

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
School District Budget Public Hearing
January 12, 2010
6:30 p.m.
Gilford High School

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

Members Absent: None

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok welcomed the public to this evening's hearing and stated that the School District's budget has been established by the Budget Committee, unless it is revised tonight. He advised the public that the Budget Committee will convene in a special meeting following the public hearing to consider any changes based on the testimony heard tonight. He further advised them that he will limit speakers to three (3) minutes and all comments must be civil. Next, he introduced the members of the Budget Committee to the members of the public that were in attendance.

Chairman Hickok stated that an overview of the School District budget is contained in the first two pages of tonight's handout. He commended them for the budget they have brought forward and reported that the only difference between the Budget Committee's recommendations and those of the School District is the \$17,603 Warrant Article for lacrosse. He also stated that the \$450,520 decrease that has been reported is somewhat artificial because a portion of it relates to federal funding. He also commended the School District for absorbing the \$652,500 increase in health insurance rates.

At this time, Chairman Hickok opened up the public hearing for comments. Jack Donahue spoke on behalf of the Warrant Article for lacrosse. He gave this article his complete endorsement and thanked all of the Budget Committee members for their consideration of it. At this time, however, he asked for the Committee to reconsider their vote based on the following points:

- It fills the niche in spring sports
- Participation is up
- Athletics and academics produce well-rounded students
- It the fastest growing sport in the country
- It is an investment in the student body

John O'Brien questioned Mr. Donahue regarding fundraising contributions. Mr. Donahue responded that he personally is in favor of fundraising but he is not sure how that fits in this warrant article. Dr. Daniel Kallmerten stated that he did not want any negative feelings to come out of broken promises that could be made regarding

fundraising contributions. He further stated that that Gilford Lacrosse Club is not disbanding and in this warrant article, it was their hope to move from a seasonal commitment to an expanded program. He further stated that it is their intention to continue supporting the individual players, whose minimum start-up cost for equipment runs between \$250 and \$300 per player.

Dr. Kallmerten further stated that it is difficult to disagree that we are in tough financial times now but this would be a good time to pull together as a community. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the matter of the Gilford Lacrosse Club making a specific monetary contribution to the program. It was pointed out that this sport costs approximately the same as other sports at Gilford High School. Rob O'Brien is in favor of supporting the warrant article and believes that success in academics is tied to athletics, because students must put forth extra effort in academics in order to participate in sports. He also stated that athletics ties the community together and a coherent program for lacrosse should be available to Gilford students in the same way that football is.

Terry Stewart stated that the only difference between the lacrosse program and football program is the lack of monetary contribution by the organization. John O'Brien further stated that this "co-funding" is important to the Budget Committee. Rob O'Brien reiterated that the sport is very equipment intensive and the organization does contribute funds beyond the \$17,603 that is requested in the warrant article. Chairman Hickok stated that he is surprised to hear Budget Committee members asking for a financial contribution since it has been explained that the organization provides equipment for students who are unable to purchase their own. He also reminded persons in attendance that the Budget Committee will meet after this public hearing and regardless, because the original vote on lacrosse was tied, it will not be overwhelming.

School Board member Derek Tomlinson pointed out that the \$17,603 being requested will support four (4) teams. Dale Dormody asked Athletic Director Dave Pinkham if other sports are required to make a stated financial contribution. Mr. Pinkham replied yes, only ice hockey. Scott Isabelle added that ice hockey is different because the School District gives funds to that organization, they do not give funds to the School District. He also stated that the warrant article could be amended at the February 1, 2010 Deliberative Session.

There being no further questions or comments, the public hearing was closed at 7:05 p.m. Margo Weeks stated that she would like to have another vote on the lacrosse funding where all of the Budget Committee members are present. Margo Weeks then moved to reconsider the previous recommendation made by the Budget Committee regarding lacrosse funding. Phyllis Corrigan seconded. Fred Butler stated that he is not sure how to vote on this matter and asked if there was any flexibility with the warrant article. Chairman Hickok stated that the Committee must make a recommendation based on the warrant article as it is now written.

Terry Stewart reiterated his concern regarding the monetary contribution of the

organization. He supports lacrosse as a sport but feels this situation is identical to that with the football program. This led to further discussion regarding the football program. Derek Tomlinson feels that comparing the two programs is like apples vs. oranges – the situation is totally different. More discussion ensued regarding the possibility of a future amendment of the warrant article.

The Committee also discussed the pros and cons of starting a program, such as lacrosse, and asking for funding in the future, as opposed to asking for funding before starting a program, not knowing how successful it would be. Mark Corry feels that parents of all student athletes make purchases for uniforms and equipment and that should not be a factor in this decision. However, after reviewing the petition and seeing that many of the supporters are the same people that supported him in last year's election, he feels that the program is worthy of support. He also thinks that approximately \$4,000 per team is very reasonable.

Chairman Hickok stated that he believes participation in sports is very important, but it puts the Committee in a difficult position when their lack of support for a particular program is presented as disappointing the students. John O'Brien does not feel that a program should be funded without having prior knowledge of the interest level. Skip Murphy agreed with Chairman Hickok and is concerned with what will be the next sport to be funded.

General discussion ensued regarding the small percentage of the School District budget that is able to be affected by the recommendation of the Budget Committee. A vote on the motion indicated Yes-6 and No-5. Motion carried.

Margo Weeks moved to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Mark Corry seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey
Executive Secretary