

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Hooksett Town Hall
35 Main Street
Thursday, December 7, 2023
6:30 pm

CALL TO ORDER

B. Soucy called to order at 6:35 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

ATTENDANCE

B. Soucy, A. Shaine, G. Martins, C. Gurung, M. Kowack, D. Greenberg, R. Ross, W. Lynch, E. Barker, and E. Bencivenga.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 30, 2023

R. Ross motioned to approve the minutes of November 30, 2023. Seconded by E. Baker. Vote unanimously in favor. Abstained D. Greenberg and W. Lynch

PUBLIC INPUT

No comments

NEW BUSINESS

School District Budget

Questions from 11/30

Below are the responses from the 11/30/23 Budget Committee meeting which were emailed from the SAU.

Question on the payment structure of the 15-year lease. (received via email)

If voters approved the Warrant Article, the lease would be paid out in equal installments over a 15 years.

The cost for the lease payment would be part of the Default Budget.

The amount of the installment will be determined by the interest rate at the time the contract for the work is signed.

B. Soucy: I understand the we are no longer using NEWA however it is listed under access fees in the budget.

We will not be using NWEA next year. The budget has been adjusted to reflect this change.

M. Kowack asked about all the access fees that are increasing. Can we find out when

these started and what the trend is? We don't know what they are trending to understand the information access fees.

For the past three years, the vast majority of the Information Access Fees were paid by using ESSER funds. With the ESSER Grant expiring in June of 2024 the cost has been shifted to the operational budget for the 2024-25 school year.

B. Soucy would like to know what the software programs are and how many licenses there are and the cost per application.

Increased Information Access Fees. Items previously grant funded:

II Schoology (3-8)

o Three years

o \$8.32 per student (900)

o Learning Management System

II Seesaw (K-2)

o Three years

o \$5.75 per student (420)

o Digital portfolio that allows students to create, reflect, share, and collaborate

II Braining Camp (K-8)

o Three years

o \$553 per school

o Online math manipulatives

II Zearn (K-8 Math)

o Two years - we replaced DreamBox (five years) with Zearn

o \$2,500 per school

o Explore concepts, discover meaning, and make sense of math

o Research-proven approach makes math grade-level concepts accessible for all

o Students have completed over 14,000 personalized Zearn lessons this year

II Lexia (K-8 literacy)

o 10+ years

o \$33 per student (800)

o Built on the science of reading

o Research-proven program that accelerates the development of literacy skills

o About 75% of Lexia licenses are actively being used (K starts later in the school year)

II Kami (6-8)

o Three years

o \$1.98 per student (430)

o Online document annotation and markup tool

o Allows for easy collaboration and feedback

o Since we purchased Kami, students have loaded over 100,000 documents into Kami

II Discovery Education Techbook (6-8 Social Studies)

o One year

o \$10.50 per student (410)

o In three months - about 4,000 resources have been viewed

II Gale (3-8)

- o One year
- o Cost per subscription. Between \$238 and \$1,354 per subscription.
- o Extensive online research platform
- o Last fall to this fall, over 2,000 searches have been conducted in Gale

A comparison of annual cost for textbooks vs digital access.

Text vs Software Costs with approximate license numbers:

II Math in Focus (K-8 math)

- o Teacher license - \$150 per teacher (6)
- o Consumable Textbook - \$25.00 per student (1,300)

II Big Ideas Math (8th grade Algebra course)

- o Student license - \$23 per student (25)

II IQWST (6-8 science)

- o \$15.35 per student (430)
- o \$480 per teacher (6)

II Wonders (K-6 ELA)

- o Six year license paid in full. Expires 2025.

Ⓢ Student license \$201.72

Ⓢ Teacher license \$882.00

Ⓢ Anthology \$209.92

Ⓢ Consumable Textbook \$32.80

II StudySync (7-8 ELA)

- o Six year license paid in full. Expires 2029.

Ⓢ Student consumable textbook and license combined - \$174.50 student

Teacher edition and license combined - \$153

Ⓢ .46 per teacher

Do we know how many notebooks are damaged annually or have to be replaced?

Please see attachment

How many school districts have an ELA Coordinator?

II Several districts in our region have a similar position. To note a few, Londonderry, Derry, Milford, Goffstown, Merrimack, Salem, and Nashua all have similar positions.

II Many districts have one ELA position per school in addition to a having a district wide Curriculum Coordinator/Assistant Superintendent position.

There is an increase of 60 new students. Was this an increase in Sped Ed students.

What grade were they in and what is the trend?

	October 2020	October 2021	October 2022	October 2023
Pre K	31	17	34	33
K-8	161	187	205	224
(+63)				

<i>High School in district</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>Out of District & Charter School Placements (K-12)</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Total Enrollment</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>344</i>	<i>364</i>	<i>398 (+88)</i>

The Psychologist is here 2 days and is that the psychologist that evaluates the Spec ED students.

The school psychologist attends all referral meetings, completes evaluations to determine eligibility, completes testing every three years for students, provides counseling to students as an IEP service and per 504 plans, and offer crisis management.

% Of students sent for a referral that are identified.

In the 2023 school year, the referral to identification % for K-8, was 73%. (74 referrals, 57 tested, 42 identified).

Cost per student 17,819/student 2024. Actual calculation is 20,179?

Prior to the Board vote on 11/7/23 the fund balance return for tax rate setting was \$937,000.

The

Board took action to reclassify \$200,000 to retained fund balance in order to have a contingency fund. On 11/8 the DOE-25 and MS-25 were adjusted accordingly and resubmitted to the State. \$737,000 is the amount that will be used at tax rate setting.

Per the DOE-25 the cost per pupil is \$17,819.18 (Elementary: \$15,681.52 Middle: \$18,755.87).

Since we are a K-8, High School enrollment is not included in calculation on the DOE-25. The calculation, per the State reporting is not as simple as total expenditure divided by enrollment:

Total Expenditures (General Fund, Food Service, Other Special Revenue)

Less: Food Service Revenue

Less: Transportation Expenditures

Less: Supplemental Expenditures (In the case of Hooksett this represents tuition and equipment purchases)

Equals: Adjusted total expenditures

Adjusted total is then divided by the Average Daily Membership (Attendance).

Attached is the per pupil expenditure for the school years, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23.

B. Soucy asked for clarification regarding non-payment for things not done.

If the voters approve the capital project, then it spread out in equal installments. The price doesn't go up on the project and we pay as the work is done.

Mike Davey, Energy Efficient investments,

Leases can be structured in multiple different ways. When the voters pass a lease, the banks provide different terms. This would be phased over 2-3 years. Options to borrow the entire amount with equal installments over 15 years. During that time the bank would pay to the construction company as work is done. Another way is similar to Timberlane. A master lease agreement for a 3 year project; they approved not to have equal payments. They will borrow just the project amount for 1 year. Then the next year they will lock at the current rate with Bank of

America. That has a little more risk or benefit. Either lock in for the entire amount in 2024 or lock in just for that amount in 2024 for the amount for that year if you think the rates will go down. Those master leases are up to 5 years.

Most municipalities finance with a lease. With a bond, it is more difficult to refinance. With the bond bank you go out once a year and lock in to that for 15 years. For a lease, it is similar to a mortgage so if the rates go down you can refinance the remaining amount.

B. Soucy: EEI is the contractor for the SAU and you get the contractors for the SAU. In the meetings, information relayed to the committee, you said that with inflation you can 8-10%.

M. Davey: That is the best guess. In Burlington VT they passed 180 million HS and then they had to go back and add 20 million for inflation. To mitigate that risk, we suggest Hooksett procure the major equipment in year one. We replaced all the units in Manchester and kept the material at a crane yard in Hooksett

B. Soucy: If you are only getting paid if work is being done. You have factored in the 8-10%?

Mike Davey: We build a contingency in our price. We could sign a maximum price to lock in the pricing. We haven't discussed to that level but we can address that. If there is surplus, you can do early payoff.

B. Soucy: If an aspect of this project doesn't get completed, like we have to do the roof immediately, 3 million on a roof came from someone else. Equal payments are being made. What happens to that.

Mike Davey: I can't imagine you wouldn't know that in advance.

M. Kowack: Schoolology started in 2020 and See Saw for homework assignments. It is all electronic and more visibility for parents at what cost?

Meg Largee: Subscriptions are based on the different content. Science activities and resource are bought individually. The media specialist identified the ones most beneficial, and everyone has access to that. It is not by user. It is available to students as well as teachers.

Textbooks vs Digital access

M. Kowack: With the rise of technology with COVID, we had to add personnel and software. For me potentially hundred of thousands of dollars extra. I don't think it was accurately portray what the cost is to the community.

B. Soucy: Are the generations now more tech based than textbook based.

M. Largee: We are in a digital world. We do sometimes find it doesn't work, so we stop purchasing it like Math in Focus. We make sure it is useful and meaningful. Currently middle school Social Studies textbooks are all on line. So rather than purchasing a textbook, we use the online format.

ELA Programs are very expensive. Is it still better than textbooks?

M. Largee: They have both programs and books. 90% teacher and 10% as a resource on the computer.

The licensing is over \$200 per student for 6 years.

Chrome books damaged annually and replaced

See attached Technology Report

Number of replaced Chromebooks is staggering

D. Roma: It stops updating after 5 years.

Before Covid, Underhill and Cawley were covered but we didn't have enough for Memorial.

With funds, we starting purchasing to fill the gap. Cawley had the oldest and used by Middle schoolers. At Cawley, I did 520 cases myself, a lot of breakage is in the 4-5 age group. At Memorial we have provided all 3rd graders with new computers. Cawley's number is high because they have the oldest computers and we hope they get to 8th grade before they retire.

Kindergarten gets a Chromebook

Prior to Covid, we were not saturated with computers. I was trying to have static purchases so we can have them purchased and travel up the grade with students. The device has a life span that you can plan on.

Cost associated with the devices.

D. Roma: \$295 with a license. Annually we've bought 150 for 3rd grade and supplementing additionally 150 for a total of 300.

Security for students:

D. Roma: There is a filter and they have limited access. There is a history we can search.

ELA Coordinators:

M. Largee: Everybody has an ELA Coordinator. Most have 1 per school plus 1 per district. This position facilitates our learning teams. It runs the Literacy Committee and makes sure we are in compliance and coordinate testing, does model lessons, and will cover if there is a substitute teacher. We had this position for years for math. We implemented this with funds during COVID.

Special Ed

What age group has the increased needs come from.

C. Osborn: Part, is as we move forward, what we know about brain development and how kids learn and what we know about disability. Regulation changes help us better identify disabilities. More advocacy around children rights. We have more knowledge. The Covid part is more with younger students with parents home and struggling with life and they didn't get exposure to what is typically experience in language and environment. That is why we are seeing young students with more struggles because they were more isolated.

B. Soucy: Our town compared to State; are our growth numbers inline with the State?

C. Osborne: When I started it was 15% and now it is over 20%. Were below the state at 17 for a while and now we are at 22%.

Psychologist – contracted one per school at 140/hour for the regular school hours. The psychologist is part of the union teacher salary structure and therefore make it difficult to hire at that union rate.

73% qualification after referral.

Cost per student

Cory Isbiki: Comes from the State DOE Report. Food service general fund and excludes transportation and tuition. Do not include HS.

Cost per student is based on actual expenditures not the budget.

Presentation by Mike Davey EEI- see presentation attached.

B. Soucy stated that he would prefer that the School Board put all the needs in the Budget and not plan on purchasing with fund balance.

W. Rearick: We purchase things out of fund balance that are one time items. If we put everything in that we needed, we would be at a much higher budget and it wouldn't get passed. I was not use to School Districts giving back the money to the town. In Rhode Island, we keep our fund balance.

B. Soucy: You already said that there are things that you plan to do with fund balance this year. The voters will decide on the warrant article but the voters will have no say on the spending of fund balance.

Discussion regarding the \$200,000 which was retained for fund balance.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next two weeks will continue School District Budget Review

PUBLIC INPUT

ADJOURNMENT

G. Martins motioned to adjourn. Seconded by R. Ross.

Vote unanimously in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan