

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2004

Present: Budget Committee Members Alfred Smith (Chairman), Dennis Acton, Kay Akerley, Leslie Brock, Candice Cantaloupo, Laura Coleman, Gail Pare, Richard Spinney
Board of Selectmen Representative Jack O'Reilly, AA Gillespie, School Board Members Helen Maldini (Chairperson) and Deidre Link, Principal Helen Rist James Katkin, SAU50 Business Administrator, Doctor George A. Cushing, SAU50 Superintendent
Residents Ruth and George Fletcher
Those not in attendances: Jack Anderson and Wil Gilbert

The Budget Committee Chairman Alfred Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to review the budget of the Newington School District.

Gail Pare made the motion to accept the minutes of the January 28, 2004 meeting. The motion was seconded by Kay Akerley. Motion carried with none opposed.

Newington School District

Selectman O'Reilly made the motion to accept the Newington School District Budget of \$1,586,970. The motion was seconded by Gail Pare.

Selectmen O'Reilly asked if the SAU renewed the contract with the teachers this year. Mr. Katkin replied that next year there will be a collective bargaining agreement. This will be in a Warrant Article. He referred to Section 2 of the Schools Proposed Budgets. The proposed budget does not include any financial data that would be contained in any separate warrant articles. As of the printing of this report there were two (2) warrant articles proposed for the 2003-2004 budget. The ratification of a three (3) year collective bargaining agreement is one of the articles proposed. Also included in section 2 of the Budget is a copy of the Newington School District Warrant 2004-2005. Article two (2) of the warrant ask for the approval of the cost item included in the ratification of the collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Katkin added the collective bargaining agreement will increase the salaries and benefits by \$11,901 for 2004-05, coupled with the proposed increase of the operating budget of \$28,521 will bring a total increase in the budget of \$40,422, of about 2.59%. He stated that the collective bargaining agreement will be 2.7 cents on the tax rate. Mr. Katkin explained that the addition of the second warrant article of Thirty Thousand Dollars to be added to the already existing school plant maintenance non-capital reserve fund, along with the collective bargaining agreement warrant will add a total of approximately 6.6 cents on the tax rate.

Chairman Smith asked about the increase in section one of the budget, to salaries. Mr. Katkin explained that the increase is due to a change in some of the existing positions, not due to the bargaining agreement negotiations.

Selectman O'Reilly asked if the increase in section one included any steps. Mr. Katkin answered, "No". He further explained that all step or wage increases must go through the

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collective bargaining agreement and be placed on the warrant.

Kay Akerley asked what the average teacher increase would be. Mr. Katkin replied that the increase will be 4.26%.

Chairman Smith noted that most of the increases to the department's supply lines are minimal and most likely due to an increase in costs.

Laura Coleman asked if this is the first year for the Foreign Language Department. Helen Maldini said that it is the second year. She explained that Portsmouth schools teach sixth graders a foreign language and so it was necessary to upgrade our school's curriculum to include a foreign language for the Newington sixth graders. This way our students will be prepared when they enter seventh grade at the Middle School in Portsmouth.

Gail Pare stated that it is her understanding that there is a new method of teaching science. She asked if the Science Department's expenditures were increased because there is an increase in expandable supplies and materials. Mr. Katkin confirmed this. He added that the science program is now more "hands on" than lecture based.

Denis Acton asked how the School decides which books are outdated and need to be replaced. Dr. Cushing explained that in the past the School Board focused on one department a year to replace and update literature. He stated that currently the school is up-to-date. However, the new administrator, Mrs. Rist will be developing her own plan for book replacements.

Laura Coleman asked if the classroom furniture replacement worked in the same way. Mr. Katkin answered that there is no real established plan to replace furniture due to the size of the school and the number of students. The furniture in Newington does not get the wear that the furniture gets in the bigger schools. So basically it is replaced on an "As Need" basis.

Chairman Smith asked if the decrease in Special Education is due to a reduction in services required. Mr. Katkin stated that it is due to the reduction of 2 aides. Mr. Katkin explained that the school is increasing the hours of the teacher because of the need of the expertise of that teacher from 50% to 70%. This in turn has allowed for the reduction of two aids. Gail Pare asked if this will allow for enough coverage in the classroom. Mr. Katkin stated that it would. He added that Mrs. Rist is a certified Special Education Teacher. After reviewing the students' needs, she came up with this proposal.

Kay Akerley asked how many children in Newington need Special Education. Mr. Katkin referred to Section 9 of the budget book-the graph that shows the percentages of special education students. Newington currently has 18 students with Special Needs. (Preschool = 1, Element School = 8, Middle School = 3, High School = 6).

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Gail Pare asked why the Pre-School Department request when from \$19,968 to 0. Mr. Katkin explained that the Assistant Superintendent was able to get a Federal Grant to fund the Pre-School Program. The Pre-School Program will be housed at the Greenland Central School next year, so the only expense Newington will see for this program is the bussing cost.

Selectman O'Reilly asked about the increase in Cocurricular Activities. Mr. Katkin responded that the increase is due to the environmental camp. The camp is done every other year. Cocurricular also includes field trips and overnight trips for the students.

Kay Akerley asked what the contracted services for the extended school year are. Mr. Katkin explained that there are three students that require constant education because of their special education needs. The school created its own special education program for these learning disabled students. Gail Pare asked where that program is held. Mr. Katkin stated that it is done at the Newington Elementary School. Mrs. Pare asked if the recreation program during the summer interferes with this. Mr. Katkin answered that it does not. Candice Cantaloupo asked the difference between the extended school year teachers and the contracted services. Mr. Katkin explained that the contracted services are a business or services brought in, not a current employee of the school. The services include areas of expertise such as speech pathology and therapy, physical therapy and physiology. Candice Cantaloupo asked about the Speech/Pathology Department and why one person is listed as 20%. Mr. Katkin answered that person is working at 20% of a full time employee.

Chairman Smith asked about the decrease in the nurse's salary. Mr. Katkin stated that there was a change in personnel and the new nurse does not make as much as the last nurse.

Denis Acton asked why it is the School's responsibility to provided Physical Therapy. Chairman Smith explained that four years ago the Supreme Court mandated that any child requiring aid in a public school, it is the responsibility of that school district to provide the services needed (speech therapy, physical therapy, full time nurse, et.). Helen Maldini pointed out that it is more beneficial to help the child, with special needs in elementary school. Then when that child leaves the elementary school they may be more confident and have more control over their special needs. Chairman Smith added that special education also includes programs for the more advanced students (gifted & talented).

Kay Akerley asked about the \$4,000 for Professional Growth Other Services. Dr. Cushing stated that the \$4,000 is for the accreditation of the Newington school. This accreditation is done once every ten years by NEASC. Kay Akerley asked what will happen if the school is not accredited. Dr. Cushing said that at an elementary school level it is not necessary. It is a voluntary process, where the school is held to higher standards. He added that the school will grow from this process. It also helps the school when writing grants. There are also special workshops that will now be available to teachers and staff.

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Gail Pare asked about the rotation of books at the school library. Helen Rist answered that the library budget is based on the State mandated requirements of two new books per year, per child. Mrs. Pare stated that she hoped that the School's library and the Town's library are coordinating their programs, in order to prevent a duplication of efforts. Mr. Katkin stated that the library at the school small and is primarily study resources.

Chairman Smith asked about the decrease in software support services. He noted that there is \$4,173 budgeted for four new computers. Mr. Katkin said that the increase in the Instructor's salaries line on page one reflects the change in position of using one of the computer instructor's expertise to maintain the software. Without relying on an outside third party, he projects it will cut the budget for this expense by about 1/3.

Kay Akerley asked why Professional Membership dues were paid to NHSBA. Dr. Cushing states the NHSBA is where the school district gets its Unemployment Compensation Insurance.

Selectmen O'Reilly asked if the increase in the cost for the Superintendent's office is based on the Town's valuation. Mr. Katkin confirmed.

Denis Acton asked if there is any other reason for the increase in this department. Mr. Katkin stated that part of the increase is due to the increase in the health insurance. He pointed out that health insurance went up 19.8%. He projected that health insurance in the next four years will double. The SAU has introduced a cafeteria plan through the collective bargaining agreement, offering three health insurance plans to the employees. By doing this they hope employees will go on some of the less expensive plans and this will keep insurance costs down. The other two components of the increase are the upgrade of computer software and the salaries increased from 3.9% to 4.5% of the budget.

Chairman Smith asked why the plumbing repairs line has doubled. Mr. Katkin said that there have been a lot of problems with the water fountains at the school. Last year they had to replace two of them.

Selectman O'Reilly asked if the School Board plans to renovate the kitchen. Mr. Katkin stated that the renovations of the kitchen will be done next year. The new kitchen is currently being developed and planned with food service equipment people. The Board will bring in the plans with their next budget.

Chairman Smith asked about snowplowing for \$3,500. Selectman O'Reilly stated that the Town will continue to plow the school however the school will now pay for the service.

There was discussion on the play ground equipment at the school. Selectman O'Reilly stated that about two years ago. The Town had turned the equipment over to the school.

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Kay Akerley asked why Newington needed an extra morning bus. Helen Maldini stated that Newington is trying to lengthen the school day by twenty minutes. The school is behind all the other school districts in instructional time. If Newington has an additional bus in the morning, students from the other side of the highway can be brought in earlier and the day can start at 8:30. Mr. Katkin stated that the District is still in the process of negotiating the bussing contract. He explained a plan to combine bus routes with the other Towns in the District in order to maximize the use of each bus, which will minimize the cost. The only way to gain the extended school day will be to add the extra route in the morning, because the afternoon routes are complicated by the High School routes.

Chairman Smith asked if the decrease in the Middle School tuition is because the students have moved on to the High School. Mr. Katkin confirmed. Gail Pare asked if the tuition at the Middle School is higher than the tuition at the High School. Mr. Katkin said that the per pupil rate is higher. Currently there are 20 students attending Middle School from Newington. The tuition rate for budgetary purposes is \$9,518. The High School currently has 33 students from Newington. The tuition rate for budgetary purposes is \$8,947. Candice Cantaloupo said that back in August at the Budget meeting, Mr. Katkin had anticipated that the tuition at the High School would be increased because of the new building. She asked if Mr. Katkin had any further information. Mr. Katkin stated that the rental fee at the high school has not been determined yet. The rental fee is based on the Regional Educational Agreement in that agreement is the rental factor. He stated that the rental factor is based on the value of the school divided by the capacity of the building. This gives a cost. He projects a change of approximately \$300 per student. The new construction will not affect the budget until next year.

Chairman Smith stated that the overall budget has increased by 1.83%. Most of the changes are in the costs to Special Education. He asked if there were any further questions or comments. There being none: Chairman Smith called for a vote to accept the School District Budget in the amount of \$1,586,970. Motion was carried with none opposed.

The Budget Committee reviewed the Newington School District Warrant for 2004-2005.

Article 2: To see if the Newington School District will vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement between the Newington School Board and the Association of Coastal Teachers/ Newington which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2004-05	\$11,901
2005-06	12,970
2006-07	13,520

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and further to raise and appropriate the sum of eleven thousand nine hundred one dollars (\$11,901) for the 2004-05 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal year. (Majority Vote Required). (NOTE: This appropriation is in addition to Warrant Article #1, the operating budget article).

Gail Pare made the motion to recommend Article #2. Seconded by Jack O'Reilly. Voted. Motion carried; None opposed.

Article 4: To see if the Newington School District will raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 (thirty thousand dollars) to be added to the previously established School Property Maintenance Fund, a non capital reserve fund under the provisions of RSA 31:1-c; for the purpose of repairing and maintaining the school buildings and grounds. (NOTE: This appropriation is in addition to Warrant Article number 1, the operating budget article).

Jack O'Reilly made the motion to recommend Article #4. Seconded by Laura Coleman. Voted. Motion carried; None opposed.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. by Kay Akerley. The motion was seconded by Jack O'Reilly. Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia L. Gillespie
Administrative Assistant