

TOWN OF DEERFIELD, NH
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
George B. White Building
8 Raymond Rd. Deerfield, NH 03037

December 10, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order by Chair at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: In Attendance - Phil Bilodeau, Zach Langlois, Herman Pretorius, Terry Roy, Bradley Briggs, Bonnie Beaubien, Alden Dill, Andrew Robertson
Excused Absences - JoAnne Bradbury, Bill Von Hassel, John Dubiansky

Off Agenda: Mr. Pretorius spoke regarding MBC policy in regards to personal comments. He asked MBC members to please refrain from making personal comments during meeting until citizen's comments at the end of the meeting. He encouraged everyone to be respectful wait until addressed by the board. In regards to citizen's comments, Mr. Pretorius said that they would like to restrict each person to a 5 minute time limit. Mr. Robertson said that while MBC meetings are open to the public, they are work sessions for the board members and that he would discourage board members from getting into a dialogue with citizens during citizen's comments. Mr. Robertson said that the BOS has been advised by legal counsel of the same for their meetings.

Discussion of Town & School Budgets:

Town: Mr. Robertson handed out updated figures for Fire & Rescue and Parks & Rec as well as a typo corrected in the Building Inspector's budget.

School: Mr. Langlois said the new para contract was given out and the school budget is completed.

New Business:

Library: \$117,091.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Candace Yost was present to discuss the library budget. Mr. Yost said funds were added for mileage for trustees going to professional conferences, fees for the Downloaded Books Consortium are increased which will result in more books, less wait time to make the increase worthwhile. Mr. Pretorius asked about the maintenance & repair line being doubled. Ms. Yost said that the elevator has to be inspected annually & the fee for that has increased,

library processing supply costs have increased, and a building maintenance line was added last year to cover more than just the roof and the furnace if there should need to be any other repairs or maintenance to the building. Mr. Robertson added that the library had been part of the Primex inspection of all town owned buildings. The Library Trustees & Librarian had been made aware of a few repairs that were needed and that repairing just a few of the roof tiles would wipe out the maintenance budget. Mr. Dill asked about the increase in the part time employee line. Ms. Yost explained it was a 2% cost of living adjustment as well as an increase to make that employee's pay equal to the other part time employee's pay as both part time positions were comparable and both doing a good job.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Building Department: \$53,623.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Rick Pelletier was present to answer questions in regard to the Building Department budget. He stated that this budget was largely unchanged other than a wage increase. Mr. Pretorius asked about the vehicle repairs line. Mr. Pelletier state the vehicle is 12 years old and funds were added in anticipation of repairs being needed this year. Mr. Dill asked how many miles are on the vehicle. Mr. Pelletier answered 35,000. Mr. Pretorius asked Mr. Robertson if the BOS is concerned with town employees driving aging vehicles. Mr. Robertson said they are, particularly the Fire Chief's due to its age and miles, but given the low mileage and Mr. Pelletier's reports on his vehicle's performance, the BOS feels his vehicle is safe for the time being.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Transfer Station: \$268,002.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Pelletier also answered questions about the Transfer Station budget. He said the major increase is due to increase in cost of disposal of product. Mr. Pelletier explained that other than scrap and iron, the town has to pay to dispose of all recyclables. The current rates for disposal are as provided by Mr. Pelletier are: \$10/ton for paper & cardboard as opposed to a few years ago the town got paid \$200/ton for it, \$15/ton for plastics. Mr. Pelletier didn't give a rate but said we also pay to dispose of glass. Mr. Pretorius asked about the increase to the heavy equipment/loader line. Mr. Pelletier explained they need to replace tires on the loader which are \$3000-\$4500 per tire and they also had to add a container. Mr. Pretorius asked about the increase to part time employee. Mr. Pelletier explained that it was a cost of living adjustment and that an employee was hired at a higher rate than anticipated. Mr. Harrington said that an employee's hours had increased and that one employee had been hired at a higher rate than anticipated, an employee had left and they couldn't hire a new employee at the old rate, so they had to higher at a higher rate to fulfill the needs of the Transfer Station.

Mr. Langlois asked what the rate is to dispose of non-recyclable waste. Mr. Pelletier answered \$84.00/ton.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

School: \$14,394,363.00

Motion: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Robertson

Discussion: Mr. Langlois said for a number of years now the School Board has provided binders with all school budget information including proposed contracts, operating budget, fund balances. He said also present at this meeting to answer questions were Nate Oxnard, School Board member who was involved in negotiating the Paraprofessional contract, Amber Wheeler, the SAU Business Administrator, and Kristen Withee, DCS Principal. Mr. Langlois said the school board has not prepared warrant articles yet. He said the Para contract will go on the ballot as a warrant article with a recommendation from the MBC. Mr. Pretorius asked that they begin with the Para contract. Mr. Oxnard said that they had focused on a few things, coordinating with the teacher's contract. They adjusted wording in the Para contract to say "School Day" and "School Year" instead of "30 hours per week" in case of any other future changes made to the school day over the course of the 4 year contract. Other changes cleaned up expectations with regard to legislation, chaperoning field trips. Mr. Pretorius asked why a change in the hours. Mr. Oxnard explained that the school day hours had changed and needed the para contract to reflect that. Mr. Bilodeau asked if the school day and school year was defined elsewhere. Mr. Oxnard said yes, they are defined in the teacher contract. Mr. Oxnard explained the cost increase for the contract. They agreed to a 4 year contract, 1.5% increase to each step value. He said Paras earn one step for each year of service. Paras on step 7 only earn raises at 1.5% amount, which is a little below cost of living. To encourage certification of paras, there is a certified stipend. The stipend is increase to 65 cents/hour of certification for 1st year of the contract, 70 cents/hour of certification for 2-4th years of the contract. Mr. Roy asked how many paras are employed at DCS. Ms. Wheeler answered 32 Special Education paras, 5 regular ed. Mr. Pretorius asked what is the average step level for paras. Mr. Oxnard said approximately 5.7. Mr. Robertson reminded the MBC members that this contract has been agreed upon by the School Board and the Para Union, that the MBC members can satisfy their curiosity but this contract will be a warrant article. Mr. Roy asked if the MBC votes mean anything. Mr. Langlois explained that the MBC will vote to recommend or not recommend when the School Board presents its warrant articles. Continuing to explain changes to the Para contract, Mr. Oxnard explained that a new health plan option had been added, which offered a lower premium, comparable coverage, and a higher copay. Paras have a choice of which plan they would like. Mr. Oxnard said on the warrant article the expected tax impact will be \$37,821.00 for year 1, \$37,503.00 for year 2, \$39,497.00 for year 3, and \$11,587.00 for year 4. The 4th year will be lower because most paras will be at step 7 by that time. Mr. Dill asked if there were figures for estimated savings on health care. Mr. Oxnard said no one had committed to the less expensive plan option at that time. Mr. Pretorius clarified that the MBC is not voting on this contract at this meeting. Mr. Langlois said correct, it will be voted on when the School

Board presents its warrant articles. Mr. Langlois said they are planning on three warrant articles; the budget, the para contract, and the creation of a fund to start saving a portion of fund balance for future expansion of the facility.

Mr. Langlois gave highlights of the school budget. Total increase over last year is 4.7%, or \$589,064.00. Last year's warrant article for CBA added \$173,723.00, which was voted on and passed by taxpayers. Special Ed increases of \$102, 871.00 are non-discretionary, high school tuition increased by \$201,000.00, transportation increase of \$94,951.00. Mr. Dill asked why the high school tuition is higher. Mr. Langlois answered there are an additional 10 students. Ms. Wheeler answered 10 additional students and the tuition rate increased as well. Mr. Langlois said the tuition rate last year was \$12,646.87 per student, capital fee \$496.00. Next year's tuition is \$12,925 per student, capital fee \$501.00. He explained there were 176 high school students last year, they are budgeting for 186 next year. Mr. Pretorius asked where they get the number for next year's projection. Mr. Langlois said it is this year's actual students minus the graduating seniors plus this year's 8th graders.

At this time, Mr. Langlois provided the MBC with line by line notes explaining changes to lines. Unless otherwise noted, all remarks and explanations concerning the specific lines were made by Mr. Langlois.

Line 12 Includes additional teachers. Administration had asked for 2 additional teachers for middle school. After discussion, one teacher was determined to be adequate. Mr. Oxnard added that next year's 6th grade class has an additional 20 students, making it necessary to add a middle school teacher.

Line 17 Substitute rate increased to attract more subs to the sub pool. School has a hard time finding substitutes.

Line 19 Decrease on this line due to personnel changes.

Line 28 Required services due to IEPs.

Line 32 High School contract increase in rate as discussed previously.

Line 45 Increase in electronic software and licensing to cover PE, Music, and Library department.

Line 50-93 Teaching supplies decreased due to one time expenses in PE, Language Arts, reduction in anticipation of less computer parts & software programs next year.

Lines 96-111 Instructional Equipment increase for additional band risers, library furniture, upgrading classroom projectors and classroom furniture replacement. They are on a rotation they would like to stick with for these things.

Lines 114-140 Special Ed increase due to CBA increases. Para staff increased from 29 to 32. Special Ed is expected to decrease for summer services. Special placement expecting a large increase due to student specific needs. Increase in equipment due to specific student needs. Mr. Roy asked if this is based on IEPs. Mr. Langlois said yes, special ed budgets are always driven by IEPs. Mr. Langlois explained that there is a special ed trust fund as an insurance policy for these expenses. The balance in that fund is approximately \$215,086.32 but the school board determined that using that fund at this time wasn't in their best interest at this time. Mr. Langlois explained that a lot of years, a lot of the surplus comes from Special Ed lines because IEPs change throughout the school years, services needed change.

Lines 158-175 Co-curricular increase due to increase in the enrichment program, Athletic Director and coaches stipends, theater performances. Umpire fees have increased. New equipment is needed for the soccer field. Dues & fees for athletic events have also increased.

Line 179 Increase in diagnostics for school psychologist due to student specific needs.

Line 178 Guidance salary increase due to CBA increase

Line 187 Nurse's salary increase also due to CBA increase

Line 219 Library instructor salary increase due to retirement and replacement hired at a higher step than anticipated. Budget for hiring at step 5, master's degree. Replacement was hired above that step.

Line 269 District's share of assessment for Deerfield portion of SAU budget. Deerfield is 21.2%. Last year's was 21%. SAU budget increased .39%. Deerfield is a higher valued town.

Lines 277-310 School administrative services increase due to contractual items ie; multi-year contracts, .375% full time increase for secretaries, OT Tech position, increase in maintenance contracts. Mr. Pretorius asked if Mr. Langlois could explain the increase in maintenance contracts. Mr. Langlois stated those are the contracts for services such as the One Call Now notification system. Ms. Wheeler added that those costs are per pupil so they increase with increased enrollment.

Lines 315-341 Increase in salaries due to summer help and personnel changes. Anticipated decrease in utilities and increase in contracted services. Utility decrease due to switching building to LED lighting last year. Offsetting funds were received from Electric Co-Op, anticipating 4 year return on conversion, estimated \$16,000/year in electric savings.

Lines 345 & 357 Increase in transportation due to student specific needs and contractual increases. Includes 7 buses, which is the current number of buses at DCS, additional funds added for athletic trips and cost of environmental camp for 6th grade. Mr. Dill asked if they were

ever going to revisit the discussion regarding the fact that bus routes haven't changed in Deerfield in 10 years. Mr. Langlois said that work was ongoing over the summer but Dail Transportation ran into a driver shortage that would have left Deerfield 3 buses short, which through the schedule into a tailspin. The work for rerouting will pick back up shortly. Mr. Dill asked if more students should equal more buses. Mr. Langlois said we are getting about 70% utilization out of the buses and they are looking at rerouting to balance the number of students on each bus, rather than adding a bus, as adding a bus would add approximately \$65,000 to the budget. Mr. Pretorius asked about optimizing time spent on the buses. Mr. Langlois explained that the school is fairly centrally located and that anyone living in any of the outer corners would have a longer ride than those living closer to school. The furthest out ride for a maximum of 40 minutes one way. Mr. Pretorius commented that it may be worth adding a warrant article to add a bus. Mr. Dill commented that the school board had done a good job with figuring out the after school program transportation needs with the buses that are already being used by DCS.

Line 361-379 Fringe benefits. CBA increases include 6.2% health, 3.2% dental, and annual staff increases.

Line 392 Transfer to food services program to cover shortage. Food services has moved in a very positive direction this year. Ms. Wheeler added that modifications have been made to the program as well as personnel changes.

This concluded the line by line notes by Mr. Langlois. Several MBC members stated that they weren't prepared to vote on the school budget at this time, in spite of the motion made by Mr. Langlois earlier in the meeting. A **motion** was made by Mr. Briggs to table discussion until the 12/17/2019 meeting, **2nd** by Mr. Roy, **vote** was unanimous to table discussion until 12/17/2019. **Motion carried.**

Citizen's Comments:

Andrea Hotaling spoke with regard to the high school tuition being over budgeted, perhaps there is room to save there and with regard to health insurance, it is always good to look for new options. Ms. Hotaling isn't sure that the paras will be able to afford the new option, maybe there are other options that could be looked into.

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Dill

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM

These minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Tina St. Peter, Recording Secretary

Pending approval by the Municipal Budget Committee

