

Gilford Budget Committee Minutes

December 12, ~~2012~~ 2013

6:30 p.m.

Gilford Town Hall

PML
Chair Bud Comm
11/21/14

Members Present: Jeffrey Beane, Phyllis Corrigan, Sue Greene, Richard Grenier, Robert Henderson, Dave Horvath, Kevin Roy, and Karen Thurston.

Members Absent: Fred Butler, Kevin Leandro, and Allen Voivod.

Other attendees: Kent Hemingway, Superintendent of Schools; Scott Isabelle, Assistant Superintendent for Business; Marcia Ross, Gilford Middle School Principal; Anthony Sperazzo, Gilford High School Assistant Principal; Peter Sawyer, Gilford High School Principal; Sue Allen, Gilford School Board Chair; and Tim Bartlett, Director of Buildings and Grounds.

Phyllis Corrigan opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. She outlined the agenda and asked those who would speak to identify themselves for the benefit of the record.

District and Maintenance Accounts:

Dave Horvath reviewed the School Administration subcommittee's written report in detail. He noted that some figures presented therein would need to be rectified "so we'll probably have to re-do these minutes when we get to the very end." Other discussion topics are summarized as follows:

Operation & Maintenance of Facilities Elementary School

- The committee recommends dividing proposed door replacement at the elementary school gymnasium and auditorium between this year and next so as to spread the \$24,540 costs over time. Dave acknowledged that his committee had not had the opportunity to inspect the doors or the carpet in the music room so the recommendation was made purely on a financial basis. Phyllis commented that her subcommittee will visit the school on December 13 and volunteered to inspect the doors and carpet at that time. Tim Bartlett clarified that the doors, both single- and double-sets, were installed in 1989 and are "extremely high-usage doors." Their mechanisms are in disrepair and replacement parts are unavailable. Retro-fitting new hardware would not be cost-effective.
- Kent Hemingway clarified that the proposed electrical outlets are computer charging stations and not motion sensing devices, which had previously been voted down at election.
- Scott Isabelle elaborated that the Simplex clock system, which runs the bells at the schools, is a proprietary system serviceable by only one repair person in the area. A

contract for maintenance on that system is included in every year's budget. Projectors are being installed in the elementary school, and they require power and data cabling. Pending review of the subject doors and music room carpeting, the School Administration subcommittee recommends reducing the Special Projects item on Page 16 of the proposed budget, Operation & Maintenance of Facilities Elementary School by \$17,000. Dave proposed that voting on the recommendation be deferred to the next Budget Committee meeting.

Operation & Maintenance of Facilities Middle School

The subcommittee recommended approval of Page 26 of the proposed budget at \$231,250.

Operation & Maintenance of Facilities High School

Dave reiterated the subcommittee's desire to spread the costs of some of these special projects over time, and outlined in particular which were approved, which were not, and which needed further investigation. He noted that subcommittee members had not yet had an opportunity to inspect some recommended special project areas. Other discussion topics are summarized as follows:

- Tim Bartlett explained that the 500 auditorium seats are original to the building (1974). The seats are at or near the end of their useful life. As sections of seats have been removed from the front rows (making room for wheelchair seating), their parts are used to repair other seats. The spare parts "are pretty well used up." The seats in the two 125-seat lecture halls date from 1989. He has been monitoring the cost of replacements on a yearly basis, carrying that estimate in the Capital Improvement Plan and it is "coming up as its turn in the barrel." The current price is \$105,000 for approximately 500 seats, a figure Dave confirmed through independent research.
- Tim Bartlett also explained DDC (Direct Digital Controls) systems replace existing pneumatically-operated dampers in the air handling system. Replacing the pneumatic system with digital will permit elimination of two compressors and an air dryer, which are less efficient and require more ongoing, in-house maintenance. As existing rubber air bladders dry out and crack they must be replaced. At the elementary school all the pneumatic systems were replaced with digital.

Pending review of the auditorium seating, the subcommittee recommends reducing the Special Projects item on Page 41 of the proposed budget, Operation & Maintenance of Facilities High School by \$17,000.

Phyllis commented with regard to the seating and the DDC units: "We're looking at 40 years of use. 40 years is a long time not to replace your chairs. You can't just invent parts: if they're not made, they're not made." She suggested deferring the vote on the entire District and Maintenance Accounts budget until the next committee meeting.

Middle School

Sue Greene reviewed the Middle School Subcommittee's report in detail. Their preliminary recommendation was to reduce the proposed budget by \$5,000 pending inquiry into after-school programs. Discussion highlights are summarized as follows:

- Marcia Ross explained that last year's \$2,812 after-school programs expenditure was not representative: a review of the prior three years' expenditures reveals an annual average cost of \$12,000. She indicated that last year's program was not run effectively.
- Marcia clarified that the increase of 11.5 percent on the A/V services line on Page 23 represents contracted services for databases for student information-gathering used at both the middle school and high school. She pointed out that \$1,000 had been reduced from a books and periodicals line in library services to balance out the increase.

Subsequent to discussion, Sue Green moved that the committee recommend approval of the middle school budget at \$2,234,639. Phyllis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 8-0.

High School

Kevin Roy reviewed the High School subcommittee's report in detail. Other discussion topics are summarized as follows:

- Peter Sawyer clarified that an apparent decrease in textbook costs results from an increase last year in response to the move to Common Core standards, particularly in math texts.
- Scott Isabelle explained that the vocational education providers, the Huot Center and Winnisquam High School, typically generate a budget to which the State pledges reimbursement of 45 percent. The balance is passed to participating districts who then prepare their budgets accordingly. This year the State lacked sufficient funds to reimburse fully, and could only contribute 29 percent. The shortfall is passed to participating districts. Gilford typically plans for such contingencies, thus no budget transfers are required to make up its share of the shortfall. Unspent funds are returned to the taxpayers. Peter added that other districts who did not plan for such contingencies are now hastening to cover their portion of the shortfall. Gilford's typical vocational education enrollment is 65 at Huot and 4 at Winnisquam; participation has been ongoing for at least 13 years. Tuition for Gilmanton students is figured at 30 percent.
- Kent Hemingway responded to Phyllis's question about a proposed joint football program with Belmont. Over the past two years his office has had discussions with the Shaker School Board, the Shaker School Superintendent's office, and Belmont Friends of Football. There remains interest in both communities to explore the possibilities; however the Shaker School Board has not elected to pursue the matter at this time.

- Peter commented that considering that many if not most graduating Gilford seniors have been with the district since kindergarten, the school will now rent their caps and gowns for graduation. In prior years that expense has been assigned to the students or their families.
- Peter also explained that Unified Sports involves special education students in soccer, basketball, and volleyball competition alongside regular education students. The added expense is mostly for transportation.

Following discussion Kevin Roy moved that the committee recommend approval of \$4,149,643 for the high school budget. Bob Henderson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 8-0.

After brief discussion, Kevin next moved that the committee recommend approval of the GMHS "57" accounts at \$117,142. Richard Grenier seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 8-0.

Dave Horvath made the following inquiries:

- Average class sizes; Kent agreed to provide that information.
- Sports participation: Kent replied that most of the activities occur at the high school. He referred to a report on extra-curricular activities that Peter Sawyer had created for the Gilmanton board and indicated that only boys' basketball did not field a team this year. He did not recommend reducing any extracurricular activities.
- A newspaper article about a lawsuit concerning water damage at the middle school. Scott clarified that several years ago a water leak had caused damage which was repaired and the resulting costs had been reimbursed by the district's insurance carrier, Primex. Primex has instituted its own litigation against one of the building contractors in an effort to recoup its losses. The district is not involved. "As far as we're concerned, we're done: Primex is trying to get their money out of the contractor."

Dave and Phyllis inquired about Common Core Standards. Kent replied there had been no negative feedback from parents and that thanks to some planning and foresight there was no budgetary impact for implementing the new statewide standards. "We had known about this and were headed in this direction for some time." He indicated that districts experiencing difficulty lack the technology infrastructure. In 2015 new computer-based assessments called Smarter Balance will require this infrastructure. "Districts who don't have the long-range plan and infrastructure are needing to increase their budgets dramatically to meet those basic needs."

Minutes

Phyllis moved that the committee accept the meeting minutes from December 5, 2013. Sue Greene seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 8-0.

Minutes from October 17 and October 24 will be voted on at the December 19 meeting.

Default Budget

Scott Isabelle distributed copies of the 2014-2015 Default Budget, calculated at \$24,389,177. By consensus the committee agreed to add this topic to tonight's agenda. Scott reviewed that the document's first pages define the formula for arriving at the default budget: begin with last year's operating budget; reduce or increase by any debt services; reduce or increase by any contractual or other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law; reduce by one-time expenditures contained in the operating budget, and the result is the default budget. The pages following the calculation pages are supportive documents which delineate each account in turn. Scott noted that for the first time in several years, the default budget is lower than the proposed budget. This is because the proposed budget reflects an increase over the previous year's budget. Although no action needs to be taken on the default budget by the committee, Scott presented it as an informational item. He encouraged committee members to examine it closely at their convenience. He acknowledged that the process can be intricate and confusing, and invited those with questions to call his office for clarification.

Adjournment

At 8:05 pm., Kevin Roy moved for adjournment. Bob Henderson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Williams

Meeting Recorder

