

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

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUDGET & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

**Monday, December 04, 2006
SAU OFFICE
7:00 PM**

AGENDA

Attendees: Bart Goodeve, Beverly Bacon, Ray Cote, Butch Estey, Craig Hicks, Gail Cromwell, Christy Greene, Arthur Knight, Bill McKinnon, Sue Copley, Gib West

Craig Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Ray Cote motioned to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2006 meeting. Gail Cromwell second. Butch Estey abstained. All else in favor.

1. 2007-2008 Budget Prep

Madeline Kedle, Peterborough community member, distributed three handouts. (See Attachments 1, 2, and 3) Madeline said that she is the voice of the overburdened tax payer. Attachment #1 addresses Mentor Programs. Madeline said that the Nashua district is placing a cap on spending and the teachers are taking a 5% pay cut. In addition, she said that the mentor program in other districts is based on having a tenured teacher with a stipend. She said that she is against the full-time mentor program. She said that it is a good program for retention but was concerned with costs. She understood the value of the position but felt it was an expense we could not afford. Secondly, she referenced Attachment #2 which addresses the NH Homestead Plan and Reducing NH Homeowner's Property Taxes by \$1,500.00. She said that overall 21% of her household income goes to property taxes. She said that she feels that she is speaking for a majority in the communities. She said that she hoped we would consider the information that she provided tonight before making spending decisions.

Craig Hicks explained that much of our concern is with unfunded mandates. Gail Cromwell said that she feels that the information contained in attachment #3 would appear worse if the elderly were factored into the data.

Bart Goodeve thanked her for coming tonight and speaking her piece. He pointed out what we are up against. He said that the mentor program is still an issue being discussed by this committee. It is our job to try to respond to proposals brought to the committee. He cautioned Madeline to consider what they can do. We are not in a position to impose a 5% pay cut. It is not within our control.

Kerry McDonald, Monadnock Ledger-Transcript, asked about the \$6.5 million of unfunded mandates and asked if it was state or federal. Craig said that it is both.

Christy said that we are keenly aware of the tax situation because we too are taxpayers. It is always in her head and her heart.

Bill McKinnon said that many on the Board are not, in his opinion, keenly aware of this. He said we need to consider the lower income brackets. He feels that there is far too much spending and lack of willingness to cut programs. Bill said that he did not buy Christy's comment at all. He said that people need to support Board members who are budget conscious.

Dan Kedle said that he hears of concerns with spending and cuts and hoped that we would arrive at a level approach. He thanked the Board for hearing their concerns.

Craig referenced a document answering Budget Questions (Attachment #4) included in tonight's packet. Bart said that Keith's explanation for the second mentor position was weak. It makes wonderful sense but he is struck by the information provided tonight on how other districts are getting by in the mentor area. He had a problem with the fact that this was a full-time, year-round position. He could understand several months but not year-round. He was open to the suggestion of scraping the position all-together.

Craig clarified that the mentor spent the whole time during the school year visiting the classrooms. Bart asked if it was a full-time coach.

Christy said that one of the issues facing public education is the loss of experienced teachers. It is staggering the number of teachers that are leaving public education. This was our district's attempt to address this. We don't want to be cut short. We are recruiting and growing them. We don't want to train and lose our teachers to other districts. Craig said that the mentor program is dealing with the 05/06 year.

Christy said that it takes about three years for a teacher to feel that they can do all that is necessary in the classroom on their own. Bart said that he can appreciate this. The theory behind the program is good. He understands that the mentor is doing a wonderful job but there is a competition for resources.

Butch Estey said he had a problem with what happens to the mentor when her job ends. The reply when asked was that we would find something for them to do. The mentor watches nineteen people in a year. Christy said that she does not have nineteen people but also those of other years. Butch said that he was sorry that he did not include the second year total in his response and that he had a problem with the handoff year. He had concern that the second person would also require a place after mentoring. Christy did not agree with the second person either.

Gib West said he was concerned with Bart's premise that we could do away with the whole mentor program. The bargaining unit called for two but did not launch. Unless something changes, that person is in the whole evaluation system. If this is our desire to cut this position we need to verify if it is included in the evaluation system. Gib also alerted everyone to the buyout for year 08 for the health insurance benefits.

Craig Hicks said that it sounds like we could put the second mentor position to bed. Agreement existed. Craig said that we should talk about the first position.

Gail Cromwell said that there is a sum of money in Professional Development that might be used to support a mentorship program. This way, the faculty could decide which programs will do them the most good.

Craig said that we want the teachers to continually train. He had concern that we were robbing Peter to pay Paul. Gail said that having a specific person to help a teacher for a given amount of time might be more valuable than sending a person off to Plymouth to train. It is not as though a teacher is on their own. There is support within the buildings.

Bart said that he originally wanted to challenge the assumption of the mentor program. He is unsure if he wanted to pull it out of the budget. As long as we have a consensus that we don't want to expand the program that was good enough for him. Craig asked if there was a way to utilize this position for Human Resource purposes. He was unsure if we could split the tasks of HR/Mentor. Ray thought that it might be a conflict of interest to act in both positions. Craig said that it was two different groups.

Bill McKinnon said that the level of the HR person that we are looking at is at a much higher level that we are talking about now. Bart said that Emily is currently working fifty hours a week now and suggested that splitting the position would only support a second position.

Craig steered back to Attachment #4 to further review the Budget Questions/Answers. Discussion took place about the value of the buildings and how much would have to be spent for reimbursement.

Bart asked shifting back to the mentor program, what the impact would be if we don't support the second mentor position. Craig's reply was that it would be roughly \$62,000 with benefits. Bart said that that information was important for those present tonight to see what we are up against. Craig asked if we knew if Emily wanted to leave her job. The answer was unknown.

Craig brought up the bus contract next. Craig said that the summer time bussing was not included in the contract. It totals about \$90,000. We were forecasting that the contract would save the district a million dollars. Craig said that he needed clarification on this topic before further discussing. Ray Cote said that he was confused with the summer figures as well. They have never been in the contract.

Craig said that we have used 26,660 gallons of oil in the small schools this year. That figure should be at the old rate. The new rate is \$2.26 per gallon. Bill McKinnon said that we had a contract price of approximately \$1.43 per gallon. Craig said he suggested that the surplus be offered to the towns. The towns were already at a higher rate. Craig said that diesel might account for the discrepancy in the figures tonight. Ray said that it was worth clarification.

Craig addressed Special Ed Trust Funds next. Bart said that there is a zero in the budget for the upcoming year. Craig said that we are talking about Tom's suggestion that we take \$50,000 out of the figure. Discussion took place and confusion existed about what was currently in the fund and what Tom Welden was proposing. Craig asked if we let it trickle down a bit, take \$50K out and not add in an additional \$50K this year. Craig said that he thought that we had a right to choose not to put \$50K in this year. Bart asked if we would apply \$200,000 to this year's budget after adding 50K on July 1st or apply 150K and not add the 50K on July 1st.

Craig asked what everyone thought we should keep in the trust fund. Bart said that we can borrow if we have a crisis. \$50,000 might not break us if we have a crisis. Craig said we might suggest leaving \$150,000 in the fund. Ray Cote said that the cost for one student is \$220,000 and therefore he felt comfortable with that figure.

Craig said we need to find out if the \$50,000 needs to go in the fund. We will see what the fund actually is at the end of the year.

Craig referenced number seven, Technology impact next. Butch asked if we could put all of the technology figures in one place.

Craig asked Gib West about the proposed budget increase with an anticipated decrease in student population at GBS. Craig asked Gib for a snapshot of what he put together. Gib said he would have preferred to have known that he would be called on for this

information. He said he would be happy to try to answer any questions. Bart asked about staff increases. Gib said that he did not add anything to staff. There was an addition for a position that came into place at the end of last year. Bart asked Gib about repairs and maintenance that went up approximately 40%. Gib said the discussion is still on the table as to whether he will need to lose one staff member. He said that the average number of students we take in during the summer is thirteen. Gail asked about the difference in budgets between SMS and GBS. Gib said that he has some very tenured staff.

Gail said FES has 13 third graders and DCS has 7 in one class. These are areas she suggested that we look at. She said that we should talk about ungraded classrooms. We could combine having mixed classrooms. Craig said that he thought that we already had that in the district. Christy said that when we chose the curriculum that we did, the mixing of classes becomes difficult. Christy asked Sue Copley about mixing of classrooms. Sue Copley agreed that it was difficult. It is a tremendous challenge to do all of the planning for both grade levels. Gail said that one would think we would be more flexible in the smaller schools. Bill McKinnon asked if the curriculum is the problem with our being more flexible, do we have the right curriculum. Christy said that they looked at what taught each subject area best when choosing a curriculum. A downside was discovered. Bill McKinnon suggested that the Education Committee look at this area. Sue Copley said that one of the driving forces is looking at the state guidelines and finding curriculum that will address the expectations. We are judged at the state level by whether our students are making yearly adequate progress. It is a tricky balance. Bill said that he is not suggesting that we go away from a district curriculum but that we look at blending some of the elementary classrooms. Craig asked how we change the model to accommodate this small sized class and still get the AYP.

Gib wanted to address the repair and maintenance increase. He said that 25% of the budget in his building is at the district level.

Arthur Knight said that there was talk of closing some of the grade schools. Is that talk still on the table? Bart said that there is an enormous effect on the schools that pick up these students. Craig said that the expenses involved in transportation alone would be high. Gail Cromwell suggested that we look at the clusters of schools. Francestown could have K, 1 and 2. Hancock could have 3 and 4. Optimum curriculum would exist. It would be a less extreme proposal.

Craig brought up arts enrichment. Gail said that there are regular art teachers and then there is arts enrichment. There are supplies and field trips. She is bothered by the salary attached to art enrichment. Craig said that two staff members receive that money. Gail asked why we need special teachers to do this work. She was unsure if it was required. Bart said that what is on the table is \$13,000. Craig said that he brought it up as a talking point on the resource discussion. Craig said he supports it every year and it is considered an extra. Bart said that arts are under funded across the district overall. He said he is fighting this small amount in what is already an amount too small in the district. Bart said that the mentor program is just south of 100K. Arts Enrichment is \$91,400. He suggested that we put both the arts enrichment and the mentor program up for competition for resources.

Arthur said that we would have to look at whether or not the mentor position is included in the contract. Arthur asked what the difference was in the core art program and arts enrichment. Beverly Bacon said that she has seen the effects of the arts enrichment program with her youngest child. She has had the opportunity to see puppetry and

witness books being acted out. The arts enrichment program supplements the art program to make this program. They organize musicians to come into the classroom, have artists come to the schools, work with Monadnock Music, FACTS (famous artists come to school), they do art enrichment programs for the faculty. In addition, they have made books with the students. It's not just art in paper form or sculpture form; it is art in music form and storytelling. Beverly said that when we want to brag about our schools, we show our arts enrichment on the web.

Dan Kedle, community member, said that he thinks that this is fantastic. He supports the arts and he thinks having programs such as this to be essential in providing an ability to express and build character. If you look at all of the programs, this is a program that builds the creative imagination.

Craig said that he supports it but brings it up because it is in addition to the regular curriculum. He said this further reinforces our dilemma.

Bill McKinnon said that his understanding of both the mentor program and the arts enrichment is that both came under grant programs. None of the programs ever seem to go away when the grant money goes away. It is the dark side.

ADA Requirements for the CVHS gym exist. Bart said that \$170 – 180K exist in the capital reserve account. Craig said that until we go through the design phase we won't know the estimate. We have to put the design in the budget and the renovation in the following year. Bart said that if we are talking about doing a major plan, it ought to be a warrant article. Craig said that he would get a better understanding of his information and further discuss it in two weeks.

Bart asked what ADA requirements we needed to do and what it cost. Craig said that the feasibility study for the gym is \$12,500. It doesn't get us close to bringing it to the voters. Craig said that he doesn't want to take a snapshot and go and vote. Bart asked for information on just our ADA costs. Craig said if we do a renovation it is all on us but if we build we get .55 cents on our dollar.

Bill said that if there were longer term plans, it is useful to have a coherent plan that ties in with the ADA requirements so that we don't undo what we just did. Bart said that if it is \$30,000 to bring us into compliance than that is the number. We can't not have some sense of the number. Craig suggested that it was going to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars because the girl's gym has to come down to the first floor.

Craig said if we do a phase plan it gives a tremendous opportunity for donations and capital. Let's have that conversation both from an athletic and cultural standpoint. Bill McKinnon said that we need a vision to sell it that way.

Ray Cote said he appreciated the vision but that he doesn't want to spend the money this year. He thought that we could bring in an architect to make the changes with the direction that we might build a wing some day and considerations should be made.

Ray Cote said that Marian used a qualifying word "requested" in mention of an increase in the retirement.

Butch said that state retirement has to deal with stocks and whatnot in paying for people down the road. What they did in order to pay for health benefits was request an increase. He doesn't think it is requested. He feels that if it is not done, we would no longer be part of the system. He said that it is nothing we had control of; we are required by law to be in the system.

Craig asked if we wanted to postpone the technology discussion until the next meeting because it was now 9:00 p.m.

Gail asked why we needed this second tech and what does the position encompass. Craig said that he needs a better understanding of the technology set-up. Ray said that Ken Campbell is requested to come and provide information. Bart said that he also wants to address the issue of oversight. He is astounded that we don't have a district person in charge with a vision for the district.

Ray said that he comes from a curriculum viewpoint. Ken Campbell does not come from this position; he deals with keeping the equipment running. Ray wanted to know how technology is integrated with curriculum.

Ray said that we have a lot of technology in this district and he does not see it being heavily used. Ray said that we have lost our way somewhere along the way and he is frustrated.

Kerry McDonald asked if we were not approving the technology plan. Bart said that as a board, we have a whole lot of technology questions. We are not approving or disapproving of the technology plan. Craig said that we are so far behind with virtual classrooms.

Craig asked if we were going to postpone discussion on the second technology position. Butch asked for clarification on two grant positions for 92K and where are they going. Butch Estey said that at the next Drug & Alcohol Policy Review meeting figures will be provided on costs for a LADC position. In addition, if we are serious about adding an SRO, we are talking a small figure for the remainder of the year. The Human Resource position will have a cost that Butch suggested should replace several people at the SAU. Bart said that much of this discussion has bigger questions. Butch said that he had no problem with making an SRO a priority for the next budget year. He said that he feels we could find some money in the budget for this. Bart said that he would be more interested in the LADC first than the SRO. Butch said that he was looking for a commitment about prioritizing an SRO.

Ray Cote asked for a definition of LADC. Butch responded that it was a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

2. Technology Plan Implications

3. Other

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Marschok