

Weare Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday January 6, 2021 7:00 pm

Opening

The Meeting of the Weare Finance Committee was called to order at 7:02 pm on January 6, 2021 via Zoom Video Conference by Tom Downing, Committee Chair.

Present

Eileen Meaney – Town Moderator, Naomi Bolton – Town Administrator

Tom Downing

Megan Thellen

Leah Borla

Tom Clow

James Drury

Tammi Hagman

Rachel Cisto (absent)

Gary Evans

Neal Kurk

Bill Anderson

Nicole Herbst

Dennis Aubin (absent)

Christine Hague

Christine Heath – School Board Member

Jackie Coe – Superintendent

Chris Roy – Business Manger SAU24

Zack Lawson – Chair JSRHS

Wendy Curry – Chair Weare School Board

Susan Warren – School Board Member

Jim Newcomb – School Board Member

Outstanding Actions

None to discuss- **Notes for audio setup-Audio and microphone off on the laptop. Call in with external speaker and no internal microphone.

Review

Out of respect for the schedule of the guests who are present to review the budgets, Chairperson Downing motioned to call guests to the podium to speak first and motioned to go out of order of the agenda. Motion was unanimously approved.

Weare School District and JSRHS Budget Overview –

Jackie Coe

Overview – Two proposed budgets 5.03% JSRHS 6.7% for Weare

Restructuring on how they deal with federal grants – budget lines for grant funding. Put individual lines into the budget to be more transparent. This equals 2.5% of the JSR and 2.6% of WSD. Those are offsetting revenues that do not affect the taxes.

Health insurance 7.3% guaranteed maximum rate mandated by the state non-negotiable. Totals \$58,810 JSRHS and \$226,938 WSD.

Mandatory employer contribution to the NH retirement funds. Increased teachers and instructional staff 3.22% and 2.89% for all other employees. This totals \$176,039 JSRHS and WSD \$138,000 increase.

Megan Thellen-Threshold to use on the overview – SAU district shares no increase on JSRHS. Those will be hashed out at district meeting next week.

Changes on Weare Budget - +/- proposed \$961057 and Should Be \$954192.68

Contract services \$14352.00 should be \$10502.50

Nicole Herbst – review offsetting revenues for clarity as follows

Jackie Coe – IDA grant is largest. That grant well over \$400k in Weare and in JSRHS \$300+. Now it is all consolidated at the SAU and is not broken out. They will be broken out as separate line items per school to be more transparent. This has not shown in the budget prior but will from now on. It needs to be budgeted in order to be spent. It will look as if there is an increase but also in the revenues so there will be a wash and does not affect the taxes.

Christine Hague – clarify – cannot spend without permission and it is in the budget to allow spending permission.

Chris Roy – \$340K both federal grant and food service included offset by revenue – object budget is \$325

Weare Proposed Object Summary – Salaries -\$23,846 increase. That is the increases for those outside of the collective bargaining \$17,700. Asking to make the tech coordinators year-round. \$25,000 in proposed budget to make them year-round employees for additional support.

Tom Downing – is it an organic or COVID need. Would the \$25,000 cover?

Jackie Coe – it has been an increasing need prior to COVID and has become more important due to COVID. They are already using grant money for 10 additional days this year. No vacation currently included but would if approved. It will increase from 210 to 260 working days.

Benefits are requirements. Smaller increases in flex plans and dental and workman's comp. \$12,500 other were on top on retirement.

Megan Thellen – class aide and preschool aide. Additional position?

Jackie Coe - No additional staff just reallocation or shift from center woods to middle school.

Nicole Herbst – additional days with salary increases include specific benefit increases?

Jackie Coe -Yes. FICA, health, etc.

Purchase services \$88,632 increase to the SAU district shares. Retirement and health increases added tech position at the SAU offset with cut to contract services. Shifting to the facilities manager to purchase services line. No change in budget. \$65,000 is transportation contract. Spec Ed transportation part of default last year. District had to absorb the increase due to being on the default but needs to be in the proposed budget. It is not options

Supplies – Gr 5 Science resources that are looking to obtain

Property - \$8600 cut to technology try to use COVID grants

Grants –

Financial Transfers – debt service line

Tom Clow – transportation – is the \$68,000 kinder included?

Jackie Coe -Yes, part of the default budget

James Drury– clarify debt services

Chris Roy – Leases in Weare – boiler at Center Woods will check to see if there are others pending on the books, but they are older. Boiler lease was refinanced. Lease began in 2005 ends in 2025. Includes principal and interest on different lines but is a decrease overall.

Chris Hague – any bonds close to being paid off?

Jackie Coe– will research and send follow up report to the finance committee

Gary Evans – Lunch bus, what is the cost involved for that food transportation. Federal gov't reimburses for the cost of the meals?

Jackie Coe - Since the contract was already in place the cost of transportation is part of that

Neal Kurk – Neal what would the SAU feel about a decrease of 1%

Jackie Coe – it would be a struggle. Would have to cut staffing.

Bill Anderson – Potential revenue drop from the state? Did they ensure every reduction possible? Cost per student available to be added may be a benefit.

Jackie Coe – working on those numbers for public hearing next week

Neal Kurk – more complete review of expected revenues at public hearing?

Jackie Coe – working on it some still working through legislature \$1.1 for Weare 430k for JSRHS. Cares II no allocation yet. Unknown on how it can be used. Staffing cuts have been made to accommodate for less students. Enrollment is level except at the elementary level. They cannot predict if students will come back next year.

James Drury – dues and fees – clarity. Curriculum costs? Are there other sources of curriculum options to possibly reduce costs?

Jackie Coe – some subscriptions for remote learning software. Some are annual and some are longer term i.e. 5 year subscription. More options on the HS level than in the lower grade levels.

Decrease \$35,820 in property services

JSRHS Proposed Object Summary – salary \$38,693 increase proposed. There are some cuts but the new salary spending is in two parts. Summer program revamping – software for summer learning and make more live instruction. NEAS Accreditation – was delayed due to COVID and will be done this year. It is conducted by a 3rd party and a committee to assess the results.

Tom Downing– what are the benefits of the accreditation?

Jackie Coe– helps to drive and shape the future of the school. Has a negative impact on college applications. Most schools in the state are accredited.

Benefits -same explanation as WSD

Purchase Services – increase to this line item but decrease to out of district placement to offset some of the increase.

Property Services - \$12000 increase for grounds repairs, maintenance, and upkeep.

Replacement equipment – numerous lines items were cut to decrease the budget

Dues and Fees – significant cuts

Debt Service – decrease

Financial Transfers – grants and food service.

Tom Downing – 5.03% increase but what are the offset numbers with the offset being 2.5%

Jackie Coe - Offset 2.53% increases with grant so only 2.53% is affecting taxpayer.

Megan Thellen– heating repairs last budget and water sewer expenses were very high.

Jackie Coe – no water and it was hauled in to keep school going. Projects were completed to make repairs. HVAC work and roofing projects and well work. The boiler is the core component that provide the heat but there are other delivery systems for the heat. That affects the boiler expense

Bill Anderson – snow plowing why difference?

Chris Roy– Staffing completes work at JSRHS. Weare School contracts the services to plow vendors.

Jackie Coe – one additional both districts have ratified a contract – Contract will be the same. Teachers only asked for the step increases to the cost of \$75,000 JSRHS (warrant article) \$5935 Weare.

Neal Kurk– Clarity on if articles are defeated teachers do not move up a step. Will it be made clear regarding the savings due to the retiring employees?

Jackie Coe – the focus is on transparency. Teachers will not move up a step if defeated.

Tom Downing – Will it be reviewed in public session

Jackie Coe – Yes and then work continues for deliberative session. Next Wed Weare next Friday JSRHS public Hearing. Deliberative sessions are the first week in February.

Nicole Herbst – will there be Zoom access to the public hearing?

Jackie Coe– yes, the links are already posted.

Sub Committee Reports

Town – Naomi – no more warrant articles should be coming forward for the Town. Public Hearing is Monday, January 18th at 7:00 pm. Deliberative session is scheduled for Saturday, February 6, 2021 at 9:00 am. They will be at the gymnasium for both meetings.

No additional Reports on Weare or JSRHS. No School Board meetings since then.

Old Business – Right to Know Request – Any and all FC emails 2021 CIP, Budget or Warrant Articles. Clarity on what falls under the Right to Know. Response was received by the town attorney. Paragraph from Laura’s letter was read by Tom Downing. RSA 91A. There should be no direct communication with the attorney by individual FC members. Any and all questions need to be sent to Tom Downing as the Chair, he is the only authorized representative to relay information. Effective immediately, no additional communication with the attorney is authorized.

Christine Hague – should any communication added to the minutes?

Tom Downing – Yes. The thread was condensed for the purpose of following the chain as written and sent to Leah Borla as an addendum to be added to the record.

Bill Anderson – Is this an issue that is occurring often?

Tom Downing – his understanding is that this has been a regular occurrence in the past. Megan Thellen agreed.

Tom Clow– document any email thread. Stick with one topic during that thread. Recommends email not be used for discussion rather for information sharing for meetings, etc.

Discussion regarding the attorney opinion. Questions were asked regarding the accuracy of the opinion. Tom Downing stated he will take the opinion of the attorney and move forward as directed to provide the information requested in the Right to Know request that was submitted.

Nicole Herbst – what is needed to respond?

Tom Downing – any emails that members may feel fall under the Right to Know Request. Send correspondence to FC Secretary Leah Borla and she will compile the information by January 13, 2021 to send to Tom Downing. If there is no response from a member and

additional communications that fall under the RSA come to light that FC member will be own their own to legally defend themselves.

New Business – Discussion regarding FC recommendations. Window of time to discuss changes with budget before ballot is generated.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the 12/16/2020 minutes as amended was made by Tom Downing. Gary Evans issued a second. Minutes unanimously approved.

Agenda for Next Meeting

Next meeting to deliberate warrants and budgets. The meeting will be set for January 20, 2021 at 7:00 pm. The next meeting agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting but it is anticipated that the full budget including warrant articles.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:32 pm by Tom Downing, Committee Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 on on January 20, 2021 via Zoom.

Minutes submitted by: Leah Borla, Secretary

Approved by: