

**WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
BUDGET WORK SESSION
JANUARY 18, 2016**

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

Finance Committee: Steve Fucille, Sue Rice, Christy Davis, Rikki Bolewsky

Administration Present: B. Stevenson, E. Jackson

The meeting was called to order by R. Horton at 5:06 pm to work on the budget.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

None.

The Board met to work on the budget. Cuts were suggested by K. Bazan at the last meeting.

R. Horton advised the pay increase in that line for next year is part of the two-year agreement.

R. Horton – Health Teacher -The State has been after us for a while.

R. Horton – Big piece is Keene tuition. Not a lot of room there.

Rikki Bolewsky asked about additional changes made after the Committee left the meeting.

K. Bazan advised on Line 21 – Reconsidered cut and brought to \$3,500; where it was.

R. Horton advised the budget is a work in-progress; even after the Public Hearing. Need to post Warrant Articles by 1/20; until then, able to make additional changes.

Line 144 – Curriculum Coordinator – Board cut \$10,000 back to level fund; 50% grant-funded position.

Rikki Bolewsky asked why the Board is making the Superintendent position full time.

R. Horton advised what happened is the position essentially became a half Superintendent and half Principal.

Rikki Bolewsky advised since we became the Winchester School, there has never been a full-time Superintendent. It has always been part-time with another part-time position.

R. Horton remembers it; they had a Principal and Superintendent.

T. Croteau doesn't remember having a full-time Superintendent, but they are looking to change that structure. Need a Principal to do Principal things and a Superintendent to do Superintendent duties.

R. Horton explained they have been told they are very light on the central office and up until a few years ago, the Business Manager was part-time.

Rikki Bolewsky – Which is the job that will be filled?

R. Horton – Principal

K. Bazan – Looking at the numbers, you can see we are encountering a major shortage in revenues. Need someone to address that and the major issues that need to be handled. That is why we need a fulltime Superintendent.

Rikki Bolewsky is concerned we have a K-8 school; Hinsdale has a part-time Superintendent. How do you justify a full-time Superintendent and cutting of the educational piece?

R. Horton advised there would be no increase.

E. Jackson advised there would be an increase to benefits.

R. Horton – This change is for the educational piece. Kids aren't coming in. If staffing is the same and levels reduce, that's the reality. On the Administration side, we struggled as an SAU.

We may not have had the strongest players in place.

Rikki Bolewsky – Why is the Business Manager salary up so much? It is over-budget \$8,800 over last year's budget.

R. Horton explained it is a situation where we hired someone at a much lower rate. The Board felt it was important to invest in it.

Rikki Bolewsky asked why the line was overspent.

E. Jackson explained in 2012-2013 there was a new person in the position part-time. It was budgeted at \$50,000 and we spent \$79,000. There were two people in that position with a change in personnel. In 2013 and 2014 the position was full-time.

R. Horton – Increase was very much because of salary when position was filled; \$80,000 is reality for Business Manager figure.

K. Bazan - \$70,000 is still low for districts our size.

Rikki Bolewsky advised it looks like Administration is increasing and things we need for the school are being cut. Realizes much needs to be done behind the scenes, but feels a lot for the teachers is being cut. She understands we may need to cut a teacher. Going up \$8,800 on that line and being overspent for the past three years, but feels they are cutting things for kids that are needed more than an average pay raise.

R. Horton advised there have also been changes to the organizational chart.

T. Croteau – More supervisory duties – actual salary is \$68,000.

E. Jackson explained why the line was overspent on merit raises; wasn't allocated to individual lines. Changes year-to-year were dependent upon what teacher's make.

E. Jackson advised increase to the Business Manager line was explained. She didn't support it.

R. Horton – Faced with forecasting for next year. Come July 1 could be major changes and need to move things around. People could move in or out, Regular Ed and Special Ed could be overspent.

E. Jackson – Other than collective bargaining, all other positions are negotiable, if there is not a contract, the line item is basically a placeholder

Line 231 – R. Horton advised due to the state of the facility, need additional repairs moving forward. All are a matter of maintenance. Do contract a lot of services out. Want to change the job description to be in-line with our need.

J. Cardinale – That person would do inside projects and oversee janitors and big outside contracted jobs.

R. Horton – Anyone who wants a tour can do one inside and out. He is concerned about the boiler; it is on 30 years of a 20-25 year life span.

R. Horton advised there are things that we can do ourselves, so don't have to hire from outside. They have invested in a lift. Want to be more self-sufficient. Many of the repairs and projects they are looking to do may not have been things we did in the past.

J. Cardinale doesn't think we will see a reduction in the line, at least at first. Things would be done that haven't been done in the past.

J. Cardinale thinks Line 231 should have been more.

Line 262, 267 and 268 – K. Bazan's adjustment:

R. Horton advised the person in the current Tech position is great at rebuilding machines, setting up labs, etc. Lacks some support on the higher level. Feels need contracted service to manage and monitor the system.

Line 262 – Rikki Bolewsky advised they haven't used over \$1,000, but there is \$1,000 being added.

E. Jackson advised they anticipate hardware needs to be updated.

E. Jackson – Line 262a is for Smart Boards; one light bulb costs \$252.00.

Rikki Bolewsky – The line is \$13,500, but it is not used.

R. Horton explained Smartboards are aging; they are used day in and day out.

Rikki Bolewsky – Technically, upping the line by \$14,000.

R. Horton advised money came from Line 268.

Rikki Bolewsky advised they are still budgeting more than last year.

R. Horton – Need laptops for two permanent labs.

Rikki Bolewsky – Between the two line items they are going from \$21,000 to \$36,000; it is a huge increase \$13,000 just for Smart Boards.

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Monica Poole feels a lot of the computers are sub-par; with not enough memory. Smart Boards can't be fixed. They are five years old and have had no maintenance put in until last year. Feels it is a drop in the bucket to what they really need for Technology.

Joan Franklin advised all Smart Boards are aging at the same time. They are trying to replace some at a time. The Tech person is now just replacing the head on Smart Boards and it is working very well. Saving a little money in the long run, replacing parts they can't actually get anymore.

J. Cardinale advised they plan to replace a few each year.

Sue Rice asked if line increased by \$1,500 for Math supplies?

R. Horton – Yes.

Rikki Bolewsky – No cuts to Aids/Paras? What were the cuts in Line 46?

E. Jackson advised when Administration prepared changes, did not cut the line. When they went back, cut it by \$42,000.

E. Jackson explained funds that need to be raised from taxation for the School portion of the budget is \$4,981,180 or \$17.79 plus \$200,000 Unreserved Fund Balance less \$1,500 from Special Ed added back in.

J. Cardinale – Paras may have a little bit of a scheduling headache, but can move Paras around to different students. That's what we got from V. Carey.

R. Horton – Administration advised we can offer the same service by changing how we do it.

Rikki Bolewsky is concerned that we are adding to Administration and cutting Paras to students who need them.

T. Croteau advised not cutting if students have an IEP; they will have it. It is a change in scheduling.

Sue Rice - By doing that, you are restricting teachers. If there is a problem, teachers will have to deal with it.

J. Cardinale advised would have a similar problem if had an issue with two Regular Ed kids.

Steve Fucille asked about the Unassigned Fund Balance being reduced from \$335,000 to \$200,000.

R. Horton explained he does not doubt the number, but an average over the years is typically \$200,000 being returned to taxpayers.

E. Jackson explained expenditures and additional revenues bring the Unreserved Fund Balance to \$335,000; would be a one-time thing.

R. Horton – Could potentially return more or could potentially return less. As long as we don't have any unexpected expenses should have money to return. When we return money to the Town it is intended to reduce taxation. The Selectboard makes the decision; just because we return the money, doesn't mean it will be used to reduce taxation.

Christy Davis asked if there is \$100,000 left, why doesn't the Board buy equipment. We approved it; why don't you spend it?

R. Horton advised the Board feels the taxpayers approve the budget presented. If we don't present what it will be spent for, shouldn't spend it. We can't encumber funds from one year to the next unless we have a contract.

Christy Davis and Rikki Bolewsky feel if equipment is needed and money is left, should buy it.

R. Horton explained have done that before; purchased something needed at the end of the year.

Reviewed Administration Lines:

T. Croteau advised the Business Manager Salary is \$68,000; not actually over what we are spending this year.

Rikki Bolewsky advised she was going by what was in the budget. Did you move money around? There is \$2,800 more than what was in the budget line last year; \$2,800 higher than in those three positions last year. Explained that's where they have an issue and that's with cutting a position. Not saving us any money by cutting a position; still this high. Advised should see a change in the numbers.

R. Horton feels the issue is whether the Superintendent should be full time.

Rikki Bolewsky – No; they see Administration going up and Paras going down.

R. Horton – If we can't run the school we might as well close the doors.

Rikki Bolewsky feels Administration numbers don't seem more efficient.

T. Croteau - \$238,000 for Administration proposed; \$240,000 for just salaries; so it is a \$2,000 increase.

Rikki Bolewsky - Saving \$3,000 with cutting a position?

R. Horton – Yes.

Rikki Bolewsky thinks it doesn't make sense. We are adding benefits, so really are not saving any money.

T. Croteau – That position previously received benefits.

J. Cardinale – Not adding benefits; it would be the same number.

E. Jackson – This year is just salaries.

R. Horton advised the Board had to take a long hard look; from the Board level, feel we need to do it differently. Previously had 479 students and ran the school with \$10.8M budget and returned money to taxpayers.

Christy Davis was curious about the decline in students.

T. Croteau advised the number at the high school has dropped as well, but the cost to Keene has gone up thousands of dollars.

S. Crusilli feels it would be hard to come back and tell you how to restructure Administration. Just trying to convey optics of it; doesn't look that grea

R. Horton advised still having discussion regarding part-time Foreign Language position for \$19,000± for grades three through eight.

Joan Franklin asked about cutting Paras if being reimbursed from Medicaid.

J. Cardinale – Don't get all of it. If IEP says students need a Para for two hours a day and they are here with a Para for five hours, we only get reimbursed for two hours. J. Cardinale advised information from the Curriculum Coordinator says we could change that by moving Paras around.

Joan Franklin advised the Paras in her room are reimbursed. Don't know any that aren't.

J. Franklin – If we are Medicaid funded, who are these people that aren't Medicaid funded?

R. Horton advised they received information from Administration; some students are only partially Medicaid funded.

J. Franklin – Advised there would be no time for the teacher to speak with the adult assigned.

R. Horton – This year we did work on some language to work with communication.

J. Franklin – Did you budget enough for the Pre-School position going somewhere else?

R. Horton – Yes; explained.

Lindsay Pickard – Considering the move to a full-time Superintendent and full-time Principal, have you considered adding Maintenance duties to the Superintendent?

R. Horton – No, feel the Superintendent role has been neglected.

K. Bazan – Has been done in part-time, but want someone in that position full-time.

Christy Davis asked if we have any student teachers from KSC.

R. Horton advised yes; we have a great relationship with KSC.

Cheri McDaniel-Thomas advised nine for the Fall and eight for Spring

Sue Rice – Plus Methods students; 10-11 for the Fall Semester. Advised that relationship brought us Paras.

J. Cardinale – And teachers.

The meeting recessed for 10 min. at 6:40 pm. to allow the Finance Committee to review the budget.

The meeting reconvened at 7:02pm.

Rikki Bolewsky asked about Custodial Maintenance – Where did the Board come up with that number? What certificates, etc. are you looking for the person to have?

R. Horton – Someone who is a general contractor who would have building/repair skills.

J. Cardinale – Probably would not have a license, but general contractor experience; would know basics of plumbing and electric. If we need to re-wire or re-plumb would have to hire a licensed person.

R. Horton – We will have a little higher level of a list of what needs to be done. There is masonry work, gutters, etc. that will need to be repaired.

Rikki Bolewsky – So the position should lower costs?

J. Cardinale – Will also keep our school in better shape. Maybe the first couple of years, there will be a lot that will need to be done. Want to repair, rather than replace.

Steve Fucille - That person can do minor electric and plumbing?

J. Cardinale explained can replace fixtures, yes; replace showers, no.

R. Horton explained they are finally spending Capital Reserve Funds for larger projects.

Then can plan what needs to be saved to maintain long-term plan.

Sue Rice appreciates what the Board is saying, but if they are going to do something that drastic, would like a finite job description and finite list of what they are looking to have done. Can it wait one year?

R. Horton – No, have waited too long. Have been band-aid fixing some things because they are not spending money on contracted services.

J. Cardinale – If not done, creates more problems.

Sue Rice asked if the Board anticipates a change in the Superintendent job description.

R. Horton – Yes, plan to define the position much more than in the past. There were lots of fuzzy lines; lots of people doing lots of jobs. This is more to get rid of fuzzy lines.

Sue Rice – So you will be looking to change the job description on any position that would work with the Superintendent's position?

Rikki Bolewsky – What needs more focus or has fallen through the cracks? Feels they need more information on what the concerns are to make the position full-time.

R. Horton – Need to be very careful when working with the budget. People are attached to each position. That is part of the reason why, if it seems the Board is being kind of vague. Currently one position has two roles. May put in the budget that one position will be a certain percentage and the other a certain percentage, but nothing says that is what is being done.

R. Horton – To run our school and find direction, feels change needs to go in. A lot of areas of the school need to be looked at differently.

Rikki Bolewsky advised without the Assistant Principal would they still have someone to help; would only have one position.

R. Horton – The Superintendent position spends days in Court; wouldn't be in the building.

Rikki Bolewsky feels they are not helping School by not having another person here.

R. Horton – Will have a dedicated position. Feels being pulled in too many directions with two part-time positions.

R. Horton – Have looked at original chart; have ideas, but not set in stone.

T. Croteau – Hoping with new chain of command everyone knows who is in charge.

Rikki Bolewsky- Paras; what is the current percentage for Special Ed and Regular Ed? Is enrollment decrease affecting both?

E. Jackson advised 23.5 for Special Ed; percentage staying about the same. Decline is falling around the same for both, in her opinion.

Rikki Bolewsky – Advised not sure where to go from here. Feels she can't tell the Board how to restructure. Has a concern with pulling someone out of the school more. Doesn't think the Committee has a good grasp on what's lacking on the outside of the school.

R. Horton – How often are we visiting schools that have good success levels; how do we fix bad test scores? We did horribly. This would allow somebody to work on the school instead of in the school. If we hire a part-time Superintendent, we would get a retired Superintendent, someone to put out fires; don't want that.

R. Horton advised you will make a decision on the budget. We are here to advise you. We can agree to disagree.

Rikki Bolewsky doesn't feel it is the move to make, taking the Superintendent to full-time. Going forward, would be pulling a person out of the school more and she hasn't seen anything to justify making the Superintendent full-time; doesn't make sense to her.

R. Horton wants the Committee to know he feels the position has not been given the needed attention.

Rikki Bolewsky – So you are saying the Superintendent job is not being done as it should?

R. Horton – Yes.

Rikki Bolewsky – Because it is not full-time or...

R. Horton advised the Board pitched the Business Administrator as full-time and the Budget Committee agreed.

R. Horton advised he feels strongly that a full-time position is needed.

R. Horton advised there are a lot of things they had to deal with that are still not done. Those things will still be an issue. The high school has not been addressed as well as they would like. Everything else gets put ahead. With real management of the ship, things will get done.

Lindsay Pickard asked with full-time Principal Pre-K through Grade Five and then part-time Principal/Part-time Superintendent for Grades Six through Eight, how would that structure work?

J. Cardinale advised when the Superintendent is out of the building, there is no one to cover grades Six through Eight.

Rikki Bolewsky would need to be part of the structure. That other person needs to pick up the slack.

R. Horton -That structure didn't work; possibly a personnel issue.

Rikki Bolewsky – Then change personnel, not the position.

R. Horton explained they went with that structure, but on July 1st they needed to fill the position without any notice. They had many conversations advising that staff needs a Principal dedicated to them. They have asked for many, many years.

R. Horton advised handling an SAU has been a very difficult task since they disbanded SAU 38.

R. Horton – Not a perfect situation with what we were handed.

R. Horton advised if you don't like the numbers, give us a number you like or advise us of changes.

Rikki Bolewsky advised if the Board is not confident in the person in that position need to get the right person.

R. Horton advised they were very close to discussing things that shouldn't be discussed in public session.

K. Bazan – Going into personnel, not positions.

K. Bazan explained why we need a full-time Superintendent. Advised it goes right back to the numbers on the revenue sheet. We are losing adequacy aid. Need more local revenue. That position will be tasked with bringing more revenue in that we are not getting at the State level.

R. Horton – We have a lot of programs surrounding schools don't have, such as the Focus Two program. We were getting \$17,530 from Hinsdale from Focus One.

R. Horton – Adequacy Aid is based on many state numbers including ADM; Free and Reduced lunch is a portion of the calculation.

Monica Poole – If money is based on enrollment, what would the Superintendent do?

R. Horton explained cut staff, reduce money returned or find balancing point and bring more students in.

Monica Poole feels the Board must have something in mind for programs to bring in.

Joan Franklin advised she tells everyone about Intel Math,. She received two graduate credits. Really supported Math instruction; how to make her a better teacher. There are many things we can apply for. If we have a full-time Superintendent they would be all over that. Advised they hadn't been receiving information until the Assistant Principal came.

R. Horton – Don't have all the answers; something needs to change.

Monica Poole thinks she could support change wholeheartedly if they weren't cutting teachers.

R. Horton advised that change was done after some cuts were made.

R. Horton thinks staffing levels need to change; it is a reality.

Monica Poole feels increasing responsibility of teachers for curriculum and families and taking Administration away that supports them. Feels they have had many responsibilities added to them since 2012-2013 including the responsibility for test score performance. Now they are taking one-half a position away from day-to-day instruction.

Monica Poole feels like it is needed in both places; need to fund both places. If the Board thinks there are too many teachers she understands, but don't take away support for teachers.

R. Horton feels confident that is the direction of the Board and why they are bringing in a full-time Principal.

Monica Poole advised the position was full time; was the job too big?

R. Horton feels people should see what it is like to be on the Board side, too.

Monica Poole – Don't have the why.

R. Horton – Haven't been clear, focused positions.

Monica Poole – Where do you want them to go? Need details. Just giving generalities, not giving details of what needs to be done.

R. Horton advised it is not just a tax issue. When they started the whole budget process were hit with disturbing test scores. Need to change it. Have been doing band-aid fixes.

Monica Poole feels the conversation with the public should have started sooner.

R. Horton personally, doesn't look at it as additional duties for the Superintendent, but a clear-focused position.

Lindsay Pickard – How will we bring in people to the school if we are planning to cut staff and have larger class sizes?

R. Horton advised the goal immediately is to straighten out what is going on. We have an organization that needs to be organized. We will have to make tough decisions. Need to bring it down to the basic level and start again.

Lindsay Pickard – You are asking us to vote on a budget without giving us a plan.

Sue Rice – What will be presented at the Public Hearing? How do you see that gong?

R. Horton – Not the way it has gone in the past.

Rikki Bolewsky – Not necessarily saying things to cut, but she doesn't understand it. Feels maybe there are things the Board can't tell us.

R. Horton – No.

Sue Rice – Would like to see where we are today and where we are going?

R. Horton – Problem is today people are cut up in little pieces.

Rikki Bolewsky wants more money in the school to help kids and teachers. Agrees things need to be done and sometimes outside of the school. She doesn't understand how this will make the school better.

Rikki Bolewsky doesn't care how much money the school returns to the Town. If the Board is saying the budget as presented will work, we shouldn't see much back. Either you are doing a disservice or you don't need that amount of money. She understands insurance, for example, the budget needs to be inflated, so it could be less.

Monica Poole - Has it ever been considered having two separate people to do Principal and Superintendent positions?

E. Jackson – That was Administration's proposal, separating the two.

Rikki Bolewsky – Looked for part-time Superintendent before and had a few applicants, then J. Lewis got the position. Felt they had a good pool to pull from. Not sure where it changed that we would only get retirement age; part-time Superintendent and part-time Special Ed. Felt they had a lot of bleed between those two positions. Would question what we were actually getting, 50/50, 75/25, etc.

Monica Poole – Don't know what we are getting now.

R. Horton – That's why the Board's direction is a full-time Superintendent.

Monica Poole – If the Board feels we really need one, won't say no, but is concerned cutting from inside.

E. Jackson – Need budget figure and warrant articles for tomorrow.

Christy Davis left the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Line 191 – E. Jackson with eliminating three potential positions may need to increase Unemployment Compensation by perhaps, \$1,000.

E. Jackson will ask the Human Resource person.

T. Croteau - Could adjust it tomorrow.

E. Jackson advised it would depend if the individuals have other employment, how long it continues.

E. Jackson advised the bottom line is \$10,963,267 with adding \$1,500 proposed tonight plus \$2,000 for Unemployment can adjust it after she speaks with the Human Resource person.

T. Croteau MOVED that the amount of \$10,963,267 go on the Warrant for the Public Hearing tomorrow; SECONDED by: K. Bazan, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

E. Jackson advised there is \$227,499.14 in the Building Improvement Capital Reserve as of 12/15 Special Ed Trust \$153,896.09 - (to her knowledge, does not include \$50,000).

E. Jackson advised it appears money has been moved from Charter Trust. Advised on 12/17/15 both accounts were closed.

E. Jackson has e-mailed Charter Trust and the Trustees; hasn't had a response.

R. Horton – Can we send a letter in the mail?

E. Jackson doesn't necessarily have all the addresses. She can call the Town tomorrow.

Should have \$203,896.09 in the Special Ed Trust fund; traditionally put Warrant Article money to go into that fund up to the amount available. If the amount put on the Warrant Article is \$50,000, but there is \$40,000 left, \$40,000 goes in. Each year they try to add to that.

E. Jackson advised nothing has been used from both accounts since 2011-2012.

K. Bazan MOVED to put a figure of \$25,000 in Article Five; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

E. Jackson advised will see an eighteen cent decrease to the tax rate - \$17.61 for the school portion.

E. Jackson – Marie Braley advised the last day to post warrant articles is 1/20/16.

T. Croteau MOVED to approve Article Three for tomorrow's Public Hearing in the amount of \$33,601.12; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

J. Cardinale MOVED to adjourn the meeting; SECONDED by: T. Croteau, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary