

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

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Tuesday, January 9, 2007
SAU Office

Budget Hearing
7 p.m.

MINUTES

Board

Mary Allen, Beverly Bacon,
Stewart Brock, Ray Cote,
Gail Cromwell, Butch Estey,
Bart Goodeve, Christy Greene,
Dan Harper, Craig Hicks,
Arthur Knight, Bill McKinnon,
Tom Welden

Beth SanMartino, CVEA

Administration

Keith Burke, Supt.
Marian Alese, B.A.
Linda Potter, SpEd.
Niki McGettigan, TES
Sue Copley, PES
Sue Dell, CVHS
Mary Ellen Stanley, FES
Anita Flanagan, HES
Dick Dunning, SMS
Pamela Matthews, BES
May Clark, DCS
Deb Lesure, AES
Gib West, GBS

Budget Hearing:

Craig Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Revenue - Craig referenced page two (Revenue Code Description). He pointed out several figures. He said that he was glad to see estimated revenue growth.

Budget – Two categories alone are salaries and benefit. A 5% proposed increase in salaries was made. Teachers have changed lanes this year more than ever and deserve more pay. He is happy to report that many teachers are seeking professional development. Health Insurance costs reflect a significant increase. Non-teacher retirement and teacher retirement also reflect big increases. The retirement system doesn't have enough funds and the district has to absorb the difference.

Al Burt, Greenfield, asked if the health insurance at the 100% rate included family plans. Joe Brennan said that he found it difficult to believe that paying 100% of the health was better than 80% of a more expensive plan. Tom said that we were paying 80% of a more expensive plan. We changed to a different plan where the employees had to pay more out of their pockets in co-pays and deductibles. If we continued to pay the 80% it would have been more expensive.

Craig said that the 80% that we were paying cost more than paying 100% of the less expensive plan. Joe Brennan asked if we were continuing to negotiate. Tom Welden said that this is a continuing dialogue. For the plan to be successful for the district it has to be a win/win situation for both. Fran Chapman, Peterborough, asked how many teachers we had totaled. Keith Burke said that we currently have 281 teachers. Fran asked how many we had last year and the reply was approximately 279. Fran asked about changes in life skills staff. Linda Potter said that these

are students who need to gain life skills such as cooking, do their laundry, and learn to shop. They require more support personnel than a regular education student. Fran said that the numbers of these students are increasing reflecting the increase in staffing. Linda Potter confirmed that this was true. Fran asked why the spike in life skills population. Linda Potter said that some families have moved into our district and others have been identified since birth and are now in the school system.

Fran asked that the Board members introduce themselves and they did.

Craig went back to the 80%/100% insurance costs. He said that it was a good move and was a much larger difference in the past. We would rather the money stay in the district than into a health insurance plan.

Fran Chapman asked about line item 232. Keith said that it is a percentage of the total salary. The increase comes from the state. It has nothing to do with the number of people retiring. Keith explained that it was a rate increase that all municipalities and schools have received. Fran asked if this would go down to a more normal level. Tom Welden said that this will hold for two years. He further explained that problems exist within the fund and it will take two years to recover. Fran asked what the problem was. Keith said that he did not know. They have hired new actuaries to determine what to do in the future. He said a number was not available at this time.

Madeline Kadle, community member, asked about the portion designated in retirement. Keith said that it represents a figure just for our group consisting of all employees. Tom said that the percentage of increase is uniform across the state. Madeline asked if it had anything to do with the number of staff retiring. Keith said that it did not.

Craig asked if there were questions for any of the 300 line items.

Al Burt asked for an explanation of SAU figures.

Keith said that it is the salaries and support of the SAU Office. The increase reflects a new position of HR Director requested to be placed in the budget. Al Burt asked what the percentage increase this year in salaries would be. Keith said that a 3% increase is built into the budget.

Al said that he looks at the default budget which guarantees everything we want. He asked if it was a correct assumption that the only way to decrease the budget was to cut line item by line item. It was clarified that voters could cut below the default budget.

Madeline Kadle asked if any of the 300 items reflected the mentor program.

Marian Alese said that it did not.

Craig said that money is being planned to put back into some of the buildings. We have postponed this in the past and it would be more costly to put maintenance off.

Craig asked about the 500 line items. The bus contract was re-bid this past year and the difference is \$189,000. Total savings for five years is expected to be in excess of \$800,000. Fran asked why the decrease in costs. Craig said that the contract was negotiated for less. Keith said that mileage should be better, it is a new fleet of busses. Craig said that we travel 3,700 miles every day with our busses.

Joe Brennan asked what insurance covered. General Liability, workers compensation, property liability were among the responses.

600 line items – Craig said that fuel will be changed to a 5% increase because of the good weather we have had this year. We were able to keep our lower price in fuel to Marian's good negotiating work.

Al Burt asked about the refreshment line. Marian said that this is really a supply. It is the cost of beverages for staff development meetings and Board meetings.

700 line items – Craig asked if Fran wanted to speak about computers at this time. Fran Chapman said that he comes with mixed emotions that once again he is asking us to increase the budget. The last time he asked he said he was ignored and so he is here to ask again. He has read the technology plan and that is what brings him here tonight. He said that he doesn't believe anything matches the depth that this technology plan makes. He commended those that developed the plan. It is evident that much work was done. He said that he appreciates the

deficiencies that we admit to. He said that only one figure is listed for \$100,000. He asked how we could have this road map for the future without a figure present. Fran said that we are going to address the teacher's needs first. He said that this tells him that we are making a commitment. Now we have to implement it which means dollars. He does not see the two being associated. He said it is not right that a dollar figures is absent. Fran said that he asked for a copy of the technology plan but others are not able to view the plan. Tom Welden said that the plan is available on the web site. Fran said that there are needs in the high school. We blew it last year and he doesn't see it in the current budget for this year that we are going to buy one single computer for the high school. He wants to see what is being spent at the high school. He said that the facts are necessary. Fran said that he believes that the person that leads this charge has got to be some individual. They must be a people person. Fran said that the burden on the Board is a big responsible decision that must be made and he pleaded that much thought goes into it. He said that last year a two million dollar bond issue was shot down. He is asking for \$250,000 for computers. He said that if it is put into the budget he will help fight for it. Keith Burke said that over the years Fran and he have been at opposite sides of many issues. He feels that Fran Chapman is right. This technology plan was put together as a three year plan. We are trying to get computers into the hands of every teacher so that they will be better equipped to help the students. It makes sense to implement the plan as it was thought out. He said that we need \$100,000 each year for three years. After that we would have to look at funding the computers for the students. He hoped that Fran would support that when the time came. Fran pleaded that the difference be split.

Craig requested that if there was a concern about accelerating it among the members that they voice their opinion. Bart said that if you recall, a Board level technology committee was going to be formed to answer other questions. There are questions about the infrastructure. Bart said that before we just throw money at it we want to make sure that other questions are answered first. Tom Welden said that we spent more money this year then one would think in our special education area. The technology plan is well thought out and we feel we can make the steps in a planned way. Fran asked if computers would be in the high school next year. Tom said that 06/07 is year one. Fran asked if in 07/08 computers would be in the high school for students. Keith said that it would be for the teachers.

Craig asked Ray if we could go back to the committee and ask if the plan could be accelerated. It was felt that was appropriate.

Al Burt asked where this line was reflected in the current budget. It was confirmed that it was in. 800 line items – no questions asked.

Fran Chapman asked about four sonic projectors that were ordered. He asked what their use was. Keith said that it is the projector that puts the computer image onto a screen. Fran asked if we have started an inventory for all purchases. Marian confirmed that we did start such an inventory. She said that anything that we purchase that is \$5,000 or more, we depreciate and track. Fran asked what the value of that inventory was. Marian said that she could get that figure.

Fran asked if we still had a childcare program running at the high school. It was confirmed that we did. Fran asked how many students participated in the program. Christy said that students can gain certification in this program. A recent graduate just opened her own day care center.

Fran said that there are many licensing budget items and asked what they were. Keith said that when we license software we do so with a yearly maintenance program. We can purchase the software and not the maintenance or updates. We purchase the license to remain updated.

Fran asked about line item 256 - U.S. First Robotics. Keith explained that it was for our robotics team. Fran asked about NHIAA fees. Marian explained that it was all of the athletic fees including referees. Fran asked about surveys. Sue Dell said that we have conducted graduate surveys in the past and have not been happy for several years. We survey past graduates to gain information.

Fran Chapman asked about AP charges. He asked if it was the half that the school paid and the students paid the other half. Marian confirmed that it was.

Fran asked about the figure reflecting conferences. Keith said that administrators are allowed to attend one national conference per year, it plays into their professional development plan. In that figure, membership to professional associations, and to the national council of social studies and New England Association of Colleges. Keith said that in order to remain accredited we need to be associated with that organization.

Fran asked about tuition costs listed in the budget and how it was set. Keith said that the rate is set by the State. We pay the sending schools, they pay us and this number reflects that.

Madeline Kadle asked if the mentor was approved and where is it in the budget.

Keith said that it is in the budget. Al Burt asked if it was for one position or two. It is for one mentor. Madeline asked if there was a vote for who wanted the mentor and who did not.

Tom Welden said that we wanted one mentor in the budget. Madeline asked if any Board members were against the mentor program. Gail Cromwell said that she is not in favor of the mentor program. She said that she feels that there are better ways to deliver the program.

Dan Kadle asked if the detail was provided in the technology plan providing licensing information and the equipment that we own. Ray Cote said that it details the age of the machines. Dan asked if software detail was provided. Ray said that not as much. We are running Windows 2000 on most machines. We talk about the student computer ratio. Dan asked if it projected replacement percentages. Ray said that it comes under planning and research and he expects to see more of that.

Al Burt said that he questions the number of under utilized classrooms. He suggested that we look into the computer and the internet and eliminate a teacher and utilize an aid. We could place all of the students in one room and do this.

Craig said that we introduced a virtual classroom. We have 15 students that took a class in a pilot program. Craig said that we spent \$5,000 on the program. We have voted to add another section. Next year we hope to have 66 students and another teacher. There are 160 courses to choose from. Al Burt asked if we have eliminated any staff. Craig said that we have not eliminated staff.

Al read enrollment figures both past and projected. Five people on the Board came out and favored eliminating staff he said. We have to come out of the dark ages. He applauded the five for thinking outside of the box. He said as a retiree he struggles but he feels he is fortunate that he can still work part time to pay his bills. He reminded the Board that they were elected to represent their towns. We can not give a 7% or 8% increase year after year. Many people in our towns fall below the level of earning a reasonable income or are retired. Al said that as long as he can work part-time he can pay his bills. The day he can't he will have to sell his house and move. He urged the Board to think about the people who are disabled or are on fixed incomes.

Craig asked if there were questions about the Budget By Object sheet. None were asked.

Craig asked about the Budget by Function page. No questions were asked.

School District Budget by School 2007 – 2008 was discussed. Al Burt asked about the budget per school. He questioned the Dublin figure. The reply was that the fifth grade and one-half a Title 1 position are included. Al said that he hoped that further consideration would be given to combining classrooms.

Fran said that the cost per pupil will go up as the population goes down. We may consider merging classrooms or eliminating the kindergarten.

Default Budget – Craig said that the 5.87% is less than the proposed budget. The contracts bring us to this. This includes salary and bussing. The big debate is the 1.55% that we can do something with. It is difficult Craig said.

Madeline Kadle asked what the cost per pupil is with the new budget. Keith said that it has not yet been determined. The State checks our MS25 before that can be done.

Craig referenced a handout on Special Education Costs. In essence, we need to understand that because of this mandate we are responsible for a student from age three to twenty-one. We go out and identify students and are responsible for them through their twenty-first birthday. He said that we get nothing from the government. Craig said that it is our responsibility for all of the children that come into our district. It is becoming more and more difficult. We recently had a

discussion about our trust funds. Last year a student moved out and we did not budget for that student. They moved back in and it caused a \$150,000 swing. We cannot operate in this way. Craig asked the community to understand the things that we have no control over. He said that we need to write our elected people and plead for help. Craig said that the growth is what we need to worry about.

Butch asked that the Board, through the Chairman, send a strongly worded letter to our Congressional delegation and our local legislators requesting that we be given the proper funding for special education. Also, we request that area town's Select Boards to follow our lead. Finally, a petition is made available at the District Meeting for the attendees to sign and for it to be forwarded to the Governor. This should be added to the website for signatures as well.

Joe Brennan suggested that we flood them with letters and then flood them again. Craig said that a letter will be written with thirteen signatures. In addition, Select Boards will be asked for a signature. State legislators will be asked to sign and then the Governor. The Governor will be asked to bring it to Washington.

Joe Brennan said that the Board should be writing a letter each.

Dan Kadle asked about factors contributing to this. Linda Potter said that different student identifications are in place, child find is bringing in more students, students moving into the district account for this as well. Linda Potter added that the severity of the disabilities is increasing. She said that the revenues are either maintaining or going down for what we are delivering.

Fran Chapman said that we pay dues to many associations. He said that those groups could be brought into this to obtain letters. Numbers are the name of the game. He said that if our little district totals seven million, he wondered what the national costs were.

Craig said that we are battling for resources and we cannot afford it anymore.

Craig referenced the attachment titled Average Annual Increase. (see attachment) The assessed value at 5.29% is not out of alignment. It absorbs every single cost that we have. Everything that we do is included.

Madeline Kadle proposed that another letter be sent out to the Governor from the Board to propose a circuit breaker be put in place. Madeline said that her taxes are 21% of her income. She said that she loves children. She is a teacher and her daughter is a teacher. She asked when the costs were going to end. She asked when enough was enough. She asked when a community health plan would be brought together. She asked what the world would be like in seven years. It is going to reach a critical mass. It will be seen in our children or our grandchildren's lifetime. Madeline said that New Hampshire is going to lose some good people.

Joe Brennan said that we have a financial education system that is out of control. He said that he still pays taxes and believes in education. Sixty-five percent of his taxes go to the schools. He said that when the Board negotiates with staff they have to consider raises. Joe said that the people were not being adequately represented.

Craig said that we are educating 3,000 of the 18,000 population in the ConVal District.

Al Burt asked what the process was of changing the annual district meeting. He proposed that it take place two weeks after the tax bills come out when they were fresh on people's minds.

Keith Burke said that the meeting is established by RSA.

Joe MacGregor asked how many meetings took place to get to tonight. Keith said that several dozen meetings. Joe asked if those meetings were peaceful. He said that the majority of the people sitting in this room suffer equally when paying their tax bills. He thanked the Board in this room for the work they do along with the administrators for their work done in building the budget. He said that he is aware of the work required when going through the budget line by line.

Mary Lou O'Neil thanked the Board for their work on the budget as well. Mary Lou hoped that Joe Brennan and Madeline consider who they vote for in elections. It is a shame that we have to pit education against this issue. It is a state wide issue.

Ken Young thanked everyone for their work and encouraged that this meeting be adjourned.

Stewart Brock said that the Board has been holding and will continue to hold individual meetings in each of the towns. Fifteen people show up. He said that people have to do their part and show up and provide input.

Dan Kadle asked how the individual town meetings were communicated.

Stewart Brock said that the meetings were posted in public areas in each of the individual towns as well as posted on the web.

Ray Cote wanted to take the opportunity to encourage everyone to go to the website and sign up for agendas and minutes on items of interest.

Fran Chapman said that we started out at one million and are now at forty. It is naïve to think that we will reverse this trend. Fran said that everything is going up.

Craig Hicks closed the Budget Hearing at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Marschok

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Peterborough, New Hampshire

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SAU Office

Board Meeting
Immediately Following Budget Hearing

MINUTES

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1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Tom Welden called the meeting to order at 8:51 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Minutes (Board Vote Required)

a. **December 19, 2006** (Pgs. 1-16)

Butch Estey moved Stewart Brock second. Unanimous.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. **Request to Accept a Gift or Donation (Board Vote Required)** (Pgs. 17-24)

1. Pierce Elementary School has received from an anonymous donor, a check in the amount of \$250 for playground equipment
2. Dublin Consolidated has received from Emmanuel Church, a check in the amount of \$100 for the student activity fund
3. Dublin Consolidated has received from Harlow Richardson, a gift of a *Crocodile Listens* book valued at \$19.95 to enrich the school library

4. Dublin Consolidated has received from John Naylor, a gift of 5 copies of *Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Gift valued at \$80 to enrich libraries
5. Dublin Consolidated has received from Belletetes Hardware, lumber valued at \$250 for an outdoor storage shed for playground equipment
6. Dublin Consolidated has received from Greg Pease a donation of 25 hours of labor valued at \$750 to build the shed for playground equipment
7. Dublin Consolidated has received from Healthy New Hampshire Foundation, a check in the amount of \$644.35 for playground equipment as part of Anti Obesity Grant
8. ConVal High School has received from Peterborough Basket Company, a donation of 45 baskets to create Thanksgiving baskets for families in the District

Keith read the gifts/donations listed above.

Craig Hicks motioned to accept the gifts/donations as read. Stewart Brock second. Unanimous.

b. Personnel (Please bring your agenda with you)

Keith said that nominations for a JV Basketball coach and a number of retirements were discussed in the Personnel meeting prior to this meeting.

Ray Cote motioned to accept the nomination listed and the retirements listed. Keith read the list. Butch Estey second. Unanimous.

Christy Greene said that this makes the mentor position extremely necessary.

c. Alternative Credits

Sue Dell said that we introduced an alternative credit opportunity for students to obtain PE credit by participating on a varsity team. We will be taking this further to allow students to seek PE credit if they already have ½ credit of PE by alternative athletic opportunities as well as participation on a varsity team. In addition, other opportunities will exist in the third stage for other subject areas. Tom Welden asked when a draft might be available for this proposal. Sue Dell said that in April. Mary Allen asked how many students have applied for this opportunity. Sue replied that seven students have taken advantage of this opportunity.

d. Monthly Events Calendar (Pg. 25)

Keith said that the calendar is included in tonight's packet.

5. Reports

a. Teacher

Beth San Martino reported.

b. Student

None

c. Education

Christy said the committee met last night. Time was spent on world language review as well as the technology plan. The remaining time was spent deliberating ConVal graduation requirements. The Board will continue to stay on the topic until we have a tangible product. We are trying to help the maximum amount of students and not harm the minimum amount of students. We are getting closer and are doing substantial work. We are passionate about this topic. This is a major piece of our job. The next meeting will take place on January 22nd. Christy said that Keith has come up with a position on striving for excellence in the district and we want to nail this down before the Program Of Studies is published.

Tom Welden said that this will be addressed on January 23rd and not the 22nd.

d. Budget and Property

Craig Hicks said that we have met and much discussion has taken place. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 16, 2007.

e. Personnel

Dan Harper said we met prior to tonight's meeting. We accepted the nomination of Clyde Sanford and the retirements listed. Dan said that he would like to continue to meet before the regular Board meetings at 6:30. The next will be on February 6, 2007.

f. Staff Development

Gail Cromwell referenced a sheet she distributed a list titled Tuition Funds/Professional Development Funds.. The group meets once a month at 3:30. Typically the first meeting of the month.

g. Communications

Stewart Brock asked everyone to plan their first quarter meeting in the individual towns. He asked for dates to be provided to him. He will get the dates posted on the calendar.

Tom Welden distributed his Time Line – Short List (See Attachment). Tom reviewed the items on his list. Tom said that the Board Self-Evaluation can be done through a link on the Board website and completed on-line and emailed back to him.

6. Old Business

a. SAU Vending Machines

Tom Welden said that the machine now only sells water. Craig asked if the machine sold any juices. Keith said that it did not at this time.

b. Food Service Position

Tom said that Marian had provided information for review at a prior meeting. No questions were asked. Tom asked if there were any questions tonight. Craig asked about the milk bid. Marian said that we bid our milk out as ConVal. This references the State bid. Craig said that he thought that we were already doing this. Marian said that some vendors could not handle our needs. They could not make daily deliveries. Craig said that he thought that we trying to jump on as much State as we could. Marian confirmed that we were.

Butch Estey said that at the time that Tony stepped into this position we were told that we would be saving a lot of money. Butch questioned whether we need this position or not. Some of what is listed under these functions was done before Tony was in place.

Marian said that on January 22nd Tony and Donna will be completing their State Certification. She will have more information on safe serve in the future.

Butch motioned that we eliminate this position as of July 1, 2007. Bill McKinnon second.

Marian said that she would provide salary information.

Keith said that it might be best to get an impact for next year. He feels it would be worthwhile to allow him to make a better case. **Tom Welden asked that the motion be tabled until the next Budget and Property meeting. Butch withdrew his motion. Bill withdrew his second.**

Marian said that this position is funded through the Food Service Fund and not through the general fund. Craig said that the benefits were paid through the general fund.

Gail Cromwell said that the large water bill is due to this building. Marian said that it is not an addition to the water bill. We satellite to the smaller schools. Gail said that she is unsure that we properly cost out the food service program. We should be charging them for water. Tom suggested this be discussed at Budget & Property. Marian said that she is unsure that she is able to do a complete cost analysis as Gail might like because of commitments in her schedule.

c. Message from the School Board for Annual Report (Pg. 26)

Tom referenced the draft included in tonight's packet. He said that this message is from the Board and not from the Chairman. Gail made changes to the wording in the first paragraph. Keith said that he will have this proofread so that the language is accurately reflected.

d. Board Self-Evaluation

Discussed earlier.

Keith announced that as of August 1, 2007 that he intends to retire from the ConVal School District. He will help in any way in the search for a successor. He has worked with many wonderful people in the district.

Tom said that Keith has been Assistant Superintendent/Superintendent for over 20 years. He managed a huge building project in the renovation of the high school and middle school and the building of eight elementary schools. We have some of the best facilities. We only have two years before a good chunk of the bond is gone and another two for the remainder. Keith has instituted various curriculums in the district. Today we have similar curriculum in the schools. During Keith's tenure, the district has won more awards through language, science and athletic to name a few. He has instituted the MAPS testing program to measure annual progress. He instituted staff evaluations that gave the staff opportunity to improve. Lastly, he has worked very strongly with the Selectman's Advisory groups as well as many School Board members over the years. Tom commended Keith in his ability to go through this with great professionalism.

7. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Marian Alese certified that manifests 68 – 72 totaling \$ 429,552.08 and Sub Run 117 and 118 totaling \$ 11,657.98 and Payroll 13 and 14 totaling \$ 1,840,505.92 have been reviewed by me and found to be proper charges against the Contoocook Valley School District for goods and/or services received and have been properly processed prior to the submittal to the School Board.

Craig Hicks motioned to accept the approval of the manifests as read. Bart Goodeve second. Unanimous.

8. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3,IIc

Dan Harper motioned to go into non- public for one matter of personnel at 9:26 p.m.

Keith Burke reported that Stewart Brock motioned to come out of non-public session at 9:50 p.m. Butch Estey second. The minutes were sealed. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Marschok