

**WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
WINCHESTER SCHOOL LIBRARY
MARCH 26, 2015**

Board Members Present: J. Cardinale, K. Bazan, T. Croteau, E. Jackson, R. Horton arrived at 6:17 pm.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. by Vice-Chair, K. Bazan for a budget work session.

The Board received a line-by-line budget breakdown and reviewed.

J. Lewis spoke to the need for a Computer teacher K-8. Advised kids are not coming in with the basic computer skills. Feels in younger grades they should learn keyboarding skills, file skills and Word and in the older grades, Power Point, Access, etc. He feels the position should be full-time. The number of classes depends on the schedule.

BayRing/Fairpoint is still not done with Fiber Optics; they are saying it will be June or July.

R. Horton asked what they are doing about a Power School person.

J. Lewis thinks it would be cost-effective to have someone come in and train Julian Stanway and Val Carey.

J. Lewis feels perhaps the Computer teacher could do that. That would take something off of Julian Stanway's plate.

John Loeb came to the meeting to discuss transportation.

John Loeb advised most school districts in the US run their own buses; most are larger than Winchester. Advantages to schools running their own buses has switched over the last several years; more profit motive; easier to attract local drivers; can buy from manufacture from Specs.

John Loeb advised First Student is part of the teamsters; First Student pays a large amount of money for health insurance. Winchester would be competing with them for drivers. Would need to equal or surpass them to attract drivers with pay and benefits. It is difficult to find drivers. Contractors would have spare drivers, mechanics plus supervisory personnel. In a smaller district you don't have the mass; makes cost and handling issues much more difficult in a smaller district.

John Loeb advised maybe two schools the same size, such as Hinsdale and Winchester could coordinate together. There could be some complications; more commonly done with Special Ed.

R. Horton asked if John Loeb had any insight in why Winchester only gets one bid.

John Loeb advised business reasons and operational reasons. It could be the distance issue. Again, there is the issue of size. If you have to spread the cost over 60 buses or six, there is a difference. Would someone want to come in and bid against an existing company and make them angry? There could be a competition issue. Advised there is not much interest. Would a company put in a bid for six buses, maybe not, but 60 or 160 yes.

John Loeb advised would be running as your own business, it is a business; there would be supervision, training, monitoring, a lot of phone calls. It takes a lot of work. A transportation company works for a lot of people, the Board, Administration, parents, students, etc. Administration would need to field issues and complaints.

R. Horton advised John Loeb that he is not sure it was relayed to him how unhappy they are with First Student. Advised the service is horrible; they don't show up, buses have no heat, students are late getting to school. The company can't give us contracts/rates on time. Advised it is very poorly run, from our point of view.

John Loeb advised he could get information together. What is the frequency of problems? He would know if it was a low or high level of frequency.

John Loeb feels they haven't looked at Winchester as an entity and the best way to service them. First Student was told they need to have buses available in locations drivers are able to easily get to them.

First Student has said they will be responsive with some operational issues. John Loeb advised when he ran the bus company sometimes things didn't go the way they wanted, but he always communicated. Things legitimately happen under the best of circumstances, but the way they are handled and the frequency they happen is the mark between quality and not quality. Need to define response times within the contract.

R. Horton asked how many buses John Loeb thought they would need.

John Loeb advised would need five full and two smaller, plus one large and one small back-up and one with a chair lift. Advised they would also need another back-up with a chair lift. It could be expensive.

John Loeb's advice is if you are dead set against this company you will be under a time crunch and maybe handling more issues then you want to. He explained if set up properly, in two years could collaborate with Hinsdale and Monadnock. If opt for a one year contract plus one year optional, could have time to do a study. John Loeb advised it will put a load on the school system. He is not saying not to do it, but it can be cumbersome under the best of circumstances. Suggested Winchester go to a one-plus-one contract.

T. Croteau asked how well Westmoreland's system works.

John Loeb advised it does fine. If you can find someone in Town who wants to do it, you could do that. It doesn't mean it would do well. John Loeb would be willing to talk with someone about that. Advised trucking is very different; need more human component.

R. Horton asked if it would be beneficial to look at a couple of smaller Sped and feeder buses and walk before we run.

John Loeb advised it is possible; it could be done. Not sure what the reaction of First Student would be.

John Loeb advised First Student now knows of the issues. They have agreed to do parking of the buses close by and that dead miles are not to be charged.

R. Horton feels the important thing is they need guidelines. Students are late for class; they get there many times when school starts.

John Loeb advised First Student wants to do an addendum to the contract. They would work with Administration; he has made some suggestions already. First Student knows Winchester is thinking of other options.

T. Croteau – Would you be able to come up with costs for Winchester to start handling our own buses?

John Loeb advised it would take a long time for him to do it. Feels they need to be careful with contract language; it could discourage companies from bidding. He would not recommend penalty clauses now; could backfire on you if you go out to bid.

J. Lewis advised John Loeb he has been very helpful; they appreciate it. Maybe he could come back on May 7th.

John Loeb advised to let him know; he will be happy to meet with the Board again.

J. Lewis was called out of the meeting and advised the fire alarm was set off in the server room; the police were here. Things are okay now.

T. Croteau – Obviously it is too late for this year. Will do the best we can for our contract. Need to get those numbers from John Loeb to see if we can do transportation here.

E. Jackson felt tonight John Loeb seemed to discourage it; would be curious to see the numbers and if they support that.

E. Jackson was not sure if John Loeb has preconceived negative thoughts on it; will the numbers reflect that?

L. Schmidt advised they are going to ask ACCESS if they have any interest in doing together when they put Special Ed transportation out to bid.

T. Croteau – Maybe we should try coming up with figures ourselves for the cost of buses, etc.

J. Lewis thought ACCESS was working on it.

L. Schmidt advised oil tanks are getting low; got \$1.79 price per gallon from Swanze Oil. They will save the price for us until tomorrow; would get \$5,000 gallons total. It would be for the Thayer and Elementary tanks; will exceed the budgeted amount by more than \$3,800. It has been unseasonably cold.

R. Horton thought the conversation two weeks ago was that we were okay with oil.

L. Schmidt that was with the February numbers.

E. Jackson advised the conversation was that we were okay and there was \$5,100 left.

L. Schmidt advised they have had 34,239 gallons delivered this year. They pre-bought 30,000 gallons.

J. Cardinale – And looking at another 5,000 gallons. Next year should use less oil and more gas. This is the first year with a gas water heater.

The Board advised L. Schmidt to buy 5,000 gallons from Swanze Oil at \$1.79 per gallon.

L. Schmidt will send the Board an e-mail with the details about oil.

J. Cardinale MOVED to go into non-public session at 7:31pm under RSA 91-A:3 II(a)- Personnel; SECONDED BY: K. Bazan, VOTED: E. Jackson – yes, K. Bazan – yes, J. Cardinale – yes, T. Croteau – yes, R. Horton – yes, MOTION PASSED.

J. Cardinale MOVED to leave non-public session at 8:46 pm; SECONDED by: E. Jackson, VOTED: E. Jackson – yes, K. Bazan – yes, J. Cardinale – yes, T. Croteau – yes, R. Horton – yes, MOTION PASSED.

J. Cardinale MOVED to seal the non-public minutes indefinitely; SECONDED by: T. Croteau, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

T. Croteau left the meeting at 8:47 pm.

E. Jackson MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 pm; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary