

Budget Committee Minutes
12/02/2004

Members Present: Dick Hickok, Sue Greene, Connie Grant, Bob Brent, John O'Brien, Phyllis Corrigan, Bill Phillips, Diana Goodhue, Derek Tomlinson, Sean Murphy, Dennis Doten

Members Absent: Don Sibson (excused)

After the pledge of allegiance, The Superintendent of Schools, Paul DeMinico presented an overview of the school district's budget. (see enclosed presentation)

After the presentation there were many questions from the Committee regarding the reorganization of Department Heads, class size, block scheduling, and how all of these issues might affect the next teacher contract negotiation. The Superintendent assured the Committee that the cost of the three new positions created due to the reorganization of Department Heads, would be covered without any additional appropriation.

Scott Isabelle told the Committee that he would get the default budget to them in advance, and it will be presented the 1st week of January.

Scott read amended health insurance numbers to the membership so they could update their printouts.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. DT/BB/11-0

The BC members had copies of a letter that they had drafted and distributed amongst themselves during the week. After disputing the issue of whether the draft was subject to RSA 91:A, the Committee decided to discuss the letter in public, at this meeting. (Dennis Doten left the meeting at this point.) The BC agreed to have Connie Grant edit the letter and to review it at the next meeting.

The basis for the letter addressed to the Selectmen is that the BC is alarmed about the increasing wage and benefit costs and the apparent lack of accountability with the merit pay system. They don't think employees should be paid a cost of living increase, but the scale should be adjusted to allow for potential future increases. Since most people don't get 6% increases, municipal employees shouldn't either. The BC will recommend that the Selectmen make sure the evaluation system works properly. Dick Hickok suggested that since the police employees have specialized training he doesn't want to loose any of them, so maybe there should be an exclusion for them in the letter. John O'Brien suggested that

the fire department should also be excluded. There were questions about the 10 towns used for the comparison and a suggestion that the same comparison towns be used by the town and the school district.

A motion was made to reduce the BC recommendation on the fire department budget by one paramedic position. (SG/BB) During the discussion it was decided that the Committee would give the Fire Chief another week to respond to their request for information about why both new positions are necessary before they reconsider their vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05. The next meeting is 12/09 at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Shackett, Finance Director