

Town of Candia

Budget Committee

Approved Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2025

Town Hall Meeting Room

Public Hearing on School Budget

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Lynn Chivers, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members Present: Lynn Chivers, Katrina Niles, William Saffie, Ryan Young, Stephanie Helmig, Susan Young, Steve Tremblay, Joshua Reap, Janet Lewis, Admin. Assist.

Absent: Susan Gill

Old Business: Approval of minutes from previous meeting- Bill made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 24 meeting. Steve seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Public Input: Carol Batchelder, 531 Raymond Rd. questioned if board members have spent time at the school to be able to make informed decisions about the budget? Steve replied that he has children at the school and feels obligated as a parent and taxpayer to try and balance between what the school needs and what people living here can afford. Spending money wisely and with accountability is what the budget committee is hoping to accomplish. Steve answered relating how he has a child at the school and although he might not be at the school, his child is there every day and he is generally happy and says what is happening at the school. Being on the budget committee; When people ask for a raise we have to consider the people in town paying for it. We don't want people to move out of town. It is our job to make sure the money is being spent wisely, accurately and accounted for. It is hard to balance. Jason Gosselin 161 Crowley Rd. Teacher raises are contractual and built into the default budget. He we are going to lose teachers. He does not want to see the school fall behind in an effort to spend less money. To take away what the school is already operating with is a poor choice.

Carol Walker, 201 Main St. said one thing she has noticed is how property values are affected by school support. She wants to see justification and the value in reducing the school budget. If it is going to affect my property values, it is going to affect my children's future. The budget cut of \$400,000, when done as a blanket cut is not a good decision. Stephanie Trube, 246 Brown Rd. asked where these cuts are coming from? Why was it proposed? The staff, teachers and children should be recognized for their hard work to make it a school that we can be proud of. Stephanie H. said the budget committee wants suggestions for how they can reduce expenses. One idea was to charge parents for the high school bussing. That was for \$10,000. and would bring the cut down to \$479,000. Stephanie Trube said she wants to know the reasoning when our children deserve the same chance to excel as the children in the past? Children in the future are the town's future. Why are we going to punish them? We just got recognized as the best school in the state.

Steve answered, he thought it was a misconception -the budget request increase was 7.4%: \$11.1 to \$11.9(mil) Stephanie H. pointed out the budget committee cut \$489,000 from the default, not any requests. Steve said that is 6.3%. The town budget has grown by 2.7% and is what we are trying to keep it at. We are trying to be inline with that. You can say we are cutting it, but it is still increasing the budget over last year, just not as much as last year. Stephanie Trube said she is more concerned about how the people who work at the school and are there every day, have a say about the budget cuts, rather than a committee that does not have the connection presence in that regard. Susan Y. said to note, the teacher's contract is not in this budget. It will be separate in a warrant article. She believes the teachers are the most important rather than consumables. Stephanie H. said regular ed health insurance was up \$116,000.,

regular high school tuition was up \$255,000. These are the things you have to look at as a community. What were the increases, what do these really mean? We can't *not* educate our high school kids, we can't *not* supply health insurance, we can't *not* get math practice books. Things like that. The price of food services has gone up \$15,000. and cost of food services is up. We have a \$110,000 increase in special ed. All add up to the increases in the default. Stephanie Trube said that may help the students out, but when you say, consumables like text books, are you saying teachers are more important and consumables are not? Susan Y. said there are other options to explore. In her opinion, the teachers are the most important thing in the classroom.

Ryan answered about spending time in the school. He said he has not. The second question he said, not speaking for the board, speaking for himself personally, why he voted the way he did. In his mind, to approve a budget that more than doubles everyone's taxes in eleven years, he can't support that. Where do you cut it? He doesn't see the current trajectory of the school budget increases every year, feasible for everyone in town, including those people on fixed incomes. Carol Walker responded that she understands that the kids are an easy target, and it is easy to have a blanket cut. That people who do not have kids in school anymore do not care about the quality of the student's education in Candia. When you say reducing \$489,000. from default, don't we normally go with a default school budget? Stephanie H. responded that if a warrant article fails, it goes in default. Default is last year's budget, plus contractual obligations, minus onetime expenses. Last year there was money left over that went back to the town. It was \$253,000. that went back to the town to offset taxes. Carol Walker asked to explain where \$489,000. fits in to default? Bill Rearick, School Superintendent, responded that the default increase is \$703,865. of that, six items make up 80% of the default. High school tuition, health insurance, Special ed. Para professionals, Special Ed. transportation, and information access. All have increased. That adds up to \$563,318. just for those six. If we are reduced to the amount that is being presented, we would be looking at some hard choices to make up that \$489,000. Stephanie said is important to support the teachers and we do. In the past, there was an issue relating to that and lack of feeling valued. When the school board became aware of it, they adjusted it. We needed to take a hard look at how we support teachers, make them feel valued, support them in the classroom. I think we have done good job with that. Reducing the budget will keep salaries stagnant, especially with the warrant article, the 3% cap, it will reduce class size, it will eliminate positions, it will lead to burnout, higher turnover, disrupt learning, and turning talented educated teachers away from our school.

Dana Buckley said he had looked back at the last six years and the spending is right around the state average. There were two years we under the state average, and four years we were above it. \$380. on average, over a six year period. Bill S. said there are 1,600 households in town. 120 residents have sold their houses. And it is not just about the school. There are a lot of retirees and it will be growing. We just need to consider everyone. We have to balance it. Saying we are going to increase the budget by 7.4% and taxpayers have to pay for it. Stephanie asked what is over budgeted? What is not needed? Looking at the busses, legally we can not reduce the buses. High school buses are \$200,000. Carol Walker asked about cutting the buses, is that \$489,000.? Not the K-8, but the high school buses. Where else would you have the budget cut? Bill S. replied the Vice-Principle should be cut because it is not required by state law because of the number of students. Holly Turlana, 355 High St., said this was brought up last year. Our school, as you know, there are behavior issues- when you talk about classroom size, talk about special ed program, talk about all these other things. Not for nothing, our vice-principle does just as much, if not more work, than our behavioral people at the school because of all the tasks she has to fill. She has to fill in with things she should not have to do, because of the lack of staffing. Without our vice-principle, our school would be very shorthanded. Jessie Palmer, 513 Chester Turnpike, I am a teacher in the local community. I have three thriving children in this community, that are thriving because of the school. They are thriving because of the staff and teachers. From a teacher's standpoint and how it does impact a school, cutting the budget does affect the children directly. Holly asked if the teacher salaries are not included in this budget? Lynn said, the budget includes all the salaries that we are paying right now, we have a new teacher's contract, so there is a warrant article that covers the increases in the new teacher's contract. Stephanie said the increases that are contractual are in here. James Miller, 246 Brown Rd.,

related how growing up he was fortunate to have every opportunity as a child and now he feels he is living the American dream. The school asking for their default budget is not much. He calculated that it is \$200. to \$300. per household. Why are we slashing the budget? They are asking for a raise, just a default. Stephanie Trube, 246 Brown Rd., said she does not agree with the numbers presented as being fluff for the school buses. Susan Y. had the following information from the School Board when asked earlier about buses and is there a way to eliminate one bus? The answer received: two busses are used to transport students to Pinkerton Academy. One bus has an average daily ridership of 30 students and the second has an average daily ridership of 38 students. Total 68. Five buses are used to transport students to the H.W. Moore School. Each bus has a daily average ridership of 46. Susan Y. said to remove one of these buses is outrageous and what is happening is people keep talking about the default budget. It is not everything they wanted, but its more. A response from the audience stated that it is not feasible to consolidate the buses because of the logistics involved for the busses to get all around town and not have the students waiting for and getting dropped off at unreasonable times of the morning and late afternoon when it is dark out. It is dangerous. Superintendent Rearick stated legally the students can not ride on the buses for more than an hour. There is no way for the buses to pick up all the students within that time frame. We would be in violation of a state law. We have tried to consolidate the buses, but it is not feasible with Candia being a large spread out land area. Becky Wing stated she had done a survey for grades K-8 this summer and there were only 19 students who would not need the bus at all, in the morning or afternoon throughout the school year. So, that is not enough to reduce the buses from 5 to 4. Jason Goselin, said default budget is a calculated number based on costs that are expected. Lynn said it is last year's budget, which for us is this year's budget, and we do not know what the expenses are going to be for this year and how much will be left over. The default budget is this budget that we are working on, plus the contractual obligations, minus the onetime expenses. Jason said the default budget went up due to contractual raises and things like that added in, but the actual reduction means we have to take money from other areas. So, it is a reduction. Lynn replied it is a reduction in the requested budget, in what was approved this year. Question by Holly Turlana does any part of the town entities have a legal right to put a cap on any part of the various budgets? The answer is yes. The voters can do that with a warrant article. Stephanie T. stated the budget committee wants to cut \$489,000., but you do not know where that would come from? Like a bottom line. Lynn stated this is the bottom line budget. If the budget committee votes to approve the \$11,446,000. Then it becomes the school board and the SAU's responsibility to figure out how to make that work. Stephanie T. said, just to be clear, you have not figured out where this money is going to be coming from? Lynn said OK. The public hearing part of the meeting is now closed. The budget Committee will vote on the school warrant articles.

Regarding the questions we had for the school: What are data communications? Is that Comcast plus 3% ? Is this for the building internet? Answer: yes, this is the cost for internet service. This year's bill is \$462.12 per month for 12 months, totaling \$5,545.44 plus a 3% increase and that is for Comcast. Bill asked if they shopped around? Stephanie H. said the three schools contracted a special rate for the three towns and is cheaper that doing by ourselves.

Under telephone: Is this the building phone? What do we reimburse for cell phones and how many? Do we shop around for cheaper phone service? Answer: The phone service covers phones for the school. Our pricing is part of a group plan with the three towns and the SAU office which gives us a lower rate than if purchased independently. We do not distribute cell phones to administrators. Instead, we reimburse for their personal cell phone to perform work related duties. Josh what do they pay per month? Bill Rearick said it is \$60.00 per month for each line. No teachers. Josh asked where do they come up with the amount? Bill R. answered they look at what a single plan would be and use that as a similar cost., still below the average.

Under tuition reimbursement: Is the entire amount in the contract? Or is there a little bit extra built in the amount is built in? Yes, extra is built in. Is other professional service, the SRO? Answer is Yes. What percent of the health premiums do the employees pay? Including all plans. A single is 5.5%, 18% for 2

person plan, family plan is 18%. Members of CEA pay 9% for a single plan, 13% for a 2 person family plan, and 14% for a family plan.

Have we contracted with an SRO? Chief Shevlin is currently working on a MOU which is for a police officer to serve as the SRO and hope to have this done by next month.

Do we know the number of students that use parent drop off and pick up? Approximately, 61 students are dropped off and picked from school.

If the teacher's contract fails, do we operate under the current contract? Would we need to pay the health insurance increases? Yes, if not approved we will operate under the current contract. We will need to pay the health insurance increases because health insurance is contained in the current contract.

Josh said that cellphone reimbursements \$60. Is reasonable, there are some companies that will do better rates per month, maybe we should just be paying for part of it. He thinks \$30.00 would be a better number. If it is a requirement for employment, that is one thing, but maybe issue them by the school and get a deeper discounted rate. A partial reimbursement is more reasonable. Additionally, said that about the national average for employee contributions to health insurance is about 16%. In New Hampshire it is about 12%. NH is more competitive. The bigger chunk of the 80% fixed costs talked about earlier, is the health insurance cost. This is will be a challenge for future negotiations. It will double in 10 years. He is concerned about having to consolidate with other towns and wants to keep his children learning in Candia. Stephanie added that as part of trying to present a better package for the teachers where they cannot increase salary, they want to provide things like the health insurance to be attractive also. Susan Y. added that instead of looking at what is being taken away, look at what being asked for above this year. Every year we have had \$100,000 to \$300,000. returned that the school has not spent. She said the voters have always supported the lower amount presented. Thinking of the positive, rather than the negative. Stephanie H. pointed out that money returned to the town was Special Ed. and the year before was Special Ed. If we do not have to spend it, we return it. It is the sensible thing to do for the taxpayers.

Lynn asked for a motion. We had previously voted on \$11,446,868.95. That is #2 on the School Warrant. Bill makes a motion to recommend the amount \$11,446.868.95 be put on the school warrant. Susan Y. seconded. 6-yes, 2-no. Motion is recommended by the Budget Committee.

Warrant Article #3 Susan makes a motion to recommend Warrant Article #3. Josh seconded the motion. Vote: 7 -Yes, 1- No. Motion is recommended to the Budget Committee.

Steve makes a motion to suspend the Budget Committee meeting to reconvene on January 21st,2026. Stephanie seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Meeting Suspended at 7:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Lewis

