

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Budget Work Session
SAU BOARD ROOM

NO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Saturday, November 2, 2019
8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Richard Dunning,
Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson,
Katherine Heck, Niki McGettigan,
Stephan Morrissey, Linda Quintanilha,
Kristen Reilly (9:34), Crista Salamy,
Tim Theberge, Jerry Wilson

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Tim Markley, H.R.
Tim Grossi, Facilities
David Jack, B.A.
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.
Ben Moenter, Special Education
Mark Schaub, Technology
Michelle Voto, CVHS
Jim Elder, GBS
Lexy Heatley, GBS
Anne O'Bryant, SMS
Tim Conway, SMS
Stephanie Syre-Hager, AES
Kathie Morrocco, Pierce School
Kat Foecking, FES
Colleen Roy, GES
Amy Janoch, HES
Larry Pimental, PES
Fabi Woods, TES

8:30 – 9:00 - **Welcome & Breakfast**

Stephan Morrissey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

9:00 – 10:15 - **FY'21 Budget Work Session** – Kimberly and David
- Overview of Materials

Kimberly Saunders outlined the work that the Leadership Team has done to arrive to today's proposed budget. She said that we continue to have to defer expenses, push things off, while continuing to make educational progress for our students. We need revenue. We need to solve our revenue issue. Kimberly spoke about the Foundational Stages Toward Excellence and the focuses that are apart of them.

Strategic Plan Goals were outlined. They included goals in the areas of student achievement, culture and community, organizational structure, and operations. If a proposal is not "mission critical" to the work that this district does in educating students and their achievement, then it should not be part of the plan.

School Board Goals include the review and modification of ConVal's present Strategic Plan, monitor equity between the two middle schools, the implementation of a universal preschool program, among others.

Questions to consider include proposed staffing changes, use of trust funds and other special revenue, warrant articles, outside programming, summer programming, funding major facilities projects, mission critical, and maintaining high quality programming for all students.

The Budget Prep Timeline was reviewed.

- FY21' Presentation and Discussion
 - o Budget Assumptions

Assumptions fall into three categories; procedural (class size guidelines, special education caseloads, and potential reallocation of existing resources), financial (health insurance rate increase, transportation contract increase, increases for NHRS and dental, a reduction in both bond interest and worker's compensation) (decreases in fund balance, decreases in catastrophic aid and Medicaid), or programmatic (curriculum renewal, professional development, student services).

- o Revenues/District Assessment (Potential Tax Impact)
- o Budget by Object
 - V.1.0 (Initial Proposals)

Version I of the proposed budget resulted in an increase of \$3.2 million over the current budget. The budget proposed totaled \$50,015,658.00. Putting forward a \$3.2 million budget was recognized as unacceptable to bring to the taxpayers. The budget was reviewed with an eye on equity.

Central questions were asked to justify expenditures. If the answer was not yes, it was removed from the proposed budget. From there, a deeper look by level took place. Questions asked included what the minimum number of staff to run a community elementary school is, review justifications for new staffing, review class sizes, review programming, review outside programming, review field trips, review capital improvement, and review technology.

Long-term planning solutions were looked for. How do we decrease the budget, or slow the increase of the budget, without risking a deficit?

- V.2.0 (Administrative Recommendations)

The proposed budget before this meeting represents \$47,381,483.59, which is an increase of \$565,780.59, which reflects a 1.21% increase. The gross budget is both operating and all revenues and is up .28%, totaling \$49,602,973.59. District assessment would have an 4.68% increase. Proposed revenues are listed as a decrease of \$1,291,469.25.

Salaries are up 2.37% or \$306,167.26 which is reflective of CVEA increases, decreases in positions/retirements, 4% merit pool for administrators, a new Business Administrator and new Assistant Principal at GBS, a 3% pool for support staff, and lane changes.

Benefits are up 2.18% or \$242,697.37. Professional Services are up 5.97% or \$160,915.44. Property Services is down 27.68% or \$309,030.80 as a result of deferred maintenance recommendations and use of trusts.

Other purchased services related to transportation are up .75% or \$32,204.75 due to reallocations.

Supplies and Materials are down 4.46% or \$101,680.36 based on the use of LED lighting and the review of the expenditures for this line over a three-year period.

Furniture and equipment is up 88.57% or \$283,489.68. This is due to the implementation cycle of the Technology Plan and the replacement of a truck and cub cadet.

Recommendations regarding facilities and use of trusts:

Use of Capital Reserve \$532,344 (HS Renovations to Special Education Areas \$94,860, Counseling Area \$201,484, PES 3rd Floor HVAC \$187,000)

Use of Equipment Trust \$25,000 for the purchase of a food service fan.

Use of Athletic Trust \$49,000 to resurface the track and JV Score Board.

Recommendations regarding facilities: Warrant Articles

PES field repair and softball field installation \$160,000

Asphalt \$710,000 for paving work at CVHS, PES, and TES.

Recommendations regarding facilities include the recommendation of a bond for the following work: Resolve all planned capital expenditures over 8-9 years for work related to facilities as well as upgrades to structural and surrounding ground areas.

Eliminate the current practice of transferring end of the year available monies to the Capital Trust Funds.

Work would be completed in a timelier and efficient timeline.

Without the proposed bond, the district would:

- Continue to address the areas of concern only as monies become available.
- Be limited to balances in the Capital Reserve Trust Funds.
- Identify projects to be placed on a timeline and may not be able to be addressed without further deterioration or failure.

Without a bond, addressing the Capital Plan Projects will not happen in a timely fashion. The ability of the Capital Trust Funds to handle the needs is not sustainable, particularly if the projected monies available at the end of each fiscal year is diminishing.

We have to find other ways to raise revenue.

Unreserved Fund Balance –

Mr. David Jack said that an unreserved fund balance is established at the completion of the fiscal year and the annual audit. This balance is a combination of funds not spent, although they were appropriated, and unanticipated revenues.

For towns to set the tax rate, we have to establish the unreserved fund balance. This year, when the tax rate was established, we had \$1.2M unreserved. The proposed budget is \$200K unreserved. There is no way that \$1.2 is sustainable. There is approximately \$3.2M established in trust funds. He said that as the budget exists today, FY'21, before it begins, increases will result, revenues will be down. Trust funds are funded with leftover monies; this will be difficult moving forward. A conservative budget will have a reaction down the line. How a bond might be helpful will be discussed. We've been fixing our infrastructure based on monies that are left over at the end of the year.

Questions to consider were outlined which included discussion on elementary, facilities, staffing proposals, curriculum, co-curricular, after school and summer programming, outside programming, use of trust funds, and warrant articles.

Kimberly Saunders shared an administrative recommendation to consider a warrant article to temporarily reassign Frankestown students to another building(s) for a specific amount of time (5 years) or until the population reaches "N" at which time the building would be reopened.

10:15 – 12:00 - Discussion

- Facilities

Kimberly Saunders spoke about the proposal for a bond. The letter of intent is due by January 1st. Rich Cahoon said that the idea that we would be squeezing down the budget closer to expenditures was discussed. We need to remind the towns that this is what they literally asked for.

Jim Fredrickson asked what of the \$2.7M is included in the budget.

Tim Grossi said that the concept of packing up the plan is not a new one. Building aid has been suspended in recent years and will now be funded more and more out of need.

The State reimburses .36 cents on the dollar. The work that will be done this year was highlighted in detail. Of the \$2.77M, how much is in the budget this year? \$71,800.00.

Discussion took place about items proposed for a bond and those that remain in the budget.

Jim Fredrickson said that he would like to see the proposed broken down to \$2.773M by four categories bond, budget, trust, and warrant articles.

Recommended bond total is approximately \$10.7M. However, if serious, an architect should be consulted.

There is a placeholder for renovation of the Lucy Hurlin Theatre.

Dick Dunning said that the district needs to go in the direction of whatever will save taxpayers money i.e. a bond and building aid.

Tim Theberge asked if any discussion has occurred with Peterborough to leverage the use of fields before work on a softball field at PES takes place. Tim Grossi spoke about the usage that the district needs.

The District is currently down to paying for two bonds.

Rich Cahoon proposed not to go through what is in capital reserve and what is in the budget until the next Budget and Property committee meeting.

The direction is to firm up the bond proposal.

If the letter of intent is submitted, it is for this biennium. We can't expend until approved for building aid.

Motion to put together a plan for putting a bond on the warrant article. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

Dick Dunning moved to consult with an architect for a preliminary discussion on proposed work at the high school and two middle schools. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous.

Katherine Heck outlined what the bonds cannot exceed when looking forward.

- Elementary Discussion

Discussion took place about the proposal to cut one professional position at AES. Typically, kindergarten figures are higher than the prediction.

Rich Cahoon moved to retain the proposed cut position at AES. Kristen Reilly second. Unanimous.

Discussion took place about the staffing count necessary for a community school and how they are counted. Further discussion took place about teaching principals

Discussion took place about the proposal to send FES students to another school for a period of years. It would require a 2/3's vote on a warrant.

Crista Salamy noted that when looking at Dublin Consolidated, the numbers are the same as that of Frankestown. Why not propose to send DCS students to another school as well?

Kimberly Saunders said that different models for school closure have been floated in the past.

As an educator, she knows that people love their small schools, but if your child is the only special education student, or doesn't have the necessary social skills, we are not doing what we ought to, to educate students. We are taking money and resources from taxpayers and other students in other schools to support these smaller schools.

Tim Theberge said that the services available to students at smaller schools are not the services available at larger schools.

Rich Cahoon noted that administration has told the board that there is a minimum of 7 staff required to run a small school. The towns want their small schools in their towns. As a result, we have shorted the high school, the two middle schools, AES, and PES in order to maintain small schools.

Kimberly Saunders said that if the proposed warrant article related to Frankestown Elementary School passed in March, it would not happen until 2021.

Rich Cahoon moved to accept the three staffing proposals, FACS at middle school, PES Assistant Principal, and high school Math Special Ed teacher. Crista Salamy second. They are not currently in the proposed budget.

Rich Cahoon said that this is the cost of maintaining the smaller schools to no longer short the larger schools.

Unanimous.

Discussion was brought back to Frankestown Elementary School.

Dick Dunning moved to move onto the warrant to temporarily reassign the students at Frankestown Elementary School based off of the recommendation. Tim Theberge second.

Rich Cahoon said that it might make sense to keep a school open, even with lower enrollment, if there is a light at the end of the tunnel. What does the light at the end of the tunnel look like? A mid-December date was requested for this information.

Katherine Heck asked if there will be a policy to have this for all of the schools as a potential so that schools do not feel picked on. This would allow for support.

Alan Edelkind asked about the petition warrant article that came forward last year about a full analysis necessary. Kimberly spoke about the distinct differences between closing a school and reassigning students. What happens when a school reaches under 40 students? We have a fiscal situation.

There are educational and social/emotional issues. There are inclusion issues. We have reached a point where the discussion “When is small too small?” is imminent.

Dr. Ann Forrest confirmed that it is not best educationally for students when a school is too small. When you drop down too low, kids do not just learn from the teacher, they learn more from their peers. When in small groups, we are limiting what students can learn. ConVal has had significant turnover with staffing in this district due to retirement. We have new teachers in buildings without grade level partners in their building. This causes barriers for learning. For adults, walking into a small school is lovely. It feels better to adults and we are casting that onto what we feel students believe.

Rich Cahoon outlined how he viewed this and how we will vote for the remainder of the meeting. Stephan Morrissey said that he felt an obligation to have a school board meeting in Frankestown and bring this warrant article up at that time. Katherine Heck said that additional information about the educational benefits of reassigning FES students should be in place. Cost benefits should be apparent.

Dick Dunning said that until people feel the impact of what this board is asking them to do they will not see the change.

Dick Dunning withdrew his motion. Tim Theberge withdrew his second.

Stephan Morrissey moved to have a regular school board meeting in Frankestown for this discussion on the agenda.

Crista Salmay said that absent all of the information needed, it is a bad idea.

Rich Cahoon said that the questions like “where will these students go?” is important. Additionally, where these kids will go to middle school is important for towns to support it.

Niki McGettigan said that if we believe that preschool is paramount, that for people to consider the reassignment of their children, she worries that if we are asking to add preschool and add a bond, but then say that we want to reassign, people will not support the extra. Values need to be decided to go forward.

Busing, classroom size, and staffing information would be valuable when making a decision to reassign.

The community would need to be reassured that the reassignment of students at the request of families would still be consistent in the consideration. Confirmed.

- Staffing Proposals

Justification for Universal Preschool:

Ben Moenter reported the work done so far on the proposal for Universal Preschool. Universal Preschool was defined. The proposal is to extend the current program to full day for the four year olds in the program. Phase II would further develop and expand the program to all four year olds.

Work focus was shared. Ben outlined the staffing changes that would result with the two phases.

Jerry Wilson moved to adopt the universal preschool Phase I proposal. Kristen Reilly second.

Kimberly Saunders reminded that this is a step toward preschool for all. There would be an additional step to have preschool for all.

Cari Christian-Coates spoke about the sequential process.

Rich Cahoon said that it was agreed that it made no sense to pursue Phase I without also pursuing Phase II.

Tim Theberge asked about other preschool providers in the area that might present pushback. Cari said that the next step will be bringing the community to the table.

Katherine Heck abstained. All else in favor. Motion carried.

TES Classroom Teacher – based on class size guidelines, it is recommended that TES hire an additional teacher in order to have a straight 3rd and a straight 4th grade classroom. The 3rd grade classroom is projected to have 14 students and the 4th grade will have 11 students. Combined, it would total 25 students.

Dick Dunning moved to add an additional teacher at TES next year. Kristen Reilly second. Unanimous.

Special Education Staff member for Pierce School – Pierce School has the largest special education caseload of community schools. The recommendation is to add a special education program paraprofessional to support the services at Pierce School to meet the educational needs of students on IEPs. This para position is a general special education and is needed to serve the population.

Jerry Wilson moved to recommend the additional special education paraprofessional at Pierce School next year. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

COTA

- Curriculum and Professional Development Amounts

Dr. Forrest reported that key drivers are Curriculum Renewal Cycle and the Strategic Plan.

Ann highlighted the budget items and approximate cost information included in Title I and those in the budget. A focus on sustaining what has been put in place has been made. Letterland is expanding into grade 3. With the ten days for new hires, there is less money around curriculum mapping and grade level work. Noted was work that takes place during the summer in the area of emergency management, Rtl, PBIS, and Responsive Classroom.

Anti-bullying curriculum for elementary and middle schools and Signs of Suicide for middle schools is proposed.

The costs are reflected in the proposed budget.

Tim Theberge asked about Cornucopia and Harris Center in terms of bidding and procurement.

Kimberly Saunders said that these are the only two programs that do the work that they do in this area. Rich said that sole sourcing is acceptable when there is one vendor.

Ann Forrest said that the Harris Center charges us 32% of the cost of programming as an example.

We get a lot of bang for our buck there.

Rich asked that we keep track of each additional mandate that comes down from the State.

- Co-Curricular/Athletic Activities

Kimberly Saunders said that there was a stipend that was budgeted for JV Golf. We do not have a JV Golf team, therefore, the stipend was removed. We do not have the capacity to have Freshmen, JV, and Varsity teams.

Kimberly said that it was good to look at co-curricular with an eye to equity for the middle schools.

- Summer Programming

- Outside Programming

Linda Quintanilha asked about summer adventures for middle school. She wasn't sure she wanted to give up on it quite yet. Kimberly shared that the students that were intended for this programming are not the students who are accessing it with the exception of one or two. The students that did access it didn't need the extra which caused additional inequity.

Dick Dunning asked about Quest. The original intent for Quest was to provide a camp experience or those who were needy. Are we not continuing to fund it because that is not the population accessing it? Yes, in part.

Ann said that the issue is getting paperwork back. Social workers went out to homes and still paperwork did not come back. It did not happen.

Rich Cahoon said that Quest sent out a yearbook every year with student information. Katherine Heck shared her experience where spots were not filled so she was asked to send her child there.

Kimberly said that this is not mission critical. She struggles with the claims that students will not slide academically. To do this, it would take longer than a week long program.

Linda Quintanilha spoke about the sense of belonging that this program brings.

Stephan Morrissey said that we have to cut some things that are not critical.

Dick Dunning said that if we have reached out to these families and they have not responded he would agree.

Stephan Morrissey asked if it is appropriate for this school district to continue to fund this.

Kimberly said that as administrators, they do not believe this to be critical.

Rich Cahoon said that the cheapest other camp around is boy scouts. It might be reasonable to ask families who can afford it to pay their part.

Stephan Morrissey said that someone has to manage this and it is time and costs us money.

Focus at high school was discussed. Low prescribed programs were the focus. 5th Block is being scaled back. Have we been able to stagger a teacher to cover 5th block? We could hire a new teacher to work blocks 2-5. No, this has not occurred.

12:00- 12:30 - Lunch

Niki McGettigan exited the meeting when the meeting broke for lunch.

12:30 – - Discussion (Cont'd)/Additional Considerations

- Unreserved fund balances
- Use of Trust and Capital Reserve Fund
- Potential salary/wage increases for those individuals not covered by the CVEA contract and the CVAA agreement

Kimberly Saunders reported that a 4% pool for administrators for those not covered in agreements and a 3% pool for those staff not covered in CVEA contract has been the norm. We budget to maximum exposure and this is already reflected in the budget.

Tim Grossi asked if the pool for both groups could be the same. Kimberly said that the group with the individuals in the 4% pool actually have a range of 0-5% in their contract. We budget 4%.

Optics were discussed in terms of what it looks like to the public.

Tim Grossi moved that both pools to be 3.5%. Katherine Heck second. Tabled.

Tim Grossi and Katherine Heck withdrew their motion and second.

Rich Cahoon moved to reconsider. Second. Unanimous.

- Capital Plan
- Medicaid Update
- Preschool
- Mandated Expenditures – Special Education

Rich Cahoon said that it is important when talking about the cost of the district to talk about this. Not to single it out. There are mandated expenditures for a reason. When talking about small schools it is important to know. In the example where seven staff members is the necessary number of staff to have in a small school, one of them is special education related.

David Jack reported that 20% of the budget is special education related. The question is, how much is mandated by the feds that is not funded.

Looking at unfunded mandates in general was suggested. Not all unfunded mandates are special education related.

Kristen Reilly exited the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

- New Strategic Plan

Kimberly reported that a timeline is being worked on to bring to the November Strategic Plan meeting to bring to the full board in December.

- Technology

Mark Schaub spoke about work underway in the area of refreshing technology. In addition, cataloging devices to identify it as an asset and placing it in the renewal cycle was noted. The majority of Chromebook purchases will soon be 2-3 years old. If we were to wait and not implement the renewal cycle, we could make it work, but in the following year, we would be using machines that are six years old.

Stephan Morrissey asked if the goals put in place with the 1:1 initiative are being met. Ann Forrest said that she has seen educational shifts. We do not want kids sitting in front of a device. The use is intentional to develop collaboration and critical thinking skills.

- **Initial Default Discussion**

Default budget will start to be managed. Last year, the board was public about what would be removed in the event of a default.

Rich said that the list is typically the same. The hockey boosters would not be surprised if their program was cut in the event of a default.

Discussion took place about a communications relations person.

Katherine Heck said that what you get back for the cost is voter awareness, voter approval etc.

Rich Cahoon said that there might be big things coming to talk about in the near future.

Dick Dunning moved to authorize the Superintendent to find resources in the current operating budget to support professional services to provide Communications/PR services up to \$25K. Second. Unanimous.

- **Final Thoughts**

Kimberly Saunders said that work on Version 3 will be developed and brought back to the board.

- **Next Steps**

- **Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II**
a. **Legal**

Linda Quintanilha moved to enter into non-public session at 2:23 p.m. for legal matters. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Linda Quintanilha moved to exit non-public session at 2:43 p.m. Jerry Wilson second.

Linda Quintanilha moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for a period of ten (10) years. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

Linda Quintanilha moved to adjourn at 2:44 p.m. Second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok