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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 25, 2018
APPROVED – November 1, 2018

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CALL TO ORDER – at approximately 7:30pm

PRESENT: Mr. Michael Bailey, Mr. Dave Cate, Mr. Bob Sherman, Ms. Daryle Hillsgrove,
Mr. Dave Cronin, Ms. Meg Bressette, Ms. Amber Capone, School Board
Representative Deb Ryan

ABSENT: Selectmen Representative Doug Viger

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MEETING MINUTES

October 11, 2018

MOTION: (Sherman/Cate) To approve the October 11, 2018 meeting minutes as written.

VOTE: (8-0-0) The motion carried.

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Fiscal Year 2020 SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW

Presenting the School budget was Superintendent of Schools Bill Furbush and Business Administrator Deb Mahoney. Also present were the Principals and Assistant Principals of the school. The Board was provided with an Executive Summary and supplemental documents that are typically requested/provided to the Board during the budget review process. Ms. Mahoney spoke to the information in the budget packet and highlighted the fact that each year they turned back to the voters any monies that were unspent (in their reserves) or unanticipated revenues. She said the number after the past year's audit was approximately \$1,506,000.

Mr. Cate questioned if the figure included the catastrophic insurance for special education. Ms. Mahoney answered yes; it was included in the anticipated revenues. She noted they estimate their revenues low when planning the budget because the revenues weren't always 100% funded.

Mr. Mahoney reviewed and summarized the information contained within the Executive Summary: 1) Introduction, 2) operating budget summary, 3) general fund operating budget trend, 4) enrollment projections, 5) descriptions of how to read the budget page formats (by object, function account, location), and 6) supplemental materials / supporting documents.

Pelham Elementary School - \$6,732,371 School Board recommended

2019 adjusted budget: \$6,755,660

Regular Education Salaries – a half-time kindergarten teacher was moved from regular education to the special education section. It was noted that all three schools had a request to add five days for a technology integrator/building instructional coach (186 days to 191 days). The cost to move the three staff members was \$5,400. Under Instructional Assistants, Ms. Mahoney also noted a request was submitted to add 5/hrs./yr for eight monitors to have additional training. Mr. Cate questioned if the vacant recess monitor position had been filled. Ms. Mahoney told the Board the

43 Human Resource Director would attend the next meeting and have information regarding
44 positions and vacancies. Ms. Capone questioned what the additional five days for special
45 education would be used for. Mr. Furbush commented on the additional five hours (for
46 instructional assistants) that would be used for professional development. He said one of
47 District's goals this year was to increase safety and learn to respond to any type of emergency.
48 Ms. Mahoney explained the additional five hours was a combination of support for training others
49 and in preparation for things over the summer. Mr. Furbush said the District also had a goal for
50 personalized learning to meet the needs of students where they are at. The roles of the technology
51 coaches to instructional roles and help teachers with strategies to personalize learning within the
52 classroom. Doing so will increase the efficiency of the classrooms.

53
54 Mr. Cronin understood that the unions were currently in negotiations, therefore the proposed
55 budget contained the salaries that applied as of today without an included figure for a potential
56 increase. Ms. Mahoney replied of the two bargaining groups, the teacher's group was currently
57 going through negotiations and will have a separate warrant article; the other was in their third
58 year of increases included in the proposed budget. Mr. Cronin inquired if secretaries were in the
59 union. Ms. Mahoney answered no; they were a non-bargaining pool of employees. Mr. Sherman
60 asked if they would have a salary increase. Ms. Mahoney answered yes; there would be an
61 increase at the District level for the non-salary bargaining pool line (of 3%).

62
63 In the line for Rental/Lease Ms. Mahoney pointed out there was a new curriculum for third grade
64 'keyboarding without tears to support grade 3 to access 1:1 Chromebooks - \$2,678'.

65
66 Under Supplies Ms. Mahoney stated the overall increase was just under \$5,000. She asked the
67 Board to email any questions, so she could research and respond. She explained the budget
68 process: 1) building administrators request their budgets, 2) after discussions/meetings there are
69 reductions at the Superintendent's level, 3) School Board reviews and makes adjustments, and 4)
70 final adjusted budget is presented to the Budget Committee.

71
72 Account #733 (Furniture Additional) and #734 (Equipment Additional) showed reductions. Ms.
73 Mahoney noted #734 included the addition of ten additional views for Google Expedition.

74
75 Within Equipment Replacement Mr. Cate asked if the iPad covers/broken iPad/iPad mini were
76 insured. He wanted to know who was responsible for the broken material. Ms. Mahoney replied
77 the school owned them and were responsible. She said iPads were typically a low-cost item and
78 didn't have insurance. She said they kept them in circulation as long as possible. Ms. Capone
79 asked who utilized the iPads. Mr. Furbush replied typically the younger grades; as they get older
80 they transition to Chromebooks. Ms. Capone question if a student should be held responsible for
81 repairs. Mr. Furbush said it could be the normal 'wear/tear' and noted there could be accidents.
82 Ms. Mahoney noted it could be 5-6 year old children who used them. She made a note of the
83 question.

84
85 Ms. Mahoney pointed out the lines for STEAM, explained the increase and noted the budget had
86 been previously included under the enrichment lines.

87
88 Within Special Education Salaries Ms. Mahoney highlighted where the kindergarten position was
89 moved into. She explained they were required to provide pre-school kindergarten under special
90 education to additional students. She said even though they didn't have a teacher for the program
91 they were required to provide it. Mr. Bailey asked for an explanation of the reductions. Mr.
92 Furbush explained pre-school numbers had traditionally been increasing and at the same time
93 unpredictable. He said the problem was parents weren't registering their children during this

94 budget season. They didn't know what the numbers will be and could only go by trends. He said
95 there was a need for the positions that were reduced; however, they decided to wait and see how
96 the year went with part-time positions and possibly come back next year with a request. Mr.
97 Sherman questioned who currently handled the preschool. Mr. Furbush replied in previous years
98 the assistant principal was the special education coordinator in each of the buildings. Continuing
99 the process was not sustainable; the needs of the students and support for the teachers were not
100 being met. This is why each building has a part-time person. Mr. Sherman asked if they would
101 have a better idea of the need (and additional information) at the time of budget reconsideration.
102 Mr. Furbush answered yes.

103
104 Ms. Mahoney continued to review the budget. She pointed out the new lines for Social Work,
105 which would be contained in each of the school's budgets as there was one person who worked
106 within the district. The expenses are school specific, although the salary is listed under the
107 district.

108
109 Nurse services showed an overall decrease of \$389. Ms. Mahoney went on to review budget
110 sections noting the respective increase/decrease to each.

111
112 There was a decrease in the Computer Technology lines of \$9,957 for Chromebook storage as it
113 was for the first grade only. Equipment Replacement Account #738 showed an increase of
114 \$10,560 for 23 ultrashort throw projectors to be replaced in half the classrooms; this budget line
115 followed the existing Tech Plan.

116
117 Ms. Mahoney gave a brief explanation regarding the salary pool, which remained constant for
118 allocation each year. She then spoke to the reduction under contracted repairs and maintenance.
119 This was related to the copier service plans; they had new software and expected reductions.
120 They have proposed a new lease for the East wing. She noted that the increase for custodial staff
121 was based on the non-bargaining pool.

122
123 Mr. Bailey asked if the increase to insurance was due to the overall rates increasing. Ms.
124 Mahoney replied Health Trust had an average of 8.3% increase, but heard some districts had
125 double digits. She said there had been an increased number in election changes (as outlined in the
126 Executive Summary). She noted dental also showed an increase.

127
128 She asked the Board to defer the Building Services sections until the next meeting to have the
129 Facility Director present. The Board asked that the utilities section be reviewed/explained as they
130 knew of pending increases.

131
132 Mr. Bailey asked the elementary school administration (seated in the audience) if they were
133 happy with the proposed budget. Principal Tom Adamakos stated he was happy with the budget.
134 Mr. Furbush asked for a brief explanation of the iPad replace/repair budget line. Vice Principal
135 Jessica Vanvranken came forward and explained the building currently had three iPad carts that
136 worked through a sign-out basis for students. In the past few years they've noticed that the iPads
137 will suddenly stop working after the warranty has ended. The carts typically have thirty iPads
138 and at times they have replacements, but there are other times they don't. Mr. Bailey understood
139 the damage was 'normal' and not from misuse. Ms. Vanvranken answered yes. She noted
140 they've had the iPads for approximately four years and only had one broken screen that was
141 replaced under warranty.

142
143 Mr. Sherman saw there was a budget reduction from the Superintendent for air conditioning and
144 asked for an explanation of such. Ms. Vanvranken replied the building was very warm and they

145 had been keeping data during the past year in reference to temperatures in the classrooms. Ms.
146 Ryan spoke to the question and informed that the School Board was studying the situation and
147 were obtaining quotes and information from Energy Efficient Investment ('EEI') (same company
148 working with the Town). Ms. Mahoney stated they were making progress but weren't ready to
149 bring information forward to the Budget Committee. They may come forward during
150 reconsideration. Mr. Sherman pointed out that the item was scheduled for this year on the Capital
151 Improvement Plan ('CIP'). Ms. Ryan replied they included it in their CIP to be responsible. Ms.
152 Mahoney stated they were trying to be very conservative with their budget because they wanted
153 their (contract) negotiation supported. Ms. Ryan noted they were currently in the discussion
154 phase regarding the air conditioning.

155

156 Ms. Hillsgrove pointed out that the track project had been taken out and was addressed during
157 this year.

158

159 **Pelham Memorial School - \$4,910,785 School Board recommended**

160 2019 adjusted budget: \$4,975,032

161

162 Under Regulation Education Program Ms. Mahoney stated they had added a Math Coach. Ms.
163 Hillsgrove asked if math was a difficult area for the students. Mr. Furbush replied math was an
164 understudied area within the school and they would continue to focus on investigating what they
165 could do. He explained the math coach was a teaching position to work with the teachers; it was
166 not a tutor position to work with students. The position will help increase the instructional
167 strategies by working closely with the teachers. He felt this would raise the student levels. Mr.
168 Cate questioned if it was a full-time position. Mr. Furbush answered yes. Mr. Cate wanted to
169 know what certification the tutor would hold. Mr. Furbush replied they would hold math
170 instruction and come under the collective bargaining agreement. Ms. Bressette asked if they had
171 consulted with other districts who had a math coach. Mr. Furbush replied other districts used that
172 model. Ms. Bressette asked if the school had ever had that position in the past. Mr. Furbush
173 understood that the position had made it through the budget process in the past but had not
174 materialized into the schools. Ms. Mahoney explained they had to reclassify the position into
175 special education. She said the proposed position had the same intention as the previous one.

176

177 There was a brief discussion regarding the workshops/conferences. Mr. Furbush discussed the
178 benefits for the administration of attending and interacting with national presenters. Ms.
179 Mahoney pointed out that the budget would allow for five teachers to attend. Principal Stacy
180 Maghakian came forward and told the Board that they had taken a team of 5-6 people during the
181 past few years; some had been presenters that represented the school in technology.

182

183 Mr. Bailey saw the reduction for furniture replacement and asked if there was a reason for such.
184 Mr. Furbush said through conversations and understanding the importance of the math coach, it
185 was agreed that the furniture could wait a year.

186

187 There was a discussion regarding language arts textbook replacement and it was noted that the
188 cost included and on-line subscription. Ms. Mahoney pointed out the reduction for furniture
189 replacement. Ms. Maghakian didn't object to the reduction as the school was able to receive
190 hand-me-downs from the high school.

191

192 As the Board reviewed the music budget lines, Ms. Maghakian provided an update on the new
193 music portable. Ms. Hillsgrove asked if the school still had a growing music program. Ms.
194 Maghakian stated they saw a continual increase; the total was approximately 120 students in the
195 band. Mr. Sherman confirmed that the cost of the bassoon included the case and supplies. Ms.

196 Maghakian answered yes. Ms. Mahoney pointed out that the new music program ‘Soundation’
197 also included a math component.

198
199 The Board continued their budget review. Mr. Bailey questioned if there was any movement to
200 eliminate textbooks and be completely on-line. Ms. Maghakian felt it was debatable because
201 students learned in different ways; some do better with pen/pencil and not when using the
202 Chromebook. They want the ability to personalize the learning and continue to offer choice. Mr.
203 Sherman questioned why the social studies books weren’t being replaced. Ms. Mahoney believed
204 the social studies books were purchased last year. Ms. Maghakian explained math books had
205 been in last year’s budget; however, the Director of Curriculum noticed an error to their benefit
206 that they had already been paid for. Knowing this they moved the funding to the social studies
207 book line.

208
209 Ms. Mahoney went through the budget pages and discussed the adjustments. She noted the
210 reduction for contracted repairs/maintenance of copier services and a new lease for a copier
211 machine. There was an increase to the Celebration of Learning to enhance the experience.

212
213 Mr. Cate noticed the vacant custodial position and recalled also seeing one at the elementary
214 school. He asked if they were having a hard time filling the positions. Mr. Furbush answered
215 yes; it was a conversation that had also come up at the School Board level. He said with the
216 unemployment rate being low it was hard to fill positions; comparatively starting salaries weren’t
217 where they need to be. He noted other districts with higher salaries were also not filling the
218 positions. Ms. Mahoney stated they had been short on custodial staff, food service, substitutes,
219 instructional assistants, bus drivers etc. this year. They are looking at recruiting plans.

220
221 Mr. Cate asked for an explanation of the architect and engineer professional services. Ms.
222 Mahoney said there were line items for school upgrade and general architect and engineering.
223 Mr. Furbush added that the goal was to have a bond proposal next year (2021 ballot); to do so
224 they need to begin the process and come up with a plan.

225
226 Ms. Sherman questioned if the band modular was a year-to-year lease. Ms. Mahoney answered
227 yes.

228
229 Ms. Hillsgrove asked if the Facility Director would speak about the natural gas conversion. Ms.
230 Ryan explained that line fell under the same discussion with EEI; they had done a district-wide
231 review of the energy consumptions to determine the areas where savings could be realized. Ms.
232 Capone stated she would have questions for the Facility Director about electricity. Ms. Mahoney
233 replied she would review her formula and if she still had questions would do more research for
234 the Board.

235
236 **Pelham High School - \$8,065,208 School Board recommended**

237 2019 adjusted budget: 8,135,213

238
239 Ms. Mahoney noted there was a line for a new full-time math teacher. Principal Gary Dempsey
240 explained that math was on their radar; there were a lot of classes at capacity and there were some
241 gaps in learning that needed to be addressed. He said they had to add classes for those students
242 were really struggling. Mr. Sherman wanted to know what advanced placement courses were
243 currently being offered. Ms. Mahoney will provide a list to the Board. She then noted there was
244 a request to add 5 credits of extra periods, which was reduced to 2.5 extra periods with a total cost
245 of \$20,208. Mr. Dempsey said the additional periods will provide flexibility when he’s building
246 the master schedule. He described they have an eight-period day with alternating blocks.

247

248 Under regular education furniture replacement Ms. Mahoney noted the tables, chairs, cafeteria
249 table replacements were from normal wear and tear.

250

251 Ms. Mahoney went through the budget and spoke about the increases/decreases. Ms. Capone
252 questioned if the school purchased calculators each year. Mr. Dempsey replied they purchased
253 several them each year. He said students had to use them for the SAT.

254

255 Under music education it was noted that the request for band uniforms had been reduced. Mr.
256 Sherman asked if they had any uniform. Mr. Dempsey stated they had collared shirts. He said
257 the band was growing and felt they would be entering competitions, and, in the future, they
258 would like to outfit the students.

259

260 Within the science education lines, there was a reduction for disposal fees. Ms. Mahoney
261 believed the listed figure would be closer to their actual cost. Ms. Hillsgrove questioned if they
262 were doing more 'green' experiments to try to avoid the disposal cost. Mr. Dempsey explained
263 they had to redetermine the cost when they moved into the new building. Ms. Mahoney pointed
264 out there had been a request for a simulation mannequin that was reduced; they will be continuing
265 to research less expensive options. Mr. Dempsey understood it was a 'big ticket' item, but noted
266 they had a lot of students going into the health sciences field.

267

268 Ms. Mahoney continued to review the budget. There was a reduction in guidance; one secretary
269 position was moved into the main office to help support.

270

271 With regard to NEASC accreditation Mr. Dempsey said they were currently in the process of
272 doing their self-study; next year they are hosting the members to perform their review.

273

274 Ms. Mahoney noted that the Spanish exchange program will be budgeted every other year.

275

276 Mr. Cronin requested details regarding the number of students transported to the CTE schools.
277 Ms. Mahoney recalled that was a regular request of the Board and would have information at the
278 next meeting.

279

280 Ms. Hillsgrove asked that the Board receive a cost summary for all utilities in each of the
281 buildings using information from the last three years.

282

283 Mr. Sherman asked about the cost for a substitute. Ms. Mahoney replied they paid a daily rate of
284 \$75, a nurse substitute is \$125 and long-term substitutes are paid the equivalent of the B1 rate
285 (approximately \$200/day). Mr. Sherman understood custodians started at \$13/hr. and questioned
286 if they received any benefits. Ms. Mahoney replied they provide benefits (health/dental/life) and
287 retirement enrollment.

288

289 **ADJOURNMENT**

290

MOTION: (Sherman/Cate) To adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: (8-0-0) The motion carried.

291

292 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:43pm.

293

294

Respectfully submitted,

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING Thursday, October 25, 2018

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296

Charity Landry
Recording Secretary