

**Dunbarton School District
Dunbarton, New Hampshire**

**Dunbarton School Board Meeting
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
February 3, 2011**

Board Members present
Debra Foster
Rene Ouellet
Betty Noyes (7:20 pm)
Deborah Trottier
Carl Metzger

Administration present
Stacy Buckley, Superintendent
Carol Thibaudeau, Principal
Ray Labore, Business Administrator

Call to Order

Debra Foster called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Handouts of the budget and the proposed revenues were made available to the public.

Opening of Public Budget Hearing on Dunbarton School District Budget

Mrs. Foster gave an overview of how the budget is compiled. She explained that the approach was to start with a basic budget without adding anything new. Then the Board asked the Principal for a list of needs and wants. After prioritizing this list, the Board decided what items needed to be addressed.

This year there are no major maintenance project; just routine maintenance. The final proposed budget is \$5,229,807 and is \$145,000.00 less than the current budget. Mrs. Foster stated that we were able to maintain the quality of programs of the school.

Mrs. Foster also explained that overall there were several areas of decreases. She stated that we don't need to have any technology investment this year. The technology plan complies with the State requirement. Grant money has been used towards technology. Mrs. Foster also explained that there was a decrease in special ed transportation and regular ed transportation. In addition, we only have 5 more years to pay on the bond to pay the HVAC.

Mrs. Foster also discussed the increases which include supplies for the curriculum, health benefits, and a minor increase for technical supplies.

Mrs. Foster further discussed the accomplishments under this year's present budget. We have rubberized the steps going to the community center, tiled a classroom and replaced coving in the bathroom. The new sound system, Promethean Boards and new stage came out of grant money and stage money.

Looking at the operating budget line there are some small increases. There is an increase in salary and benefits. This is based on what we know right now.

Mrs. Foster also discussed the line item, 1800, Community fund which is our Kitchen fund. She explained that the Board cooperates with the Selectmen to put money in to defray the cost. We put aside \$1,000.00 every year.

Regarding the support services – the health services, there is an increase because we are purchasing a locking cabinet for the nurse. Medication needs to be secure. In addition, we are purchasing an audiometer. It will be cheaper to have students tested in-house, rather than sending them out for testing.

Concerning Instructional, there is an increase for the Information Center. We are purchasing new tables because the tables in the library aren't safe. Also, the shelving is starting to bow so we included new shelving in the budget for the Media Center. Everything else shows a decrease.

Mrs. Foster touched upon Technology support. She explained that we contract with someone who can fix the computers remotely. There is a slight increase because it is based on more time.

The principal's budget went up \$6,400.00. We had to budget for a stipend for a staff member to call substitute teachers.

Transportation – has gone down. We had a new contract put in place and got a better deal. There was an approximate \$8,000.00 savings.

The bond went down \$3,000.00 due to the amount of interest going down.

Food service budget has dropped as well. The estimated proposal is less. We do have to purchase a new microwave.

Mrs. Foster also explained that there are no changes to school board costs. The SAU services are less because the assessment decreased.

The curriculum did increase for supplies for science, natural science because we have to restore the consumables that the kids use for science labs. Last year we put in printers in every classroom but we now have to supply cartridges for all the printers.

Mrs. Trottier gave a presentation on Special Education. She explained that Special Education is mandated by the State and therefore the School must provide the service. She explained that we have a proactive approach in Dunbarton. Because of this approach we have fewer students needing services. We anticipate a decrease in Special Ed on the elementary level, a little increase at the middle school and a little increase at the high school. Overall Special Education is approximately \$11,000.00 less.

Carl Metzger gave a presentation on the General Maintenance Budget, as well as Electricity, Oil and propane costs. He explained that the Board decided there aren't any outstanding items to address this year. We worked with administration to come up with a 5 year plan such as tiling the rest of classrooms, issues with siding and perhaps a new roof within the next 7 years. Overall this budget went down \$3,374.00

Mrs. Noyes gave a presentation on Tuition. She explained that the tuition is based on enrollment. For the 7th grade we are planning on 27 students at a cost of \$10,828.00 per student. In the 8th grade, we are planning on 34 students, again at a cost of \$10,828.00. The Board decided to add in one additional student. These total \$671,336.00 to MVMS for our middle school students.

In the middle school, we also have ESY for 4 students and that costs \$500 per student. That is included in tuition. This brings the total cost of tuition for the middle school to \$673,336.00.

In the high school, we planned for 38 students for the 9th grade, 38 students for the 10th grade, 34 students for the 11th grade and 33 students for the 12th grade.

This gives a total amount of \$1,677,070.00 for the high school tuition. Also under tuition we have categorized another \$750.00 to take care of students that have home tutoring. In addition, the ESY program for 4 students is another \$2,000.00.

A member of the public asked what the cost of tuition is for the high school. Mrs. Noyes answered that the tuition per student at the high school level is \$11,566.00.

Mrs. Foster asked the Superintendent if the tuition could change. Mrs. Buckley stated that it might change. Mrs. Buckley also stated that the numbers are based on the Superintendent's budget. Mr. Ouellet stated that if there is a change, the number could go down.

Mr. Trexler asked if any extra seats were budgeted. Mrs. Noyes stated that there is one extra seat in the high school and 1 in the middle school.

Mrs. Foster stated that in past years the Board reserved 3-4 seats but we whittled it down over the years.

A member of the public asked if we have any money left in the Special Ed Reserve Fund. Mrs. Foster stated that the amount is \$92,000.00. She further stated that the Board wanted to build it up to \$125,000.00 but we're not doing anything this year. Mr. Ouellet stated that years ago, the goal was \$100,000.00.

Mrs. Foster also explained that when the Board budgeted for preschool transportation slots, they budgeted for known costs only.

Mrs. Foster stated that the proposed budget is \$5,229,807.000.

Mr. Trexler asked if we are using the same bus company. Mrs. Foster stated that the Special Ed provider is new, but the regular education provider is the same.

Mr. Trexler also asked about grant funding and if we have a lot of programs that started in grant money and are now in the Operating Budget. Mrs. Buckley stated that we haven't used grant money for programs. She also commented that the Artist in Residence, a portion is granted and a portion is in the budget.

Mr. Ouellet stated that for the last 3-4 years our technology infrastructure wasn't where it is suppose to be. We have used the grant money to enhance our technology. We don't anticipate any expenditures in that area this year.

Mrs. Foster stated that 20 laptops on a cart are on the wish list this year. We will look to grant money for that. Promethean boards were purchased with grant money. We try to revive as many laptops as we can but we try to keep up. We decided that purchasing is the best way to go and will use grant money to purchase new computers.

Mr. Ouellet gave a presentation on the projected revenues. He explained that revenues had not been included in the presentation at the public hearing before. He explained the hand-out of projected revenues and that the revenues come from state and federal sources.

Mr. Ouellet further stated that we are projecting the State adequacy grant. It hasn't been decided at the state level. It makes coming in at a certain tax rate impossible because we don't know what will come in for revenues so we stayed at level funding.

We are anticipating a large decrease in the Unreserved fund balance. This is the amount of money not expended in the budget.

We had a significant decrease in revenues from last year. One factor that may help us is that the valuation for the town has gone up. We anticipate that the budget will produce a tax rate of \$14.83 – that is projected.

Rene Ouellet stated that we may not know what the state adequacy amount will be until we finish with the budget.

Mr. Ouellet discussed the proposed teacher contract. To give a sense of where discussions went, we looked at the old contract and cleaned up the language inconsistencies. One was the work day.

He stated that they discussed preparation periods and increased them slightly. We can do this without expanding staff.

Another issue raised was how sick leave can be used. We changed some deadlines about teachers letting us know about plans for retirement, and credits status. We found ways to change the deadlines so we get the info earlier for budget planning.

A major extra-curricular activity is Sargent Camp where we send the whole 6th grade. The board is proposing in this contract that teachers receive a stipend this year. The total cost is \$1,400.00.

There were no changes to health benefits. We did some adjustments with salary. The salary grid moves up with experience. Around the grid itself, we negotiated how the whole grid would move up. There will be no cost of living increase for either 2 years. The increase is just under 3% the 1st year and 2.5% the 2nd year.

The total cost of the contract is for 2011-2012 is \$34,297.00. That's \$.11 on the tax rate. The increase for 2012 – 2013 is \$28,651.00

Mr. Ouellet stated that the Board is very aware that coming up with a new contract is a 3 party endeavor – the teacher union, the board who thinks about the bottom line and then there's the town and what makes sense and what can be afforded.

We have not only put in Article 4 but also added Article 5. If the contract is voted down, we want to go back into negotiations. We can't automatically go into negotiations without authorization by the courts.

If Article 4 is voted down, Article 5 would allow the Board to resume negotiations. A special meeting would then be called to discuss the new contract.

Mrs. Foster said the alternate is that the negotiations would start next September. We would be pushed to September and start over again.

Mr. Hammond stated that the Selectmen went through the same thing on the town level but not to this magnitude. He commented that it is tough not to get the revenues. Mr. Hammond stated that he would take the recommendation and go forward. He thinks that Article 5 should be there that you don't lose anything by having it.

Someone asked if Article 4 is voted down, would the board can go back and negotiate and then have a special meeting. Mrs. Foster stated that it would be before June 30th.

Someone commented that if you call a special meeting you won't get 5 people. Mr. Ouellet stated the intent is not to push something through. There is a 3 way partnership.

Mr. Trexler asked if Article 5 requires you come back to a special meeting. Mr. Ouellet said that the board would call a Special Meeting.

Mr. Trexler also questioned the health insurance benefits. Mrs. Foster stated that the health plan is Blue Choice Tier III.

Mrs. Trottier explained Article 6, the Kitchen fund. She explained that they are trying to build a kitchen fund. Things are aging and we need to be more proactive. There is \$1,000.00 in there now and we want to start saving up. We are only looking at putting in \$1,000.00 in it this year; It's a savings account.

Mr. Metzger addressed Article 7, the Capital reserve fund. He explained that each year we put in \$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00, we just recently used \$66,000.00 to insulate underneath the roof to cut down the ice dams. So we want to put in another \$10,000.00 because we are looking at replacing the roof in 7 years. Also the siding is deteriorating.

Mr. Trexler stated that the recommendation is to reroof in 6-7 years. The concern was that if we are getting any leaks, we'll never know it because the foam insulation is so tight. We recommended that it be re-roofed at the 20 year mark. The cost estimate was \$186,000.00 last year and if you include the community center the cost jumped to \$250,000.00. It will be much more in 6-7 years.

Mr. Ouellet made the clarification that it is coming from unreserved fund. Mr. Trexler asked about emergency capital repairs. As an example, if the boiler went would we have the \$20,000.00 or so that we would need. Can the board withdraw from capital reserve fund? Mrs. Foster stated that every year something comes up. For instance, the tank monitoring system had to be replaced. That was not a budgeted cost. Another example is that we had to replace the carpet with tile last May.

A question arose as to what the tax impact would be with the salary increases. Mr. Ouellet answered - \$.101/2 cents for just the salaries \$.11 with Sargent camp.

Public Comment

No further comments

Adjournment

The Public Budget hearing adjourned at 8:39 PM

Judith van Kalken
School Board Recording Secretary