

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUDGET & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Monday, November 27, 2006

SAU OFFICE

7:00 PM

MINUTES

Attendees: Craig Hicks, Beverly Bacon, Stewart Brock, Sue Copley, Ray Cote, Gail Cromwell, Butch Estey, Bart Goodeve, Bill McKinnon, Tom Welden, Marian Alese, Keith Burke, Sue Dell, Dick Dunning, Deb Lesure, Linda Potter, Gib West

Craig Hicks called tonight's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. 2007-2008 Budget Prep

Marian Alese said that the budget summary is a breakdown of certain budget categories. A second mentor and technology position are included. Two grant positions are moving into the general fund. Benefits include health insurance and NH Retirement increases. NH Retirement is asking for a 2% increase on the employer side. The change is from 6% to 8%.

Craig Hicks asked about the five kindergarten aids. Marian said that the children will be moving from kindergarten to first grade.

Gail Cromwell said that she wanted to get rid of the mentor positions completely. She said that this is traditionally done by the peers or principals. Gail said that this is a luxury that she does not feel we can justify. She asked what the evidence was that this pays off. Craig said that all new teaching employees go through this program. Gail asked why the staff in each school can't help these people get going. Keith Burke said that he did not think that it was a luxury. People constantly compare us to the business world. The amount of money invested in businesses to get proper training is high. Teacher preparation institutions vary in their ability to train. This individual is dedicated to working with our staff. Keith said that we should talk to the staff affected by this. They are able to get up to speed much quicker. Principals spend time with new staff but can not focus their time in the way that the mentor does. It is an extremely valuable thing to do. Gail said that it does have value but there are other ways to deliver this. Marian said that the quality will suffer. Gail asked how we know it will suffer. Marian said that it has been done in the past and the quality is not the same. Keith said that the focus on curriculum and preparation has paid off. It is far superior to anything from the past.

Stewart Brock asked if anyone had a sense of how many hours this individual puts in. Keith said that it is a full-time job for one individual in addition to hours beyond. Keith added that the mentor observes and critiques but does not evaluate. The teacher can be relaxed and candid with the mentor. The mentor

can work to remedy situations that the teacher might be reluctant to admit. Linda Potter said that she has seen the effects of the mentor working with the Special Education staff. She has been a teacher mentor in the past and finds that she did not have the time necessary.

Tom Welden said that staff had never been through a program before to introduce them to the district and how it is run. Because of the success of this program our turnover is relatively low. Staff can work things through with the mentor. The program allows for consistency in mentoring.

Bart Goodeve asked how common this is in other large districts. Keith said that our mentor meets with other mentors in the state. He guessed that 15 -20 mentors exist in the state. Bart asked if there was a notion to expand the program with an additional mentor. Keith said that a comprehensive method of teacher evaluation was developed. The idea at the time was to cycle a mentor who had taught within the district to mentor for three years and then return to teaching. The new mentor would pick up for two years. Next year we would see one mentor come out. Keith added that three years was a little bit too soon. It was changed to five years. Bart said that he is split in his opinion. He agrees with both Gail and Keith. Keith said we are not suggesting that anything be cut. Ray Cote said he is supportive of the mentor program. He was unaware of what the driver was to add a second mentor.

Craig said that at some point we have to have a handoff year but it is apparent from discussion that it is valuable. There is risk to the program with the replacement person.

Bill McKinnon said that the main cost justification is that it reduces turnover therefore saves some costs. If we had the turnover percentages for ten years we should see a noticeable drop over the past four years to provide evidence that it is effective in reducing turnover.

Craig said that it helps in a turnover situation but that was not the main goal. He sees the value in putting the resources into staff within the first three years to see if we should cut our losses.

Ray Cote said that it is an attractive piece to the teaching environment.

Gail said that it sounds like the second trade off year is hiring a new mentor to be mentored by the first mentor. She does not see the second person.

Keith said that it is a second person for just one year. The real issue for this program is to have teachers who have both experienced having a mentor and not speak with us. The attitude of the teachers and the value they feel is valuable. Craig said that we will get more information.

Craig referenced the second tech position. Keith said that we said we would reduce one of the district positions and move it to the high school. We only had people at the middle schools in the past. We moved someone into the high school. It is very difficult for one person to get around and meet the needs in all of the schools. We are below the average for tech support.

Ray asked what drives this. Keith said that the distance drives this. The knowledge of the servers and distance of the schools is an issue. We needed support on site. Ray asked what causes people on the road. His company works remotely. Keith said every year we are putting in more computers. We are continuing to bolster the training of tech people. We believe the need continues to be there.

Ray asked for a report. Keith said that he would have Ken come and speak to us. Ray asked for a log of what Ken does and where he goes. He asked why we

spend a lot of time on the road. Keith said he would have Ken come and give us a first hand account of how he spends his time.

Craig asked about CBT. Keith said that he had them come in and it would cost a lot of money and that it would be a yearly cost. Even at a basic level the costs were significant. Craig asked if we would be interested in spending some money to see if we can operate better. Keith said that we did that. We had someone come in to the high school to make recommendations. We are implementing those recommendations. We can continue to explore.

Bart said that we heard the presentation of a technology plan just last week that should address this. Keith said that this discussion was not in the technology plan. Bart asked why it wasn't included in that plan. Keith said that the web and tech coordinators are in the plan. The technology director has never been in the plan. Bart said that this is symptomatic to the problem. Keith said that we said it is important to move one of the positions to the high school and would evaluate how it worked out while keeping the budget flat. Bart said that he is surprised that these are separate and distinct discussions. Keith said that it was not the committee's charge. They were charged to formulate a plan to file with the state. They did more than what was required. Ray said that if we have problems managing our infrastructure, he thought that it would have been included. He hoped that it would be within the plan.

Gail asked where the computers were in the plan. Marian said that it is in the function 2210 district line 22 for \$75,000. It is also in the total budget.

Craig asked if there were better ways to do things. Keith said that is what they asked CBT. Costs were requested and it was pretty serious money. We looked at the best way to capitalize on what we had. We made changes based on those recommendations.

Keith said that we took the overall amount of budget of approximately \$200,000 and planned for machines and networking to bring the district to a 4:1 student to computer ratio. We allocated money and put it in a warrant. Tomorrow night we will receive the plan. We have developed a spread sheet to see how we can have some type of computer for every teacher in the district.

Ray said that it ended up at the district level because it was divided up among several schools. Computers are a problem once you put them in because they age. It is not like we can put them in and not spend any money on them.

Craig said that we are saying that one person can't handle putting out all of the fires with our computers. Bart said that it is more than just repairing machines. New programs can be implemented.

Keith said that it is not that the fires are not being put out. Ken is involved with the day to day operations of all our servers. In addition, he keeps our finance systems running. We use him for software support as well. Ray asked why there is ever a problem with the payroll system. We aim to never think about the computer issues with payroll. Marian said that every single time we lose power in the elementary schools; Ken has to start the servers. Bart said that it sounds like the scope of this job is too discreet. Marian said that Ken also handles the phone system and the heating systems which are run by computers. Bart asked if he was qualified. Keith said that he can do 85-90% of the need. Stewart asked if the people in some of the buildings are trainable to handle some of these situations in order to maximize time.

Keith said that the job description states that they provide certain services. The last Wednesday of every month is designated to pull tech people in for training in one location. Training is part of it.

Gail said that it might be useful to have an organizational chart to help us know what we are doing.

Ray said that he does not understand if we need this person or not. Gail said that we need to decide if we need this person or not.

Keith said that he would provide information or withdraw the request.

Gail said that when referencing the five kindergarten aides moving to FT, would we be hiring part-time aids in addition. Keith said that the aid moves with the student. If we have a student coming into the district that requires an aid then they are hired. Craig said that this is an incremental cost because kindergarten goes from part-time to full-time. Gail said that when these five aids move up, we might not need to replace them. Linda Potter said that three of the five came from our preschools. Gail asked if we have considered other ways to deliver this service in the schools. She suggests that we consider other ways of delivering the elementary school experience. Linda said that the reasons for this need vary with the needs of the students. Keith said that if there were a better way to do it for the child and more cost effective, we would do it. Some students would require out of district placement.

Marian said that Title I funds are being reduced which accounts for the two grant positions moving to the general fund. Keith said that Title I funds tie into our free and reduced lunch count. Our funds have been reduced but we still need to fulfill the need.

Benefits – Marian said that Health Insurance rate increases as well as FICA increases account for this change.

Purchases Services – Marian said that Arts Enrichment is the elementary program which includes presenters.

Cost for offsite Alt Program - This is a proposal to move the Alt. Program off of the high school campus. Linda Potter said that this program is for those students who do not find success in a regular school setting. Gail asked where the space would be rented. Linda said that this figure reflects the going rate for 1,200 sq. ft. Ray asked about the space available in the elementary schools. Keith said that with these programs, the teachers have to set up rules that differ from the schools. If we move them off site, it makes the operation of the program better. To move this group of students into one of our elementary schools is not an option. Stewart said that some of our towns have halls that might be used. He asked how many kids we are talking about. Linda Potter said that we are talking about ten kids. Craig asked if this reflected bussing. Keith said that it would mean re-routing some of the busses. Butch asked if it meant additional personnel. Keith said that it did not.

SAU staff salary proposed increases – reflect increases in administrative services. Craig said that the Arts Enrichment program should be looked at in the event that we need to take something off of the table.

Bart said that he would take issue with this because the majority of the money we are talking about is salary and benefits.

Property Services – include parking lot paving and coating, acoustical tiles, HVAC, window replacement etc. Gail asked if we were planning to use any of the capital improvement funds to pay for this. Marian said that we can do that. It is up to the Board. Keith said that the idea of having that fund is for

emergency situations. We don't want to overextend. Marian said that we have used some of this fund for roofing at the high school and at SMS and PES. There is about \$300,000 in the fund. Craig asked when we want to pay for it and when do we want to bond for it. Keith said that the state will reimburse us for the high school but not the other schools. The changes in the rules for building aid account for this. Gail asked for the value of our buildings that was thought to be included in a previous report.

Craig said that he would like to see a plan in front of us. He asked what we do about ADA compliance and architectural. We have to have a plan next year. Keith said that we had an estimate on architectural fees and we could get an update.

Other Services – insurance. Marian said that it is a combination in worker's compensation. In addition, the bus contract figure needs clarification.

Supplies – include electricity, gas, and oil. Craig asked about the rate reduction in electricity. He asked where we are with our oil. Marian said that we had money available in oil. We are starting our new contract December 1, 2006.

Marian said we have spent money since July but we paid the old contract price. Property – reflects various musical equipment in the schools as well as furniture, fire proof cabinets etc.

Gail commented that in the budget it shows the Aramark contract to be the same. She believes that if we went out we could save enough money to hire an HR person. In addition, snowplowing is sizeable. She asked when those contracts were last out to bid. Marian said that we send them out to known vendors every year. Gail asked why PES costs so much money. She asked how competitive we are in getting estimates for these jobs.

Marian said that the budget by object is the detail for the summary sheet. Salary and benefits are our biggest hit.

Craig asked about the Board of Education Services. Bart asked what it included. Marian said that it included legal services and costs of meetings.

Web Access includes T-1 fees. Ray asked if this cost would be impacted with our new provider. Keith said that we are getting more for the same money.

Craig asked what of our reserve fund we used for special needs tuition. Marian said that none was used. Craig asked if we wanted to use any of it. Gail reminded us that we only get 1%. Keith said that the fund was set up for catastrophic situations. He cautioned that we are careful in using the fund.

Marian said that there is almost \$400,000 in the fund. Keith said that we get reimbursed for catastrophic aid after the fact. Bart asked what an appropriate fund balance is and should we continue to put funds into it. Marian said that there were a couple of years that we did not deposit into the fund. Marian said that a new student just moved in which will spend some of the balance. Bart said that it seems like there is something that we could do here by either taking some out or not put more in or both. Craig said that we should use some of the money since it is taxpayer money and that we should seek advice on how much we should leave in the account.

Craig asked about mileage, line 580. Marian said that it includes parents transporting their students to out of district placements. Staff that travel from building to building accumulate mileage.

Craig wanted to know what all of the technology added up to. Ray said that he would try to produce a number for the next meeting.

Dues and fees include athletic fees, membership fees, graduation costs, diplomas and other graduation costs.

Craig asked if we were all set with the sound system for District Meeting.

Marian confirmed that we were.

Revenues are basically zero. Tom said that revenues show that they are up approximately 2.5%.

Craig asked if anyone needed the revenue information. Marian will resend that information out.

Craig asked if anyone had any specific school issues.

Tom said that GBS population looks like it will drop by 42 students but the budget is up almost 7%. It is a dramatic increase.

Craig asked why the jump at Dublin. Marian said that it is the Title I person.

Tom asked if we would see the list of what is needed and what we could take away for savings.

Gail asked if one of the Title I positions would be at Dublin. Marian confirmed.

Gail asked why regular teachers could not do this remedial reading work. Keith said that the reading is part of a pull out program that requires special training.

Gail asked what would be done about the second grade class which will have seven students in it. Keith said that they might be combined.

Keith said that there is not a lot to put on the chopping block. He is willing to look at staffing only when the numbers get real low. Tom said that the population has been totally flat at AES and the budget is up. He said that salaries alone are not driving this.

Marian said that a nurse was added to AES because of some of the medically fragile students there. Keith said that it is incremental costs due to salary and benefits. There isn't too much there after that.

Tom said that he is looking for creative ways to work with the budget. Keith said that we can put off maintenance, reduce equipment replacement and other items that he was unsure we wanted to do.

Stewart said we need to look at the possibility of reducing staff. We would be remiss in not looking. Bart asked if there was a goal we were trying to hit. The impact is minimal. Bart said that he sees nothing that is "fluffy" in the budget.

Gail said that we need to look at the twenty credit issue. We need to know what the costs involved are. She asked if we ever arrived at staff information with regard to block scheduling.

Keith said that information will be brought forward at tomorrow night's Board meeting. The final report is available.

Kerry McDonald, Monadnock-Ledger, said that she contacted the state to identify which districts are running technology plans correctly. She asked if we contacted any of these other districts. They had not been contacted.

Craig Hicks adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Marschok