

Budget Committee

November 9, 2017

FINAL

Roll Call:

Ann Bond
Clint Hanson
David Doherty-School Board Representative
Mark LePage-Chairperson
Gerry Fleury-Vice Chairperson
Brian Seaworth
Marie Chouinard
Mike Connor
Pat Boucher-School Board Alternative Representative
Peter Gagy
Tina Courtemanche-Selectman Representative
David Sheldon-Selectman Alternative Representative

Excused-Karen Yeaton

Call to Order: 630pm

Minutes:

Gerry Fleury made a motion to approve the minutes from 11/2/17. Clint Hanson seconded the motion to approve the minutes.

Discussion: There are a few mistakes that were noticed such Sept was Dept.

Motion accepted as amended 10-0

II. Continued Discussion School Revenue.

Mark Lepage opened the discussion with letting everyone know the tax bills were sent out on 11/8/17. However it has been made known that residents of the town still have a lot of questions. Hopefully over the coming weeks these questions will be answered.

Dave Doherty School Board Representative on the Budget Committee gave an update from the last School Board meeting. Patty Sherman is working on getting answers to many of the questions posed from the first meeting. In addition she has implemented an immediate budget freeze. All purchases have to be reviewed before authorization.

Mr. Doherty also presented a packet of information prepared by Amber Wheeler Business Administrator. A review of the packet ensued with one of the first discussion being of enrollment and how estimations are projected.

Mark Lepage asked why the school used a range of 80-95%. This was what the school has used historically, however lately the enrollment has been dropping affecting the numbers more. Clint Hanson stated that in the past there intentionally was a 20% reduction to allow for the buffer and to not be in this situation.

Mike Conner wanted to know when the MS 24 was submitted as it was stated earlier that it was due September 1. Mr. Doherty stated he remembered at the fall Budget meeting that the MS24 was not completed as of yet and this was after September 1. It was submitted more towards the middle of October as the school was waiting for the numbers from the school to submit to DRA. However the committee does have to remember that Amber works for 5 different schools therefore we only get 1/5 of her time.

David Sheldon asked if there was a revenue shortfall last year as well however not as significant? Was this taken into account when projecting this year's numbers? Clint Hanson stated this information would be found on page 9 of the packet therefore they would wait until it was reviewed.

The percentages used in the past year to calculate students was told to the committee by Mark Lepage. Allenstown used 93%, Chichester 90%, Epsom 98% with an overall percentage of 94%. In addition it looks as though there was a significant increase of Pembroke students enrolled.

Ann Bond requested to know if a town stated they were sending a certain amount of students if they paid for those students no matter what? The town's only pay for the current enrolled students per AREA agreement.

The next section reviewed was that of tuition calculations per Dave Doherty.

Ann Bond requested to know if the sending town gets reimbursed from the state why didn't the Town of Pembroke receive this money. It was stated that the cost of the special education students come with an increased cost from the sending town therefore we are getting paid for the services upfront and the sending town gets reimbursed after a period of time.

Gerry Fleury requested to know why the tuition revenue is off. It is important to understand this now as this will allow us not set ourselves up for the same thing next year.

Clint Hanson stated that there are both fixed and variable costs associated with the school. Therefore no matter what there are some things that can't be changed immediately. In addition page 9 in the packet states that if tuition is too low then it can be billed to the sending towns the following year.

Gerry Fleury stated that we should have a mechanism in place from 2016 to show why this has happened is this in place now? What can be done to mitigate now?

Tina Courtemanche requested to know when we know how many students are attending the school. Per David Doherty a more firm number is calculated around the 3rd week of September each year.

Discussion ensued with the disappointment in what had happened. Some committee members stating that the ball was dropped by someone. And that it is bothersome that the estimations have such a variance.

David Doherty stated that the School Board is looking at the classroom size and staffing however there are variables that add to the decisions that are made.

Gerry Fleury reiterated what he stated earlier in the meeting. The bigger problem throughout all of this is the enrollment estimations were off and there causing a significant shortfall.

Ann Bond stated that the 10/24 School Board Minutes state that the tuition rate is covering the budget. Dave Doherty stated this comment was written incorrectly.

Mike Conner stated that he didn't know if the Budget Committee failed however it shows that we need to look more on the revenue side of the budget as well. Mark Lepage agreed that looking at revenue, estimates, history and make sure we are more conservative.

Dave Doherty stated that Amber will try to do better. She understands the information for what the school and budget committee is looking for. She knows what needs to be seen in the future.

Agenda for next budget meeting include an overview of the Budget Packets.

Clint Hanson requested to know why there was an increased revenue with the town budget. It was stated that David Jodoin takes a conservative approach when estimating the numbers for the budget.

Brian Seaworth stated that the increase in the county portion was due to the revaluation and the county Collective Bargaining Agreement.

David Doherty stated he did his best writing down all of the questions for the board. He asked however if there was any specific questions to email him directly. Mark Lepage requested to be copied on all of the questions.

Gerry Fleury expressed his concern on how the town employees will be treated during this tax bill season. Ann Bond questioned if the School sent out a notice to the residents explaining things. Per David Doherty this was not done. Mark Lepage requested to have a one page outline of what happened.

Marty Perlloo requested to have this mailed to the residents as they would already be mad coming in.

Steven Nadeau requested the newspapers/media be notified to explain to calm residents

Shawn Manseau requested a press release.

Mark Lepage requested to know who would want to do this as he is not willing to do this. Ann Bond stated she would be comfortable to do so on the Budget Committee behalf with a School Board member.

Motion to adjourn was made by Gerry Fleury and seconded by Brian Seaworth. Motion passed 10-0 at 830pm.