

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, January 7, 2020

SAU #1 Office

7:00 PM

(Snow Date - January 9, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m. @ SAU)

Proposed 2020-2021 Budget

Per RSA: 40:13, II-a (c), a public hearing on the proposed budget is required.

Minutes

Stephan Morrissey called the Public Hearing open at 7:01 p.m.

Dr. Kimberly Saunders shared that she is proposing the 2020/2021 school year budget tonight.

ConVal budgets toward becoming a model of educational excellence within 5-7 years. Dr. Saunders shared the focus with the Foundational Stages.

Strategic Plan Goals continue to be worked toward. Student achievement, culture, community, and organization are the goal focus areas. School Board goals were shared.

The Budget Prep process was reviewed. It begins with a rollout in September. Review and revisions to that first draft occur thru October and November. The Board presentation is shared in November. Continued review and revisions take place. The public hearing tonight, is followed by District Meeting Part I and the March vote.

Budget assumptions include procedural, financial, and programmatic considerations. Detail under each of these assumption areas was shared. In addition, areas that resulted in decreases in revenue were noted.

Version I of the proposed operating budget totaled \$50,015,658. This reflected an increase of \$3.2 million over last year. The budget was further reviewed through responding to a series of central questions. If the answer to any of these questions was negative, scrutiny with that request resulted. Additionally, elementary schools, middle schools, and the high school looked at a magnitude of considerations. ConVal has twelve facilities that we are responsible for. Capital costs, capital plans, and the raising of capital dollars is a constant discussion at Budget & Property Committee meetings. Ultimately, administration arrived at Version 5.1.

The operating budget as it stands today is \$48,343,567.85 which is a 3.26% increase or \$1,527,909.85. 47% of this reflects salaries, 22% benefits, and the remainder is supplies and materials, property services, and equipment.

The difference between the operating budget and the gross budget is a 2.23% increase between the two; the gross budget is \$50,565,102.85. The big drivers in district assessment are a 4.63% decrease in revenues, a \$250,000 estimated unreserved fund balance, and a loss of \$225,000 in Medicaid revenue.

Requests have been made in the community to raise less money rather than return money at the end of the year.

Version 5.1 changes were highlighted. A slight increase in adequacy but decreases in Medicaid.

District Assessment is proposed to increase by 5.67%.

The salaries are proposed to increase 4.54% related to CVEA increases, a 4% Merit Pool for administrators, a new Assistant Principal at PES, and two retirement buyouts in this line. A pool of 3% for support staff, contractual lane changes for professional staff, and additional staff make up this total.

Staffing changes include the reduction of two professional positions and three para professionals.

Increases reflect the increase of a family and consumer science staff at the middle school level, staffing related to "Preschool for All" (one teacher, a .2 case manager, 1 para, and 1 social worker) among other positions.

Benefits will increase by 2.18% or \$242,697.37.

Professional Services are up 5.97% which is reflected by an increase in Pupil Services and Technical Services.

Property Services are down 21.31% or (\$237,919.18) through the intention to use trusts to fund these services in part, long-term capital planning, and structural repairs and maintenance.

Other purchased services are up .75% or \$32,204.75 due to a 3.5% increase in our transportation contract (buses).

Supplies and Materials are down 4.2% or \$(95,680.36) due in part to LED lighting and the use of technology as opposed to print materials.

Furniture and equipment is up 88.57% due to needs highlighted.

Dues and Fees, Debt Service totals \$51,217.25. This reflects the budgeting of a food service loss and an increase in costs of dues and fees.

Questions –

Dr. Cromwell, Temple, asked the cost of "Preschool for All". What is the cost and will there be a program in every elementary school?

Dr. Saunders said that there is a two year upscale for Preschool for All. The plan is to upscale to a plan for all four year olds to have a program for those students that are currently in the program. This would allow for just under half of the four year olds in our census to come to preschool. The cost is a \$480,000 increase to the preschool budget. We are budgeting the full amount but there will be a fee for parents on a sliding scale for participation. Next year, preschools will be located in Antrim, Greenfield, and Peterborough. These programs will be expanding in these locations. The following year, expansion will be looked at based on where the population masses are and where students can be best serviced.

Bob Edwards asked about the transportation contract; is it a brand new contract? No, we are in several years and will go out to bid in the fall.

Gail Cromwell asked about the trust fund list – estimates total \$3.3M. ConVal has been adding about \$600K each year. She asked that the board be more modest. Dr. Saunders said that she cannot be more conservative in this area. She is worried that we are not saving enough dollars to fund our Capital Improvement Plan for projects to protect and maintain our facilities. She said that we have three buildings that need significant renovations. We have to have a long-term plan to save enough dollars to realistically fund our trusts.

Dr. Cromwell shared her opinion on which trusts should be funded and which should not.

Kimberly Saunders confirmed that we will be adding to capital reserve and two additional, health maintenance and athletics. The last three years for Guaranteed Maximum Rate for health insurance increases have been nominal. The health trust allows a leveling and fewer spikes in this line.

What is the unreserved fund balance? \$250,000 is anticipated to return back to communities.

School Districts cannot retain a fund balance. The only options are to fund trusts and to return funds. 5% to 7% is what is recommended to have remaining in a fund balance.

Gail Cromwell said that she knows the concern with dropping enrollment. What the people in Frankestown have said at the forum would be said in any of the towns. She suggested moving fifth grade back and having different models.

Kimberly Saunders said that moving fifth grade back is not viable in all of the towns; for some it means moving three or four students back. People are resistant to closing schools. We are trying to work on solutions that use the buildings and excess space in buildings in innovative ways to increase our revenues.

Steve Chamberlin, Frankestown, asked for clarification if the recommendation to reassign FES students is off the table. Kimberly Saunders shared that the recommendation began with the identification that seven staff member are needed to staff a building at a minimum.

Stephan Morrissey said that many scenarios have been discussed. There are no formal plans to reassign FES students or any other school.

Bob Edwards, Antrim, said that he wondered if important projects would get delayed with the underfunding of the capital plan. Kimberly Saunders confirmed that the district has been conservative. She noted the high school parking lot as one area that has been in dire need of work. The community "new" schools are twenty years old now and require maintenance. The middle schools and the high school, along with PES, all need work done to them.

Bob Edwards further asked if a bond is in the future. It was confirmed that is the plan.

Stephan Morrissey said that the district is trying to manage the capital needs. Trust funds are used, building aid is being sought.

Christine Robidoux, Temple, shared her curiosity about staffing. Does ConVal have issues hiring staff as a result of the lack of affordable housing? Dr. Saunders said that every year we have positions that we have difficulty filling. In the past, our brand new teachers may not be able to afford local housing for purchase. Renting is more probable.

Stephan Morrissey asked if there were further public comment. There were no further questions.

Stephan Morrissey called the public hearing to a close at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok