

February 6th School Budget Meeting

Members present: Jeff Jones (Chair), Leslie Browne (Vice Chair), Jonathan Vanderhoof, Charlie

Post, Caitlyn Maki, Bill Ryan, Adam Lavalley, Jennifer Bernet (arrived at 6:15), Michelle Alley (arrived at 6:10)

Public Present: Lisa Post

Called to order: 6:02p.m.

(Notes by Leslie Browne)

Jeff addressed the question of recording meetings which came up in the Jan 22 meeting. He checked with Peter and consulted counsel to verify that it is legal to record a meeting without notice for minute taking purposes. Charlie asked Bill to apologize, and Bill declined stating that he felt he was still correct. RSA91A was cited as the statute that covers this issue.

Overall behavior at meetings was discussed including language, raising hand to speak and not interrupting other members. Also discussed was following the chain of command when requesting information from the administration. All requests should go through the Chair of the committee. It was agreed that those requests be put in writing to reduce confusion and have a paper trail to refer back to.

(Secretary Michelle Alley entered the meeting and continued writing notes from this point.)

Charlie mentioned that it is hard to do an evaluation without backup information. There is no way to do follow up if we don't have the information. He asked if we could avoid profanity in meetings, mentioning that there are often children present. Adam said that he thinks it's ok to say what he wants, and no one should be stopped from doing so. He added that it was his child that was present. Jeff continued that we should avoid profanity going back and forth with each other. He continued that there should be an understanding that you raise your hands to speak. Charlie said that this happened several times and Adam commented that he broke no rules. Leslie said that there really should be some decorum. Michelle agreed that there should be decorum and that we could work on making these types of rules for the committee.

Jeff moved on to the collective bargaining agreement on Article 5 and 6 and noted that Kristie had provided the increase of salaries requested. Charlie said that there had been a significant increase. Jeff added that we should be preparing the public for an up to 8% increase if all the warrant articles pass.

Adam, Caitlin, Jonathan, and Leslie talked about the unfilled positions. Adam said that if we do not fill the teaching positions, we won't be paying for them as this assumes a full staff. Jonathan also mentioned that this is constant every year. Caitlin said that we shouldn't say if we don't "fill them" you won't pay for them saying we should say simply that this is the budget that we want to spend. They also discussed that we need to be very clear that it doesn't change what percentage.

Jeff then asked what the will of the committee is. He went on to say that we have the article four laid out with tax impacts and asked if we should have this as a speaking point. Adam asked if we usually lay this out in the budget. Caitlin said that people are prepared to follow along with the budget and that you may not need to have a running tally. Jonathan mentioned that this isn't your standard increase. Leslie said that it's because it's a contract year it deserves some more information. Adam asked shouldn't we put it all out.

Jeff asked what the decision of the committee was. Adam asked if we should present them side-by-side from last year. Caitlin said to list the warrant article and everything on the draft warrant should be fair game. Jonathan mentioned the 17% to 25% is a big ask and would rather see it break up over several years. Adam spoke about how 2021 and 2022 saw some of the biggest pay increases from the general working public and that the timing of the last contract did not align the public's increase.

Jonathan said that there should be something to tie their salaries too. Suggesting that academic performance should relate to salaries. Leslie said that we can't be the only school with low paying salaries. Jennifer asked if we are currently doing this now with teachers. Adam said that SAT tests matter, that no one cares about standard tests including the kids and that we should take a wider look at tests. Caitlin said she was concerned for our district and keeping good staff. She mentioned that we have not been a breeding ground for teachers and acknowledged that the longer they teach in our district the more they can help. Even without comparing, she mentioned that our pay is terrible and such a bare minimum to live off. Jonathan mentioned it could be the way we are viewed. He continued to mention that teachers usually start lower, and salaries increase every year. Adam said that we have an advantage in little districts saying that smaller districts like ours do not have to deal with things that others experience in larger districts. He also said that we might be able to attract teachers for a little less because of our small district status but that we aren't even close to other districts' salaries.

Jeff made a motion to vote, and it was seconded by Adam.

Jonathan said he would love to support the contract and continued that looking at the overall picture, he doesn't feel like we are being realistic. He felt sustainability is a concern and that he would love to be able to say *look at our test scores* but felt he couldn't say this about our district yet. Leslie questioned this statement asking why they shouldn't get a raise. Jonathan said they should but not as much as is being voted on. He said that it was just his opinion and felt that kids are suffering in our district and thought that this wasn't going to solve any of the district's problems.

Jeff said that the thing he has trouble with the most is the other warrant articles. He mentioned that he didn't think that paving the parking lot is a good idea right now and that isn't responsible to spend the district's money for this right now. He went on to say that he thought we are asking way too much and need to pick our battles. He also mentioned that we will feel the brunt of this as members of the Budget Committee.

Leslie said the problem the problem had been that when things happen, like repairs, it's not always brought before the school board as it happens. She mentioned that we should not kick the can down the road and that we need to be up front and this is what we must do to keep teachers. Jeff said that he took a tour of the Academy of Science and Design and that our school looks great compared to ASD. But the achievements are off the charts. Caitlin said that

she would rather support this warrant than Article #8 and to put what they need in and not worry about the extra.

VOTE Motion to Recommend our Support.

1. Jeff - Y
2. Jonathan N
3. Jennifer Y
4. Leslie Y
5. Adam Y
6. Bill Y
7. Caitlin Y
8. Michelle Y
9. Charlie N

Passed 7 | 2

PUBLIC HEARING PREP:

Charlie said that slide #4 (District Enrollment Slide) should include a tally and trends. Jeff agreed and said he can put the total in at the bottom and asked for feedback on slide 14 (SAU63 vs Peer Group). Adam said that we've isolated costs when we've gone over it. Jonathan didn't think it applies to the budget we are currently working on and asked if we can calculate our budget percentage for this year. He also asked about the transportation amount. The group continued to talk about aesthetics and repeated slides. Jonathan and Leslie both asked if we can be more transparent about the warrant articles. Leslie said the only warrant we will have next year is for teachers contract article #5. Adam and Leslie both explained that it is a significant amount. Jonathan said that we are talking about points that will be bigger each year. Adam said if you look back it looks like we are taking decrease.

Public Comment

Lisa Post – Lyndeborough

Lisa said that we get more people at public meetings. She would like to see if we can get paper copies because some can't see the screen. People want more information, then less information. She said that the public will challenge you on the information they are receiving so be ready to answer questions. She mentioned Jonathan agreeing that we are not really seeing the increases at the beginning. She said that it's a year where a lot of people are struggling financially and are not sure how this will go over.

Mary Goulding –Wilton

She liked how the committee talked about decorum. She said sometimes it's hard to have respect for board meeting personnel. She continued that what we do is not easy and knows the committee is trying to save money. She felt that there are some long-term teachers who should be paid.

Leslie to recess Jenn 2nd all Yes.

The meeting continued at 7:05 p.m.

Jeff asked if there was anything else we would like to include in the presentation. Jonathan answered that non-budgeted expenses should be included. Charlie said that a lot of things are unspent, and this should be transparent. Jonathan asked what our final budget is and thought we should list all the grants at the end of the slides. He continued to say that they put it at bottom of the budget. If you don't have that you are using that to say that it's not included in the budget. He continued to say that having it on the slides allows us not to have a public meeting about it. He continued to say that there is a loophole which he said was odd. He continued to say the biggest problem would be that the grant money is being used for something with no accountability. He said he wasn't accusing anyone specifically and that he wouldn't want to be the one making the decision on this. Charlie asked if we had the numbers yet. Jonathan mentioned that with this the actual expenses are fungible. Charlie added that an example would be the school health center that was added later.

Meeting Suspended until after the School Board joint meeting.**Recommended meeting 7:46p.m.**

Jeff asked if there were any changes to the slide presentation as he wanted to make sure he was presenting all the thoughts of the committee. Jonathan asked about any known expenses not in the budget. Michelle requested that WLC be bolded to stand out on the SAU63 vs. Peer Group slide. Jeff said that if anyone in the committee is inspired to talk go ahead, but generally we wait until the end for public comment. Adam agreed but mentioned that most years there are interruptions and asked what the best ways would be to stay on track. Leslie said that usually there are comments after every warrant article is introduced (referring to the March 9th meeting). Jeff said that usually expectations are set at the beginning of the meeting and that comments are at the end. Michelle asked how many people come to the public meeting and the answers all were all in agreement that it really varies.

Motion to adjourn Jeff, 2nd Leslie.**End 8:04PM**