

**WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
BUDGET WORK SESSION
JANUARY 11, 2016**

Board Members Present: K. Bazan, J. Cardinale, S. Thompson, R. Horton, T. Croteau

Finance Committee: Steve Fucille, Sue Rice, Christy Davis

Absent: Rikki Bolewski

Administration Present: J. Lewis, B. Stevenson, E. Jackson, V. Carey

The meeting began at 6:00pm.

R Horton advised the group that the meeting was a work session for the School budget and the Finance Committee is here. Everyone introduced themselves.

R. Horton and J. Lewis explained the set-up of WSD Pre-School through Grade Eight; there are 416-418 kids, outside placements, 29 classrooms with paraprofessionals for Sped and Grades 9-12 at Keene High School/

R. Horton advised there is a huge gap between the increase to the budget and reduction in revenues, which would add \$2.00 to the tax rate. The Board sent the budget back to Administration for new a proposed budget.

E. Jackson reviewed the budget line-by-line with the Board and Finance Committee explaining for the Committee the description of each line.

*\$1.715 million is a huge part of the budget; which is Keene High School tuitions Regular Ed; a very large line is Supplies – includes folders, paper, glue sticks, etc; all that type of thing.

R. Horton advised they would be using items from that line for the new Science lab.

*\$1.5 million in the budget is for Special Ed.

*Special Ed supplies is under-funded.

*Christy Davis is looking for a function number.

E. Jackson advised she can do that.

E. Jackson advised she will have a regular and default budget for the Board and Committee.

*R. Horton reviewed additions to the Sports lines.

R. Horton advised Wednesdays and Fridays there are basketball games here.

R. Horton advised the Student Council raised \$581 from the wood raffle.

The auditors will be here Wednesday and Thursday this week.

J. Lewis will check on the date of the School Board Delegate Assembly. He thinks it is the 17th.

R. Horton asked J. Lewis to confirm it; he is interested in going.

*The Board discussed Charter Trust funds. The Board is working on trying to move them.

*R. Horton discussed the Building Improvement Fund. For many years the Board was not sure what the funds were for. It is up to the discretion of the Board. They write a warrant article each year to put money in that fund. That warrant article does effect taxation.

E. Jackson advised they are searching for new insurance company for WC, Property and Liability.

*Locked in electricity this year.

*E. Jackson reviewed CEP; providing and preparing more lunches.

*E. Jackson advised oil is a huge line. She has locked in a portion of oil at \$1.69.

*E. Jackson reviewed Transportation.

R. Horton advised ACCESS will be working with the School on Special Ed transportation. They will work closely with ACCESS as years go on. Will also use for Athletic transportation as they will have more away games.

R. Horton reviewed change in Technology. Now have a person/staff rather than an outside contracted company that we were using.

*Copier leases – New company bought out the leases from the prior company.

*R. Horton reviewed E-Rate revenues from the Government for Technology. Each year we increase bandwidth. Think we are okay right now, but there could be some need to increase bandwidth in the future.

E. Jackson will e-mail a spreadsheet to Committee members. They will take the budget home to review and will come to Thursday's meeting to continue work on it.

J. Lewis advised the Board tasked them with bringing back a budget that does not reflect a \$2.13 increase to the tax rate - bottom line - \$10,992,912.18. J. Lewis, V. Carey and E. Jackson reviewed the budget and where changes could be made and brought them back to the Board.

*Teachers – Move teacher from First grade to Pre-School; Fourth grade teacher can move to Fifth; turn one Math teacher into a Health teacher. They will not be adding a new Pre-School teacher, a new part-time Music or part-time Language teacher.

*J. Lewis – change in his current position. He would be full-time Principal and they would hire a part-time Superintendent with no benefits.

E. Jackson explained it would be hands on experience to see what's going on and move the dial. Need someone in the Principal position to move teachers along.

R. Horton felt they had been moving along with the Curriculum Coordinator position; bringing staff through the training piece.

V. Carey advised she doesn't do evaluations; staff not accountable to her. Need someone to make sure what needs to be done is being done.

J. Lewis – Need to do what is best for the school. What do they need? He believes it is a full-time Principal.

V. Carey – There is not just the physical absence, but a focus problem. There are too many things going on.

*J. Lewis – Looking at cutting some additional positions, possibly in Administration and a Sped position.

*J. Lewis – No longer in a position to have a Language teacher or part-time Music teacher. Revenues are not there.

Changes proposed impact students, employees and taxpayers. Based on support staff we have, if they work from start date to end of year, the cost is over \$600,000. If someone leaves, then we don't hire right away.

V. Carey discussed paras; looked at the number of hours required by an IEP. It may not be consecutive hours. Looked at all services and consolidated services to paras; cut the number of admin. paras. Need to be very attentive with schedules.

V. Carey – Instead of spreading students to three classrooms, spread to two and can have two teachers, not three.

E. Jackson – Not looking to cut people, but work smarter; will be a two-year plan.

V. Carey – advised they came up with cutting roughly seven positions. Typically lose paras at the end of the year. Not looking to fire anyone, but wouldn't fill the position if they left. Don't know what Kindergarten Special Ed number will be. Also, have move-in's and move-out's.

E. Jackson advised it would be very hard to move students this year.

Sue Rice – Already have been consolidating.

E. Jackson – Need to provide services if students have an IEP. This is the way to get there.

The cut would be \$52,000, but should have been over \$600,000.

*E. Jackson - Increase to Summer School – Board had cut \$25,000.

*Increase in Evaluations

*Increase in Legal

*Cut supplies from Life program.

*Speech and Hearing – Had third person in the past – will save \$74,000 for one position.

*Restructuring – This means eliminating another position, Assistant Principal. We would have the Curriculum Coordinator there if/when needed. The line includes an increase to the Curriculum Coordinator position.

*Library - \$26,000 positive difference this year, plus Health and Social Security. They have set up for future years with one full-time position.

*Took out Board salaries.

*Legal - \$20,000.

*Audit - \$45,000.

*Superintendent – put \$70,000 in the budget; part-time with no Health or Dental benefits.

J. Lewis feels 29 hours is doable for that position.

*Software from Hindsdale – this year \$4,500 under-budget; upped it to \$13,200 for cost of actual software.

*Reviewed principal and secretary salaries and benefits as proposed.

J. Cardinale – Not saving anything salary-wise.

E. Jackson advised there are two higher-level administration positions.

*Custodial wages were under-budget.

E. Jackson adjusted custodial lines. Had change in personnel with no Health or Dental Benefits.

*Maintenance of Grounds – reduced to \$14,000; had added \$3,000 for Spring Landscaping.

*Repairs and Maintenance – Cut \$3,000

*Electricity – Cut \$5,000

*Bottled Gas – Add \$500

*\$2,000 cut in Keyboards and Memory

E. Jackson advised that brings the budget to \$10,992,912.18 and \$1.04 on the tax rate.

E. Jackson advised with an Unreserved Fund balance of \$260,000, with at least \$75,000 in revenues, will return money to taxpayers adding zero to the tax rate. We would have to underspend the current budget by \$260,000.

R. Horton advised probably should have had this last week. With every change he doesn't see anything new. They changed administration, but not how we run the school.

E. Jackson advised asking for restructuring plan for people. Not asking for just financial change, but restructuring.

J. Cardinale advised the Board is looking for a Director of Maintenance position. If we continue the way we are, the building won't be here in 10 years.

J. Lewis – Have made changes to do things differently.

E. Jackson – Allows the new Superintendent to make changes and reorganize. Better to start over and start fresh.

S. Thompson – Looking at things from management perspective, change in leadership; could change whole direction. J. Lewis couldn't do everything he wanted.

J. Lewis advised it is tough to get to everything. Not saying can't do it, but can't do it well.

K. Bazan is impressed with the budget received, but he is worried about next year; can expect revenues to go down. There is no plan to bring in new revenues.

K. Bazan – Continue to see the population of the school going down.

E. Jackson advised it buys us time; they are capturing more Medicaid. A revenue source could be having a Sped program here.

K. Bazan thinks the School is ready to take a risk.

R. Horton – Playing with unassigned fund balance to reduce taxation. Advised he is not willing to do that. Advised they need to see a balanced budget; not using funds from this year to fund next year.

E. Jackson advised it has been done that way in the past.

R. Horton never set tax rate that way; never anticipated what we would return in January.

R. Horton appreciates the work; what they found. Explained that is why they hired E. Jackson. Set out in the budget session looking at how we educate kids. Doesn't think we are doing very well and now they want to cut administration. He is asking E. Jackson to look outside the box.

J. Cardinale – Would only have one position to observe teachers.

E. Jackson explained at the rate we are going, would evaluate teachers only once. Is that what you want to do?

V. Carey advised the Assistant Principal doesn't do evaluations; they provide input.

The meeting recessed at 9:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary