

School Board Public Hearing
January 9, 2012
6:30 p.m.
Town of Gilford

Members Present: Richard Hickok, David Horvath, Dale Dormody, Kevin Leandro, Kevin Roy, Fred Butler, Pat Labonte, Rae Mello-Andrews, Skip Murphy, Phyllis Corrigan and Sue Greene

Members Absent: Gus Benavides

Richard Hickok began the hearing with an overview of what was to be expected during the hearing and introduced the budget committee. Richard Hickok stated that the budget committee was there to listen to the citizens, not to defend the budget but hear what the citizens have to say, he then reviewed the handout that was provided giving an overview of the budget:

- Page A-1 and A-2 gave a summary of the total budget of \$24,142,615.00 (down \$326,992.00 from previous year); total est. revenue = \$5,113,360.00; total est. state aid = \$4,774,513.00; total amount to be raised by taxes = \$14,254,742.00.
- Page A-1 and A-2 gave summary of increases and decreases
- Page A2 gave total default budget of \$24,582,495.00 – Default budget is previous year’s budget minus one time expenditures. Due to proposed budget being lower than previous budget, default budget is higher.
- Page 1 – 5 gave proposed budget comparison between current budget, school board proposed, budget committee proposed and difference – there were only two differences
 - o \$1,000.00 budget committee reduced summer/after school program transportation.
 - o \$34,389.00 reduced from Operation & Maintenance of plant – Salary was calculated twice in error.
- Collective Bargaining agreement was recommended by budget committee by a vote of 6 to 5.
 - 1 warrant article for middle and high schools occupancy light sensors for \$74,670.00 was not recommended by budget committee.

Richard Hickok stated that in general the budget committee is in total agreement with the proposed budget and opened the floor to questions from the citizens.

Barbara Aichinger asked if the estimated impact on the tax rate was based on current assessments.

Scott Isabelle confirmed they are based on current assessments.

Barbara Aichinger asked about the 9.2% increase in health insurance given there is no approved teacher’s contract where does the 9.2% come from.

Scott Isabelle stated that they are still in the last year of the current contract and the wording of the new contract has not changed whether the contract is approved or not there will be a maximum rate increase of 9.2% for health insurance.

Barbara Aichinger asked since there is no evergreen clause how do they get the increase if the voters do not approve the new contract.

Scott Isabelle stated that the evergreen clause applies only to salaries and not health benefits if the contract is not approved they will not get pay increases however the benefits will remain in place.

Barbara Aichinger asked if that is done by law.

Scott Isabelle stated yes they are bound by law and stated the language in the new contract is the same as the previous contract with the addition of the wording to put a committee in place to search other health care options.

Barbara Aichinger asked if the non union employee’s health insurance costs are separated out.

Richard Hickok stated that they are not separated out the amount is included in the total. Richard Hickok asked if anyone else had any questions, no one responded.

Barbara Aichinger asked Kent Hemingway, School Superintendent, about the article that was in the paper that stated Gilford teachers pay is on average \$11,000.00 more than other towns.

Kent Hemingway stated that he had responded to Barbara via e-mail answering and stated that the board looked into this and found that the longevity of the employees is the biggest factor regarding the increase in pay.

Paul Blandford stated that he was on the review committee and found that with longevity comes experience, with experience comes greater pay and reminded them that there will be no pay increase in the first year of the new contract.

Kurt Webber pointed out that they did have a decrease in staff for next year of 6.7 full time equivalents in both teaching positions and support staff.

Barbara Aichinger made the comment that the increases in health insurance costs are passed onto the tax payer.

Joe Wernig asked if the purpose of review committee was just for research purposes or to cut positions.

Paul Blandford stated just for research to see where the town of Gilford stood compared to other similar sized communities and they found that Gilford has very experienced staff.

Joe Wernig asked what the budget committee rational was not recommending the warrant article for the light sensors.

Richard Hickok stated that it was a complex issue to try and determine when the town would see the payback for the expenditure and did not think payback would be as quick as expected and given the current economy could not see spending that money right now.

Jackie Drever asked why the technology account was cut.

Kent Hemingway stated that the administration came in with a request for replacement computers however the school board in an attempt to reduce the budget decided to pare back on the number of computers it would replace.

Jackie Drever asked if salaries would be reduced.

Kent Hemingway stated that no salaries would be reduced they are only slowing down the cycle of replacing the computers.

Richard Hickok asked if there were any further questions, with nothing further he adjourned the public hearing portion of the meeting and moved onto the four warrant articles that were just submitted and not previously discussed by the budget committee. Richard Hickok posed the question as there were no dollar amounts associated with the warrant articles did the budget committee want to spend time to review and recommend each article.

Dale Dormody stated that since there is no dollar amount did not see the purpose in spending time to review them.

Richard Hickok stated that the only reason he could see would be to give the taxpayers insight as to whether the budget committee recommended them or not.

Dale Dormody made a motion to not vote on the warrant articles that do not have a dollar amount associated.

Phyllis Corrigan seconded.

Richard Hickok asked if there were any further questions.

Skip Murphy stated that he would rather see the town folk make the decision.

Richard Hickok asked if there was any further discussion and called for a vote to not make any recommendations on the warrant articles that do not have a dollar amount associated.

11 yes

0 no

Motion to not make any recommendations on the warrant articles passed with all in favor.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the budget committee's recommendations would have been noted on the warrant articles if they had been discussed and voted on and Richard Hickok confirmed that it would.

Scott Isabelle stated that three of the warrant articles; implementation of a tax cap, school default budget be made by the budget committee and the request to change the date of the town vote would require a public hearing before town vote in March.

Barbara Aichinger asked if that could be done in the deliberative session.

Scott Isabelle stated, no it could not.

Richard Hickok thanked all who attended and closed the public hearing at 7:00pm .

Respectfully Submitted,

Mia Gagliardi
Recording Secretary