



Town of Weare NEW HAMPSHIRE

Town of Weare Finance Committee

December 21st, 2023, 6:00pm

Members			
X	Tom Clow (Chair)	X	John Merva
	Elizabeth Evans	X	Maria Fossiano (Secretary)
X	Neal Kurk	X	Bill Anderson
	James Drury	X	Tom Flaherty
X	Karie Tepper (Vice Chair)	X	Lori Davis
X	Jessica Kallipolites		
Guests/Speakers			
X	Jon Morton (Town Moderator)	X	Naomi Bolton (Town Administrator)
X	Christopher (Chris) Roy	X	Jacqueline (Jackie) Coe (Superintendent)

	Agenda Topic	Discussion
1.	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee said the Pledge of Allegiance Jacqueline (Jackie) Coe and Christopher (Chris) Roy joined committee meeting to give school budget presentations
2.	John Stark Budget Presentation	<p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently working with a budget of \$14,663,898.00 Proposed Budget is \$15,023,071.91 Increase of \$359,174, or 2.5% Default calculation is up \$296,240 or 2 percent Themes will be healthcare, guaranteed maximum rate for healthcare, the most the healthcare is going to increase is 12.1% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant Increase Big Items in the budget are student services and special education needs (both budgets) <p>Proposed Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary (details different lines of salary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are pluses and minus', they were pay increases for the collective bargaining agreement In 2nd year of John Stark Collective bargaining agreement, negotiations next year

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some are census changes, hired someone or someone left, less expensive, more expensive ○ Halfway through page 2 there is a \$5,681 increase ○ Cut a position, there are 4 open teaching positions at the high school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addressing open positions by having teachers teach a 6th class ▪ Math and Science are areas that they are struggling to hire ▪ Several people are piecing the positions together ▪ 4 openings but were able to come to the committee with 1 additional cut ○ Neal Kurk asked- <i>"Could you explain why you have 4 open slots, and you are filling the functions by paying the teachers to do some of the work, why did you decide on 1 of the 4 and not 2 or 3 of the 4, what was your thinking?"</i> ○ Jackie Coe Responded- We definitely need the 3, it is not a good situation that we have the 4 open. We felt like with one we could manage ○ Neal Kurk follow up- <i>"And continuing as you are not is not acceptable?"</i> ○ Jackie Coe Responded- No, Jackie does not like when there are teachers teaching a 6th course. That means they have 25 more students, less time to meet with students for extra help, and they are tired (more prep, more parents to call). It is a nice bump in pay for the teacher, but it is a lot of work. Not a good way to operate long term. ○ Neal Kurk continued- <i>"Do they get 20% increase in salary?"</i> – Yes ● Aid Salary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decrease, that is breakage, loss someone, and hired a new person at a lower rate ○ Negotiating a contract for support staff although it will be a separate warrant, not completed cannot discuss ○ Lori Davis asked- <i>"Can you tell me about the current level on their contracts, is it 4% each year, 6%?"</i> ○ Jackie Coe Responded- Doesn't have that off of the top of her head, would have been in the presentation last year, she will re-share that information ○ Biggest number is the \$114k, that represents the position cut because they also cut benefits, represents census changes, and also includes the 12% guaranteed maximum rate for Health Insurance ○ Neal Kurk asked- <i>"Do you have any sense from the provider as to whether they will go up 12.1%?"</i> ○ Jackie Coe Responded- No, they have had years where they've matched it, and had one year where they said they would have gone up more if they didn't have to provide a guaranteed maximum rate but there have been years when they've gone under. ○ Chris Roy added- Statewide the average increase is closer to 19%
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- Neal Kurk asked- *“So 19% Statewide and they are only maxing us out at 12.1%?”*-
- Jackie Coe responded- Yes, we are supposed to be happy with 12.1%
- Jackie Coe noted- we’ve been very careful that when it does come in under it does fall to the bottom line so part of the money that goes to offset taxes in the fall
- Neal Kurk asked- *“Do you care to estimate what the bottom line going back to the taxpayers will be for John Stark as of June 30th, 2024?”*
- Chris Roy responded- Typically estimate \$100,000
- Jackie Coe added- For John Stark around March last year, we said we would shoot for \$500,000 back, we are navigating in a different landscape coming into next year. The last 3 years they have had staffing issues, so money fell to the bottom-line. The other part of it is the use of Esser Funds, and now those things will go into the budget. Jackie will get back to Neal on a number.
- Lori Davis asked, *“Is it possible to find out your exposer rate right now, would like to know that number?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- Okay, she will find out
- Health
 - Increase of dental insurance by 4.7%
 - Decrease due to census changes
- Pages 5,6,7,8 are all taxes, retirement, FICA, life insurance that follow positions, at the budget workshop the board cut one position, so they cut all costs associated with that position
- Bill Anderson asked- *“On page 3, on the district wide benefits, the district wide actuals were \$41 instead of a million?”*
 - Jackie Coe responded- We are not allowed to share what an individual gets for health insurance and so they pool it, and then it gets disbursed.
- Tuition Course Reimbursement and Conference Workshops & Support Staff Reimbursement
 - Both in the Collective Bargaining Agreement
 - Any increases would go on the warrant for support staff
- Had some decreases for unemployment compensations and worker’s comp
- SAU District Shares, John Stark’s district shares go up by \$58,621
- Lori Davis asked- *“What is that exactly?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- The SAU Budget
- Neal Kurk asked - *“How many additional positions did the SAU budget add?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- One additional position, added director of facilities who manages all the physical buildings, manages CIP
- Neal Kurk asked – *“Why did you have to add this position the function must have been done before someway?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- Yes, we had 2 people across 2 of the districts, so Weare was contracting from John Stark for .2 of a facilities director position and Weare middle school was sharing 50/50 of a position from Henniker so we would contract back a Henniker employee that Weare paid 50%, net

dollar impact is zero. Healthy increase to SAU budget but there is also a 65k decrease to other budgets.

- Neal Kurk asked – *“What were the pay raises to the employees at the SAU?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- They varied, Jackie’s was 2% but they are generally anywhere between 2% and 4%.
- Significant increases for Special Education Contracted Services but also some decreases within the life skills transition
- Neal Kurk asked- *“Can you explain the \$50,000 up and the 30 down?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- We have out of district services, students who are not in our schools and we have to provide out of district services to them, some tutoring, behavioral support, and some counseling support. \$50,000 is for actual services
- Jackie continued- IDEA grant is supposed to be used for needs that come up that the school was not anticipating so we moved things that IDA Grant was used for and that is the increase in the Weare Budget so when things come up, they have the IDEA Grant for
- Jackie continued- 39% decrease is for students who are 21 & 22, and we will not need that line anymore
- Neal Kurk asked- *“If a very expensive child moves into the district this year, and you have the 3 teacher vacancies could you take money from that line and transfer it to this line and cover those unexpected expenses?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- Yes, we would do that or use the IDA Grant
- Occupational Therapy
 - Decrease in speech contracted service
- Evaluations and Testing
 - Decreased Special Education Evaluations
 - Auditors Fees have gone up, school has an extra report this year, this line will go down next year
- Made cuts to water and sewer
- 1,000 dollar increase under Special Education Repairs
 - They have a lot of students with hearing issues and the repairs around that equipment
- Made cuts in ground maintenance, glass repairs, and emergency repairs
- There is a vehicle lease increase (new lease), school has a van (12 passenger) that is used for special education but also can be used by smaller sports teams can also use instead of using larger buses
- Transportation contract has gone up so overall cost of transporting students has gone up and more students to transport
 - Speaking to special education only
 - 48 thousand is some of the out of district placement
 - John Stark student population has gone up about 50 students
- Lori Davis asked- *“Some towns are having issues finding bus drivers to cover routes, are we also having that issue?”*
- Jackie Coe responded- Our bus company does a great job, the folks that work there are members of the town and we have been able to cover routes. Stark and Weare are one system. Weare schools and John Stark share buses.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Flaherty asked- <i>“What % increase what the bus lease?”</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jackie Coe responded- It was a van lease, next year we will go for a new bus contract, will present year by year. • Co-Curricular was a cut, needs to be crossed out, John Stark Board would like to grow a summer program, and there were transportation costs associated with that, they pulled that from the budget, and they plan to use Esser Funds and other grants to cover that cost (13.5k shouldn't be there) • Neal Kurk asked- <i>“I thought you would need to keep the 13.5k in the budget and just change the funding source?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- Esser Funds get approved through the state, they do activity proposals, it does get incorporated into budget at the end, but they don't need lines within it, Esser funds are reported monthly • Property liability insurance has gone up • There are some additional costs for out of district placements, students go to other school districts some go to private programming • Neal Kurk asked- <i>“Do you know how many Stark/Weare students leave Weare under EFAs and go to private schools?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- No information that we have full access to, she believes there are 30 Weare students who received EFAs, and she believes 5 of them were Weare students. • Math Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the process of implementing a new math program, and those are some of the costs associated with that. • Tom Flaherty asked- <i>“The summer school supplies, reduction of 100% before but now it is staying even at \$400, I thought the summer school numbers had all dropped?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- There was a huge increase associated with the summer program and they pulled everything out of the budget. We keep the \$400 for summer school, we have summer school (tutoring, competency recovery). Special education program and non-special education students, some special education students have summer school as part of their plan. Also, if students didn't make their competencies (didn't pass), school has an opportunity for summer work to allow them to pass. • Made additional cuts to custodial supplies and ground supplies based on usage. • Neal Kurk asked- <i>“Do you go out and bid your electricity?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- She doesn't know the answer to that. • Chris Roy added- Schools are under an electricity contract, contract is from before numbers started soaring, so schools are locked into a good rate. • Jackie will get rate and usage for Neal. • Karie Tepper asked- <i>“When looking at the top 3 lines for supply lines for library, computers, and school board the 22-23 actuals are significantly lower than the 23-24 budget and the proposed, do you have actual numbers on what you spent so far this year?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- She can get them for Karie, they did look at actuals as they were building the budget.
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		<p>for students. Made significant cuts on budget for Weare and John Stark and now will be spending their budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neal Kurk asked: <i>“How much are we loosing in stabilization aid for the 24/25 year?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- Nothing, hold harmless for 2 years, after the 2 years we lose 20% • Esser money is \$400k this year, there will be a gap in budget moving froward, but schools used Esser money for 1-time costs such as literacy program so the gap will not be \$400K. Schools report each month on how they spend the Esser money. Didn’t use for positions. • Bill Anderson has a record of money returned from John Stark and Weare schools, ~ \$300k in 2017 (pre covid) • Tom Flaherty asked: <i>“On Page 18, supplies 610, in the first section the bottom line is going down 11k, but you are proposing 318 thousand; that is \$100K more than 22/23 actuals, where does that \$100k exist, 214 in actuals and you are proposing 318?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- She would like to share the actuals of where we are now because we did go through each of those, she asks her principals if it isn’t spent by the time, she goes to the finance committee do you actually need it? • Chris Roy commented- Could be coming from other lines, consolidated a lot
3.	Weare School Budget Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the details on this first page are on the salary page, there are 4 position cuts, started off with 2 • BCBA (Behavior support), currently using grant funding, cheaper to hire someone in this position then to contract out • Lori Davis asked- <i>“Does that include the insurance costs and other costs associated with employment?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- It does, and it is still cheaper than contracting • On page 2, the school psychologist is even more the case having a salaried school psychologist is much cheaper • Occupational therapy, increases that happened in the wage pool • Custodial salaries on page three are a combination of things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Custodians are not within the collective bargaining agreement ○ Needed to increase wages ○ Created 2 lead positions • In 2nd year of collective bargaining agreement with support staff, overall increase of \$15,600, will go into negotiation next year • Lori Davis asked- <i>“What is the percentage that the support staff get in the step increase for this year?”</i> • Jackie and Chris will get that information for Lori • District wide benefits, increases are due to census wide GMR • Lori Davis asked- <i>“Do you go out to bid on your insurance often?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded- we looked at it last year and they have a meeting in March to discuss • They do not have support staff health insurance, but they do have a small 500-dollar flex plan for support staff

- Tom Clow asked- *"Can you explain that?"*
- Jackie Coe responded- It is like a flex spending account; they give money to an FSA
- Lori Davis asked- *"Do you do insurance buy outs?"*
- Jackie Coe responded- They do it for teachers, buy out varies, Weare has it tiered based on how many people opt out of insurance and what insurance they would take, 3k or 5k
- Tom Flaherty asked- *"On Teacher Retirement (Page 11), is that strictly driven by teacher population, it went down?"*
- Jackie Coe responded- It went down because of the 4 positions, and the support staff are not part of the retirement system for NH, rate will change next year, if they were in the system it would apply to all support staff
- Increase to SAU budget
- Tuition reimbursement is \$19,950, number is in the collective bargaining agreement, Weare has been in a spot where it has been difficult for teachers to do additional outside development
- Contracted services are the same 'pluses and minuses' as at John Stark
- Information/ Tech has increases, 4 people within the SAU
 - SAU now has a network person instead of Weare having their own network person
 - Sharing resources to cut down costs
 - Lori Davis asked- *"Who controls their wages and finances?"*
 - Jackie Coe responded: If proposed budget doesn't go through Jackie will need to make decision about who get what raises, you control it, Jackie awards the increases
- Decreases in repairs
- There is a 9k increase in grounds due to shifting in supplies. For example: chips for the playground, we do not buy the chips, we pay someone to distribute the chips, contracted service instead of buying a supply
- Lori Davis asked- *"What line would the generator, lights, and fuel for the generator fall under?"*
- Jackie Coe responded- It would fall under general repairs/ maintenance lines
- Transportation increases larger in Weare due to more students
- Maria Fossiano asked- *"Are the schools doing anything to encourage students to take the buses because we are paying for buses to be provided? Parents have come to the selectmen with concerns about the traffic at the middle school."*
- Jackie Coe responded- The buses are provided, and they drive by their homes
- Tom Flaherty asked- *"Do you have a sense of how many students are taking the buses?"*
- Jackie Coe- There was a survey last year, survey results posted on website.
- Weare School District down 67 students
- Bill Anderson asked- *"On your contract that you have for a buses is it based on volume/ volume/ number of students they are going to carry?"*
- Jackie Coe responded- Contract is based on per run per day
- Increases in property insurance, decreases in telephone
- There were cuts within advertising

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing extraordinary needs in out of district placements • 82k cut for pulling the director of facilities into the SAU • Consolidating supply lines, cut of 18k in supply lines • Cuts within electricity • Trying to replace furniture in the classrooms every year but there is a separate line for furniture, furniture getting old • Tom Flaherty asked- <i>“On the top of 28, criminal checks increased a lot, but you are reducing staff, why the increase? More expensive or different kind?”</i> • Jackie Coe responded we hire a lot of people, and everyone has to have a background check state added a new fee for support staff • Bill Anderson- <i>“Did I miss the line where contracted services went down?”</i> • Jackie Doe responded- Contracted services were paid for by a grant • Bill Anderson mentioned the potential benefit of increasing class size to the size of classes in 2017 • Jackie Coe mentioned- schoolboard more comfortable with the 20-student class size
4.	Teacher Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neal Kurk asked- <i>“We are spending 18 million dollars a year in Weare and roughly the same at John Stark? How do the test scores at Stark, Weare elementary, and Weare middle school compare with state averages? Are we spending money and getting the educational result you would expect?”</i> • Jackie Coe- Academic outcome data was presented at the last board meeting; scores are not where we want them to be • Neal Kurk asked- <i>“Where they are, how long it’s been below the state average and how long it’s been below the state average?”</i> • Jackie Coe- Doesn’t have the date, in Weare we are significantly low, not the case for everything in John Stark, literacy scores are close to state average, but math is below • School uses Esser funds to buy quality resources for math and literacy, schools are engaging in a lot of training with teachers, how we teach and the resources we use is one part of how schools plan to improve student outcome. • Teacher retention is also a part of improving test scores, we do not pay teachers the state average in Weare • Tom Flaherty asked- <i>“You mentioned at the last meeting that you hired 18 new teachers last year and they are all staying?”</i> • Jackie Coe Responded- Yes, we are retaining them to this year, people we hired last year we actually kept them for a 2nd year, people we hired 2 years ago left <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Had bubble in contract, you get paid by how many years you taught, they condensed years 1-6 so folks that are in year 8,9,10 make less than other school districts can leave and make more money somewhere else. ○ Expanding bubble is part of what they did with this negotiation ○ Increases are significant across the board • Jackie included grid, not as far off in steps 1-5, that is why we can hire folks new to the field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included neighboring towns • Link to contract in documentation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated leave ○ 2-year contract, 2nd year is much less ○ 8.2% increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base salary hiring in under new contract is 42, 862 and currently making 40,400 • Tom Flaherty asked- <i>"25% of students are on an IEP, 7% are on a 504, average ins California (whole state) is 13% IEP, 1.5% on 504, how does that compare to our neighboring town? Is that a factor why teachers don't want to stay here?"</i> • Jackie Coe responded- NH is on the high end, not out of the ordinary from our neighbors. Jackie did a survey asking why they stay teaching in Weare, details are included in the documentation. They like the leadership and culture in Weare. • Lori Davis asked- <i>"Since we are increasing salary were people willing to cut some medical benefits?"</i> • Jackie Coe responded - Contracted was negotiated and health benefits are staying the same • Jessica Kallipolites asked- <i>"Are you looking at other strategies to help on board people, help retain people?"</i> • Jackie Coe- Yes, Weare is a very supportive school community • Neal Kurk asked- <i>"What percent increase does the contract represent/proposed budget?"</i> • Jackie Coe responded- Proposed budget 1.25% increase, 4.9% in first year of the contract • Neal Kurk asked- <i>"Would it be possible for the school to go back to its proposed budget and reduce it below the current reduction for that the total increase of the contract plus the purposed budget is 3.2%?"</i> • Jackie Coe responded- She doesn't think that would be possible • Neal Kurk responded- you could assume the cost of healthcare would be less, knowing that in the 24-25 that positions will not be filled • Neal Kurk asked- <i>"What is the last date board can make changes to its proposed budget?"</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jan 9th • Bill Anderson asked- <i>"Have you had any teachers take the early retirements for the healthcare benefits?"</i> • Jackie Coe responded- We've had one and one who will start at the end of this year • Bill Anderson asked- <i>"For the paras, do you have a rough estimate of how many you are still contracting out?"</i> • Jackie Coe responded- It was a mixed bag, hired more have fewer open positions, just entered a contract for 1 or 2
5.	Dates and Times for next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Committee Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ January 3rd at 6:30pm ○ Tentatively the 17th and the 24th • Public Hearing for John Stark is 1/12 • Public Hearing for Weare schools is 1/10 • Deliberative session Weare Schools is 2/7

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberative session John Stark is 2/9 |
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