

APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 2nd, 2023

1 **CALL TO ORDER** – Ms. Meg Bressette opened the meeting at approximately 6:33 PM.

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4 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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7 Ms. Bressette called attendance:

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9 **PRESENT:** Chair Meg Bressette
10 Vice Chair Greg Smith
11 Bob Sherman
12 Phil Haberlen
13 Ellen Cormier
14 Paul Grant
15 David Silva
16 Garrett Abare – *not present at roll-call; arrived at 6:42 pm.*
17 School Board Representative David Wilkerson
18 Selectmen Representative Jason Croteau
19 Recording Secretary Heidi Zagorski

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21 **ABSENT:** Secretary Deborah Ryan - *excused*

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24 **BUSINESS**

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27 **MINUTES REVIEW: October 26th, 2023**

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29 Mr. Phil Haberlen asked to correct the number from .81 to 1.81 on line 121.

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31 **MOTION:** (Sherman/Cormier) To place the October 26th, 2023 Budget Committee Meeting minutes on file
32 as amended.

33 **VOTE:** (9-0-0) The motion passed.
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36 **REVIEW DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL BUDGET**

37 Ms. Bressette welcomed Superintendent Mr. Chip McGee, Finance Director Ms. Deb Mahoney, and Assistant
38 Superintendent Ms. Sarah Marandos. Mr. Chip McGee also welcomed Ms. Kim Noyes as Director of Student Services,
39 Ms. Toni Barkdoll as Director of Human Resources, Mr. Brian Sands as Director of Facilities, and Mr. Keith Lord as
40 Director of Technology.
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43 **GENERAL FUND**

44
45 Ms. Deb Mahoney stated that they provided the Budget Committee with an electronic list of questions from the previous
46 meeting and their responses. Ms. Mahoney said in addition they provided the Budget Committee with the warrant article

47 that the School Board recommended and took their vote on the night before. She added that they are still working on the
48 collective bargaining article. Ms. Bressette asked when they would have this. Ms. Mahoney said they would focus on
49 having this by Reconsideration for their target date.

50
51 Ms. Mahoney said the District Budget starts with salaries. Ms. Mahoney said the only salary you see in this section is for
52 the district-wide chorus teacher. Ms. Mahoney said the salary and benefits are listed. Ms. Mahoney said additionally in
53 this section, you will see the collective bargaining agreement requirements. Ms. Mahoney said daily substitutes have
54 increased. She said they have seen an increase in the daily substitute expenses. Mr. Bob Sherman asked what the daily
55 rate for a substitute is. Ms. Mahoney said the daily rate is \$110/day.

56
57 Ms. Bressette said the District-Wide School budget is \$16,278,977.

58
59 Ms. Mahoney said there is an increase in long-term substitutes. She said they have seen an increase in long-term
60 substitute expenses. She said they budgeted for this based on a four-year average.

61
62 Ms. Mahoney said next is the district-wide rental and lease software. She stated that the IXL Math subscription was
63 moved to the district-wide budget and is reflected in this section.

64
65 Ms. Mahoney said the next section is district-wide Special Education.

66
67 Ms. Mahoney said the Registered Behavior Tech is listed with salaries and benefits associated. She said the Instructional
68 Assistants' salaries are listed. Ms. Mahoney said there is a reduction under nonunion workshops. Ms. Mahoney explained
69 that the new director looked at historical spending and provided reductions throughout the Special Education budget lines.
70 Ms. Mahoney said the first reduction is under nonunion workshops reduced to one instructor. She noted there is a budget
71 line removed for \$2,000 that has gone historically unspent.

72
73 Ms. Mahoney said next is Professional Services. Mr. McGee said there is a significant increase primarily due to a
74 program change. Mr. McGee said the program New England Center for Children (NECC) had previously been budgeted
75 in Psychological Services and Cooperative Classroom Services. He said this is a line move so the budget increase of
76 \$150,000 in Professional Services will also be seen as a \$150,000 reduction under Psychological Services and
77 Cooperative Classroom Services. Mr. McGee said there are five level-two Superintendent reductions which are in
78 collaboration with their new director. Mr. McGee said they have reduced the part-time Reading Specialist position at the
79 High School to offset the need for a new language-based contracted program. Mr. Greg Smith asked what the net change
80 would be. Mr. McGee said the net change would be an increase of \$18,000 on the Professional Services budget line.

81
82 Ms. Mahoney said there is a reduction in tutoring services. Ms. Mahoney said this was reduced based on needs. Ms.
83 Mahoney said they also have reductions in legal services, disposal, repairs and maintenance, and postage. These
84 reductions were made based on adjustments for what they actually need.

85
86 Mr. McGee said the next section is tuition to other needs. He said this has significant changes this year. He said if a
87 student requires specialized instruction, they are required to find these services for them. Mr. McGee said this could be
88 paying tuition to another school district that runs a specialized program and also to private day programs and on occasion
89 private residential programs. Mr. McGee said tuition to private schools is up over \$500,000. He said these are specific
90 placements and quoted costs for next year. Mr. McGee said there are related services for Occupational Therapy, Physical
91 Therapy, Speech Services, and (ESY) Extended School Year program. Mr. McGee said the tuition for residential
92 programs has declined.

93
94 Ms. Mahoney said there are reductions in the budget for items that are not needed going forward. She said the software

95 line has been eliminated, the equipment additional line is eliminated, the equipment replacement line is reduced, and dues
96 and fees are reduced.

97
98 Ms. Mahoney said bilingual programs have no significant changes to the budget request.

99
100 Ms. Mahoney said ESY has summer program costs for Special Education. She said salaries are listed there. Ms.
101 Mahoney said the tuitions are listed as well. She said there was a reduction in supplies.

102
103 Ms. Mahoney said under Social Work Services you will see the district-wide Mental Health Clinician listed with salaries
104 and benefits.

105
106 Ms. Mahoney said district-wide Nurse Services has substitutes listed with no changes to the request.

107
108 Ms. Mahoney said in the Psychological Services section you will see salaries for the three Psychology positions as well as
109 the benefits associated with it. She said you will notice these are currently vacant. She said they were not able to secure
110 employees for these vacancies and they are using contracted services. Ms. Mahoney said they have an adjustment in the
111 budget to be able to compensate for the contracted service provider.

112
113 Ms. Mahoney said Speech Services has some vacant positions open and currently has contracted services supporting these
114 positions.

115
116 Ms. Mahoney said Physical Therapy services are a contracted service and based on the contract for next year there is a
117 reduction of \$17,000.

118
119 Ms. Mahoney said Occupational Therapy has four Occupational Therapist positions that are filled. She said the salaries
120 and benefits are listed. She said there is an increase of about \$2,400 to provide services as required.

121
122 Ms. Mahoney said next is district-wide improvement of instruction. Ms. Mahoney said this is where the Assistant
123 Superintendent for curriculum instruction and assessment is listed with salary and benefits. Ms. Mahoney said there is a
124 small reduction of \$650 in the supervision and evaluation tool that they use for their programs.

125
126 Ms. Bressette asked what the responsibility pool salaries are. Ms. Mahoney said as part of their collective bargaining
127 agreement, they have additional funds budgeted to support the additional responsibilities that the teachers have to support
128 the educational programs.

129
130 Ms. Ellen Cormier asked what the TGIF salaries are. Ms. Sarah Marandos said it was the Teachers Grant Incentive Fund
131 which is a part of the required Collective Bargaining Agreement. Ms. Marandos said an example would be if a teacher
132 wanted to start a club based on student interest, they would need this pool of funds to start it. She said there is a committee
133 that is represented by all three schools, the School Board, and the administration that decides how these new clubs or
134 opportunities for the students can be funded and it is through this fund.

135
136 Ms. Mahoney said next is instruction and curriculum development which has no changes.

137
138 Mr. McGee said under district-wide instructional staff training you will see a new request. Mr. McGee said there are
139 mentors who are experienced teachers, who have the responsibility of helping to mentor new teachers. He said they are
140 proposing to increase mentor pay from \$500 to \$700 each. Ms. Bressette asked who the out-of-district mentors would
141 cover. Ms. Marandos said sometimes they hire teachers who are on alternative certification plans, and the New
142 Hampshire Department of Education (NHDE) requirements do not meet the certifications of the in-house teachers. Ms.

143 Marandos explained they have to look at other districts and provided an example using the new Family and Consumer
144 Science (FACS) program at the Memorial School. She said they had to outsource to a neighboring district that had an
145 Experienced Educator Licensed (EEL) teacher in FACS in order to get their teacher certified within the NHDES
146 requirements. She explained they have to pay for these out-of-district teachers with a different line item.
147

148 Mr. Smith asked about the Suicide Prevention Speaker requirement. Ms. Marandos said they have recently hired two
149 district Mental Health Clinicians. She said they have been building up their capacity to do their state-mandated Suicide
150 Prevention training for all staff in the Pelham School District. Ms. Marandos said previously they had to outsource
151 speakers and they are working on getting this all in-house, adding that you will not see this in the budget in future years.
152

153 Ms. Mahoney said district-wide computers have 1:1 Chromebooks budgeted in this section and related cases and supplies.
154 She said there are some reductions here and a slight increase in supplies.
155

156 Ms. Mahoney said School Board services are next. Mr. McGee said a new item is to budget \$3,200 for the Grand
157 Opening event of the Pelham Memorial School.
158

159 Ms. Mahoney said district-wide clerk services, treasurer services, and election services have no changes.
160

161 Ms. Mahoney said auditing services have no change and legal services are down slightly.
162

163 Mr. McGee said the next section is district-wide superintendent services. He said they have non-bargaining employees in
164 the district who have experienced a change in their health insurance, and they have proposed a change for a 3% salary
165 increase. He said for their hourly employees they have found they are not keeping up with the market and have a concern
166 about losing talent. He said they have proposed a 1% increase for the marketing adjustment for these employees.
167

168 Ms. Mahoney said repairs and maintenance have been reduced. She said they have a new lease for the copier machine
169 resulting in a reduction.
170

171 Ms. Mahoney said the Special Education Administration has some changes within the salaries and benefits.
172

173 Ms. Mahoney said business and finance services have no significant changes to the budget.
174

175 Ms. Mahoney said under SAU is payroll, accounting, and the business administrator position listed with salaries and
176 benefits.
177

178 Ms. Mahoney said workshops are down.
179

180 Ms. Mahoney said rental and lease software has increased.
181

182 Ms. Mahoney said next is facilities and operations district-wide. She said they did reduce the number of staff that they are
183 sending to the schooled university from two to one resulting in a reduction of \$900. Ms. Mahoney said a reduction is
184 shown in the travel mileage as a \$2,000 reduction.
185

186 Ms. Mahoney said the next section is building services, which is the maintenance team. She said the salaries and benefits
187 associated with these positions are listed.
188

189 Ms. Mahoney said next is insurance for property and liability. She said they did have to increase this due to insurance
190 claims from lightning strikes at the Pelham Elementary School.

191

192 Ms. Mahoney said SAU building services are specific to the SAU building. She said the electricity and natural gas
193 budgets are listed and are both down.

194

195 Ms. Mahoney said ground services reflect an increase of \$58,000 to replace the district truck and plow.

196

197 Ms. Mahoney said there is a new request for \$250 per school to increase the equipment needed for the 'stop the bleed'
198 program for emergency plans.

199

200 Ms. Mahoney said next is Transportation. She said they are in their third year of the transportation contract which results
201 in an increase of about \$2,300 for regular transportation. She said there is Special Education Transportation as well which
202 is up significantly and is just under \$200,000.

203

204 Ms. Mahoney said next is Human Resources services. She said the salaries and benefits are listed. Ms. Mahoney said
205 they have new hire expenses. She said they budgeted for what they are seeing for actuals for criminal record checks. She
206 said they have their fingerprint live scan system. She said the reduction is a combination of adjustments to those lines as
207 well as the live scan system because it was a one-time purchase.

208

209 Ms. Mahoney said there is a rental lease software line where they budgeted their new unified talent implementation which
210 was a one-time purchase and now only has the annual support fees for the software listed.

211

212 Ms. Mahoney said they have a new Human Resource Director and they have been looking at new ways to recruit and one
213 of these improvement tools is by participating in campus fairs. She said they would like to add this to the budget for this
214 year.

215

216 Ms. Mahoney said district-wide technology includes those employees who support the technology needs. She said the
217 salaries and benefits are listed.

218

219 Ms. Mahoney said there is a reduction of \$3,500 in professional development training needs. Ms. Mahoney said the
220 auditorium at the High School is being utilized again. She said they have a district-wide coordinator that supports the use
221 of that space. She said they have found that they do not have a budget to support the auditorium specifically. She said
222 they have a line for the auditorium's annual training for the equipment and a line for equipment repairs and maintenance.

223

224 Ms. Mahoney said there is a reduction because they have an audit done in data security every other year and this is an off
225 year.

226

227 Ms. Mahoney said travel and mileage have a reduction of \$1,600.

228

229 Ms. Mahoney said the supplies listed at \$800 are for the auditorium for stage lamps and other equipment needed.

230

231 Ms. Mahoney said the software line has an overall \$12,000 increase. She said the increase here is for Screen Cloud for
232 monitors and a backup support server for the network.

233

234 Ms. Mahoney said there is an increase in the technology plan. She said this year it is budgeted for the replacement of all
235 the network switches for the district.

236

237 Ms. Mahoney said under district-wide benefits and fixed charges, they budget for benefits that are associated with
238 disability payment requirements, unemployment insurance, and the Affordable Care Act.

239 Ms. Mahoney said under debt services, they budget for principal payments for bonds, and the interest payments for the
240 bonds.

241
242 Ms. Mahoney said this is the completed district-wide budget.

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245 **FOODSERVICE FUND**

246
247 Ms. Mahoney said these are non-bargaining employees. Ms. Mahoney said they are challenged in this department and
248 made a market adjustment. She said they also eliminated a driver position. She said they had to take the truck off of the
249 road due to a frame issue. She said they are using personal vehicles to get around the district. She said they also have a
250 fully functional kitchen at the Memorial School now so the need to move food around the district is less.

251
252 Mr. McGee stated that the Food Service department is self-funded.

253
254 Ms. Bressette said the Food Service budget is \$1,143,423.

255
256 Ms. Mahoney said they removed the budget for truck repairs which was a \$750 reduction. She said they added in the
257 Screen Cloud Service that allows for the displays in all the kitchens in the districts. She said that is a \$600 add.

258
259 Ms. Mahoney said printing and travel are down. She said supplies are slightly down.

260
261 Ms. Mahoney said the Elementary School has six positions and has one un-filled position. Ms. Mahoney said food is
262 significantly up with a 7.1% increase and this reflects an increase in food rates. She said there is a reduction in supply
263 rates.

264
265 Ms. Mahoney said the Memorial School is next. She said it has an additional position listed that was transferred in from
266 the High School. Ms. Mahoney said repairs and maintenance are reduced by \$2,000. She said the supplies are reduced and
267 they adjusted their anticipated food to actuals which is a reduction.

268
269 Ms. Mahoney said next is the High School. She said they moved one position to the Memorial School and also eliminated
270 a second position resulting in a reduction. She said there is a reduction under rental lease equipment because they had
271 been budgeting for adding a second vending machine, adding they have decided to remove the second vending machine
272 request resulting in a \$4,000 reduction.

273
274 Ms. Mahoney said overall this budget is down from the prior year.

275
276
277 **GRANT FUNDS**

278
279 Ms. Bressette said the Grant Funds budget is \$705,865.

280
281 Ms. Mahoney said this is a level budget. There are no changes.

282
283 Ms. Mahoney explained in budgeting they need to make sure they are budgeting for the appropriations that they expect to
284 spend. She said this is called gross appropriations. She said for example, they would say they expect to receive at least
285 \$705,000 in grants, so they have a budget available for them to expend from. She said however the funds themselves do
286 not come from taxation they come from the submittal of grant approvals.

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OTHER SPECIAL FUND

Ms. Bressette said the other Special Fund is budgeted at \$52,000.

Ms. Mahoney said this is a level budget. There are no changes. Ms. Mahoney said this is where they budget for local grants and other items that they have anticipated revenues come in from.

DISCUSSION

Mr. McGee responded to a question from member Mr. Phil Haberlen relative to student to staff ratio. Mr. McGee said at this point going back to 2000, this is something that is not readily available to the district, but he does think it is something that could be hand-counted out of the town annual reports. Mr. McGee said in the response to the general questions, they were able to go back to 2007 for student-to-teacher ratios. Mr. McGee said he would be hopeful that this could illustrate the same concepts that Mr. Haberlen was looking for. Ms. Mahoney added that they do not calculate the staff-to-total student ratio. Mr. McGee said they have the 2007 to today student-to-teacher ratio as opposed to any person drawing a paycheck.

Mr. Haberlen said the question states student to staff, and the Excel spreadsheet provided says student to teacher. Mr. Haberlen confirmed with Mr. McGee that the data is for teachers only and that there are staff drawing paychecks that are not included in the provided data. Mr. Haberlen asked Mr. McGee if he had an understanding of where the trend line would go if you extrapolated it to the left towards 2000. He asked if it would continue to go up. Mr. McGee said he did not know. Mr. McGee said he has rarely seen it above the 16 mark where it was in 2007 in his professional experience in Pelham and beyond. Mr. Haberlen said it looks like in 2007 it was at 16 for Pelham including teachers only, and it is at 11.8 in the most recent year, stating that it is about a 30% increase of just teachers to student ratio over that time period. Mr. Haberlen said he was satisfied with the data provided.

Ms. Bressette said they would go over any lingering questions and review the school budget at the next meeting on November 9th.

Ms. Bressette said at the November 16th meeting they would be voting on school budgets, school warrant articles, town budgets, and town warrant articles.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Sherman/Wilkerson) To adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:17 PM.

VOTE: (10-0-0) The motion carried.

Respectively Submitted,
Heidi Zagorski
Recording Secretary