



Town of Hopkinton

Budget Committee

330 Main Street, Hopkinton NH 03229-2627 - (603) 746-3170 – www.hopkinton-nh.gov

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 9, 2022
Approved 1/11/2023**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Zankel called this meeting of the Hopkinton Budget Committee to order at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, in the large meeting room in the Hopkinton Town Hall. Those gathered recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Budget Committee

Members Present: Mark Zankel, Jonathan Cohen, Rich Houston, Steve Reddy, Debbie Norris, Christa Scura, Ken Traum, Norm Goupil, Don Houston, and Victoria Bram

Member Absent: None

Others Present: Rob Nadeau-HSD School Board, Mike Flynn-HSD Superintendent, and Neal Cass-Town Administrator

Public Present: Loren Clement and Tricia and David Lambert

APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Traum moved to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of November 9, 2022. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

VOTE: Voting in favor: Zankel, Cohen, R. Houston, Reddy, Norris, Traum, Goupil, D. Houston and Bram; no votes against; Abstaining: Scura: Motion passed 9-0-1

TOWN FINANCIALS UPDATE

Mr. Traum updated the Committee on the Town year-to-date expenses. Everything is on track and where it is expected to be. Nothing significant to point out. Ms. Bram pointed out the Emergency Management expenditure reported in the proposed budget didn't match this financial statement. It was determined that there is a typo in the budget in the year-to-date expense for this line.

TOWN 2023 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Traum presented a PowerPoint outlining the Select Board 2023 proposed budget and capital expenditures. He thanked all those involved in the process and then provided the following information:

- Select Board 2023 goals
 - Maintain current level of service
 - Minimize the effects of the current inflation
 - Maintain well-qualified staff
 - Deal with long over-due road maintenance issues.

- All while recognizing that many taxpayers are financially stressed
- The Realities of 2023
 - Heating fuel up 46.88%
 - Gas/Diesel up 86.61%
 - Trash Transport/Disposal up 27.66%
 - Demolition Hauling up 145.45%
 - Houston Barn Bond \$34,720 payment
 - Employee Merit Pool up \$167,648
 - Health Insurance up \$37,739 (4.6%)
 - Transfer Station Lagoon Closure
 - Sewer infrastructure needs
 - Road maintenance needs
- Summary of the Select Board Proposal
 - All-in, a 2023 tax rate increase of \$0.46/1000 – 6.46%
 - A \$1.0 million 20-year bond for the lagoon closing at the Transfer Station (Webster pays 25% of bond payments)
 - A \$2.0 million 10-year bond for road rebuilding of a large portion of Briar Hill Road

Mr. Traum outlined the budget process to date which included the Department Heads, beginning in August, preparing their requests, the Department Heads then meeting with the Town Administrator and then meeting with the Select Board to present their budget and capital expenditure requests. The Select Board also met with the CIP Committee. The Department Heads requests amounted to about a 7.0% increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

The Select Board discussed at length the state of the roads in town. Up until about 7 years ago, when the budget was tight the Select Board would cut the Paving/Shimming line in the budget. Since that time, the Select Board has committed to increasing this line by 5.0% per year, but this year it became clear that this increase was not even keeping up with inflation. During this same period of time, two road bonds were approved at Town Meeting.

Before the latest round of inflation, the Town was about \$9.0 million behind in road maintenance that should be done now. Knowing that the issue is quickly becoming worse, the Select Board is proposing a two-pronged approach for 2023:

1. Increasing the Paving/Shimming line item in the operating budget to \$530,000, a \$140,975 increase over the 2022 budgeted amount. This moves this line item closer to the amount needed on an annual basis to maintain our 60-miles of paved roads. (We also have 40 miles of gravel roads).
2. Proposing a \$2.0 million bond to rebuild part of Briar Hill Road.

The Select Board made just four other changes to the Department head requests as follows:

- Fire- PT Call Wages \$ (5,000)
- Rec – Postage \$ (250)
- Rec – Special Events \$ (3,000)

- EconDev-Community Relations \$ (500)

Mr. Traum gave further details of the Select Board proposal.

- Revenue
 - Estimated Revenue of \$3,767,463
 - Increase of \$69,880 – 1.89%
 - Sewer Fund - \$55,626 Paid by users and CVP
 - Major Drivers
 - Room & Rental \$(136,569)
 - Motor Vehicle Registration \$ 40,000
 - Ambulance Charges \$ 15,000
 - Webster Transfer Station Reimbursement \$ 40,000
 - Transfer Station Commercial \$ (25,000)
 - Recycling Receipts \$ 15,000
 - Checking Account Interest \$ 13,000
 - TIF Revenue (accounting change) \$ 23,683
- Sewer Fund – covers the sewer operating budget and is self-funding with revenues coming from the sewer users, and from reimbursement by the Contoocook Village Precinct for half the cost of the shared Water/Sewer Superintendent. These expenditures have to be included in the overall numbers but they are separated for this presentation for clarity.
 - Next year there is an anticipated request for a \$1 million bond for sludge removal from the facility with come of the costs covered by the users, but not all. These costs have increased dramatically because of the anticipated presence of PFAS.
 - Also, a 100% grant has been received to fund a solar array at the Wastewater Treatment Plant which will supply the power needed for that facility.
- Operating Budget
 - Total Operating Budget of \$9,027,987
 - Increase of \$744,472 – 8.99%
 - Excluding Sewer \$701,695 – 8.68%
 - Major Drivers (>\$20,000)
 - Merit Wage/Benefit Pool \$167,648
 - Paving/Shimming \$140,975
 - Fuel – Gas/Diesel/Heating Oil \$106,620
 - Transfer Station Hauling/Tipping \$ 94,000
 - Debt Service \$ 51,500
 - Health Insurance \$ 38,000
 - DPW Full-time Wages \$ 33,000
 - Legal \$ (45,570)
- Capital Reserve and Maintenance Trust Funds
 - Total CRF/Maintenance Funds of \$851,500
 - Increase of \$119,500 – 16.33%
 - Major Driver

- Town Facilities Maintenance Trust \$ 90,000
 - Not funded in 2022
 - It was noted that inflation took a huge toll this year with estimated costs rising dramatically requiring a reworking of the plan. An example of this is the increase in cost for the 10-yard packer used at the Transfer Station which went up 40% from \$112,000 to \$159,000.
- Fund Balance Use
 - Total use of Fund Balance of \$ 400,000
 - Increase of \$355,000
 - Fund Balance offsets the amount needed to be raised by taxes.
 - The estimated fund balance at the end of 2022 is \$610,000. This is higher than usual due to over \$250,000 in unanticipated one-time revenues from the State.

- 2023 Estimated Tax Rate Impact

- **Amount to be raised by taxes**

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
\$5,593,479	\$5,982,224	\$388,745	6.95%

- **Tax Rate** using estimated 2023 valuation

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
\$7.07	\$7.53	\$ 0.46	6.46%

- Transfer Station Lagoon Closing Bond

- The septage lagoons at the Transfer Station that were used to collect largely home septage, were closed in early 2022. Tests have found the presence of PFAS, dramatically raising the cost of closing the lagoons. The engineers estimate at this time is \$1.0 million to appropriately deal with the contaminated soil. The site is next to the capped landfill so ground water is very well monitored in the area.
- Bond Cost (\$1.0 million)
 - 20-year at interest rate of 5.0% -
 - Hopkinton Total interest costs: \$393,750
 - Year 1 payment (Hopkinton)
 - \$75,000 = .0944 on tax rate - \$300,000 property = \$33.03
 - Year 20 payment (Hopkinton)
 - \$39,375 = .0495 on tax rate - \$300,000 property = \$17.34

- 2023 Road Bond

- Road maintenance has been seriously underfunded for many years. Briar Hill Road needs to be rebuilt at an estimated cost of \$4.5 million and there are other roads that also should be rebuilt. This \$2.0 million bond begins the rebuilding process. The Select Board doesn't believe the town could afford a larger bond at this time.
- Bond Cost (\$2.0 million)
 - 10-year at interest rate of 5.0% -
 - Total interest costs: \$550,000
 - Year 1 payment
 - \$300,000 = .3786 on tax rate - \$300,000 property = \$132.52

- Year 10 payment
\$210,000 = .2650 on tax rate - \$300,000 property = \$ 92.77

Mr. Traum concluded his presentation and offered to answer any questions.

Questions and discussion concerning the Transfer Station lagoons took place. The \$1.0 million estimate is the engineers “best guess” at this point but this is still a work in progress. There are five separate areas in close proximity to each other where sludge was dumped. The five were used on a rotating basis. The sludge, which is mixed with dirt, either needs to be contained on site in a lined landfill, or trucked away to Canada, the only place taking materials containing PFAS. A better timeline for a plan should be available over the next couple of months. The Town is working with NH DES to clean up the site. If the Town doesn’t move forward at this time with cleanup, DES could order it cleaned up and could impose fines. There is agreement at this point that the sooner the cleanup is done, the better. The sludge that was deposited in the lagoons is from Hopkinton and largely residential, although some businesses sludge was also put there. It has been a licensed facility to accept this sludge for well over 40 years. Almost all waste streams now contain PFAS, but this was not tested for, until recently. Hopkinton now has an agreement with Allenstown to accept sludge and many companies use the Concord facility for dumping. The Sludge Removal Capital Reserve Fund is specifically for the sludge removal at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and cannot be used for this lagoon cleanup, but the possibility of being able to land fill the sludge from the Wastewater Treatment Plant at the lagoons at the Transfer Station is being reviewed. Webster is responsible for 25% of the cost of the lagoon cleanup.

The Budget Committee then turned to a discussion on the proposed road bond. The estimate of the cost of “catching” road maintenance up was \$9.0 million before the recent inflation. It is estimated that the number is now double that, even after completing the culverts on Briar Hill Road, Stickney Hill Road, and Kearsarge Avenue. The cost to rebuild a mile of Briar Hill Road is \$1.3 million and the road is three miles long. Paved roads need to be treated about every 10 years so with 60 miles of paved road, 6 miles should be done each year. Not all roads need to be rebuilt with some just needing a pavement topcoat or a chip seal. Once a road is rebuilt, it will only need maintenance in the future. To maintain 6 miles of paved road per year, \$800,000 to a million dollars is needed so we are still falling behind even with the large increase in the Paving/Shimming line item to \$530,000. The option of returning some paved roads to gravel was discussed, but on roads that have a significant amount of traffic the cost of maintaining the road is high.

There does not seem to be federal funds going into municipal roads. The funds are largely going into the interstate. There was discussion on the funding from the State of New Hampshire that no longer comes to the town and a discussion of the advocacy taking place to try to improve this.

The \$350,000 grant for a solar array at the Wastewater Treatment Plant was explained. The Town will own the ground-mounted system and the power will be used at the plant. Options for expanding the system for use at other town facilities are being reviewed, but the grant only covers the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Traum provided an update on the solar array at the Transfer Station. In this case the land is being leased and the solar company will own the arrays. The company has extended its option for another year, is working on their interconnection agreement, and is preparing to present to the Site

Evaluation Committee (SEC). The Town is still expecting to receive around \$150,000 in revenue per year when the array is operational.

Ms. Bram asked if further information would be available to the residents concerning the PFAS at the Transfer Station. It is expected that much more information will be available prior to the bond hearing and prior to Town Meeting.

Mr. Zankel asked how the Select Board determined that the merit pool would be 6.5%. Mr. Traum said they attempted to balance the rate of inflation, the need to keep employees, and the affordability for the taxpayers.

TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATION PUBLIC COMMENT

Bonnie Christie said she had comments mostly to do with the PFAS situation at the Transfer Station. She said the PFAS situation is not being dealt with. She knows the budget process is huge and the PFAS at the lagoons is a “bear”. She then made the following comments:

- She hopes the replacement of the furnaces at the Town Hall will include looking at non-fossil fuel options. Mr. Traum said that other options will be reviewed.
- She shared her concern about the lagoons at the Transfer Station which will cost at least \$1.0 million to clean up. She continued that she wants waste taken more seriously and wants a full-time “professional” hired at the Transfer Station to oversee the operation there. She continued that she believes the Town was not following its permit because sludge from businesses was being deposited.
- She said that there is trash on the banking by the hopper that is there because of the design of the design of the center and because of plowing. She suggested a fence to prevent this from happening.

Mr. Zankel requested that she keep her comments focused on Budget Committee items.

- Ms. Christie continued that she is outlining the reason the Budget Committee should be funding the Transfer Station more effectively.
- She said that hauling and tipping fees are going up \$94,000. A plan should be in place for source reduction which would provide immediate savings.
- She then commented that this is probably a Select Board issue, but there are currently no Webster members on the Hopkinton/Webster Refuse Disposal Committee. She said the this is the committee that sets up the management and budget for the Transfer Station. Mr. Traum clarified that this committee makes recommendations to the Select Boards.

Mr. R. Houston commented that he shares concern about PFAS but the regulations are new, and it was only recently that there have been tests available to test for PFAS. He noted that the sludge now goes to Concord or Allenstown and is treated, but the PFAS isn’t removed and goes through the system and into a river. The previous system kept all PFAS on site.

Ms. Christie said the DES has never seen anything like this and that is why they shut the lagoons down. Mr. Cass clarified that other towns do or have used the same system. Also, the Town made the decision to close the lagoons, it was not ordered by DES.

HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Goupil updated the Budget Committee on the October financials by sharing the memo from Business Administrator Michelle Clark stating the following:

- General Fund
 - Revenue is coming in as anticipated at this time
 - There is an additional payroll run this year compared to last year.
 - Grant information from the State has not been received to allocate staff that are covered under grants. It is hoped this information will be available before the next report.
 - It still appears that there is under \$100,000 as undesignated fund balance to reduce taxes for 2023.
- Food Service related
 - Sales continue to be a challenge with only free/reduced qualified families eligible for some assistance. The year ended with \$86,641.50 in fund balance and there is \$75,000 in the general fund budget to help offset the deficit.

Progress is continuing to be made toward reducing the end of year surplus. Also, it is anticipated that there will be a \$150,000 foodservice deficit. Half this amount has been budgeted for in the current budget and the full amount will be accounted for in the next budget. Mr. Flynn clarified that over the last couple of years the federal government has paid for breakfast and lunch for all students and this year, only those qualified students receive free or reduced lunches. Beyond that, regular purchases by students are below estimate causing the deficit to be larger than anticipated. The School District will evaluate how inflation is affecting the deficit.

Mr. Goupil reported on two grants that have been received by the School District:

- \$3,500 from SEEDS to do energy audits on all three schools.
- \$105,000 from the State for safety and security enhancements. Mr. Flynn noted that every school district in the state applied and it was a competitive grant. The District received 80% of what it requested.

Mr. Goupil reported that when the tax rate was set, it came in \$0.16 less than estimated.

Mr. Goupil provided answers to questions previously asked by the Budget Committee.

- The information on how close the District is to having all new roofs will be provided in January.
- The balance of the bond being spent on capital items does lower the future tax impact because those items will not to be done in the future.

Mr. Zankel explained his previous questions about alternative models to providing education by stating that a couple of years ago the school budget was voted down twice, taxpayers were stressed, and we are a property valuation challenged town with a single town school district. He asked if there are alternative ways to deliver high quality education to meet the on-going challenge.

Mr. Flynn said the District is currently working to address this and during his time here has identified areas of concern. One of the goals is level staffing. Class offerings are currently being reviewed and the question as to whether the high school is a “Community College” or public high

school is being asked. Mr. Nadeau gave an example that some Advanced Placement courses may only be offered every other year so that all students can still take them, but they wouldn't be available every year. Mr. Flynn added that students registered for classes where few students are registered may have to take those classes through Virtual Learning Academy (VLACS).

Mr. Flynn provided an update on the Hopkinton School District budget process. He noted that they are a meeting behind this year compared to last year, so he won't have an estimated 2023 tax rate until January. Since the last Budget Committee meeting, the School Board has requested that \$380,000 be removed from the budget.

The budgeting philosophy has included focusing on improved operations by looking at the structure and organization of the District and by emphasizing accountability. A priority is to reduce the end of year surplus. Budgeting goals for 2023-2024 are:

- Strive for level funding on non-fixed costs
- Continue to move away from a large fund balance
- Establish long-term planning
- Maintain tax rate stability
- Bottom line budgeting/Zero-based budgeting

The key budget drivers are:

- Contractual Increases
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Inflation
- Special Education – Required by law

The projected enrollment for 2023-2024 is 950. Enrollment has gone up in Hopkinton while it has decreased in most other districts in New Hampshire. The enrollment breaks down as:

- Harold Martin School – projected 287 – no change
- Maple Street School – projected 218 – up 1
- Hopkinton Middle/High School – Projected 445 – up 7

Mr. Flynn continued by providing details to the key drivers.

- HEA/HESS Budget Changes – Teachers are now paying a portion of their benefit costs
 - HESS salary up \$103,855 and benefits up \$219,954
 - HEA salary up \$433,298 and benefits up \$384,807
- Utility Budget Changes – No added usage, just increased costs
 - Oil \$33,624
 - Electric \$58,324
 - Propane \$46,941
 - Current: \$304,848 Proposed: \$447,081 Change: \$142,233
- Transportation – There currently is a bus driver shortage causing an issue with providing transportation to winter athletic events. – There is a drop in ridership to school, so a route is being eliminated adding 7-10 minutes to some bus rides. The services covered in this budget include athletics, field trips, regular education, and the CRTTC.
 - Fuel \$40,700

- Services \$103,092
- Eliminate bus route \$(76,431)
- Current: \$665,330 Proposed: \$747,814 Change: \$82,484
- Special Education Budget Changes – This budget can change overnight.
 - Private School Tuition \$190,043
 - Contracted Services \$39,570
 - Transportation \$(114,012)
 - Current: \$1,025,914 Proposed: \$1,023,865 Change: \$2,049
- Facilities Budget Changes without Utilities
 - Major Increases
 - Annual Evaluation – previously not budget but paid out of fund balance
 - Supplies
 - Repair and maintenance
 - Current: \$411,497 Proposed: \$479,687 Change: \$68,190
- Technology Budget Changes
 - Classroom projectors \$15,000 – these were put on hold in 2020 due to the pandemic
 - ParentSquare \$6,000
 - Current: \$268,770 Proposed: \$286,590 Change: \$17,820
- Harold Martin School – line items were reviewed very closely by the new principal
 - Major increase is supplies
 - Current: \$101,585 Proposed: \$104,111 Change: \$2,525
- Maple Street School
 - Major increase is IXL - \$4,000 – Originally funded by the foundation, then ESSR, and now moved into the budget
 - Current: \$59,717 Proposed: \$64,854 Change: \$5,147
- Hopkinton Middle High School
 - Tuition to CRTC \$13,000
 - Adventure Education Equipment \$1,500
 - Graduation \$4,100 - previously paid by the graduates
 - Math Program HMHS \$5,200 – share of the 1-8 math curriculum
 - Kiln \$2,730
 - Current: \$290,896 Proposed: \$325,703 Change: \$34,807
- Athletics – this is the first time this has been broken out separately
 - Officials Fees \$4,000 – increase in mileage rate
 - Current: \$112,180 Proposed: \$118,800 Change: \$6,620
- SAU Budget Changes
 - Food Service \$75,000 – budgeting to cover full deficit
 - Printing contract – copiers and printers are on a 5 year contract. \$6,500 in savings to date
 - Current: \$872,632 Proposed: \$981,881 Change: \$109,249
- Staffing Budget Changes
 - HMHS Psychologist \$32,810 – going from 1 ½ to 2 fulltime – additional duties have been added also.
 - MSS Teacher \$44,000 (General vs. ESSR) brings each grade K-8 to 4 teachers
 - MSS Wellness \$8,000 (General vs ESSR) student health, fitness, and support
 - HMS Math Specialist \$27,000 (General vs ESSR)

- Overall Budget Proposal
 - \$24,852,680
 - Current: \$23,069,768 Proposed: \$24,852,680 Change: \$1,782,912
 - This has been reduced by \$389,000 since the last Budget Committee meeting.

Mr. Flynn added details to the savings from retirements. The following chart includes teachers and administrators that left after the 2021-2022 school year compared to the replacement in 2022-2023.

Building	Prior Salary *	Prior FICA	Prior Retirement	New Salary	New FICA	New Retirement	Savings
HMHS	\$81,492.57	\$6,234.18	\$17,129.74	\$51,436.00	\$3,934.85	\$10,811.85	\$38,673.79
HMHS	\$100,000.00	\$7,650.00	\$21,020.00	\$85,000.00	\$6,502.50	\$17,867.00	\$19,300.50
HMS	\$117,000.00	\$8,950.50	\$24,593.40	\$100,000.00	\$7,650.00	\$21,020.00	\$21,873.90
MSS	\$102,000.00	\$7,803.00	\$21,440.40	\$100,000.00	\$7,650.00	\$21,020.00	\$2,573.40
HMHS	\$79,540.44	\$6,084.84	\$16,719.40	\$68,193.00	\$5,216.76	\$14,334.17	\$14,600.75
HMHS	\$82,333.80	\$6,298.54	\$17,306.56	\$77,460.00	\$5,925.69	\$16,282.09	\$6,271.12
HMHS	\$65,023.26	\$4,974.28	\$13,667.89	\$53,581.00	\$4,098.95	\$11,262.73	\$14,722.76
HMHS	\$83,175.31	\$6,362.91	\$17,483.45	\$67,036.00	\$5,128.25	\$14,090.97	\$20,766.45
HMHS	\$53,581.00	\$4,098.95	\$11,262.73	\$44,840.00	\$3,430.26	\$9,425.37	\$11,247.04
MSS	\$78,277.00	\$5,988.19	\$16,453.83	\$49,210.00	\$3,764.57	\$10,343.94	\$37,400.51
HMS	\$79,119.00	\$6,052.60	\$16,630.81	\$79,103.00	\$6,051.38	\$16,627.45	\$20.59
HMHS	\$121,817.84	\$9,395.35	\$16,766.10	\$84,011.00	\$6,426.84	\$15,966.79	<u>\$41,574.66</u>
*Prior Salary in 22/23 budget prior to HEA increase.							\$229,025.47

Last year, due to the large surplus, the School Board offered a second opportunity for early retirement. The School District policy when hiring, is now to target teachers who are early in their profession. A mentoring program has been established and is overseen by the Curriculum Director pairing experienced teachers with less experienced teachers. The 2023-2024 budget reflects a savings of \$123,000 due to these staff changes.

Mr. Reddy said that as a taxpayer this makes him happy, but as a parent he is concerned about losing the teachers that know the families. Mr. Flynn said the goal is to retain the new teachers.

Mr. R. Houston questioned whether teachers at the beginning of their teaching careers cost more for health insurance. Mr. Flynn does not believe so and Mr. Nadeau added that these teachers may help the risk pool numbers.

Ms. Bram noted that about 8-10% of the teachers retired last year but the number is not expected to consistently be this high moving forward.

Mr. Cohen asked if the school voucher program affects the School District. Mr. Flynn said yes, but only 3-7 students currently are using this program so it isn't significant. Because the number is so low, there is not a way to really determine if there are lower costs because of fewer students and how this number compares to the revenue lost because of the program. Mr. Flynn noted that the District's goal is to retain and attract students.

Mr. Flynn noted that the current lawsuit against the State does not deal with how to raise funds, but what the “adequate education” number should be.

Mr. Reddy asked for clarification on the 950 ADM number. This is the average daily attendance at school. If a student is absent, they are not counted in the ADM. There were also questions concerning home schooled students. Mr. Flynn said that no one keeps data on home schooled students. They notify the school when they start home schooling but there is no requirement beyond that. This has been shared as a concern. Also he stated that there is no oversight on what is taught to home schooled students.

Mr. R. Houston asked if enrollment increasing is a good thing. Mr. Flynn responded that the School District is properly staffed and the current staffing level can absorb growth and any “bubbles” in class size without hiring additional staff. He noted that the facility is a different question and that Maple Street School is tight and growth could cause a need to look at adding additional classrooms in that building.

Mr. Goupil said the School Board does not meet again until January and that they will present their recommended budget to the Budget Committee in January. Mr. Flynn said he is always available to answer questions and to meet with members of the Budget Committee.

CONTOOCCOOK VILLAGE PRECINCT FINANCIALS UPDATE

Mr. D. Houston said he had nothing to report.

HOPKINTON VILLAGE PRECINCT FINANCIALS UPDATE

Ms. Bram said she would save her information until she presents their budget at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Trisha Lambert, 305 Galloping Hill Road stated that she home schools her children and was appalled by the discussion of tracking students during the Superintendent’s discussion. She asked that the Budget Committee realize that there are different ways to teach students. Ms. Scura said that she thought what was said by the Superintendent was that home schoolers are not and cannot be tracked.

Loren Clement, 86 Maple Street questioned whether the graphics showing the savings from retirements included the amount that was paid out to the retirees. Mr. Goupil said that each year, three \$30,000 early retirement payouts are included in the budget as required by contract. Last year the extra retirements were paid out of fund balance. Ms. Scura reminded the Committee that the \$30,000 is a one-time payout and the savings can be over multiple years. It was suggested that the Budget Committee be provided with information about these savings over multiple years and that the payout is included.

Mr. D. Houston asked what the goal is for the School Districts surplus at the end of the year. Mr. Goupil said there is no target, they are just trying to reduce the amount.

Ms. Bram said that she is seeing the connective thread through the discussion and the Budget Committee needs to be able to articulate to the community the long-term savings connected to the

hiring practices, and the cost of the new and upgraded administrative positions. There is a well thoughtout plan designed to reduce the risk of the unknowns providing a more steady budget.

OTHER

Mr. Zankel said that he has received the request for the Budget Committee’s annual report for the Town Report. Mr. R. Houston agreed to write the report.

There was discussion of whether to hold the meeting next week or meet next at the meeting scheduled for January 11.

After discussion Mr. Cohen moved to cancel the meeting scheduled for December 14. Mr. Goupil seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Cass
Town Administrator