

Regular Meeting of the  
**Candia Budget Committee**  
**December 11, 2013**  
Moore School Library, Candia, NH  
Approved Minutes of the Public Session

**Present:** Chairman Matthew Broadhead, Vice-Chair Allyn Chivers, Secretary Paul Leblond, Carla Penfield, Todd Allen, Selectmen's Rep. Carleton Robie

**Excused:** Judith Szot

**Absent:** Christine Watson

**Also Present:** Bob St. Cyr, Moore School Principal; Dan Roma, Moore School Technology Coordinator; Michelle Lavalley, Moore School Assistant Principal; Nash Reddy, Moore School Director of Student Services; Dr. Charles Littlefield, SAU 15 Superintendent; Marge Polak, SAU 15 Asst. Superintendent; Karen Lessard, SAU 15 Business Administrator; Kim Royer, Candia School Board Chairman; Nicole Laflamme, Candia School Board Vice-Chairman; Deb Leblond, Candia School Board; Emily Roster, Candia School Board; Marlene Montminy

**Call to Order**

Chairman Broadhead called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance

**Administrative Business**

Minutes:

Minutes from the previous meeting (December 4, 2013) were not discussed.

**Old/New Business**

Chairman Opening Remarks

Chairman Broadhead opened the meeting by thanking all for attending and stating how encouraged he was by the process last year and is looking to repeat the success with this year's process. Chairman Broadhead stated he was very pleased to see the preliminary budget presented by the School Board and their eye toward the bottom line.

Chairman Broadhead reminded the attendees that today's meeting was to gather information, hear from the members of the School Board and the representatives from SAU 15, obtain answers to the questions that remain from the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, and to have a productive meeting.

## Superintendent Remarks

Dr. Littlefield thanked the Budget Committee and concurred with Chairman Broadhead relative to the success of the process last year and stated that this year's process was equally as good, if not better. The process provides direction on what type of information is needed in order for the Budget Committee to make the decisions it needs to make. With regard to the questions that remained, Dr. Littlefield suggested that the Budget Committee be provided with an update on what has been happening at the Moore School and how it has been operating along with a brief overview and response to how the School Board arrived at their budget figures.

## Joint Meeting

Kim Royer offered information to the Budget Committee relative to what has been happening at the Moore School. It was currently Computer Science Education Week at the school in which all students were participating. The PTO is currently offering a story hour to the students. The Math in Focus program is now up and running and being offered to all students along with training information nights for parents to support the students and help reinforce the program at home. Kim Royer went on to explain how technology is used everyday at every grade level and listed the various types of technology being used by the students and teachers. Kindergarten is now in its second year of implementing full-day instruction and, although it is going very well, it is being monitored and reviewed closely to ensure success and continuation in future years. Kim also highlighted a variety of projects regarding the facility maintenance and renovations that have been completed including the new bathrooms, the organic spray that was used outside for ticks, bees, and mosquitoes and stated a slide show with more detailed information on renovations and facility maintenance is on the website. The fall and winter athletic programs are in full swing and it is unknown at this time what will happen with baseball and lacrosse. There are many clubs that have been organized including the recycling program, the SCRATCH program, and a program where students teach senior citizens basic computer skills.

Kim Royer concluded by providing the attendees with an update regarding the recent concerns with Central High School. Kim stated that the concerns that were brought to administrators are being addressed and they are seeing a positive turn-around. Student GPA's are improving and Michelle Laflamme visits the school weekly to ensure that the Candia students have what they need to succeed.

Dr. Littlefield followed by advising the Budget Committee that the proposed budget was status quo to last year. There were no requests in the budget that would expand programming. There is a request in the budget for \$25,000 for technology which is a shift in philosophy when it came to warrant articles. In an effort to present a budget that truly represents operating costs, the funding requested for technology is rolled into the operating budget rather than a warrant article. There is one retirement anticipated which will result in a small savings going forward. There is a successor Collective Bargaining Agreement for support staff that is currently being negotiated that will be presented as a warrant article. The CBA for the teachers that the voters approved last spring is reflected in the budget presented. There is a 1 ½% COLA for this group.

Dr. Littlefield reminded the Budget Committee that the SAU had changed providers from the Local Government Center to SchoolCare for health insurance. The change resulted in an immediate savings. The SAU has found SchoolCare to be competitive with the costs and the rate increases are much smaller than what was experienced with the LGC.

There have also been increases to the employer contributions to the retirement system. The second year of increases is reflected in the budget request.

High school tuition for Manchester has increased from \$8500 to \$9500 per student; however, there are fewer students so the budget request for tuition is down. Special Education tuition is also down as a result of fewer students needing to be placed elsewhere since the educators have done a really good job accommodating the special needs at the school.

#### Common Core Program:

Principal St. Cyr presented the Budget Committee with information pertaining to the Common Core Program. The facilitator position for this program is funded for three years. The program is in its first year and the facilitator has implemented the program by providing peer guidance and support to the teachers to help with transitioning to the new state standards. For the 2014-2015 school year, the goal will be to continue the implementation in preparation for the comprehensive assessment of the new standards. In 2015-2016, an analysis of the assessment results will assist in going forward with any instructional changes that are needed.

The goals for the facilitator are to assist the staff with the new standards for Language Arts, the Math in Focus program, a writing plan for K-8, transitional skills for the students, and creating a curriculum map that will translate from one grade level to another and meet the needs of the students.

Principal St. Cyr concluded his presentation with (recorded) feedback from a few teachers in support of the Common Core Facilitator.

Todd Allen asked if the Common Core Facilitator position had been implemented in Hooksett and Auburn. Dr. Littlefield stated that the position was not implemented in Hooksett but had a person doing assessment and accountability and will be assuming more of the Common Core Program. The Auburn school district had funded the position but could not find a qualified person and is currently using the appropriation for consulting services.

Chairman Broadhead asked what the phase out plan was going to be for what he felt was a critical position and what the impact would be. Dr. Littlefield, referring to Principal St. Cyr's presentation, stated that the Candia school district was in its most critical year with the implementation, and year two will be focused on preparing for the assessment, and year three will be the year for phasing out when adjustments are made and support is withdrawn.

Dr. Littlefield emphasized that the Common Core Program has changed what, how, and when curriculum is taught. Students will be better served in Candia where the School Board had the foresight to know the resource was needed compared to other communities that did not.

#### Health Insurance:

Karen Lessard provided some follow up information pertaining to the increases in health insurance appropriations throughout the budget. Some appropriations reflected an increase higher than the 4.2% to 4.3% indicated in the memo provided to the Budget Committee at their December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Karen indicated that some employee's elections had changed during the last open enrollment. There are also some new employees whose elections are different than what had been estimated.

Karen also indicated that there were no changes to the health insurance carrier or the employee contributions. The employee contributions will change in 2015-2016 school year when the contribution will increase 2 ½%. Dr. Littlefield added that an exhaustive review of benefits and the procurement process was conducted a few years ago.

#### Unemployment Compensation:

Karen Lessard stated that there was a calculation error in the previous budget proposal and that the correction resulted in a \$3,528 decrease in the budget and provided a new budget proposal to the members of the Budget Committee reflecting the changes made.

#### Classroom Furniture:

In response to a question regarding how many classrooms are still in need of new furniture, Principal St. Cyr indicated that the 2014-2015 proposed budget included replacement furniture for four classrooms and will continue through the next two budget cycles.

#### Tuition Calculation:

Karen Lessard provided a worksheet showing how she arrived at the tuition budget request. Chairman Broadhead reiterated that the cost of tuition was up by \$1,000 per student but enrollment was down resulting in a savings.

Todd Allen asked if the tuition rate changed for any of the other high schools that Candia students attend. Karen Lessard stated that the rate was same for all high schools and any amount above \$9500 is the responsibility of the parents of the student.

#### Extended School Year:

Nash Reddy advised the Budget Committee that the increase in the proposed budget request reflected an amount to accommodate nine students in the ESY program which has doubled in enrollment since last summer and provides for several students with specialized programs.

#### Contracted Vision Services:

This appropriation has not been spent for the past few years. The Budget Committee had asked if the requested funds were going to be spent this year and if the proposed budget request was

needed. Nash Reddy indicated that there was a visually impaired student currently enrolled at the school. The contracted services provide direct support to the student to enable them to participate in the classroom. Nash also stated she felt it was in the best interest of programming to continue the funding. Todd Allen asked if the entire \$1500 was needed for one student. Nash stated that the cost of a specialist coming to the school versus the student attending school elsewhere is minimal.

#### Psychologist Services and Supplies:

It was asked what the length of the contract was for the school psychologist. Nash Reddy stated that the contract was for one year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and equates to 72 days during the school year, or two days per week. Allyn Chivers asked if the psychologist is scheduled for two days or is on an on-call basis for two days. Nash stated the psychologist was in the building two days per week.

It was also asked if the forms used by the psychologist could be copied rather than utilizing the printed forms. Nash Reddy explained that the forms used are consumables that are evaluation forms completed by either the student or the evaluator. The data is entered into a computer-based assessment program and provides data relative to diagnosis and treatment.

#### Speech Contracted Services:

The budget proposal for this line item showed an increase of \$11,700 over the 2013-2014 approved budget. Nash Reddy stated that the contract amount had not increased although it appeared that way in the budget proposal. Karen Lessard stated that the current and proposed contract amounts were the same but due to a software issue budget adjustment are not reflected in the budget proposal report. They are reflected in the monthly reports that are provided to the Budget Committee.

#### Improvement of Instruction Services:

There was an increase to this budget request when it has historically been under-spent. Principal St. Cyr stated that the increase was related to the Common Core Program and although it has been under-spent in the past it is expected to be fully expended this year and funding will assist those students who require additional help meeting the standards of the program. Chairman Broadhead asked if there was a per-student cost associated with the funding. Principal St. Cyr stated that funding was not based on the number of students.

#### Audit Expense:

There was an increase of \$1,000 in the proposed budget for this line item. Karen Lessard explained that there have been changes to reporting requirements and the implementation of GASB 45 this year resulting in the increase in the proposed budget.

#### SAU Assessment Calculation:

Karen Lessard provided a worksheet showing the calculation for the SAU Assessment budget figure. Karen explained that per an RSA a percentage of the valuation of three towns in the SAU and a percentage of the three towns ADM-A make up the calculation. Allyn Chivers asked why the proposed budget amount had increased by 13%. Karen explained that it was a matter of mathematics. Of the three towns, Candia is paying 16.23% of the assessment, resulting in a \$19,244 increase over last years adopted budget, compared to 25.84% for Auburn and 57.93% for Hooksett.

#### School Office Printing:

There was an increase to the proposed budget for this line item when it has historically gone under-spent. Principal St. Cyr explained that they have been frugal with this line and have used printing supplies purchased in previous years to keep the expenses down. Printing supplies have now been depleted and they will need to replenish those supplies in the coming year which is the reason for the increase.

#### Athletics:

Principal St. Cyr explained that if the school does not have enough sign-ups for baseball in a given year, the school is then forced to discontinue the program for the following two years. Principal St. Cyr further explained that there are many students who play for other leagues rather than the school teams which can result in low turn-out and cancellation of an athletic team. The school is trying to form a lacrosse team. Allyn Chivers asked if there was going to be enough interest from the students to necessitate funding a lacrosse team. Principal St. Cyr stated that they were trying to determine the interest. Michelle Lavallee followed up by stating that if there was not enough interest to organize a school team an intramural team may be formed. Paul Leblond asked if there was an intramural league for lacrosse. Michelle stated that the tri-county supported it but there are restrictions. Paul Leblond then asked if there were similar penalties to baseball if a team cannot be organized. Michelle stated there wasn't because scheduling was not done in advance like baseball.

#### Technology:

Dan Roma provided information regarding the \$25,000 requested amount for replacement equipment and the comparisons between using Apple (Mac) products and PC's. Dan explained that the Mac computers are considered learning tools and go beyond the constraints experienced with other types of computers. Mac's are also essentially ready to use right out of the box and have a considerable amount of safety features and software that is preinstalled. PC's require additional investments to make it comparable to a Mac. Mac's have traditionally been more reliable, less susceptible to viruses, and have a longer life. Dan's personal experience is the PC equipment currently being used has been less reliable and more cumbersome. Dan added that the teachers seem to prefer using the Mac over the PC and that due to the reliability of the Mac, teachers have more time for class instruction and are not spending class time dealing with PC problems and troubleshooting.

Chairman Broadhead asked if the Mac's are purchased with any type of warranty. Dan stated that a one-year warranty comes with the purchase; however, an extended warranty is not purchased in addition to it. Chairman Broadhead followed by asking how repairs are currently done for the computers and what sort of licensing fees are paid for software. Dan explained that he is able to do some of the repairs and the need for repairs to the Macs have been minimal compared to the PC's and licensing fees are typically the same. Dan went on to explain the various operating systems being used and that Microsoft XP will not continue to be supported by the manufacturer and security updates will no longer occur. In order to upgrade the PC's operating systems additional licensing fees will need to be paid. Apple offers a free download of operating system upgrades.

Todd Allen asked why there wasn't any consistency in the operating systems being used and whether or not being consistent would benefit the students as they prepare to go to high school and if we are spending money on technology that may become obsolete. Deb Leblond stated that the reason for using different technology was based on what the student will be able to use out in the real world. It is to the student's benefit to be exposed to all types of technology and operating systems. Dr. Littlefield added that initially he was not in favor of using Apple products because of his own difficulty in learning to use them but after watching what the students are able to do and how quickly they are able to adapt, is now convinced that multi-platforms are the way to go. Nicole Laflamme explained that we need to continue investing in different types of technology for our students despite not knowing what the future holds when they reach high school.

#### Federal Funds & Food Service Budgets:

Karen Lessard provided the Budget Committee with a report showing a summary of the Candia School District proposed budget including the General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and the Food Service Fund. The proposed budget grand total is \$7,992,019.87. This amount is \$23,023.10 less than the 2013-2014 approved budget.

Allyn Chivers asked is there was figure yet for the default budget. Karen Lessard said she was still working on it.

Karen Lessard also provided a report of the balances in the trust funds. Karen stated that a majority of the Tech Expendable Trust will be expended in January.

There was a brief discussion regarding warrant articles. Dr. Littlefield stated that there could potentially be two warrant articles, one for the Collective Bargaining Agreement as discussed earlier and one for a Special Education Trust. The School Board will be discussing them in greater detail at their January 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. It is the intent of the School Board to limit the number of warrant articles so not to confuse or overwhelm the voters and to request a budget that accurately reflects what it needs to operate. Karen Lessard added that the possible warrant article for the Special Education Trust would not include any new money and would most likely come from the fund balance.

Chairman Broadhead stated the Budget Committee could possibly be meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> for a supplemental public hearing on all warrant articles.

Chairman Broadhead thanked the School Board for the time and effort put forth in proposing their budget.

### **Adjourn**

Lacking further business, Chairman Broadhead entertained a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** To adjourn. Motion by Todd Allen. Second by Paul Leblond. All in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Recorded by Marlene Montminy