

SANBORN REGIONAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, December 15, 2016

A meeting of the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee was held on Thursday, December 15, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. The following were recorded as present:

SRSB BUDGET COMMITTEE

Annie Collyer, Chairperson
Charlton Swasey, Vice-Chairman
Cheryl Gannon
Sandi Rogers-Osterloh
Jack Kozec
Tammy Gluck, School Committee Representative
James Doggett
Ami Faria

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

Ms. Collyer welcomed the administration and members of the public.

PROPOSED BUDGET: OVERALL REVIEW

The Budget Committee reviewed the proposed budget with the Administration and asked for clarification to various line items.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh questioned the employee 15/16 salaries and how they compare to the actuals. Ms. Coppola explained the salaries that are indicated are at the time contracts were written.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh referred to the two psychologists utilized by the high school. They are scheduled based on Fremont's needs and asked if there are extra funds that are submitted from Fremont for this or is that part of their bill.

Ms. Coppola explained that is included in their tuition contract.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked Dr. Blake about the enrollment decreasing at the high school and an increasing enrollment from Fremont. She asked him to define the past school redesign efforts.

Dr. Blake explained the high school redesign effort. They reduced a math position through combining classes and rearranging schedules. There have been a number of different things done along the way. He explained we reduced a business teacher a couple of years ago and combined classrooms there.

Ms. Gannon had a question on page 278 regarding Additional Compensation Plan (ACP) initiatives. She asked if that is part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and asked for a description of what some of those ACP's might be.

Ms. Coppola explained the information is already provided and are all part of the CBA.

Ms. Gannon stated that currently the contract did not pass and she asked if that will remain the same. Ms. Coppola said yes.

Ms. Gannon asked would these change if it passes. Ms. Coppola said any of those changes would be part of a warrant article which would then merge into the operating budget if they passed.

Ms. Collyer asked if they have ever looked at different sized school busses.

Ms. Coppola said we can't prescribe the size of the busses the company uses. She said most have busses for a student capacity of 77 which is standard in the industry.

Ms. Collyer asked for the terms of the SAC grant. She asked if it is expiring mid-year next year.

Dr. Blake said they did a matching amount of \$25,000 and it expires another year out. During the 18/19 SY is when it would expire. They have been extending it a full year from December to December.

Ms. Collyer asked if it could become a contracted service or if it is for an employee. Dr. Blake believes they have to be employees of the District. Ms. Coppola said the \$25,000 matching funds included everything the position needs other than salary and benefits.

Ms. Collyer questioned Ms. Coppola's retiring in August. She hasn't seen any job postings for her position. Dr. Blake stated he won't be posting any positions until January.

Ms. Collyer asked what is the actual average step increase on the CBA. Ms. Coppola said the School Board will decide that. She can't report that.

Ms. Collyer questioned dues paid by the District. Dr. Blake described the associations they use and the services they provide to the school district. NHSBA is \$10,000 and they offer services and trainings and school board policy service.

Ms. Collyer questioned the \$14,000 for athletic dues. Ms. Faria stated the breakdown for that is on page 15.

Ms. Collyer referred to page 95 regarding the total of general fund and the total proposed budget. She questioned a \$1.1 million difference between the two. She said when you add the

total of special revenue funds on the default page, it doesn't add up to the total number of the budget. Ms. Coppola asked Ms. Collyer to send it to her and she will try to explain it.

The Committee reviewed the outstanding questions that are still listed as 'in progress'.

Ms. Collyer referred to the two questions that are listed 'in progress'. The Budget Committee asked for a list from the last 3 years the number of teachers that resigned and how many were for retirement. She asked the administration for a time estimate on when they will get them the answers. Dr. Blake explained they have limited data to pull information from.

Dr. Blake questioned what this information has to do with the proposed budget they are reviewing.

Ms. Collyer stated it all has to do with money.

Dr. Blake explained they don't do exit interviews with everyone who leaves. Ms. Collyer asked him to please get the information they are asking for and not to ask why they need it.

Dr. Blake said they can provide the information in the next three weeks. Ms. Collyer said that is not sufficient. Dr. Blake said they will do the best they can.

Ms. Collyer explained that their Q & A's are posted on the website. It has a multi-purpose for the community. This is in the service of transparency for everyone.

Ms. Collyer asked about the grant writer and wanted to know what Dr. Blake's thoughts are on that. It impacts the budget.

Dr. Blake said we could have a grant writer. It is a matter of putting out an RFP for a grant writer and seeing what the opportunities are. Some districts have grant writers on staff.

Ms. Collyer referred to the bid policy and our request for information on RFP's. Ms. Coppola explained how the architects get paid. Mr. Swasey wanted to know when they will get copies of the RFP's. Ms. Coppola explained the amount of work that would be necessary to complete this task. She stated in order to provide a complete and full list for the past two years, it will take a significant amount of time. It could take 40-60 hours to do that and they don't have anyone on staff that has the time to spend on that.

Mr. Swasey asked how many pages would be for the tennis court? He said since RFP's would be available electronically, a memo could be sent to department heads requesting the RFP's. Ms. Coppola stated the District would have to hire someone to do this project.

Mr. Swasey referred to the stipends and wants copies of the contracts. Ms. Coppola informed him he can get copies of the contracts, however, what he is looking for is not in the contract but

it is in the school board policy. The Committee responded by saying they were told the stipends were in the contract and now are being told they are in the policy.

Ms. Collyer referred to the question regarding capital expenses. It was asked they provide a list of the past 5 years, the dates on which the capital expenditures were authorized and paid.

Ms. Coppola explained the projects are awarded by the School Board and that information can be found in the minutes. They don't have that information by date, they only have it by year.

The Committee reviewed the Math chart and data available for grades 4, 8 and 11 to track what impact the Math Coordinator has had by class. This chart gives us tracking to see what the benefit has been from the Math Coordinator.

Ms. Collyer had some staffing questions and Dr. Blake will have it for them next week.

Ms. Collyer asked Dr. Blake to explain the shifting of positions in the Superintendent's office.

Dr. Blake explained he has a new administrative assistant. A long serving staff member has left and as part of her leaving, they moved some staff around. We have an HR coordinator now. We have office coordinator. He said they basically moved folks around in the office and they cut the receptionist. There was a .4 reduction overall.

Ms. Coppola clarified that it is a .4 addition because the business administrator position will be a full time position for next year.

Ms. Collyer commented there is \$9.6 million in capital projects over the next 5 years, according to the Capital Improvement Plan just accepted by the School Board. She noted that finding funding for that much money is going to be a big challenge and is scary.

Ms. Collyer stated there are just a few outstanding items remaining to be received from the administration.

Mr. Doggett referred to page 12. He was provided an explanation on the research chart on page 45 to look at the cost of purchasing text books.

Ms. Collyer asked the Committee members to be prepared to come in next week with suggested changes to the proposed budget, whether up or down, along with their reasoning. She asked that they try not to be too specific because the School Board will decide how things are. They will all discuss and vote accordingly next week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Baker of Newton thanked the administration. He appreciates the thorough work by both parties and believes it will be to the benefit of the community.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT – none to report at this time

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Mr. Doggett said hopefully there will be some report to them soon on support staffing and teacher contracts. The unions have accepted it.

Ms. Collyer stated she is really concerned about the proposals from the administration at this point. On top of that, she added that we also have CIP and contracts, and is concerned about the demands on the taxpayers.

Ms. Gannon asked about review of the default budget. The default is \$34,723,540 and the Superintendent's proposed budget is \$34,682,157. Dr. Blake said those figures are correct. Ms. Collyer said that the default is for the School Board to review.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Doggett made a motion to approve the minutes of December 8, 2016 with one amendment. Seconded by Ms. Gluck. VOTE: 8-0 motion passes

Mr. Swasey referred to questions that have not yet been answered. He stated that having to wait three weeks for an answer is not right. He referred to State statute which says information shall be provided "forthwith". He said we have been stalled on a lot of stuff and he is frustrated. He added that if we have to pursue the 'right to know' law then we will.

Ms. Gannon said the administration answered the questions to the best of their ability and considering they are running a school district with a \$34 million budget with over 300 staff members, they are doing the best they can. She said any complaints should go to the School Board who oversees those working in the District. She questioned the significance of some of the questioning and how it relates to the proposed budget when 70% of the budget is staff, salaries and benefits. She does not agree with taking this to the 'right to know' or as a non-compliance issue.

Mr. Doggett said the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Newton has asked that he bring to the attention of the Budget Committee they are in dire need of a new fire station and to keep that in mind.

Ms. Gluck said a lot of the decisions on how we function are made at the State level. This puts the cost of education on the backs of property owners and that is the challenge we have and it affects what can be done in the towns and with limited resources. She said that maybe the Selectmen need to take that energy they have and spend it on how we fund public education.

Ms. Collyer disagrees with Ms. Gluck's comments about removing local control. Ms. Gluck said she doesn't want to remove local control.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Doggett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Rogers-Osterloh.

VOTE: 8-0 motion carries

The Budget committee adjourned the meeting at 9:40 pm.

Minutes submitted by,
Linda Mahoney