

**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 12, 2022**

**8:30 a.m.**

**MINUTES**

**BOARD**

Tom Burgess, Keira Christian,  
Richard Dunning, Alan Edelkind,  
Jim Fredrickson, Katherine Heck,  
Janine Lesser, Kevin Pobst,  
Crista Salamy, Doug Sutherland,  
Liz Swan, Stephen Ullman

**ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.  
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.  
Cari Coates, Student Serv.  
Carrie James, H.R.  
Tim Grossi, Facilities  
Amy Janoch, Learning Recovery  
Heather McKillop, CVHS  
Larry Pimental, PES

**8:30 – 9:00** - **Welcome & Breakfast**  
Janine Lesser called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**9:00 – 9:15** - **Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II**  
- **Negotiations**  
- **Personnel**

Alan Edelkind moved to enter into Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II at 9:03 a.m. for matters of negotiation and personnel. Dick Dunning seconded. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Dick Dunning motioned to exit Non-Public Session at 9:18 a.m. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.

Keira Christian motioned to seal the minutes of Non-Public Session for a period of twenty (20) years. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.

**9:15 – 9:45** - **FY'24 Budget Work Session** – Kimberly Saunders  
- Overview of Materials  
- FY'24 Presentation of Administrations Recommended Budget

Kimberly Saunders reported that this proposed budget was one of the most difficult so far. There are some tradeoffs. Class size was looked at carefully. There are budget challenges.

The proposed budget does not include anything for the strategic plan. This is to keep everything moving forward.

Dollars were leveraged to do more for students. The flexibility to make tradeoffs to directly impact student learning was exercised. One-time expenditures for inclusion in federal dollars were reviewed.

If we start down the default budget route, two budgets would follow in development.

Per pupil costs will be shared. We are not doing things for students because we continue to operate in an inefficient system. \$829,000 is spent on staffing at Temple Elementary School.

Administrators have been pushed further than ever before to develop this proposed budget; there is no more push left.

The Budget Prep Timeline was shared beginning with the rollout in September with multiple reviews and revisions. The first budget was up \$3 million. Today, the proposed budget is up approximately \$800K. Today is the Board Workshop. Between now and January 10th, the Public Hearing date for the Proposed Budget and February 7<sup>th</sup>, the date for District Meeting, assumptions will be made.

Assumptions made include maintaining programming, continuation of replacement cycles, and the continuation of planned curriculum.

Expenses and revenues were touched on.

The operating budget is at \$53,927,735 which is an increase of \$826,700 over the current year. This reflects a 1.5% increase.

The gross budget is \$56,384,735 which is a .01% decrease.

District assessment would increase by 7.86% or \$3,129,301.

Salaries are down \$291,678 which includes a 5% pool for other positions, the CVEA, and the 4% for CVAA.

This represents notified lane changes, notified retirements, and the potential for a reduction in force.

Benefits are anticipated to increase by 4.71% or \$588,405 as a result of health plan rates up by 4%, New Hampshire Retirement decrease, and eliminated positions.

Professional Services are up \$253,057 or 7.48% reflected by contracted custodial services, increases in pupil services and a general increase in costs for contracted services.

Property Services are up \$28,193 or 2.32% as a result of no significant projects and no doorway replacements.

Other purchased services are down \$162,927 or 3.82%. This is due to a decrease in transportation, decrease in tuition, increase in property insurance, and savings in phone and internet.

Supplies and Materials are up \$469,568 or 17.43% reflected in increased electricity, heating fuel, and software.

Furniture and equipment are up \$349,694 or 50.16%. This is reflected by replacement vehicles, replacement technology, and furnishings to complete science rooms.

Dues and Fees, Debt Service are down \$365,979 or 2.67%.

Considerations for the board to think about include the use of ESSER III Grant funds and the purchase of Educational Technology through Title I funds as well as Trust Funds. This has not been incorporated into the proposed budget. The Board needs to make decisions.

The increase in gross budget and proposed budget is 1.8%.

#### **9:45 – 12:30 - Discussion**

Kimberly Saunders referenced Building Costs Per Pupil FY'24 by school related to facilities.

When per student costs and per student outcomes are looked at, the cost per pupil at Antrim Elementary School is \$1,835 compared to Temple Elementary School which is \$4,639 per student for facilities costs only. What we spend per pupil matters to keep the lights on, pay for backflow testing, asphalt sealing etc. The average was \$1,494 across the state when the lawsuit began.

Kevin Pobst shared that the towns need to be aware of what each town is getting compared to others.

Kimberly said that it is more about being fair to the students in the buildings.

Kevin said that the lack of fairness needs to be translated for people.

Consolidation was touched on. Liz Swan said that the board needs to be willing to have this discussion with community members. The board knows why consolidation is needed.

Kimberly tied the cost per student information into decisions on consolidation. Does the Board want to spend \$4,639 per pupil on facilities if the building might be part of a consolidation plan?

Projected enrollment information was reviewed. Antrim Elementary School would reduce by one staff through attrition, Pierce School would reduce by one, Dublin Consolidated School would be minus one, Frankestown Elementary School by one through attrition, Hancock Elementary School would reduce by one, Peterborough Elementary School would reduce by two, and Temple Elementary School would reduce by one. None of the classroom sizes exceed the class size guidelines.

Great Brook School reflects no change nor at South Meadow School or the high school.

Tim Grossi spoke about difficulties finding staff. One position required four months to fill. Contracted services reflect that current ConVal staff are under paid. Tim said that his department is a necessary evil. The department is run efficiently. It is because of the technicians and staff. If these staff are lost, it will take months to fill and he won't get the same experience to fill.

Tim proposed a \$1.00 bump per hour in addition to the percentage increase in the budget for these staff.

Kimberly Saunders shared concerns with the proposal as some will make more than some of our principals.

Other justifications were proposed. Most have a tradeoff or are asking for something different to take place.

- Eliminating a special education teaching position and adding a para at Hancock Elementary School and one at Antrim Elementary School - increase in budget of \$12,080.

• BEST Paraprofessional - the model was set up as a mobile crisis unit where a BCBA and a para would go into the environment to support what is happening. The BCBA would eventually phase out with the Para remaining until the environment has changed. This would make these staff available for another situation.

There are two paras to work with the BCBA's. It is not enough to address the needs in our eight elementary

schools. Moving the regular para and adding another as well as increasing the special education para support is proposed. Three would be available for special education. The intention is to continue to support special education behavior needs and to those of regular education students.

Dr. Ann Forrest said that we know that there is a strong correlation between students who qualify for FRL and performance. It is a more vulnerable population. There is sometimes a correlation between behavior for students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). A classroom with a higher percentage of students who qualify for FRL is vulnerable. She said that she could not advocate enough for this. The entire school benefits. Cari said that adding more resources helps implement the Strategic Plan.

Is there a more cost-effective way to train the existing staff? Training is one component, mobility is another. Where is this model now being used other than ConVal? School districts are inquiring about this model and asking for more information. It is a highly specialized role that not everyone can fill. Proposed cost is \$210,160.00.

Certificates in areas of behavior are an expectation of the staff members.

Dick Dunning asked for assurance that having this resource would enable a principal not to have to follow a student around. Putting this burden on a larger school because the student was moved there for resources is the concern. The hope is that they can remain in their community school.

- Proposed Restructure Plan - Elementary Administrative Team. Decisions have been made based on specific schools. The proposal is to have three types of principals; principal, a principal coach, and a principal teacher. The differences between a Principal/Teacher and a Teaching Principal were detailed.

A policy that guides this decision-making is what is being asked. \$254K is the cost to add the 23/24 school specific recommendations. There would be no shared principals.

Teaching principals would have a paraprofessional. Principal teachers would not.

The appeal for a teacher to test the waters with an interest in administrations was seen as a positive. It provides experience.

There is the capacity to fill in some of these positions in house while going out for two positions.

The Strategic Plan has a focus on our instructional leadership. It allows the principal/teacher to be that instructional leader.

It was noted that should a school enrollment fall below 50 students, that school should be recommended for closure. Alongside this, the board is considering facility and maintenance work as well as different administrative models.

Regardless of whatever policy is developed, the Articles of Agreement would require a vote.

Administration no longer has faith in the current system and this is in the best interest of the student population. It is not fair to kids.

The board is committed to the fact that the current system cannot continue. The board needs to struggle with how to get from one point to another.

If administrators collectively believe that they should step up and put it out there and deal with that. The time for subtleties is over with regard to consolidation.

Parents trust their kids' teachers. We have yet to get teachers on board about consolidation.

Discussion took place about supplementing an inefficient elementary school. When students get to middle school, parents care more when their student cannot perform at a certain level in math as an example.

**Katherine Heck moved to enter into non-public session at 11:30 a.m. for matters of negotiation in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II.**

**Liz Swan seconded. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Liz Swan moved to exit Non-Public Session at 11:45 am. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.**

**Liz Swan moved to seal the minutes of Non-Public Session for a period of five (5) years. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.**

A Reading Specialist at Antrim Elementary to move more students into the 50 percentile or higher in reading. \$90K is anticipated cost.

Middle School ESP Program position - estimated cost \$38,600

Two 1.0 FTE Interventionist Teachers at Great Brook School. Cost undetermined. This will address math needs at GBS. Two teachers at GBS have the skill set; with one of the two needing additional training.

Reading Interventionist at Antrim Elementary School to address reading needs. \$93K anticipated cost.

Three full-time math interventionists at South Meadow School - one would shift from 8th grade to an intervention position. This is about math and the goals for math at the middle school level. \$279K estimated cost for one year. Money could come from ESSER funds. There would be three one-year positions and one permanent. This is a well thought out plan.

The Director of Learning Recovery is retiring in June.  
An equity position would be asked. Using ESSER funds for 50% could take place.  
No one in the SAU Administration could take on the equity and data aspects.  
Katherine Heck proposed bringing forward a justification for this consideration.

The original plan for ESSER funds would have been spent at the start of the current year. Most of the plan was people but, we were unable to fill the positions. By the end of the year, it is projected that \$2.4M will remain that needs to be spent in one year. We cannot leave that on the table.

Stephen Ullman supported using the \$417K in ESSER funds to offset one-time proposed budget costs.  
Dick Dunning agreed.  
Keira Christian agreed if it were for one-time expenses.  
Katherine Heck said that the funds cannot be held. The relationship is between the Treasury and the school district.  
Is the board interested in the phasing piece for positions that are more than one year? Two separate items.

**12:30- 1:00 - Lunch**

**1:00 – - Discussion (Cont'd)/Additional Considerations**

Janine Lesser asked if there were questions.

Jim Fredrickson recapped that a vote will need to be taken at the first board meeting in December.  
Jim agreed to send the board a tool that reflects the impact on the budget on decisions made.  
Any new warrant articles needed? Warrant articles to fund trust funds?  
In January, the actual budget needs approval for the January 10th Public Hearing.  
The budget will be an agenda item at every meeting moving forward.  
What positions could be impacted by ESSER funds? What will the impact on the budget be?

Dick Dunning said that this approach, with the Superintendent to present the budget, is useful. Decisions can be made based on that.  
Katherine Heck said that tax bills will be going out in the next coming weeks. Due to the way the tax system works, what was voted in March begins to be paid for in the December bill. We had a high fund balance two years ago to the tune of \$2.7M which dropped taxes. But now, a spike will be visible because we don't have those kinds of funds every year. When we develop a budget, our taxpayers will have concern. What percentage of taxes were actually collected in each of our towns? Towns pay over 100% of the education piece but tax rate collection has been dropping. What will happen is that people won't be able to pay their taxes. This information should be collected from the towns so that we know the fiscal capacity for our residents. Spikes or drops are not favorable. We need to spend those ESSER funds on one-time items. Secondly, there are a few financial tools that we are not currently using. One is the retention balance that will be available to the district at the end of the year. This will be a decision made every year. The District can retain up to 5% of net assessment but ConVal will retain up to 2.5%. Lastly, there are tools about non-lapsing warrant articles among other tools to inform the public. A multi-year appropriation for capital projects was another tool cited for consideration.  
Jim Fredrickson said that this will be placed on the next Budget & Property Committee agenda.

Jim Fredrickson said that \$611K in reductions have been discussed. Other items were cited that were discussed today. A total of \$1.15M in additions have been discussed. The impact on taxes is important.  
District Assessment is proposed to go up 1.7%. Tax bills in December are impacted by the budget this year minus over \$2M returned. The increase in district assessment would be the impact if moved ahead.

Doug Sutherland touched on the Strategic Plan. Some of the justifications forward the Strategic Plan alignment.

Liz Swan said that she would like the board to think creatively about reconfiguration or consolidation for the March vote.  
Janine Lesser said that once we adopt the Strategic Plan, we have the approval of the community to begin to make plans.  
A unified board should take it out to the community and speak in one voice.

- **Final Thoughts**

- **Next Steps**

A previous vote on the high school parking lot and clarification on what a “no means no” vote means was touched on. A no vote is for that given year.

- \$45K from 4% to 6%
- ESSER items pulled from the budget
- one-year ESSER positions and those that could be 50% phased in will be considered
- 2% health increase and using the health trust
- equity position.
- \$106K for one maintenance truck and two food service vehicles move to equipment trust. \$256K will be balance of equipment trust before \$106K.

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

**a. Legal**

**b. Negotiations**

**c. Personnel**

**Doug Sutherland motioned to adjourn at 1:22 p.m. Stephen Ullman seconded. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok