

Hopkinton Budget Committee
Final Minutes
January 10, 2007

Present: Karen Irwin, Chair, Jane Bradstreet, Patrice Gerseny, Barbara Unger, Danny Coen, David Lancaster, Bob Carpenter - PlaceNameContoocook PlaceTypeVillage Precinct Representative, Tom O'Donnell - PlaceNameplaceHopkinton PlaceTypeVillage Precinct Representative, Marshall Rowe - School Board Representative, Peter Russell - Selectmen Representative

Chair Irwin opened the meeting at 6:35 pm with a review of the minutes of the meeting 01-04-07 Peter Russell moved to accept, seconded by Jane Bradstreet. Clarifications to the minutes were discussed. All were in favor of the amended minutes, the minutes were accepted.

School Presentation

Marshall Rowe, School Board Representative, began the School Budget presentation with recognition of those SAU members, leadership team and the school board for their individual and combined efforts. The goal is to have the Budget Committee understand that the budget is responsible to the students and the taxpayers. Mr. Rowe encouraged committee member questions during the budget presentation. Other members of the schools offering explanations and/or clarifications were: Superintendent Brian Blake; Business Administrator Michelle Clark; Director of Technology Cynthia Dobe; School Board Members – Larry Donahue, Kim Fuller, Arpiar Saunders; Harold Martin Principal William Carrozza; Maple Street Principal Michael Bessette, Hopkinton Middle/High School Steve Chamberlain.

The first of five handouts, the Executive Summary of the Hopkinton School District Proposed 2007-2008 Budget was a list of 23 items that made up the budget. Mr. Rowe gave an overview of each of the lines and cross referenced the booklet given at the last meeting for further explanations. The Budget being presented this evening with Articles is \$15,818,942 up from \$14,622,548, a \$1,196,394 increase and without articles is \$15,278,585 up from \$14,416,598, an \$816,987 increase.

The second handout concerned the Expenses in the Operating Budget condensed under 28 major headings. Attached to the expense listing was a list of the Revenue from local sources, state sources and federal sources. Mr. Rowe gave an overview of each line and cross-referenced the booklet as questions were asked. Committee members asked questions concerning contracted employees, salary increases/decreases, additional personnel hours, transportation costs, Special Ed increases, hot lunch fees will now cover costs, and out of district tuition costs

The third handout was a Budget Analysis of the Total Budget comparing 07-08, proposed budget with articles, to the 06-07 budget with each variance/increase for a total of an 8.18% increase. A separate section identified the mandated amounts [contract/otherwise] totaling \$10,402,264.48. The non-mandated section of the budget totals \$4,889,677.63. The Budget Committee asked for a 3.8% budget increase. The budget with articles presented exceeds the target by \$640,737. Mr. Rowe gave an overview of each line and cross-referenced the booklet as questions were asked.

- Budget Committee Member David Lancaster stated he would like to see the wording in the note section after each Warrant Article changed from the 'School Board Recommends' to 'Budget Committee Recommends'. Mr. Rowe advised DRA – Dept of Revenue Administration gives examples and mandates the wording of Warrant Articles.

- Budget Committee Member Danny Coen asked what would happen if the increase in retirement was not paid. A general consensus was the district would get PersonNamesued.

- Mr. Lancaster asked for a Budget breakout similar to the 'Big Book' received from the Selectmen. Business Administrator Michelle Clark responded by saying it would not be an easy task.

- Mr. Coen stated the voting body does not have to approve funding of the teacher contract beyond June 30th. He read from the contract and the PlaceNameplaceLocal PlaceNameGovernment PlaceTypeCenter book. School Board Member Arpiar Saunders responded by saying the town has obligations.

The fourth handout concerned school facilities. The School Board is asking for in Warrant Article #2 for \$527,000 to replace the HVAC, 40 replacement windows and to build an additional parking lot for 30 vehicles all at HMS. For the High School – security system and a used 2 classroom modular unit. \$100,000 from the Expendable Trust Funds would be transferred and leaving the amount to be raised locally to \$427,000. Mr. Rowe gave an overview of each line and cross-referenced the booklet as questions were asked.

- HMS – HVAC system needs to be upgraded with the installment of new windows for better air circulation. The parking lot – Mr. Russell stated the parking lot hasn't been changed since the original building. Chair Irwin offered maybe a different route be established like at Maple St. Mr. Lancaster suggested a Police Officer be assigned at drop-off and pick-up times. HMS Principal Carrozza stated there are currently around 57 parking spaces and 55 staff and classroom volunteers on any given day, the 30 extra spaces would be further from the building and would be filled by the staff leaving closer spaces for pick-up and drop-off

- HMHS – The Security System is a camera for parking lot surveillance and a card reader at the exterior doors and the 2 classroom modular unit.

The final handout is the proposed Warrant Article V for Repair and Maintenance of the three school buildings. The entire amount of \$55,950 would be transferred from the Expendable Trust Funds, leaving no amount to be locally raised. Included in this handout was a listing of each school, the item[s] needed, the cost and the rationale for the request. Mr. Rowe gave an overview of each line and cross-referenced the booklet as questions were asked.

Mr. Rowe reminded all of the School Bond hearing on January 16th. Business Administrator Michelle Clark took the committee through the process of refinancing a bond saying the whole process takes about a month.

Public Comments/Questions

Scott Flood – Where would the 20 spaces be located?

Principal Carrozza – The woods to the right would be cleared.

Superintendent Blake - There is no school resource officer and would be left to the officer on duty.

Scott Flood – Where does the \$350,000 returned by the schools go?

SB Member Rowe – They are built in funds to accommodate expenses, if they are not needed they are returned.

Selectmen Russell & Mr. Rowe – It is returned to the town and applied to reduce the next school budget.

Business Admin. placeClark gave examples of what is included, such as monies to reimburse for continuing education classes by school staff that went unused.

Scott Flood – What is the increase in vocation education?

HMHS Principal Chamberlain explained the contract that placeCityConcord has with Hopkinton and 8 other communities. The school feels it is beneficial and promotes the program. The original 06-07 budget was for 10 currently there are 18 students in the program with 2 complete bus runs, one is contracted due to a conflict with Kindergarten drop-off and pick-up.

Scott Flood – Could the SAU provide a detail breakout of the budget?

Business Admin. placeClark advised the mandated and non-mandated budget items could not be separated. The state requires information in the current format which does not separate them.

Scott Flood – Can't you add more detail than the state requires?

Business Admin. placeClark stated the Budget committee has the line items and if they want a break out from there she can do it individually.

Scott Flood - Quoted from State statute on budget recommendation in Warrant Articles.

SB Member Rowe directed him to go to the DRA website, the town warrants are phrased differently than the school warrants.

Selectman Russell – The language from DRA is for the dollar amount not the notation on who recommends.

BC Member Bradstreet asked Chair Irwin to check with legal.

Richard ‘Stretch’ Kennedy commented on the retirement fund increase and suggested mismanagement of funds by ING.

Diane LaChance asked about the \$10,000 for security at the high school.

SB Member Rowe responded that it will help improve on security. The card reader will be used when the doors are locked during the day. The office will be notified when a visitor wants to come in.

SB Member Donahue – The security is basically for the midday.

Merrill Dustin expressed concern over the need for the 30 additional parking spaces.

Superintendent Blake said the location was based on the area available.

SB Member Donahue reiterated that it was needed to relieve the daily congestion – worse at the end of the school day.

Diane LaChance asked if there were plans to have parents fund extras, like the AP classes that are above the ‘basic’.

School Board members agreed there really is no real definition. The federal government calls it ‘Appropriate Education’, the state calls it ‘Adequate Education’. Some classes considered at one time above basic have since become standard.

Chair Irwin closed the public comment portion. BC Members were handed printouts from Building & Grounds and a 2007 Estimate Tax Rate for their review for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Clark
Secretary

attachments