

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

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

**Budget & Property Committee Meeting
December 16, 2008
SAU
1:00 p.m.**

Attendees: Craig Hicks, Bart Goodeve, Butch Estey, Gail Cromwell, Lauren Kirkpatrick, Mary Allen, Beverly Bacon, Ray Cote, John Gryval, Mary Loftis, Linda Potter, Marian Alese, Richard Bergeron

Craig Hicks called the meeting to order at 1:24 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Linda Potter framed what the Board should be thinking about. The decisions made today should focus on student performance around direct savings, partial savings, and reallocation of funds toward staff for reading growth.

Marian shared a Power Point presentation on the Proposed Budget. She said that we need to decide if we are going to post a Bond. Hearings would take place January 20th for Budget/Bond/CVEA Public Hearings.

Critical decisions were outlined. They include staffing, current discussion with potential financial impact, redistricting/bus routes, CVHS Bond Issue, Use of 08-09 Delta. Marian said that we will be discussing the Operating Budget only. Budget Assumptions were outlined. (See handout)

Dick Bergeron explained that the fixed costs under the Budget Assumptions total approximately \$730,000 of the increase in budget. He said that he wants to know if the assumptions hold true for the Board. It affects the bottom line.

Marian further outlined Results to Date also included in the handout. The Autism Elementary Program can be located in Hancock with a redistribution of staff. The Literacy Coach position is in the general budget. Dick said that grant positions can be held for two years. One position can be absorbed and then the following year.

Gail Cromwell asked where the teacher contract was in this budget. Marian said that only health insurance is included and not salaries. The Warrant Article will reflect that figure. Gail asked what the total figure will be in the budget. The April 1st number will be \$110,622.00. The salary Year 1 will total \$511,899 for teachers and paras. Year 2 assumes a 10% increase in health will be \$1,010,163.00. Year 3 would total \$1,068,828.00.

The Elementary Math Program Adoption is the big hit on the Supplies line.

Ray Cote asked if the money for math is for supplies and asked if we could support it. Dick confirmed that we could. He said that the adoption of a Math Program requires Board approval.

Dues and Fees include Special Olympics and high school sports. Debt Service is a result of payments to debt service.

Discretionary Money was included in the presentation. Approximately 4% was discretionary.

Marian reviewed a general overview of the 100 line – Salaries. (See Handout). \$56,000 is in the budget for regular education At Risk students. A fulltime health position was added at PES.

Dick said that PES has a talented Art position that teaches art and music. The release time for teachers is problematic. A retirement at PES will allow us to change the service delivery model. If we are going to teach Health, it must be done by an HQT teacher. It is currently shared by the nurse and a guidance counselor.

Beverly Bacon asked how the service model will be changed. The reply was that the amount of time that kids have for library service is not occurring. We see an opportunity for kids to see additional time in the library.

Ray Cote spoke on behalf of the Technology Integration Position at the high school. He said that they would be directly involved with the curriculum. The equipment is not used how it should be. Bart asked what skill set this position required. Dick Bergeron said that certified integration specialists help teachers integrate technology into the classroom.

Marian said that a full-time floater position in the Maintenance Department is proposed. Marian reviewed the organizational chart for the Maintenance Department. The cost of the floater is approximately \$55,000 with benefits.

Marian added that the Maintenance staff has been absolutely awesome over the past five days. She wanted to publicly acknowledge the work that they have done. In addition, the Food Service Director has worked to feed people in the shelters.

The 200 line – Benefits includes an increase in \$268,011.

The 300 line – Purchased Services includes an increase of \$27,211.

It included reductions in the HVAC maintenance contract, an end to the Aramark agreement, and a move of the software maintenance contract to line 650.

Increases include GBS Arts Day, ground maintenance, Support Staff Professional Development and the addition of the Keys to Literacy Program.

The 400 line – Purchased Services included reductions for repairs and maintenance and water/sewer and an increase for snow removal.

The 500 line – Purchased Services includes an increase for OOD (Out of District) Placements, mileage rate increases, property liability and worker's comp insurance increases as well as homeless transportation.

The 700 line – includes an increase of \$187,732 for upgrades to the CVHS infrastructure and maintenance.

Student/Teacher Ratio information was distributed.

Gail said that she has gone through student enrollment in each of the grades. She proposed reducing AES by one teacher in the 3rd and 4th grade.

Craig asked for information on the pros and cons of Multi-Age concept.

Gail distributed her research on enrollment information and proposed changes.

Dick said that we need to start with a philosophical view. When we build schools that incorporate Multi-Age in some and not in others we invite comparisons. It is based on a philosophical belief rather than numbers.

Bart said that he supports Multi-Age; however he felt that we need to expand the scope beyond financial etc. If we consolidate classrooms, we are going to free up space. We already have excess space. Do we reexamine our territorial imperatives? The Articles do not state that only residents of town elementary schools attend the elementary school in that town. There is nothing that states that Peterborough has to serve Peterborough only. If we erase the town borders we might see a difference in enrollment figures.

Gail said that the big schools, PES and AES, will become inefficient with redistribution.

Bart added that efficiencies might be seen in transportation as well with redistribution.

Ray Cote said that moving the philosophy of Multi-Age was a direction we should move in. The Articles do not dictate where kids go to school. The Board should look at redistricting. We need to sell it.

Mary Allen said that we have been talking about Multi-Age for one year. It has been on the radar. She feels we are ready to make a decision on Multi-Age. She does not feel that a pushback from the community will take place.

Craig asked Mary if Antrim could be brought in on the Multi-Age topic. Mary said that she is not excited about multi-aging grades $\frac{3}{4}$ but is with $\frac{1}{2}$.

Dick said that he would love to explore a full-day K with Multi-Age K/1. It offers better opportunity for performance. He said that he would love the opportunity to work with the bus company and remove town lines and look at bus routes. The other proposal is less effective by making sure that each of our elementary schools is viable.

Marian said that the decision should not be made lightly. This conversation should take more time outside a budget discussion.

Gail reinforced the idea of Multi-Age and said that we needed to support our Superintendent last year with the Hancock proposal.

Bart said that he would like to see the Board vote to embrace the philosophy of Multi-Age classrooms. We need to itemize the efficiencies and that we will have increased student performance.

Mary Allen worried that HES could support keeping 5th graders and supporting a 4/5 multi-age. We are missing three Board members and she worried about moving the matrix forward.

Bart Goodeve moved to adopt the district wide philosophy for Multi-Age classrooms.

Mary Allen second. Unanimous.

Dick said that he will come back with a proposal with recommendations.

Bart asked if there were political reasons for not recommending multi-age.

Mary Allen said that we are looking this as sustainable and not just one year.

Linda Potter explained that having another SpEd Administrator for the middle schools would allow us to have the training and follow-up with procedural changes in law. Current SpEd attend court appearances and other requirements that prevent them from doing other tasks. The buildings would have a higher awareness level in the buildings. Linda said that she is reactive rather than proactive.

Ray asked what would happen if this was held up for another year. The cost is about \$75,000.

Linda said that she and Cari are in buildings other than the middle schools all but 2 hours a week.

Craig said that this is an investment in making sure that 1:1's are justified.

Dick said that this is not currently a good use of our SpEd Director's time. Our local schools and teaching positions training level is less than his past experience. This position exists at the high school. We are spreading our SpEd Director doing things that are not related to her position. Linda said that another option is to do it as a stipend of \$4,500.00.

Dick said that when you are the LEA you determine eligibility. You determine kids as special needs without the expertise.

Craig asked for a sense of the Board. Agreement by all.

Craig said that we have issues at the high school in areas of drug use. The right coordination with local police is important. He would like the support of the Board in way of a continuing conversation with the hiring of an SRO.

Ray asked the status of the LADC. Dick Bergeron said that we need the LADC and Guidance to address the Board. We have come head on into confidentiality issues. The position is seen as drug therapy. They recommend where one should go for individual therapy. The issues of confidentiality have created a tail-spin.

Dick said that the position and job description will need review.

Butch Estey said that if a kid comes in to speak to a LADC, the LADC cannot speak to a parent.

Dick said that the position serves a purpose. With a good SRO, the officer establishes relationships with students and sets very visible supports. It is not the enforcement piece; it is the connection that is made with kids in making better decisions.

Craig said that all of the local town police officers are in agreement that a SRO would be of value to all of the towns.

Mary Allen said that this is a matter of timing. Some Board members were not a part of the previous SRO discussion. It needs a full and frank discussion. She is comfortable in giving four additional weeks for further discussion.

Bart said he would like to know the job description and hiring guideline. The best argument is that this position is required to mitigate problems taking place. Discussion ensued. Mary Allen said that if \$50K goes into the budget, my town is struggling and would think that the SRO is a given and we would have a problem. Craig asked how long we will keep our heads in the sand. Mary Allen said that we can't just bring this forward we need to have discussions in the open so we can get input. Bart said that if we put it in the budget and get it in March you won't hire someone until next March, how much time will you lose. Craig said that this is my 3rd year asking and we have been working on this for 3 years. Butch asked if we can we put the money in and then have a vote to see if we want to have the position after we have public hearings and then make a final decision? Bart agreed that we should put the money in and then have the public hearings to get input from the public. Craig said that he did a lot of homework and has no problem with setting the money aside and then going forward with the public information hearings. Bart asked where Sue Dell comes into to this conversation. Linda Potter said that she is supportive of this position. She did come and do a presentation to the board.

John Gryval asked if we should bypass this. I have a hard time not supporting this. We heard we need a floating maintenance person and a sped coordinator. Can we come back and take a second look at that? Craig said that year after year we hear anyone can go into building and buy drugs.

Bev said that drugs are a daily thing at CVHS. The presence of an SRO would diminish that somewhat, there are fights everyday as well as other things. I think an SRO would be a large benefit for the students. Craig said that we are already spending money because the Assistant Principal is spending time doing that. There are a lot of pros and cons. We need the ability to have someone do the interaction with students and adults. Ray Cote said that everything I've heard about SRO says it would be appropriate. I am tending toward putting money in the budget, have discussion about what we can do, if answer from public is no than return the money, if yes

then the money is there. We have been looking at this a long time. Bart said that the problem is a linear approach. I would prefer money for SRO versus Maintenance position. Mary Loftis said that this seems a greater priority than a maintenance position. Are SRO's generally employed by the Police Department? I am inclined to support this.

Linda said that every student with a court referral becomes a referral to special education. She said that it is a proactive situation. Keene saw a decline in the amount of students court referred. Marian reminded the Board that they have until January 5th to make a final decision on the budget. In addition, if we need to give up the maintenance position we could in lieu of the SRO. The SpEd coordinator is not.

Mary Allen and Gail Cromwell were not in favor of the SRO.

Marian said that an adjustment was made to staff that contributed to health costs.

Craig thought that the pay scale of some of our lower paid employees was too low and we wanted to adjust.

Ray asked that we go back to the minutes.

Marian said that we are in the process of looking at hourly wages in general. Once research is done, adjustments were made as supplemental pay. Going forward, should she keep that amount in the budget? It was confirmed.

Bart asked for closure on the maintenance and SRO position.

Bart Goodeve moved to remove the maintenance position in favor of an SRO. Gail and Mary Allen were not in favor. All else in favor.

Linda Potter discussed the departmentalization of Elementary grades. Strengths in specific areas would be shared to best utilize staff to help increase student performance.

Linda said that focused Para support requires time to look at Para's. If there are 8 1:1 Para's that become trained in a specific reading program, she can utilize those Para's to provide instruction in a specific area. The SpEd students could still receive their SpEd education.

Linda spoke about the Teaching Principal Role and various models that could be looked at.

Marian said that the delivery of services to students could be considered. The population of the various towns is getting smaller.

Craig said that we might be spending more with the Teaching Principal in each of the smaller schools. Each has an aide and an assistant in each of the buildings.

Bus Routes

The same start times for AES/GBS are on the table as a possibility given CVEA agreement rules.

Ray asked about sending GES kids to GBS and asked if it was still on the table.

Marian said that the District as a whole should be considered rather than equal populations in the buildings. The conversation needs to happen.

Mary Allen said that we need to take a look at this. We need to fix it. We need to look at the domino effect. It is an important discussion. She urged this discussion to take place.

Bond Issue

Craig said a new maintenance building does not make sense. Leave it where it is. SpEd seems to grow. The Alternative Program might best fit where the maintenance building was going to go with an expandable footprint. We do not have room to build out but we do upward. If the focus is on energy savings, we should look at the connecting wing to the gym.

Bev asked about accessibility to the back of CVHS for Alt Ed. Craig said that the road leads right to it.

Marian said that \$420,899.02 is available for a reduction to the 09/10 budget. Facilities could be considered.

Bart said that we are going to hit taxpayers up and we might want to give this money back.

Marian disagreed. It is not a standard return of money.

Bart said that when it goes the other way it is considered an artificial deflation of the budget.

Craig said that some of the 09/10 items could be taken care of in 08/09 therefore reducing the 09/10 budget by that amount. Bart said that we should be transparent about it.

Marian referenced the revenue report. Adequacy money will be up \$742,000. Our district assessment will increase \$300,000 even though the operating budget is up.

Craig said CAT and Building Aid are bigger than last because we got stiffed.

Bart said that if we can do better than break even that is what the taxpayers are looking for right now. The regional economy is going to be a disaster.

Linda Potter said that the possibility of reallocating some of the funds to bring in HQT specialists into some of the buildings will be coming.

Craig said that we have seven long-term employees retiring this year.

The Town House needs reminding that their facility will be needed for voting.

Next School Board Meeting was set for December 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

Craig Hicks thanked Marian for all of her work organizing the shelters etc. Marian thanked everyone for their support.

Ray Cote motioned to enter non-public at 4:16 p.m. on a roll call vote for matters of personnel. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok