

**Unapproved
Candia Budget Committee
Public Hearing Minutes
January 2, 2013**

Members Present: Matt Broadhead, Lynn Chivers, Todd Allen, Judith Szot, Carla Penfield, Paul LeBlond, Emily Roster, School Board Representative, Richard Snow, Board of Selectmen's Representative, Christine Watson arrived at 7:05.

Matt called the meeting to order at 7:01 at the Moore School. Matt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Matt explained that this meeting is for the limited purpose of a public hearing on the school budget to seek public input from citizens. The Budget Committee started with the School Board's proposed budget and had a meeting with them. Then the Budget Committee had a meeting and came up with their proposed adjustments to that budget. Matt went on to explain that this meeting isn't for the Budget Committee to have discussions amongst themselves, but if they have follow-up questions to clarify any comments or adjustments from the public, they can ask them.

The prior minutes are not available tonight for approval and will be done at the next meeting.

Matt opened the hearing to the public.

Sharon Dewitt asked if the Committee could go through the budget and explain what proposed changes they have made. Matt said there was a lot of discussion and he won't be able to recap all of it, but there was a lot of discussion about the Common Core teacher facilitator. It was suggested that line be reduced to \$20,000. School Board member Deb LeBlond said that the changes can be seen if you look at the columns for the School Board proposed budget and the Budget Committee proposed budget. Any changes will show up there. Instruction Supplies was reduced from \$29,000 to \$19,000. The Transportation line was reduced, but that was at the request of the School Board. The only other item changed was the maintenance building repairs. That line was increased to \$20,000 from \$6,000. Matt said that if anyone wants to know what the particular conversations were surrounding any proposed changes they can read the minutes on the town website. Citizen Jen Maurice asked if the number of teachers was planning on being reduced because the total in the Regular Education Teacher Salary line was lower than last year. Emily responded that there are two teachers retiring and the salaries has gone down because some of the staff they hired last year are at a lower pay scale than the teachers that left. She said there are no plans to lay any teachers off.

Matt asked Emily if the proposed warrant articles that have been presented have been approved yet. Emily said that they will be finally approved at the School Board meeting tomorrow night. There has been a couple wording changes and figures for the CBA have been added since the initial approval. Matt explained that tonight this public hearing will be recessed until next Wednesday, when the Budget Committee will be meeting and deciding on the final budgets to go to the Deliberative Sessions. There will be a period of public comment at the start of the next meeting, so if there are follow-up questions or comments, they can be voiced then.

Matt asked for an explanation on warrant article #8. Emily explained that is a new state statute that allows a town to vote to have the ability to retain up to 2.5% of the school surplus at the end of the year.

It can be used only for specific needs as outlined in the statute such as emergency expenditures, over-expenditures... It is recommended by the State of NH to have this in place, but has to be voted by the town to do so. Per the statute, 2.5% is the highest amount that can be retained. Emily said that schools have never been able to retain any of their fund balance before, so this is giving a little bit more flexibility to the school budget, just like the towns have had all along.

Deb LeBlond asked the Budget Committee to explain the changes to the maintenance line. Matt said that there was a proposal to increase the line by \$14,000. The School Board had proposed \$6,000 and the Committee proposed a total of \$20,000. The discussion was if we are going to continue to expend roughly \$20,000 every year on maintenance, it is an item that should be included in the budget. Todd said that over the past several years, the school has spent between \$12,000 and \$13,000 per year on that line item, but it was only budgeted for \$6,000. There will be warrant articles for \$175,000 of deferred maintenance. This tells him that this line has been severely under-funded, or not funded where it needs to be to keep the buildings maintained. So he suggested increasing it to \$20,000 so that we don't have another \$175,000 in deferred maintenance that comes up. Deb asked if the Committee is aware that the School Board has a five year maintenance plan to upgrade and improve the building, spending \$35,000 per year to update the facility. She asked if the plan to put the money in the budget is in the hopes that the warrant article will go away? Matt said that there was a discussion when they saw there was a difference between the maintenance and improvements lines. There is a subtle distinction there. The Budget Committee feels maintenance is for maintaining what is already existing but improvements is going beyond pure maintenance like adding something or completely renovating something. Matt had suggested that the building maintenance line should be increased by \$35,000 in lieu of a warrant article because he feels it should be included in the operating budget. But that motion failed. The warrant article will still be in there. The Budget Committee is treating them as separate lines. Matt said there was a difference of opinion in regard to what should be included in each of those lines. At next week's meeting, the Budget Committee will be finalizing what it recommends goes to the Deliberative Sessions. Todd said that if the Budget Committee increased the line item to \$35,000 and the warrant article is still in there, there is potential for \$70,000 to be funded. It is a catch-22 – which one do you put in first? The Budget Committee didn't go with Matt's proposal because the warrant article does exist. Kim Royer asked if the warrant article will stay and if the Committee will recommend it. Todd said that the Budget Committee needs to vote on that, but personally he would not vote for the warrant article because he feels it should be in the budget. School Board member Kim Royer said that if the Budget Committee doesn't recommend a warrant article it doesn't pass. So, if the warrant article doesn't pass the school won't have the funds to do the maintenance. Todd clarified that the \$14,000 increase is for the year-to-year-to-year maintenance, not for all the deferred maintenance that has been piling up over the years. That is why they are separate. The \$20,000 is really so that we don't end up with another \$35,000 deferred maintenance action. Todd explained that the money for the deferred maintenance is not in the budget because it is in a warrant article. Kim asked the Committee members to think about the fact that they need to maintain the school. It has not been properly maintained for a variety of different reasons and we can't keep putting band-aids on the school to maintain it. Emily asked if anyone had more input on the Common Core Facilitator issue. Dr. Littlefield said that they had a discussion on that issue when they had a joint meeting with the Budget Committee. It is a lot for a local school district to deal with. The government has decided to implement this Common Core plan. This changes what they teach, when they teach it, and to what degree they teach it. It revolutionizes what they do. In a year when they would have been reducing the teaching staff by 1 position, it is a reallocation of existing resources. Our needs have changed dramatically. The new Smarter Balance tests are based on the Common Core. This position is a temporary position for three years. He thinks it is a vital position. He appreciates the recognition on the part of the Budget Committee that it is important

and that it was funded, but he feels it might be difficult to get somebody on board for \$20,000. Our teachers need and deserve the intensive assistance if they are going to meet the expectations imposed upon them. Dr. Littlefield added that they have requested what they think they need to do the job. It is not new money, but a reallocation of existing resources. Matt said there had been discussion regarding whether this job can be performed in part time hours as opposed to full time. Are other school districts doing this? Dr. Littlefield said this is new, so he is not sure what other schools are doing. Deb LeBlond said that a lot of schools employ a full time curriculum coordinator all the time, not just for something that is imposed on them like this. She said that she is doing her own coordinating in her classroom this year and it is overwhelming. Dr. Littlefield said that this touches on nine grades and focuses on language arts and math. With 9 grades and two levels of focus that is 18 areas of instruction. That could definitely fill a full time position. This is a teaching position, covered by the teacher's contract. The results of the Smarter Balance tests will have consequences if they do not meet the standards. For the lower 10% of school districts, there will be intervention from the state. Not to mention the black eye on Candia and its effect on property values when the school system is not up to standards. It is a transitional position – not forever. He would rather have it for two years at full salary than three years at \$20,000. Paul asked how much support the school would get from the textbook companies. Dr. Littlefield said that the textbook companies will provide a great deal of support and training in implementing their textbook series, but that is not necessarily implementing the Common Core. The degree of the support will be part of the negotiations with the textbook companies. Judith asked if that wasn't the reason they bought this series of books – because they best met the common core standards. Dr. Littlefield stated that they have not purchased a program yet, they are still piloting two different ones. The deal for whichever one they decide to purchase will be for implementing that series, not implementing the whole Common Core.

Sharon DeWitt stated that she knows the time schedule is tight, but maybe next year try to not schedule a public hearing for the first day after vacation. Matt agreed, but said that the timing deadlines around the Tuesday holidays this year was hard to work around. Teacher Lee Ann Wells spoke about the Common Core Facilitator position. She is a 6 grade teacher and said that the increase in non-fiction reading is dramatic, along with the shifts in math. She would feel a lot more confident to have the extra support of a facilitator in that position. She feels the position is very valuable in helping in the transition.

Todd said that the budget is a bottom line budget, and the ultimate decision on how the moneys get spent lies with the School Board to prioritize their needs based on the budget year. No matter what the Budget Committee cuts, increases, or changes, it is still the responsibility of the School Board to spend the money as they need for the priorities. Emily said that it is a bottom line budget, but the School Board has presented a very tight budget this year that is pretty much in line with prior years budgets that was approved by the town. If something comes up and expenditures need to be exceeded in some areas, we might not have the extra money in other areas. She feels the town should fund the budget that has been proposed by the School Board because it is a fiscally responsible budget. Matt added that he commended the School Board because their proposed budget came in lower than previous years budget proposals. It is in the right direction for the taxpayers at this time in this economy.

At 7:42, Matt made a motion to recess this public hearing on the school budget until January 9, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall. Seconded by Todd. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Cheryl Eastman