

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
December 17, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Town Hall

Members Present: Sue Greene, Dick Hickok, Dale Dormody, Phyllis Corrigan, Margo Weeks, Mark Corry, Kevin Roy, Skip Murphy and John O'Brien

Members Absent: Fred Butler and Terry Stewart

Also in attendance were Superintendent Paul DeMinico; Asst. Superintendent for Business Scott Isabelle; School Board member Sue Allen, GES Principal Jack Billings, GMS Principal Marcia Ross, Athletic Director Dave Pinkham and Lacrosse Petitioner Daniel Kallmerthen. Also in attendance was Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok welcomed the Committee to this evening's meeting and stated that tonight's review will cover the Elementary School budget, Middle School budget and Petition Warrant Articles.

Dale Dormody began the budget review with the Gilford Middle School budget. Other Sub-committee members included Kevin Roy and Skip Murphy. Dale Dormody explained the spreadsheet that he attached to the Sub-committee's report and the proceeded to review the actual budget, starting with some general comments. The 2010 Middle School budget represents a 2.02% increase, or \$48,293. If you remove the 3% salary increases from this budget, it would actually show a slight decrease.

Some of the areas of the budget highlighted included the 3% contractual salary increase, a 21% reduction in teaching supplies, a 75% increase under new equipment and an 8.15% increase under transportation and field studies. Dale Dormody also pointed out that the \$12,905 for coaching salaries for boys' sports is for 14 coaches and the \$16,374 for coaching salaries for girls' sports covers 17 coaches.

Dale Dormody moved to approve \$2,437,863 for the Middle School budget. Margo Weeks seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 9-0.

Margo Weeks stated that she appreciated the spreadsheet created by Dale Dormody and would like to see something similar done for the Town's budget.

Dale Dormody also reviewed the Gilford Elementary School budget. He met with Scott Isabelle and Jack Billings on Friday, December 11, 2009. At this time, Sub-committee member Phyllis Corrigan apologized to the Committee for missing that meeting last Friday.

The budget for the Elementary School shows a slight 0.11% decrease over last year's totals. Again, this meant very few comments from the Sub-committee due to the flat budget. Salaries show a 2.6% increase, which is less than the full 3% due to turnover. The salaries for Elementary School Aides show a decrease of \$35,542, which represents an increase in ARRA funding. As far as telephones are concerned, there is no cell phone expense and the \$1,000 increase is due to the shared cost of the AlertNow safety system.

Dale Dormody inquired about recent enrollment figures, specifically if they had any updated information since the October figures that were referenced in the budget overview. Dr. Billings advised that enrollment had increased by 16 students since October. He said that the numbers were spread across the grade levels, and were due in part to families moving in with grandparents. He further stated that some of these additions would be temporary, given the circumstances, but others would quite probably remain enrolled at GES throughout the remainder of their elementary school years.

Dale Dormody moved to approve \$2,462,754 for the Elementary School budget. Margo Weeks seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 9-0.

The last area of review was for Petition Warrant Articles. Only one petition has been received and it requests the sum of \$17,603 to fund varsity and junior varsity lacrosse for both boys and girls at Gilford High School. Petitioner Dan Kallmerten was in attendance to provide a presentation to the Committee regarding the history of the lacrosse program in Gilford. The program has showed continued growth since its inception in 2003. To date, the costs associated with the program have been covered by a \$130 per player fee, fundraising and donations from businesses.

Dr. Kallmerten pointed out that lacrosse is an expensive sport due to the requirement for extensive safety equipment. It is their goal, if the \$17,603 Warrant Article is approved, to have each player responsible for their own equipment, generally around \$350 each. The School District's budget would then assume the costs for transportation, professional services, coach's salaries, athletic supplies and field supplies.

When asked for a recommendation from the School Board, Margo Weeks asked Athletic Director Dave Pinkham to respond. He stated that lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in the region and within the Town of Gilford, it is very popular among students and the numbers participating have increased every year. He reiterated Dr. Kallmerten's statement that lacrosse is a very expensive sport due to equipment safety requirements. Margo Weeks added that the School Board voted unanimously to support the lacrosse program at their last meeting.

Brief discussion ensued regarding which students are participating in lacrosse and which staff members would be coaching the sport. Dave Pinkham stated that all Gilford coaches stress academic performance to their players.

Mark Corry questioned why the lacrosse program would not be offering a monetary contribution, similar to that which was done by the football and hockey programs. Dr. Kallmerten responded that they would be offering individual player support to cover the cost of equipment, if needed. Dave Pinkham also pointed out that the number of lacrosse players exceeds that of hockey players by approximately 70 students vs. 24 students.

Kevin Roy inquired about other towns in the area with lacrosse programs. Dave Pinkham replied that Laconia, Kennett and Plymouth have school programs at this time, with Prospect Mountain and Inter-Lakes looking into programming. Phyllis Corrigan asked if other school districts pay for equipment and Dave Pinkham responded that generally, this is the responsibility of the player.

Dr. Kallmerten stated that the lacrosse program is presenting a "middle of the road" budget. He also pointed out that, as a physician, he is able to provide some of the medical services. Skip Murphy inquired about the likelihood of the program's funding drying up, necessitating a request

to the School District for additional money. Dr. Kallmerten replied that if this were to happen, no scholarships would be available for player equipment. He also pointed out that the organization is sensitive to other fundraising efforts that exist. Scott Isabelle pointed out that there is an expectation on the part of parents whose children participate in sports that they must contribute financially for their equipment.

Chairman Hickok stated that he has mixed thoughts on the program and feels pressure to not disappoint the students. Dr. Kallmerten stated that for the funds being requested, lacrosse is a good value and contributes to a healthy, active lifestyle. Margo Weeks also pointed out that having seven years of success with the program indicates proven interest among students and parents. She reiterated that a great deal of emphasis is put on athletes maintaining their academic performance.

Sue Greene expressed concern that there is no hard figure on the contribution that would be made by the lacrosse program and is concerned with escalating costs as the program expands. She is in favor of "pay and play" athletics. Skip Murphy agreed that the lack of any financial contribution is also a concern for him.

Dr. DeMinico stated that sports provide an incentive for students to maintain high grades and universities look favorably at accepting well-rounded students. Dr. Kallmerten stated that he could not make any promises on the future of the lacrosse program and Selectman O'Brien commended him on that position.

Margo Weeks moved to support the Petition Warrant Article for \$17,603 to fund lacrosse at Gilford High School. Phyllis Corrigan seconded.

At approximately 7:50 p.m., Budget Committee member Terry Stewart arrived at the meeting. He stated that he believes lacrosse, like other sports, should be conducted on a volunteer basis. Following brief discussion, a vote on the motion indicated 5-yes and 4-no. Chairman Hickok stated that this is a difficult decision, but he will also vote in the negative. The final count was 5-yes and 5-no. A tie indicates the motion does not prevail.

Phyllis Corrigan moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2009 Budget Committee meeting. Mark Corry seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 9-0 with Margo Weeks abstaining.

Margo Weeks moved to adjourn at 7:56 p.m. John O'Brien seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey
Executive Secretary