

**Approved
Candia Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2011**

Members Present: Lynn Chivers, Todd Allen, Kim Byrd, Judith Szot, Matt Broadhead, Carleton Robie, Selectmen's Representative, Ingrid Byrd, School Representative, and Cheryl Eastman, Secretary. Carla Penfield arrived at 8:20.

Members Absent: Christine Watson

The meeting was called to order at 7:00. Lynn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve minutes of November 9, 2011

Lynn Chivers asked to change the word "added" to "adding" on page 4, under "other", 2nd paragraph, 3rd line. Kim Byrd made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Seconded by Matt Broadhead. All voted in favor. Motion carried. Judith Szot abstained as she was not present at the last meeting.

Answer questions from last meeting

Carleton Robie answered the questions regarding the town budget from the last meeting as follows: The Conservation Commission "Administration" line covers postage, membership fees/dues for Bear Paw, NHACC, LRWA, and the website costs. The proposed increase in this line in 2012 is due to the costs of administering the Conservation Commission website. In the past the website was maintained on a volunteer basis, but now the Conservation Commission will have to pay to have it done.

The Planning Board Special Projects line is to cover the costs for special mailings for the boy scout packet. In 2010, this line was used to buy a projector screen.

The Tax Collector Membership fees line covers Tax Collector Association dues, workshops, conferences, and certifications. This year both the Collector and the Deputy Collector will be certified.

Request from a member of the Board of Selectmen

Carleton Robie reported that Selectmen Joe Duarte had requested that Carleton mention to the Budget Committee that they look at the Welfare stipend. He wanted to know if the Committee had any recommendations regarding the cut by 50%. Lynn Chivers reported that the Committee had looked at the cut and discussed it and no one felt it was a problem. Carleton Robie further stated that he had informed Joe Duarte that the Budget Committee had meetings with any interested department heads and the Welfare Department Head failed to show up. Lynn Chivers commented that the Committee felt the reduction was appropriate and had no problem with it.

Review proposed school budget

Lynn Chivers wanted to go through the budget by sections and come up with any issues that the Committee wants to bring up with the School Board and SAU at the meeting on Monday, November 21. This is not the time the Committee will be going line by line and dissect the budget. She did advise that the proposed budget is about one million more than was spent last year. The 2010-2011 actual was \$7,030,773.54. The 2011-2012 approved budget is \$7,787,086.33. The SAU proposed budget for 2012-2013 is \$7,901,158.24.

On Page 1:

Salaries - There is a \$204,000 proposed increase. This increase is made up of:

- \$168,000 for the retirement incentive for the five teachers that agreed to retire this year
- \$10,400 for two teachers track changes (change in level due to completed courses)
- \$41,550 for another Kindergarten teacher (this does not include benefits)
- \$12,870 for a reading teacher to go from 80% to 100%
- \$23,400 for the bonuses that were included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (24 teachers X \$975 payment)
- \$5,000 for Title 1 positions
- (\$57,000) in estimated savings due to hiring five new teachers at a lower rate than the five that are retiring.

Full Time Kindergarten -

Lynn Chivers commented that at one point the town was told that kindergarten was going to be mandated by the State. The town voted to have ½ day Kindergarten in order to meet the requirement. Now, no Kindergarten is mandated at all because the State does not help fund it. Lynn Chivers is appalled that the School Board stuck an increase to full time kindergarten into the budget with no discussion or vote of the town. She went on to say that studies have shown that full time kindergarten is just for the convenience of the parents, and that kids that age cannot learn all day long. It is not appropriate that the School Board is asking the taxpayers to pay for what amounts to daycare. Ingrid Byrd stated that she told the School Board that a change like that should be brought to the voters, but was outvoted. There was discussion of researching the original warrant article that started Kindergarten in Candia to see how it was worded - whether it was stated as being mandatory, or if it was just half day only. Kim Byrd stated that the projected enrollment for Kindergarten is showing a 23% decrease, from 39 to 30 students. He feels the money is being put in the wrong place in the budget.

Regular Education Health Insurance - Lynn Chivers commented that there is a \$44,000 increase in this line. When the teacher's contract was voted on, the town was told that this was going to save \$63,000, but now we have made up that savings and added \$44,000. Ingrid Byrd stated that the insurance rates went up this year. Matt Broadhead added that insurance rates have gone up a lot because of the mandatory things that need to be included now due to federal law.

Instructional Supplies - Judith Szot commented that there is a 100% increase in Instructional Supplies. Ingrid Byrd said that this budget was written with the intent that parents would not have to supply any items. All binders, notebooks, pens, pencils, paper... would be supplied by the school. Judith Szot brought up the fact that these supplies were budgeted at the regular catalog prices, but the actual expenses would be less due to bulk purchasing. They should have been budgeted as such.

On Page 2:

Workbooks - Judith Szot commented on the increase in the lines that cover workbooks. She feels that workbooks are not the best practice for learning reading.

Furniture - Lynn Chivers was told by Ingrid Byrd that the increase in the furniture line was for trapezoidal tables to enable the teachers to place the students in groups to promote better learning. Several committee members felt that the traditional desks could be arranged in groups instead.

On Page 3:

There was discussion regarding transportation and the increase for Special Education transportation. This is due to new students.

On Page 4:

The extended school year program is mandated by IEP's.

The English Language Learner program – the school has to have someone available to teach this, in case it becomes necessary.

On Page 5:

CYAA Rentals - Judith Szot commented on the increase. This is on top of the fact that the CYAA has increased their rates for participation as well.

On Page 6:

Nurse Professional Service – This is an increase of \$69,300 due to a new student that needs to have a nurse with them at all times. This is a contracted nurse and is in addition to the regular school nurse. If an IEP states that a nurse is required, the school is bound by law to provide one.

On Page 8:

Occupational Therapy Contracted Services – This line covers a contracted physical therapist.

On Page 12:

Transportation – There is a \$130,000 proposed increase. This is due to a plan to have the start and end of all the bus routes occur at the same time. In order to accomplish this, there will need to be two additional buses. Carleton Robie stated that last year the School Board was talking about getting rid of a bus route to be more efficient and cost effective. This year they are proposing to increase the buses by two.

On Page 13:

Boiler replacement – Todd Allen commented that since the old, inefficient boiler is going to be replaced, the budget for heating oil should be reduced.

Server relocation – There was discussion regarding the plan to relocate the server in the school, due to the room being too hot, not well ventilated, and too dusty. It was discussed that perhaps an independent evaluation of the situation should be done to determine the actual need.

Trust Funds - There was further discussion of which items will be funded out of the existing trust funds for things such as Technology and Building Maintenance, and which items should come out of the budget.

Wage Pool – Ingrid Byrd explained that the Wage Pool line is to cover any increases to employees that are not covered by the collective bargaining agreement. These employees have not had any raises in several years.

There was discussion regarding the merits and repercussions of the Budget Committee proposing a budget that is significantly lower than the SAU's proposed budget, knowing that the Deliberative Session voters can only increase the total by 10% over the Budget Committee's budget. Carla Penfield is an advocate of this strategy, saying that year after year the town has looked at increases and it is the Committee's responsibility to protect the taxpayers. It is time to send the message of "no more games". Todd Allen feels that it is also the Committee's responsibility to make sure that the services that are provided are what the taxpayers want – and is the town getting their money's worth?

There was further discussion of how to arrive at a number that the Committee would recommend. It is the general consensus that if the Committee can make a case for a particular number, it will be easier to get the taxpayers to believe that number. Carla Penfield feels that the possible repercussions would be that in the next election, some members of the Committee would be voted out, and there could be an

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attempt to get rid of the Budget Committee all together. It was said by several members that since the school had a surplus this past year of over \$500,000, that tells us that they have been over-budgeted. Ingrid Byrd informed the committee that the proposed default budget will be approximately \$7,989,000.

Lynn Chivers reminded the Committee members that at the coming meeting with the School Board, the Committee is not there to argue particular points – the Committee is there to listen. At a later meeting, the Committee will be going over the budget line by line to determine what they feel is appropriate.

At 9:15, Kim Byrd made a motion to adjourn. Judith Szot seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Cheryl Eastman