

Budget Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2024
4:00 p.m., Hampden Academy - Library

Attendees: Committee members Jessica Barnes, Stacey Haskell, Will Seavey, Nick Raymond, Superintendent, and Trish Hayes, District Accountant, Greg Im from Drummond Woodsum and Town representatives: Casey Ashe, Cynthia Grant, Eric Jarvi.

Absent: John Holmes and Allan Gordon

Budget Chair, Will Seavey opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Superintendent Raymond explained that Article 1 is regular education and Article 2 is special education. All of the principals and directors were present to discuss the needs of their students.

Pertaining to Article 1, Superintendent Raymond noted the district is currently in negotiations with the teachers' union. The support staff contract is already in place. Both of these classifications are contained within the Articles 1 and 2. The new Maine Family Medical Leave Act tax is included in the budget. Current employees are included in the budget, however, we have just been informed that two teachers will be retiring. They are included in the budget at this time because their notice was so recent. Those amounts will be adjusted for the budget revision meeting on April 25th.

Principal Moore spoke first about the Smith School's needs. One request for an ed tech to work in a sensory room. Newburgh Pre-K will be housed at McGraw school next year. A playground for the Pre-K students at the McGraw school will be purchased.

Principal Lindermann at the McGraw school has no new positions, minor fluctuations based on curriculum materials. Not a lot of changes; consistent with last year.

Principal Cyr discussed transitioning with the grade 2 at the Weatherbee school. Next year's numbers will shift. She has requested a new teacher to meet the increased enrollment at the school, otherwise there are small budgetary variances. Currently there are 18 teachers; next year will require 19 teachers because of the numbers of students. Projections show that 20 teachers will be needed in FY26. She is working with Principal Lindemann for a smooth transition of the second grade students.

Principal Thibedeau at Reeds Brook school discussed fine tuning the books, software, and E-Books account budgets. Supply costs are increasing because we provide school supplies so parents don't have to. Will be reducing 2 staff members, hopefully through attrition, due to decrease in number of students. Increased art program to full-time for FY25.

Principal Pratt at Wagner school discussed staffing remains static, some shifting in numbers of students, but doesn't require additional staff. E-Books will increase due to fine tuning.

Principal Ruhlin at Hampden Academy discussed the 504 Coordinator is an additional position for FY25. This position will supervise and support guided study hall and coordinate 504 plans. The NNDCC program will be paused for FY25 due to lack of enrollment. A new request is the Advanced Placement proposal in which the district pays for one AP test fee for each student in FY25. I Hope that this will increase the number of students that take AP courses. Will monitor and revisit in FY26.

Superintendent Raymond mentioned that another 504 Coordinator position is built into the budget at the K-8 level for FY25.

Dorothy Hall, the GT Coordinator, asked for increases in professional development and contracted services for what cannot be provided in-house. The staffing model goal is to provide equitable services across the district. She has proposed to reduce the teacher position and have 3 full-time ed techs to cover Winterport, Reeds Brook, and Hampden Academy. She has seen an increase in students that are presenting as twice exceptional. The Dept. of Education provides reimbursement for Gifted & Talented programs on a two-year reimbursement turnaround basis.

Superintendent Raymond reviewed the cover sheet for Article 1 budgeted items and variances. Mr. Raymond pointed out the cost of the new Maine FMLA which is currently over \$200,000 for FY25 is based on salaries for all staff. Equipment at the secondary level is beginning to wear out and replacement is needed. Salary and benefits are the predominant costs in this article.

Discussions occurred pertaining to Article 1.

Superintendent Raymond introduced Article 2 - salary and benefits are the majority of the increases for this article. Lynne Wells, Director of Special Services, was introduced to summarize the special education article. Mrs. Wells gave an overview of the special services budget. The past five years – 18 resource room teachers, 8 special ed self-contained teachers, 5.4 speech therapists, 3 OTs, 2.5 SW, 78 ed techs. We are contracting for speech and physical therapy. Currently there are 467 students in Special Education which is a significant increase over last year. Last year we had 430 students. Currently there are 31 students in the referral process and 26 students currently with IEPS in the Child Development Services system. The budget includes an occupational therapist at .4 added for FY25, speech therapist at .4, five additional ed techs to cover the incoming Child Development Services students and is hoping five will be enough. These students have significant needs. There are also two new positions for IEP Coordinators to help the special education staff with their paperwork to enable more teaching time. Mrs. Wells has reduced tuition lines for out of district services and has put that cost into grant funds. Physical therapy costs have been reduced based on reduced student needs. Mrs. Wells spoke about Child Development Services which means that 3-4 year olds would be included in the public school education and our district would be responsible to oversee the student's needs. This is a new initiative driven by the Department of Education. Mrs. Wells will be attending a meeting tomorrow regarding this and will pass along that information at the next meeting. She also explained that students may now stay in school until age 22, so we will see increased needs at both ends of the education process.

Discussions occurred pertaining to Article 2.

Will Seavey handed out the budget committee's response to the town's letter of April 3, 2024. A copy of the response to the towns is attached to these minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

cc: Board of Directors