

SANBORN REGIONAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, December 1, 2016

A meeting of the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee was held on Thursday, December 1, 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

EXCUSED

James Doggett, Ami Faria

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

PROPOSED BUDGET REVIEW: ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Ms. Collyer referred to the pages dedicated to costs associated with enrichment at the elementary level programs.

Deb Bamforth, Principal of D.J. Bakie, described the work they do with students and she provided examples of activities in the program. She said the same is true at Memorial. Students are challenged at every level, in every classroom.

Dr. Blake stated there is a district-wide STEM Committee (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) to look at opportunities throughout the year.

Ms. Gannon referred to STEAM and asked how is this different than with the regular curriculum and where does this come in for budgetary assignment.

Ms. Bamforth explained they received a Nellie Mae grant for STEAM.

Ms. Gannon mentioned that is a one-time award for money. She asked if there will be a continued budget going toward this program. She asked if it is different in the middle school.

Ms. Bamforth stated there shouldn't be large implications for this at the elementary level. The program is more of a philosophy outlook on how we can bring these activities into units we are already teaching. She mentioned Dreambox Math which they also have through a grant. Ms. Gannon asked if this program will continue. She was told Dreambox is in the budget.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh referred to the 3% salary increase for administrators. They had received a 2.5% increase last year. She questioned how does that reconcile with the teacher's contract not passing. She commented they are increasing a budget and people are more likely to vote no against the staff and professional contracts that need to pass. The administrators got a raise last year and now this year. She feels if it wasn't in there, and the budget was reduced, the contracts would have a better chance of passing. Ms. Rogers-Osterloh doesn't want to see staff and the professional contracts not pass again. She feels there is a conflict there. Each school has an increase in their budget for the administrators but the teacher's numbers remain the same. She asked for an answer to that.

Ms. Coppola said that question should be directed to the SAU.

Dr. Blake said he feels comfortable with that figure being in there.

Ms. Collyer asked about the change in health insurance deductibles.

Ms. Coppola explained the health insurance deductible for the administrators increased from 0% to \$2,500. Ms. Collyer commented how that pretty much made it a wash for administrators with the salary increase they received.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked what is increasing this year that the administrators need to cover with a 3% salary increase. Dr. Blake stated the 3% increase isn't covering anything, it is what they deserve to receive.

Ms. Collyer asked about changes in special education and asked for an explanation what is going on.

Ms. Bamforth explained this is an on- going problem in terms of staffing with special education. A request for an increase in paraprofessionals at Bakie is due to the incoming students who are identified with special needs. She explained why the number of paraprofessionals is driven by the number of students who need support. She also explained how the cuts that are made come at a cost.

Sandy Rutherford, Principal at Middle School, explained they need to still require them at the middle school level in order to keep the students academically moving.

Ms. Bamforth said it is important to understand we have to accept all the students who move into the District and they try to find a balance as the numbers change each year.

Ms. Gluck asked Mr. Rutherford about them losing three classroom teachers and gaining two paraprofessionals. She asked if the teachers they are losing are special education teachers.

Mr. Rutherford said the loss of a special education teacher is at the high school. He informed them they are going to maintain the same number we have. He stated two are content area teachers and one is retiring. They won't be filling the retirement position.

Ms. Gannon referred to the Case Manager positions being eliminated. She asked if those are also teachers and, if so, what proportion is dedicated to both. She also asked about Medicaid reimbursement and how that gets folded into the budget since it is received after the fact. Ms. Gannon also questioned catastrophic aid and where does it show up in the budget, and how is it managed.

Ms. Coppola explained Medicaid is received in the current year program. It comes in as revenue. Catastrophic aid is a year behind and comes in as revenue.

Ms. Bamforth explained case managers are also teachers. They can help any student.

Ms. Gannon asked what portion of their time is spent on case management and what portion is spent on teaching.

Ms. Bamforth explained a good deal of time is assigned to writing IEP's. She said it is difficult to answer that question because of the needs of each individual student. She added that there is no down time.

Ms. Gannon commented that the loss of a case manager is also the loss of the ability to teach and intervene.

The duties of paraprofessionals were explained. It was stated that paraprofessionals can help students, but Case Managers determine what work needs to be done and how, and provides materials.

Ms. Collyer questioned enrollment figures at the Middle school. Mr. Rutherford explained they sent additional information which is far more explanatory. He explained why the numbers are so large in PE.

Ms. Collyer asked about them losing three teachers. Mr. Rutherford explained they will have one team in 6th Grade, one team in 7th Grade and two teams in 8th Grade. Mr. Rutherford said they are working on a plan with 90 students in each one of the teams.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked if they are seeing the results of the Math Coordinator. She asked if they are seeing the results with math scores that are measurable because of all these programs, as well as, the Math Coordinator.

Ms. Bamforth stated they are. She also stated there are multiple measures they are looking at to determine student progress which gives them a much more accurate picture of students' progress.

Ms. Gannon referred to the cut of one teacher at Memorial. She said as of 10/1/16, Grade 1 had 35 students with three teachers. They are reducing Grade 3 to two teachers. Grade 2 will remain with two teachers.

Ms. Bamforth discussed enrollment numbers and the number of teachers at Memorial school.

Ms. Gluck asked Memorial School what percentage of their students has an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan). The response was 18%. They have one case manager for six or seven classrooms.

Ms. Gluck recommended that Mr. Swasey spend a day in one of the classrooms so he can experience the space issues they have to deal with.

Ms. Collyer discussed classroom sizes in terms of square footage at Bakie, Memorial and the Middle school and asked if they are similar in size. She was told they are.

Ms. Gannon referred to the recent School Board discussion regarding replacement equipment and how it is determined what equipment needs to be replaced and when. She said they have a 5 year plan to follow. Ms. Gannon wanted to know if the administrators use the 5 year plan as a guideline and determine at the time they are building their budgets, what needs to be replaced and what can be put off for another year.

Ms. Bamforth explained they look at their needs and their needs can change exactly as Ms. Gannon described. For instance, if a carpet doesn't need to be replaced when it says it does according to the 5 year plan and they can be put it off then that is what they do.

Ms. Bamforth informed the Committee other Principals look at what they need and don't automatically buy things just because they are in the budget. They are trying to be aware of making choices of what is essential and what is not necessary. They spend for what they need.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked for clarification on outside evaluations that need to be done by outside sources. She said \$2,500 is budgeted for this.

Dr. Blake explained those types of evaluations are above and beyond what our school psychologist can do. It is beyond their capabilities. He stated there are specific issues that would require more different assessments they are either not capable of doing or are licensed to do.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked about paraprofessionals at the Middle School. She was having difficulty understanding where to find the information she was looking for. Ms. Coppola assisted her in understanding how to read the documents in the budget book.

Ms. Gannon referred to the BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). She questioned wouldn't it make more sense for one person to go to each of the schools and, if someone could be found, would they pursue it.

Ms. Bamforth responded that it would definitely make sense and they would pursue it. She said it would make sense to have a BCBA on staff but the problem is you can't find someone who is willing to work on a contracted salary. They make more money as a consultant.

Ms. Gluck mentioned there were questioning from the Committee members at their last meeting as to what happened to the extra \$290,000 difference between what was budgeted and the actual. She thought this might be a good time to bring it up.

Ms. Coppola informed the Committee she uploaded the explanation on 11/22 for them.

There was no further review of the proposed budget for the Elementary and Middle Schools. Ms. Collyer thanked the administrators for attending. The administrators left the meeting at this point.

Ms. Collyer said we are going to go through Budget Committee requests for FY 17-18, #3. She asked the Committee if they are happy with the answers or if follow up is needed, or do they need more time to look them over.

Mr. Swasey stated the Math Coordinator question still hasn't been answered. He said what they got was just a narrative. He wants the documents. He read their original question.

Ms. Gluck wanted to know what documents he is looking for. She asked what kind of study he wants.

Mr. Swasey said if they don't have a study they should just say so. He wants to know one way or another if there is a study done or if they have documents. If there aren't any, then he wants to know.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh said it was mentioned that more kids need accelerated math so there must be documentation showing this.

Ms. Gannon thinks the question is too vague and they need to ask for the assessment on grades and narrow down what is wanted.

Mr. Swasey said if he knew what they have, he could ask for it. He wants whatever they have.

Ms. Gluck suggested a cohort of seven years from elementary up to 8th Grade.

Mr. Kozec said it would be helpful if they could have the questions that have been answered and the questions that are still outstanding.

Ms. Collyer said there are two questions 'in progress'.

Mr. Swasey is not happy with the math coordinator question.

Ms. Collyer suggests everyone look at the questions and get any follow up questions to her by Sunday night because she wants to give the administrators as much time as possible to get the answers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Baker of Newton addressed the Committee. He referenced the question by Mr. Rogers-Osterloh regarding raises for administration. He asked if raises are typically based upon individual assessments or if they are a class of raises regardless of performance.

Jan Bennett of Newton said that is two different classes of employees. Administrative raises are in the collective bargaining unit.

Corey Masson addressed the Committee. He referenced comments made by Committee members at an earlier meeting where it was stated they did not receive the line item budget they were promised. Mr. Masson did not agree with that and read a description of what a line item budget is. They have provided the budget to them in three different ways. He was confused as to how that comment could have been stated. Mr. Masson added that when comments such as this are done in public, it becomes reality. He informed them they have a district report card and they have a document that oversees all the assessments.

BUDGET COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Ms. Gluck thanked Corey Masson for his explanation. She said we need to try a spirit of cooperation. Administration is trying to give us everything we want and in a timely manner. She suggested maybe we need to be more specific on our questions if the answers are not what we want.

Ms. Collyer stated she sees a basis for a math coordinator based on what she has read. She likes the idea of tracking student performance through the system and thinks it would be helpful to have it for the Deliberative Session.

Ms. Gluck commented that is not the role of the Budget Committee. Ms. Collyer stated that everything comes down to money.

Mr. Swasey referred to the proposed 3% pay raise for the administration. He said last year they received 2.5%, this year they are asking for 3%, and probably next year another 3%. He said that is almost a 10% increase over three years. That is not how you run a business. He said the Town of Kingston, over the last ten years, had an increase in salaries of just \$112 per week. He

stated there is no balance against what people can afford and want. Taxpayers deserve something to, not just employees. He said 'needs' are very subjective as opposed to what is required.

Mr. Swasey said he knows what a line item budget looks like and referred to previous line item budgets and that is what they were until they went to the new format. The line item budgets use to be a very thick document as opposed to what they now receive. He said we did not get what we were promised.

Ms. Gannon likes reviewing specific portions of the budget at a time. She feels it is more manageable and helpful having the administrators here to answer questions on the budgets they have built. She reminded the Committee in regards to the proposed salary increases, the Budget Committee recommends a bottom line but the School Board makes the decisions where the money is spent. She wants them to keep that in mind. Ms. Gannon referred to the Public Forum recently held and mentioned there were some members of the public who complained about the budget, yet had no questions. She stated the Budget Committee has been provided with more information this year than they have had in the past ten years. She stated going through the proposed budget is what we need to focus on and on understand what is being proposed.

Ms. Collyer mentioned she would like to be notified via email when information is uploaded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh made a motion to approve the November 9, 2016 minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Swasey. VOTE: 6-0 motion passes

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh made a motion to approve the November 17, 2016 minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Swasey. VOTE: 6-0 motion passes

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Swasey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Rogers-Osterloh. VOTE: 6-0 motion passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Minutes submitted by,
Linda Mahoney