

**Budget Committee
Minutes
February 8, 2011**

Present: R. Barnes, T. Beard, B. Boyd, R. Buckley J. Burk, B. Cummings, S. Heinrich,
G. Markwell, M. Publicover, A. Schneider and School Board Alternate R.
Swonger

Excused: M. Beck

Also Present: Superintendent M. Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. M.
McLaughlin, and School Business Administrator M. Shevenell

A. Schneider called the meeting to order at 7: 06 P.M and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

A. Schneider reviewed the agenda for the evening: discuss any pertinent items before the Public Hearing, recess the meeting at 7:25 PM, open the Public Hearing at 7:30 PM and then resume the Committee meeting after the Public Hearing for any final recommendations and actions.

A. Schneider announced that Deliberative Session would be held on March 7th and that immediately after Deliberative Session, the Committee would meet to make any final recommendations as well as approve minutes from the February meetings. He indicated that those minutes would be sent out prior to the Deliberative Session for review and that anyone with any proposed changes should contact the secretary ahead of time.

Petitioned Warrant Articles

A. Schneider announced that no petitioned warrant articles had been received.

Follow-up on Operating Budget

A. Schneider told the Committee that R. Swonger had some additional information to share regarding the proposed teacher's contract.

R. Swonger provided each member with three handouts

1. Cost comparison of the three health care plans
2. Salaries in 7 surrounding communities showing just the minimum and maximum steps
3. Merrimack's full salary scale and how Merrimack's salaries compare to the average of the 7 surrounding communities.

Discussion included the following points:

- The salaries listed are for the current year and do not take the proposed contract or any salary increases that the surrounding communities might implement this year.

Minutes, 2-8-11, continued

- Merrimack uses Amherst, Bedford, Brookline, Goffstown, Hollis, put in list for salary comparison because these towns are within a reasonable commuting area and still in southern New Hampshire and have a similar cost of living.
- Several years ago the District regularly lost teachers to other school districts. Teachers now seem to be staying based on work climate and benefits.
- Much of the salary information is available on the state Department of Education website.
- Merrimack salaries are 10% below the average of the surrounding communities on comparable steps.
- The number of salary steps varies for each town.
- If an experienced teacher is hired, that teacher does not start on step one, but is given credit for the number of years of teaching experience.

A. Schneider recessed the meeting at 7:25 PM.

The meeting resumed at 7:50 PM.

A. Schneider asked if members wanted to continue the discussion on salaries. No one did.

Final Actions

Article 3: Teacher's Contract

A. Schneider said that the vote to recommend Article 3 was 10 – 1 – 0 and asked if any member wanted to change his or her vote. No one did.

S. Heinrich asked if R. Buckley wanted to share his opinion. By consensus, members agreed not to re-vote on articles unless someone who had originally voted wanted to change his or her vote, but to offer R. Buckley a chance to express his opinion, if he wanted to do so.

R. Buckley told the Committee he was in favor of Article 3.

Article 5: Establish a Capital Reserve Fund for Combined SAU/Special Services Office

A. Schneider said that the vote to recommend Article 5 was 8 – 2 - 1 and asked if any member wanted to change his or her vote. No one did.

R. Buckley told the Committee he was in favor of Article 3.

Article 6: Operating Budget

A. Schneider asked if there was any other discussion on the operating budget. In addition, he asked R. Buckley if he had any questions about the budget.

There was no other discussion and R. Buckley had no questions.

Minutes, 2-8-11, continued

R. Barnes made a MOTION to recommend the proposed operating budget. Second: S. Heinrich.

S. Heinrich said the job of the Committee is not necessarily to cut, but to review, the proposed budget looking out for the prudential interests of the District as well as the taxpayers.

A. Schneider said that a majority of the Committee agreed that no changes were needed and those that feel that there needs to be a change in the way the District is run, need to work with the School Board and their processes before a budget gets proposed.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 9 – 2 – 0.

Voting YES: R. Barnes, T. Beard, , J. Burk, R. Buckley, B. Cummings, S. Heinrich, M. Publicover, A. Schneider, R. Swonger

Voting NO: B. Boyd, G. Markwell

A. Schneider reminded the members they had a budget form to sign before leaving the meeting.

Other

M. Publicover asked what had happened with the sub-committee on Rules of Order.

B. Boyd said he felt it was appropriate to wait until the budget was finalized before starting the task and he expected to call a meeting shortly.

Public Participation

There was no public participation

Board Comments

A. Schneider reminded everyone that elections were in April. He said he would call a meeting in May or June so that the Committee could decide what direction it wanted to go in, unless a meeting to discuss proposed rules of order was needed before that time.

R. Buckley announced he would not be running again.

B. Boyd thanked the members for giving him the time to make several motions and for be willing to listen to him.

A. Schneider thanked all the members for their hard work. He said it had been a difficult year between resignations and the need to make decisions about what the Committee was going to do this year.

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: B. Cummings. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

A. Schneider adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM.