

TOWN OF SEABROOK
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 18, 2008

PRESENT: Don Hawkins, Peg Weare, Ivan Eaton, Michelle Heywood, Aboul Khan and Richard Maguire

NOT

PRESENT: Paula Wood (Excused)

REPRESENTING SEABROOK SCHOOLS:

Maureen Ward, Assistant Superintendent
Bob Berry, SAU Business Administration
Jeni Mosca, Principal
Les Shepard, Vice-Principal
Diana Peitrowski, Special Education
Jon Moore, Chairman, School Board
Bruce Cassassa, School Board
Michele Knowles, School Board

D. Hawkins opened the meeting at 6:05 PM.

Minutes of 12/1/8 Meeting

Motion: D. Maguire Accept minutes of 12/1/8 meeting as presented
Second: I. Eaton
Yes: D. Hawkins, P. Weare, I. Eaton, A. Khan and R. Maguire
Abstain: M. Heywood

Minutes of 12/1/8 meeting accepted as presented.

Minutes of 12/4/8 Meeting

Motion: D. Maguire Accept minutes of 12/4/8 meeting as presented
Second: I. Eaton
Yes: D. Hawkins, P. Weare, I. Eaton, A. Khan and R. Maguire
Abstain: M. Heywood

Minutes of 12/4/8 meeting accepted as presented.

D. Hawkins explained the procedure for the meeting and advised that the evening's discussion was for the Seabrook School Budget.

SEABROOK SCHOOL DISTRICT

M. Ward, Assistant Superintendent stated that the budget that they were presenting showed an increase of \$175,134 or 1.6% higher than last year's budget. She advised that the areas that increased were contractual but there were several decreases to help keep the request down.

D. Peitrowski said that she had researched the past five years to get history of the out of district placements. She described the process of the program, cost involved and the number of students involved.

J. Mosca explained the different types of testing programs that were administered at the school.

D. Hawkins asked what would cause different results in the standardized testing.

J. Mosca said it could be the students, time of day, time of year and type of questions. She said that the testing is a snapshot of the children during six days of testing as compared to their performance to the other 174 days of the school year.

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D. Maguire pointed out that it was difficult to compare the differences/similarities with other towns of the same size and the transient nature of the student body.

B. Berry stated that most of the budget is fixed costs and only a small percentage is discretionary. He pointed out that 79 percent of the budget goes to salaries and benefits.

D. Hawkins questioned expenditures versus revenues.

B. Berry explained unexpended funds and revenues helping offset future expenditures. He stated that some monies are kept and used to help offset what is asked of the towns to support the school.

There was discussion on the technology area of the budget regarding replacement schedule of computers in the school.

D. Hawkins asked about the enrollment history of students at the school.

M. Ward covered the printout with the enrollment from 2001 through 2007.

J. Mosca stated that it varies from month to month but the average stays the same over the year.

B. Berry stated that the district looks at the real estate market to help project the number of students that will be enrolling in the school.

M. Ward explained the cost per student and said that the state average is \$10,977 and Seabrook's cost is \$11,551.

D. Hawkins thanked the school representatives for the overview. He said that this information helped show trends.

A. Khan asked if they tracked the students who went on to the high school as far as the drop out rate and those who graduate for the students who come from Seabrook.

M. Ward stated that they try to keep all the students as one unit in the high school and not separate by town. This information is not tracked by town. She did state that the dropout out rate last year was less than 3 percent.

REGULAR EDUCATION

D. Hawkins questioned the salary line. He also questioned Education Associates and Monitors budget line. He asked about Curriculum Facilitator line.

M. Ward stated this was contractual. She also stated that there been some restructuring in this area that was working out well. She said this was a reduction in force and the staff team was working well.

L. Shepard stated that involving the teachers more was working well.

D. Maguire questioned the administrative change and how long this had been going on. He also asked about other schools with this type of administration. He wanted to know if this was done in other SAU 21 schools.

M. Ward stated this had just started this year and there are teachers working together to help support administration. She advised there were some in Arizona and this gave teachers a voice. She felt this was good for the students. She stated that most of them in the district were doing this type of leadership also.

D. Hawkins asked about the role of the Educational Associate.

J. Mosca explained what they do and that they work in different classrooms depending on the need.

I. Eaton questioned longevity causing an increase in the budget.

J. Mosca said it does some years but not this year.

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D. Maguire questioned the proposed budget amounts being less than the default amounts. He wanted to know if this year went to a default budget they would have more money to spend in these areas.
M. Ward stated that they would.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

D. Hawkins pointed out there was a decrease in this area.
M. Ward stated it was \$18,000.
D. Peitrowski stated that there were some staff changes in this area.

D. Hawkins asked about court placements.
D. Peitrowski stated that there have been fewer placements because the court system likes to try to keep the children in home and get them the services they need locally.

D. Hawkins questioned the increase in Educational Associates and how the number persons for this position were determined.

D. Peitrowski stated that there is one associate per grade level. She fully explained this department to the budget committee.

D. Maguire questioned the secretary pay.
M. Ward stated this position is not included in any agreements.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

M. Ward stated that there was an \$811 increase in this area because there were more students involved and they wanted to make sure they could all be involved.

SUMMER SCHOOL

J. Mosca pointed out that there was one position added in the middle school area. She also pointed out that there are a lot of students taking part in the summer literacy program. She said at the middle school level this program is for the students to make up classes they did not pass during the school year.

D. Maguire pointed out that he does not feel that this area of the budget shows the true cost of running the summer school program.

GUIDANCE

M. Ward stated that the increases here were due to contractual step raises.

SPEECH SERVICES

D. Peitrowski pointed out that the decrease in this area was due to retirement. Currently this position is contracted out, as a replacement has not been hired yet.

IMPROVEMENTS ON INSTRUCTION

D. Hawkins questioned workshops and improvement in instruction.
M. Ward stated that was professional training and for an outside speaker that might be brought in.

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EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

D. Hawkins asked if this was for the library.
M. Ward stated that it was.

COMPUTER SERVICES

D. Hawkins questioned the increase in salaries in this area.
M. Ward stated it was for a Tech Assistant.
B. Berry advised this was for a part-time person to help at the end of the day.
D. Hawkins questioned the line for equipment.
M. Ward stated they had reduced the number of computer replacements.

SUPPORT SERVICES

D. Hawkins questioned the increases in this area.
J. Mosca stated this was for the EVEN Start Program. She explained the program and that the board felt it valuable enough to keep the program going even with federal funds being cut back.

D. Maguire asked about the program being at capacity with 12 families. He also asked who this program was accountable to.
J. Mosca said that there is a waiting list and people taking part in the program need to commit to approximately 20 hours per month. She stated that she watched over this program.

D. Hawkins questioned the School Resource Officer amount of \$50,000.
M. Ward stated that there was a memo of understanding with the Seabrook Police Department that they pay the salary for that position.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

M. Ward stated that they made a cut in the legal expense line, as they do not expect to need as much this year.

SAU SERVICES

D. Maguire asked if there was a standard formula used to determine this figure.
B. Berry stated that there was and it was set up according to town valuation and students. He stated that the valuations are done by the state. He also pointed out that the number of pupils is based on the average daily attendance of the students.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

M. Ward stated that this area had decreased because there is only 1 principal and 1 vice-principal for elementary and middle school.

D. Maguire questioned a formula for the stipend these two positions get.
M. Ward stated that there was no formula.

D. Maguire stated that in his opinion it was unfortunate that there was not greater disclosure on how the decision in this area was made. He then referred to a Newburyport Daily News article talking in the change of structure at the Seabrook Schools.

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D. Hawkins questioned the increase in the clerical line.

M. Ward stated that they were very dedicated personnel and the board felt there should be a raise in this area.

D. Maguire questioned dues and fees that were paid.

L. Shepard stated that they paid for one membership, which allowed the staff to all share the information and keep current on things relating to teaching.

D. Maguire questioned two memberships for the principal's organization.

M. Ward stated that was for the principal and vice-principal.

BUILDINGS

D. Hawkins questioned compensations increases.

B. Berry stated that the staff is on a step increase schedule and this is not contractual.

D. Hawkins asked what percentage of the work done is just the cleaning.

B. Berry stated that this area would cost more in contracted out. He said that these folks go above and beyond when taking care of the building.

M. Ward stated that the staff is always checking on the building. She stated that one of the other schools in the district is contracting out this service and she would let the committee know how that works.

D. Hawkins asked if the fuel was contract.

B. Berry stated not at the moment but they were looking into getting natural gas to the school. He stated that this would mean an initial cost in some of the equipment but would save money in the long run.

D. Maguire questioned the cost for fire extinguishers and servicing.

B. Berry stated this was for checking the fire extinguishers and the sprinkler system.

GROUNDS

D. Hawkins asked about sand and salt costs.

M. Ward stated these costs were in the contract for snow removal.

VEHICLES

D. Hawkins noted this area was the same.

TRANSPORTATION

M. Ward stated that this was the last year of a five-year contract and they were getting ready to negotiate again. She pointed out that there could be a 5 percent increase in this area.

D. Hawkins asked about the extent of the busing services.

J. Mosca explained all the areas that the school used buses.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

D. Hawkins asked about health insurance.

B. Berry stated that they have a base rate guarantee and that there has been some staffing change.

D. Maguire asked if the employees paid any of these costs.

B. Berry stated they paid 17 percent and did appreciate this benefit and understood the costs.

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D. Hawkins asked about retirement and buyback on time.
B. Berry stated they were unsure of retirements and personal time can be bought back under this contract.

FOOD SERVICES

D. Hawkins questioned the increase in this area.
M. Ward stated the cost of transportation of the supplies and the increase in cost of the supplies.
B. Berry stated that the school is reimbursed on some of the cost of the food for federal programs.

WARRANT ARTICLES

There are three warrant articles: SESPA, Long Term Maintenance and Asbestos Removal.

D. Maguire pointed out that this already read Budget Committee approval and guessed they were assuming this.

D. Maguire stated that he was in favor, reluctantly, of this commendable budget. He stated that there was a 14.7 percent increase in this budget over the past three years. He pointed out that the enrollment seemed to be going down slowly but the budget was increasing.

D. Hawkins stated that there was a concerted effort by the school to lower the budget even though some of the areas were out of their control.

D. Hawkins stated that if there was no further questions or discussion on this budget it was time to vote the budget by section.

TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

Motion: I. Eaton Recommend Total Operating Budget of \$11,181,383
Second: A. Khan
Yes: Unanimous

Budget Committee recommends \$11,181,383 for Seabrook School Total Operating Budget.

SESPA NEGOTIATIONS

Motion: D. Maguire Recommend \$25,698 for SESPA Negotiation Warrant
Second: I. Eaton Article
Yes: Unanimous

Budget Committee recommends \$25,698 for SESPA Negotiation Warrant Article.

LONG TERM MAINTENANCE

Motion: D. Maguire Recommend \$75,000 for Long Term Maintenance
Second: I. Eaton Warrant Article
Yes: Unanimous

Budget Committee recommends \$75,000 for Long Term Maintenance Warrant Article.

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ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Motion: D. Maguire Recommend \$90,000 for Asbestos Removal Warrant
Second: D. Hawkins Article
Yes: Unanimous

Budget Committee recommends \$90,000 for Asbestos Removal Warrant Article.

SPEC ED EXPEND TRUST

Motion: D. Maguire Recommend \$20,000 for Spec Ed Expend Trust Warrant
Second: A. Khan Article
Yes: Unanimous

Budget Committee recommends \$20, 000 for Spec Ed Expend Trust Warrant Article.

D. Hawkins stated that the Public Hearing Date would be on Monday, January 19, 2009 at the Recreation Building.

Motion: M. Heywood Adjourn
Second: A. Khan
Yes: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Signed: _____
Don Hawkins, Chairman

Date: _____

DH/jp