

**TOWN OF HOPKINTON**  
**Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 18, 2017**  
**\*APPROVED\***

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Janet Krzyzaniak called the Hopkinton Budget Committee Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., at the Town Hall, welcoming all those in attendance.

**ATTENDEES**

Janet Krzyzaniak, Don Houston, Ken Traum, Richard Houston, Deborah Norris, Amy Bogart, Ginni Haines, John Wuellenweber, Mark Zankel, and Bill Chapin, Jr.

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

Steve Chamberlin, Superintendent; Michelle Clark, Business Administrator; Brenda Ginent, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Matt Cairns, School Board Chair; James Newsom, District Moderator; Caitlin Andrews, Concord Monitor; Arnold Coda, Diana Weiland, Carolyn Koegler-Miller, Mary Kusturin, Aviva Nestler, Steve & Deni Yianakopolos, Bill Jones, David Lewine, Melissa Trafton, and Emile Burack.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 11, 2017, DRAFT MINUTES**

Ken Traum motioned to accept the January 11, 2017, draft minutes. Amy Bogart seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**FOLLOW UP TO THE SCHOOL BOARD'S FY18 BUDGET PRESENTATION WITH QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

*Copies of the Hopkinton School District 2017-2018 Budget Information is available upon request. References will be made to areas of that information in these minutes.*

Questions asked last week, by the Budget Committee and the public, *answered by Steve Chamberlin.*

Asbestos clarification: Pages 29 and 30 include the explanation of the cost of the asbestos contract. There are no number modifications, just clearer language. This replaces the page in the information package.

Unreserved Fund Balance: An information sheet was presented that shows four different ways funds can be put aside in different options. In the Article X/Tax Rate Stabilization Funds, they can put up to 2½% of parts of the budget. This year they are forecasting \$200,000, out of that fund, as revenue this year. They're forecasting taking \$75,000 out of the Health Care Trust Fund to help offset that cost. Encumbrances and Committed Funds were explained.

Negotiations: Typically contracts are worked through with exchange bargaining. This time they used the problem solving/collaborative bargaining approach to look at the health insurance issue. Potential Financial Terms with the 3-year contract was provided.

Insurance: Information was provided, showing the breakdown of the upcoming health plans and their costs. Cost to the district, for health insurance is \$8,265.32/single; \$16,530.52/2 person; \$22,466/family (that includes the premium and the deductible). The new health plan got a 94% approval rate from teachers. Current health care information was also shared for comparison, showing that the employee pays 2% and the district pays 98%. Claims are the main driver to the cost of health care. There are over 400 people in this insurance program including town and school employees and their families, and retirees (who pay their own costs).

Cost per pupil: The cost per pupil is less tuition and transportation costs to get the core cost per pupil. The Hopkinton taxpayers pay for education in 2 ways, through local tax and the state-wide property tax. The District also gets adequacy and IDEA funds.

Private School Attendees Numbers: Grade 6, 2; Grade 7/8, 10; Grades 9-12, 22. The net number of students in the schools are still increasing.

Special/Complex Need Students: We have 19% totally identified special/complex needs students with IEPs, there are more with 504 plans. This is higher than the state average. The final decision on which students are identified is through a team approach including a local education agent (principal or director of student services), a teacher, and a parent. It is very much regulated by IDEA. On page 19, the increase in professional services due to increased need for tutoring 504 students is for providing an education to the student(s) who may not be able to attend school during a hospitalization but still needs to have schooling available to them through tutoring. This is legally required.

Part-time Curriculum Director: Two years ago, a \$6,000 stipend was set aside to hire a consultant to lead us through the development of our English Language Arts Curriculum. They chose ELA because writing and reading is used in all learning areas. That team had a Library/Media Specialist, a World Language teacher, and a Social Studies teacher. They developed a train-the-trainer model and hired a former superintendent who was a Curriculum Director/Assistant Superintendent at 3 districts, to come in and work with the team for 15 months, and develop an ELA visible curriculum. The entire faculty got involved in the ELA curriculum because if it was going to work, everybody needed to be teaching it. This year, all their professional development time was spent developing curriculum. Their contracted service trained other teachers lead teams (World Language 7-12 Development Team, Social Studies K-12 Development Team, Science K-12 Development Team) using the \$6,000 stipend and they have other grant money that pays the developers to work outside of their contract time.

Full-time Curriculum Director: A full-time curriculum director would focus on development, implementation, and accountability. One of the areas that needs to be developed is raising the level of teaching to go beyond facts to depth of knowledge. The curriculum director helps to make sure the curriculum is written that way, helps teachers teach that way, and makes sure they are teaching the curriculum. If the teachers are involved in producing it, they'll want to be involved in teaching it. With a full-time Curriculum Director, the vision is to have 4-5 curriculum development teams, they would work on agendas, and put together a timetable for delivery of those curriculums over the next 12 months. They would pull all resources, they would pull curriculum from other schools, other states, and other organizations. The Director would oversee all the aspects of bringing it all together.

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Spreadsheet – clarification of some of the numbers: *(Michelle Clark explains)*

Line 2212 - the 848% increase is for the Director of Curriculum

Line 2222 - \$43,375 is for books, software, access to websites (for all 3 schools)

Line 2225 - \$70,000 is for contracted services for software programs, usage fees for those programs

\$31,350 is mainly for toner used across the District

\$98,375 is for computers, laptops, and redoing the Room 501 Lab (just under \$30,000)

\$11,975 is for dues and fees or access

Line 2610 - up 8% - is for staff, facilities expenses, property liability insurance, fuel, and electric costs  
(further details are on page 31 of the information package)

Line 2620 - \$193,133 is for the property repair & maintenance

\$315,360 is for heating fuel (average of 15,000-gallons propane, 34-40,000-gallons heating oil), and automated programs that are used for cost savings in fuel consumption

Line 2630 - \$13,900 is for removing the speed bump and repaving at Maple Street

Line 2722 - \$174,649 is for transportation of special education in and out of district and outsourcing

Line 2723 - \$30,181 is for vocational school busing (they share buses and costs with Kearsarge)

Line 2725 - \$9,230 is for field trips

Line 2840 – up 9% - is due to the change in benefit selection

Deferred Maintenance Expenses: The study committee provided numbers reflecting the need for \$8 Million, next year, to address safety and ADA issues that have been postponed for a long time. This will add another large amount on the tax dollar next year. Mr. Chamberlin said that the Board, last night, started the first steps to look at a performance contract for deferred maintenance. They're looking at an approach that maybe the deferred maintenance can be put into a performance contract and fund that through budget expenses and savings to energy savings. Then use the bond for the facility work; the access, the safety and security issues. Maybe the bond would be close to the \$400K and the performance contract is close to the budget. An analysis is being done to see if there would be cost savings. A conference call is set up with Harriman to get the information needed, so that they can move forward in their planning.

Football Program: *The Yianakopolas' were present to answer questions about costs.*

The town is discussing modifications to the field at Maple Street. Next seasons, the 5 home games are all set with fields. They are looking for all options for a field in Hopkinton. There are more Hopkinton players than Hillsboro. They are looking for 50% of the coach's stipend, 50% of the transportation, and 50% of the referee fees; the total expense is \$23,000. Volunteers do field preparation. There is no expense to the town. The budgeted amount for football is \$7,000. Don Houston did research on a full-fledged football field done right and the cost is upwards of \$500,000 (including drainage, construction, irrigation, etc.), just for the field – not including property. Mr. Yianakopolas said this is not what they're looking for. They'll work with what they have, they don't need a \$500,000 field. Volunteers and donations came together to make the games great. Fundraising will continue to be a big part of their program. They have a scholarship program so that anyone who wants to play will play and anything they need to get onto the field gets taken care of. They're looking for football to be treated as fairly as any other sport in town. The support from the community has been outstanding, from donations, volunteers, and participations at the games. Two players from the team have been

recognized by the state, as All-State players. One player is going to the CHAD All-Star game to represent this team in June; Red Hawks are now on the map. Mr. Cairns said that the player going to the CHAD game was Henry Yianakopolas and he thanked the Yianakopolas' for their dedication and support of the football program and thanked Henry for his wonderful service as a member of the School Board as a student representative.

Who chooses what sports come and go in town? There is no equal spread of costs across the sports in the schools, some sports get everything paid for and others must pay. Every sports player should receive the same benefit because sports are a part of education and development. Shouldn't sports that are viable, beneficial, and desired be available to students? Ski jumping and cheerleading have been cut from the program in the past couple of budgets.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE**

*There was concern, voiced by public attendees, regarding questions versus comments and where the appropriate place was to pose questions versus comments.*

Mary Kusturin commented that the numbers presented in the School Budget proposal didn't make sense to her. She said she did some quick calculations and she said if we sent every one of our students to private school instead of our public schools, it would save us money. She asked why that is.

Aviva Nestler commented that having a Curriculum Director makes a significant impact on the education in the community mostly because teachers, principals, superintendents have a lot of responsibilities and they only have so much time in their day. This dedicated individual is helping the students and the teachers and they're sharing best practices with everyone involved.

Arnold Coda commented that in 2003 the lacrosse program was defeated by the voters but the School Board overruled the voters and put the program in place. The cost of that program is still in the school budget and is paid for each year. Now the football program is asking for the same recognition across the board for sports. How much and how long will these costs continue to grow at the expense of the taxpayers? He's concerned that people are moving to town who aren't concerned with the taxes but there are taxpayers in town who have a difficult time paying taxes and \$1.02 added to the tax rate will be a real hit to them. He asks the Budget Committee to look at the School Board budget costs and see what is relevant. He said that next year he'd go to School Board Meetings and voice his concern there.

David Lewine commented that he chose to move to Hopkinton from Manchester because of the reputation of the school system. He said that many of his peers moved to Hopkinton and/or purchased property in Hopkinton because of the reputation of the school system. They're now concerned with the academic quality and curriculum/intellectual enrichment of the students. The high school had a great reputation in some areas. He, peers, and other parents of bright students are considering whether Hopkinton is the right alternative because their children say they are bored in the Hopkinton School system, they're not getting enough stimulation in their classes, and they're not being challenged in classes. He believes that to keep people moving in to Hopkinton, because of the school district rating, anything the district spend towards curriculum enrichment would be beneficial.

Melissa Trafton wondered about the spending trend with special education costs (rising two times above regular education costs) was going to be a continuing trend. She asked the Budget Committee to look at that line items locally as well as globally.

Matt Cairns said there was going to be a dedicated School Board meeting that would address special education. A notice will go out regarding that meeting.

Mark Zankel explained that the Budget Committee had asked the School Board to present a look ahead on anything in their budgets that might be perceivable for big items in the future.

Mr. Lewine suggested that legally mandated versus discretionary should be broken down. Carolyn Koegler- Miller said that information was important to know too.

Mrs. Krzyzaniak read the definition of the role of the Budget Committee per RSA32:1, the purpose of the budget committee is "to assist voters in the appropriation of public funds". The Budget Committee is the check and balance for the taxpayers, representing the people. The Budget Committee needs to see the whole picture, with input from each board, from their boards view, why items are needed in the budget before they present it for a vote. A 5-year forecast would be beneficial to see how expenses could be spread out over time, realizing that changes could be made.

What the new families and new taxpayers need to take into consideration is that there are families in town that, not too many years ago, were just like you; they moved here, bought homes, raised their families, got a great education for their children, paid taxes as they were raised higher and higher, helped build the community and school system into what it is. Those families before you built the foundation for families who want to move here, but they are being forced to move out because they can't afford to live in the town they helped build.

Mr. Coda commented that the quality of education is of utmost importance, but cost/tax rate is equally important. He wanted to know why 22 high school students were choosing private school.

Emile Burack thanked the Budget Committee for volunteering their time and effort in making sure that the taxpayers had information they would need to make an informative decision at the town meetings.

Correspondence received from Carolyn Koegler-Miller/Molly Singsen-Richer (present tonight and voiced their view), Arnold Coda, and the Youngman's, were read by Mrs. Krzyzaniak.

Mr. Coda's letter was concerned that select audiences were presented with some of the upcoming budgets, so that those select audiences would pass the word on and support their budget presented.

The Youngman's voiced outrage with the proposed School Budget and the amount of the tax increase. They believe the contracts are too rich, and must be cut back; the health care plan they are proposing does not exist in the lives of most of us who work in the private sector. Employees generally pay some of the premium and all the deductible. No wonder the cost went up 23%. We need to tell the School Board what the budget will be. They need to get back to reality. This budget is way too rich.

### **REVIEW ALL BUDGETS**

Hopkinton Village Precinct meets January 19, 2017, and will have a presentation on 1/25/17.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Don Houston presented documentation for the Budget Committee to consider regarding tax dollars to be raised comparison and Department of Education Statistics.

The team effort for the curriculum is working, why not keep it in the current phase instead of hiring a dedicated position with the expenses involved in a dedicated position. Team approach has worked in our town for a long time.

The amount of paperwork that would be required if a Curriculum Director would come on board. That would mean more time for paperwork versus student time. Teachers who have been here for a long-time value student time. There are teachers within our district that are so valuable, maybe they are a tier 3, and they might be one of the first ones who will be let go. They need to be looked at before bringing in new people. Our high school graduates are getting into great schools, with the education they have been provided with.

The sacrifice the teachers made in their contract negotiations, by taking a future pay cut and a benefit cut, so that the town could see a benefit and to keep the budget reasonable. Their sacrifice is going to be cut in half because of one new position. They made a sacrifice, shouldn't we respect that sacrifice?

It was suggested that the budget presented should be cut in half in anticipation of next year's increase. Having a manageable tax rate is what is important and the current budget is not manageable. On the back of Tier 2 page, at the bottom, it lists where cuts would start being made, if faced with having to make cuts. Discussion continued with wants versus needs, are all the classes offered needed, suggestions on where cuts might be made, and how much the budget should be cut by. People are moving to town for our schools. They don't care about the cost, they want the best education, the best classes there are to offer, for their children.

Don Houston suggested to have the School District cut their proposed increase by 50%. The Budget Committee agreed 6-4 that the proposed increase should be cut by 50%.

### **NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday, January 25, 2017, 5:30 p.m., at the Town Hall, Budget Committee Deliberations.

Wednesday, February 8, 2017, 6:30 p.m., at Hopkinton High School, Public Hearing on all Budgets.

### **ADJOURN**

John Wuellenweber motioned to adjourn at 9:40 pm. Amy Bogart seconded. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tammy Clay

