

Gilford Budget Committee Minutes

December 19, 2012 — 2013

6:30 p.m.

Town of Gilford

*OME 11/2/14
Chair Budget Comm,*

Members Present: Jeffrey Beane (7:10), Fred Butler, Phyllis Corrigan, Sue Greene, Richard Grenier, Robert Henderson, Dave Horvath, Kevin Leandro, Kevin Roy, Karen Thurston, and Allen Voivod.

Gilford School Administrators Present: Director of Buildings and Grounds Tim Bartlett; Elementary School Principal Danielle Bolduc; Superintendent of Schools Kent Hemingway; Assistant Superintendent for Business Scott Isabelle; Director of Student Services Esther Kennedy; Technology Director Brenda McGee; and High School Principal Peter Sawyer.

Also present: Susan Allen, School Board Chair.

Phyllis Corrigan opened the meeting at 6:29 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. She reviewed the agenda and reminded that district and maintenance account items from the previous meeting still awaited resolution. Phyllis suggested that if time permitted, the board could finish all of the school budget items which would eliminate the January 2, 2014 meeting.

Elementary School

Kevin Leandro submitted his subcommittee's written report. At \$2,262,588 it represents a slight increase of one percent over the current budget. The subcommittee recommends approval as submitted. Other discussion topics are summarized as follows:

- "Smart boards" have a life expectancy of approximately 10 years. Unlike computers which require replacement due to obsolescence, smart boards will be replaced as they develop functionality issues.
- Danielle Bolduc explained that texts include online subscriptions and include DreamBox, an online math instructional program; AIMSweb, a progress monitor for reading and math; and ALEKS, a math tutoring and assessment program. Scott Isabelle noted that to classify budget items the district must follow established codes which have not been updated since the 1990s.

Subsequent to discussion, Phyllis Corrigan moved that the committee recommend approval of the elementary school budget at \$2,262,588. Kevin Leandro seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 10-0.

Technology

Dave Horvath reviewed his subcommittee's written report in detail. The proposed budget at \$411,288 represents a 6.7 percent increase over the current budget at or \$25,928. Some of the difference is represented by contractual salary increases. The subcommittee recommends approval as submitted. Other discussion topics are summarized as follows:

- Brenda McGee clarified that a Virtual Memory Host is a device that replaces four to five individual computer servers. “It reduces management and costs.”
- Scott Isabelle elaborated about the difficulty of placing some budget items in existing classifications. For example e-readers fall somewhere between computers and texts. His office makes efforts to be consistent in how it determines where to place such items so that future review will be accurate.
- Brenda also explained that adopting Chromebooks and using Google Docs has resulted in savings in software costs. Google Docs is available for free. “They can do all their word processing in Google Docs and store it, all up in the cloud.” Clerical staff and some teachers continue to use Microsoft Office software. Additional computers purchased will improve the district’s ratio of one computer for every five students. The goal is one computer per student, which the district hopes to realize in three to four years.
- Fred Butler inquired whether students can take Chromebooks home. Brenda replied that these devices stay in school; however there are four netbooks available to be checked out as one might borrow a library book. Students can bring personal wireless devices from home, but for consistency in teaching, it is advisable that all students use the same kind of device.
- Bandwidth is currently 50 megabytes per second and is proposed to increase to 100 megabytes per second. Requests for Proposals have issued and responses are anticipated in February. Preliminary estimates are approximately \$6,000 for all three schools.

Subsequent to discussion, Dave Horvath moved that the committee recommend approval of the technology budget at \$411,288. Bob Henderson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, 10-0.

Special Education

Kevin Roy reviewed his subcommittee’s written report in detail. The proposed budget at \$3,094,167 represents an increase of \$163,926 over the current budget. The subcommittee recommends approval as submitted. Other topics of discussion are summarized as follows:

- Esther Kennedy explained that one teaching position left vacant by a retiring teacher is being filled by a certified individual at part time (.29 FTE). The new teacher is pursuing a master’s degree in special education.
- An increase in after-school program costs reflects federal law which directs that schools are responsible to support all students who wish to participate in public school activities, including after-school and summer school. If a special education student wishes to participate, the district will provide a para-educator, if appropriate, to accompany that student.
- Contracted services includes physical and occupational therapy. There are now some high school students with significant needs, some who matriculated from the middle school, and others who moved into the district. Due to changes in population and

individual student needs, it is difficult to project budgetary requirements accurately. The proposed budget reflects the district's needs at present. Advances in medical care and evolving societal attitudes permit more students to be "kept as part of our school community."

- Part of transportation increases for handicapped students is represented by a placement in Manchester. Transportation involves more than a certified bus; the driver requires specialized training as well. Esther indicated "What you're paying for is safety."
- The district has worked hard with local courts to craft individual educational plans, thereby averting the high evaluative costs that can accompany court placements. The district is seeing an increase in the number of students involved with the court system as delinquents, mostly at the high school. If the district is joined as a party in a court action, it is then often obligated to conduct an evaluation to determine whether the student qualifies as a special needs student.
- Esther related that Common Core Standards have no present effect on the special education budget. The standards are being implemented district-wide, therefore "What we do for these students, we do for every student." There are alternative tests to the present NECAP evaluations, but such alternatives have not yet been unveiled for the coming Smarter Balanced evaluations.

Subsequent to discussion, Kevin Roy moved that the committee recommend approval of the special education budget at \$3,094,167. Phyllis Corrigan seconded the motion which passed 10-0, with one abstaining.

District and Maintenance Accounts

Phyllis noted that as indicated at the previous meeting her subcommittee did inspect the music room carpet as well as the gymnasium and multi-purpose room doors.

Kevin Leandro reported that the carpet was not just worn; it had become unattached from the surface beneath, raising hazardous bumps and ridges. "It's definitely past due" for replacement. He also reported that the subject doors "are all bad, some worse than others." He described some doors did not close properly, some had frost around their seals, and some had skins de-laminating from their cores. As to replacing half this year and half next, "Certain ones should be done this year, they're worse than the others." Phyllis noted that some doors were missing hardware.

Kevin Roy voiced his view that rather than trying to defer an inevitable cost until next year, all doors should be replaced this year. Phyllis concurred.

Dave Horvath calculated that adding the \$5,000 for the carpet and \$12,000 for the doors will bring the subcommittee's recommended reduction to \$37,300, for a net increase over last year's budget of \$134,366.

Kevin Roy inquired whether the auditorium seats had been inspected. Dave Horvath replied that they had not; however he had made independent inquiry and discovered the proposed

replacement figure to be appropriate. Kevin then asked about the cost to replace an air handler unit at \$2800. Tim Bartlett explained that \$2800 will replace one unit; 13 remain to be replaced at the high school. Replacing all of them will allow two compressors and an air dryer to be taken out of service, with resultant repair and energy savings.

Kevin moved that the board recommend approval of one DDC air handler unit at \$2,800. Richard Grenier seconded the motion, which passed by majority, 7-3 with one abstaining.

Subsequent to further discussion, Phyllis Corrigan moved that the committee recommend approval of the Maintenance accounts as modified at \$2,290,491. Dave Horvath seconded the motion which passed 10-0, with one abstaining.

Following brief discussion, Dave Horvath next moved that the committee recommend approval of the District (10) accounts at \$8,946,921. Sue Greene seconded the motion, which passed by majority, 9-0 with two abstaining.

Warrant Articles and Insurance

Phyllis Corrigan reminded that another meeting is scheduled for January 2, 2014; however these topics could be discussed and acted on at the present meeting. Discussion yielded a consensus to hear the presentation but defer voting to the January 2, 2014 meeting. Kent Hemingway and Scott Isabelle gave presentations, summarized as follows.

Teachers' Contract

- The tentative agreement represented by the proposed three-year teacher contract is the result of a number of months of negotiation between representatives of the teachers association, the school board and administration. It will be presented to voters at the public hearing in January, the deliberative session in February, then at voting in March.
- The agreement includes a salary increase of 1.5 percent for each of the three years, plus step increases if applicable.
- The reduction of \$156,186 in first-year health insurance costs resulted from significant, concerted efforts by all parties to contain these costs. The board established a health care study committee which over the course of a year met with other employer/employee groups and vendors from all insurance companies to explore options.
- A change in health insurance offerings yields three plans, with a baseline \$20 office visit copay plan that includes prescription drug copays of \$10, \$20, or \$45. The district will pay the dollar equivalent of 95 percent of the base plan cost, regardless which plan a participant chooses. Participants can pay more, or less, for plans differing from the base plan.
- The Affordable Health Care Act will bring unknown effects. The government will define a "standard" plan, and benefits from plans offering more than the standard plan may become taxable. All public school employee groups are currently covered by such high-

value plans. What has not been determined is whether tax will be borne by the employer, the employee, or the insurance company offering the plan. As proposed, the administrative staff and teachers are at the same level, which will help minimize any such tax impact.

- One of the most important provisions in the agreement is that the teachers' association or the school board may reopen negotiations for the purpose of reconsidering health care if the ramifications of the Affordable Health Care Act make it desirable to do so. Only salary and health care benefits may be discussed during any negotiations reentered under this provision.
- Article 14 would pay \$2,500 to members of the bargaining unit who do not participate in the district's health insurance plan. This amount is increased from the present \$2,000. Approximately 12 individuals in the district take advantage of this provision.

FICA and Retirement

- Encouraging news is that employer contributions do not rise next year to pay unaccrued actuarial balances.

Warrant Article 5

- Passage of this article will enable the district to retain up to 2.5 percent of any fund balance at year's end; the remainder will be returned to taxpayers. Such funds may be used for emergency expenditures or other uses approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Education.

The committee will review school district warrant articles at its January 2, 2014 meeting.

Upon inquiry it was discovered that minutes from the meetings of October 14, October 27, and December 12, 2013 had either not been reviewed or timely distributed. They will be considered at the January 2, 2014 meeting.

After brief discussion of the police station, Phyllis Corrigan moved for adjournment. Kevin Leandro seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 11-0.

Respectfully submitted



Mark Williams
Meeting Recorder

