

Timberlane Regional School District Budget Committee

Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, and Sandown

Regular Meeting
December 10, 2009
7:00 p.m.

SAU 30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, New Hampshire
03865

1. Call to Order: Mr. Mullen called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Present: Mrs. O'Neil, Ms. Rochford, Mr. Mullen, Mr. Mascola, Mrs. Copp and Mr. Dhaliwal (arrived at 7:40p.m.) Administrators present were Mr. LaSalle and Mr. Stoking. Absent: Mr. Balanoff and Mr. Murray.
3. Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Copp made a motion to accept the minutes of November 24, 2009, with the amendments made. Mrs. O'Neil seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous
4. Correspondence. Mrs. O'Neil reported there were no emails received.
5. Delegations and Individuals: None
6. Reports of Committees:
 - a. Budget Committee Members: Ms. Rochford reported attending the Facilities meeting with Mrs. Copp on Tuesday December 1, 2009. She reported the approved list of facilities projects for 2010-2011 was cut to almost a level budget from the previous year. She also reported that there are deferred maintenance projects in the amount of \$7 million dollars that are not getting done. Mrs. Copp asked if the HS science lab renovation could be moved to a warrant article. Ms. Rochford continued on with her report stating that the Safety meeting following the Facilities meeting went well and mostly reviewed the latest H1N1 information and the new telephone system.
 - b. School Board Representative: Mr. Mascola reported the SAU Board met on December 3rd, 2009 and voted to accept the TTA contract.
7. Unfinished Business:
 - a. Sandown Vacancy: Mrs. Turner was expected at this meeting but she did not attend. Mrs. Copp stated that she talked to her earlier in the day and Mrs. Turner sounded ill.
 - b. Plaistow Vacancy: No new information.
 - c. 2010-2011 Budget: Mr. Stoking distributed the financial Reports of the proposed budget "draft three" which was being presented to the Budget Committee. This version is 1.95% above last year's Budget. Highlights of the changes in excess of \$20,000 was listed on page one for everyone to review. The items that were revised/cut in this version of the proposed budget were listed on the back of page one and were reviewed. The total amount of items cut to reach this level was \$630,712. Next Mr. Stoking presented the Default Budget for 2010-2011 in the amount of \$61,887,555 which is higher than the current proposed budget by \$27,798. The new HS intercom system was kept in the Default Budget because of the serious safety issues with not having a working system. The Sped out of district tuition increases were also included because the District is mandated to educate those children. The time collection system is in the Default Budget because of the fine of \$87,000 imposed by the NH Dept of Labor for timecard recordkeeping issues.

Mrs. Copp asked to review a few of the accounts; specifically the Sped transportation increase seemed excessive. Mr. LaSalle explained that Sped transportation is currently a different company than our regular transportation company and the District is looking into changing companies, next year's contract specifies the budgeted amount. Transporting one sped child can cost up to \$40,000 per year. Some children need a nurse with them at all times and the cost of the nurse is the responsibility of the District.

Mrs. Copp asked if the District was able to find an alternative to the LGC Health Insurance. Mr. LaSalle explained the next contract negotiations will happen simultaneously for both Timberlane and Hampstead and he anticipates having better negotiating power at that time. Additionally he increased the amount of contribution rates for some plans and he has closed adding any new people to the most expensive plan.

Mr. Mullen asked about the costs and enrollment of the evening division. Mr. LaSalle explained that what was formerly known as Adult Ed, crafts and hobbies, is the segment that has very poor attendance this fall but the credit courses continue to be popular and have helped our dropout rate reduce from 8% to 2 % per year.

Mrs. Copp asked what other cuts Mr. LaSalle was anticipating from the proposed budget. Mr. LaSalle stated he is watching the enrollment numbers closely and is anticipating cutting up to four teachers. He has not had the opportunity to discuss with Mrs. Killen, Director of Elementary Education possible cuts in elementary curriculum, elementary libraries and social studies.

Mrs. Copp stated that she would like to reduce the proposed budget down from the 1.95% increase to a 1.25% increase. Mr. LaSalle stated that kind of cut will involve reducing quality and additional staff. The business of education does not involve much stuff. It is people and benefits. The HS lab renovation budget is \$326,000 plus another \$20k in equipment and if a warrant article can be written to include the construction costs as well as the furniture and equipment, this would reduce the proposed budget quite a bit. Mr. Mascola asked why Mrs. Copp wants a 1.25 % increase. Where did that number come from? Mrs. Copp explained she wants to appeal to the perception the taxpayers have and they will round up a 1.95% increase to 2% while at 1.25% they will round down to 1% when they go in to vote. Mrs. Copp stated that if there are enough funds in the Capital Reserve account, then she would never vote for a budget with this project included. Mr. LaSalle explained that he feels that this short term decision can cripple your long term goals. Mr. Dhaliwal stated that the sacrifices made to move the percentage from 1.95 to 1.25 would not make enough of a difference to change the vote for most people. Ms. Rochford stated the HS lab will create two regular academic areas plus a lab which will greatly affect the HS ability to teach the "Lead the Way Program" and other classes. Mrs. O'Neil stated she fears that not funding this project negatively impacts academics.

The Capital Reserve account was discussed and options to fund it other than the standard \$100,000 from surplus, as has been the process for many years. Mr. Mascola stated that the savings in the Capital Reserve account at \$100,000 per year is not really going to make a dent in the projects slated in the strategic plan which will cost in the millions.

Mr. LaSalle handed out and reviewed a summary of the TTA contract that was accepted at the last school board meeting.

Mrs. Copp made a motion to remove the HS lab renovation project for \$326,000. Mr. Mascola seconded the motion to open it for discussion. The motion and second was withdrawn. Mrs. Copp made a motion to recommend to the school board to remove the HS lab renovation and associated costs from the proposed budget and to place it into a warrant article. Mr. Mascola seconded the motion to open it for discussion. Mrs. Copp made a motion to amend her motion currently being discussed to include and "to move the lab renovation and associated costs to a warrant article to be funded by the capital reserve

account". Mr. Mascola seconded the motion on the amendment. Mr. Mascola stated that warrant articles being on the ballot opposite the TTA contract has historically not been done in order to give the TTA contract the best chance to pass. Mr. LaSalle stated that many sacrifices were made to keep the project in the budget and this project does greatly affect the quality of academics and he does not want to make it optional by placing it in a warrant article. This project is the one jewel in the 2010-2011 budget and he does not want to risk having it defeated in a separate warrant article. Vote: One in favor of the motion, four opposed to the motion and one abstain, Mr. Mullen. The motion failed.

Mrs. Copp stated she is very uncomfortable because Mr. LaSalle has been making all the cuts to the budget, not the budget committee. Discussion continued regarding when petitioned warrant articles need to be submitted.

Mr. LaSalle reviewed the meeting and stated that his general sense is that the committee would like him to find additional cuts and this budget is still a work in progress. He will look at the items he discussed earlier and report back to the committee at the next meeting on Tuesday December 22, 2009. Mr. LaSalle excused himself at 8:45 p.m.

8. New Business:

9. Other Business:

10. Future Agenda and Dates:

Budget Committee:

Tuesday, December 22, 2009 SAU Office 7:00 p.m.

Other Meetings:

Thursday December 17, 2009-School Board-SAU Office 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Mascola made a recommendation that each committee member attend their town's selectmen's meeting to let them know of the important dates coming up for the school district.

Mrs. O'Neil made the recommendation that the SAU notify each Town's Selectmen's Secretary so the dates can at least be announced during the Selectmen's meetings.

Mr. Mullen made a motion and was seconded by Mrs. Copp, to adjourn at 9:15 pm.

Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Smith

Recording Secretary

Approved 12/22/2009