

Town of Newfields
First Session of the 2008 Annual School District Meeting
Deliberative Session February 3, 2009

School Board Members:

Joseph Army, Chair
Michael Price
Carolyn Bellisio
Nathan Lunney, Chief Financial Officer
Dennis Dobe, Principal

Bill Davis, Moderator
Sue McKinnon, Town Clerk

Moderator William Davis called the meeting to order at 7:05pm and called for a pledge of allegiance. He reviewed a few administrative rules and introduced the head table.

Article 1. Shall the School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$2,173,936? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be \$2,170,982, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the District or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

The School Board recommends \$2,173,936 as set forth on said budget.

The Budget Advisory Committee recommends \$2,173,936 as set forth in said budget.

The Moderator read Article 1. He stated that the budget will be looked at by exception only. He does not intend on reviewing it line by line.

Chairman Joseph Army thanked the audience for attending the meeting. He informed us that over the past 4 years the budget has increased a total of 6%. Dennis Dobe and Nathan Lunney have been very careful with our money while still providing a high value of education. He is proud of the job they have done.

This year's proposed operating budget has increased 1.75% or \$37,375. One teacher position has been eliminated but health insurance and retirement costs have increased. Health insurance is up 10% and retirement is up 20% over last year. Joe commended Dennis on keeping the budget increases down.

Joe added that this year the paraprofessionals contract was negotiated which is an increase of approximately \$9,000.

Lastly is the \$10,000 maintenance warrant article. It is very important to continue to

keep up the building yearly. The school has a 4-5 year plan in place.

Joe thanked the Budget Committee Members Don Doane, Mark Bouzianis, Jodi Linehan, and Jan Trueman. They were in unanimous support of the proposed budget. The presented budget was the approved budget and no cuts were made.

Selectman Rosanne Gilbert asked for a breakdown of the number of classes and children in each class. Dennis informed us that there will be one kindergarten class, two 1st grade classes, one 2nd grade class, two 3rd grade classes, two 4th grade classes and two 5th grade classes. There are 15-20 students per class.

Rosanne questioned the kindergarten teacher's salary and a better use of her talents and experience.

Dennis explained that personnel assignments are made by him and this was not the venue for discussing individual teachers. He is comfortable with the decisions he has made to provide a quality education.

Wes Moore asked for an explanation on how salary increases work.

Joe explained that the school has been fortunate not to have had to hire teachers' right out of college. Teacher salaries are based on a grid system. For every year of experience the teacher moves up a step on the grid.

Tracy Birmingham asked how Newfields salaries compare to other schools in the area.

Joe mentioned that a teacher salary survey was done last year and we discovered that our teachers are some of the lowest paid in the area. .

Section 2900-Support Services are benefits such as health, dental, retirement, fica and workers compensation.

Sheila Lane asked if 1.75% was the true cost of the increase in the budget. The overall budget increase with warrant articles is actually 2.63%.

Sheila asked if Section 1400-Student Body Activities, is for Sargent Camp. She sees this line as an area where money could be saved by having parents pay for their children to attend this program.

Dennis said that Sargent Camp may not be available in the spring because Boston University is about to close their doors. The cost of attending Sargent Camp was recently added to the operating budget. They have tried hard not to ask parents to contribute money. Students no longer do fundraising for the program. If Sargent Camp is no longer in existence they will have to decide whether or not to offer a similar educational experience. They are looking into other programs which may be available.

The salary line 50110 has a total of 12.2 teachers. The art, music and physical education teachers are included in the total \$647,410.

Jeff Buxton asked for an explanation of Line 50120 Salaries of Temporary Employees and the increase of 15%. Dennis explained that this appropriation is for substitute teachers. Also included are temporary teachers for those teachers out on maternity leave last year.

Section 2150 Speech Services includes the salary for a part time specialist for one particular child with acute needs.

Mark Gosselin asked if there was any discussion in contract negotiations about sharing costs for employee health insurance. Joe Army said Newfields School has the most aggressive cost sharing in the SAU. Teachers pay 20% of their health insurance and the school pays 80%. This year's contract is not subject to health insurance. That was done last year. This year's contract negotiations were with paraprofessionals which does not include health insurance. Paraprofessionals are the part-time employees.

Dennis commented that under Section 1200 Special Education, there are appropriations for assistants assigned to classrooms due to special needs of children.

Carolyn Bellisio commented that because we have low enrollment coming in this year, teachers will rotate and the number of classes will change each year. For example, next year there will be only one 1st grade class and two 2nd grade classes.

The Moderator mentioned that we can go back and discuss Article 1 at any time. The budget may still be amended if necessary and he reviewed the process.

Karen Nieman asked about the default budget and what the necessary costs are. Nathan said that an example of a necessary cost is the health insurance and contract increases. The default budget amount on the warrant already includes adjustments. Joe said the default budget is \$3,000 less than the proposed budget.

Nathan added that the default calculations page is the last page in our packet. Increases have been made for benefits such as retirement, dental and health. There is a reduction in the interest we have to pay for the debt service/bond.

Sheila Lane asked if any money was returned to the town last year. Nathan said that approximately \$65,680.00 was turned back to the town to be used towards the tax rate.

She also asked how much money is currently in the school building maintenance fund. There is approximately \$4,000 left in the maintenance fund according to Nathan.

Ray Trueman asked how much spending equals \$1.00 on the tax rate. The amount is about \$257,000.

Nathan mentioned that revenue projections have decreased for the upcoming year. The revenues were posted with the budget at the town hall and post office. Earnings on investments are down and estimated to be \$11,000. Building aid is the State's contribution and it is down to \$23,000. Building aid ends when debt is retired. Catastrophic aid and the Medicaid Distribution are down. Total revenues have decreased \$40,000-\$50,000. Last year's revenues were \$143,703 and this year's projected revenues are \$88,971.

Article 2. Shall the School District vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Newfields School Board and the Newfields Staff Paraprofessionals Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

Year	Estimated Increase
2009-2010	\$ 8,850
2010-2011	\$ 5,012
2001-2012	\$ 5,151

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,850 for the 2009-2010 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal year?

The School Board recommends the approval of this warrant article and this appropriation.

The Moderator read Article 2. A motion was made by Natalie Fream and seconded by Dave Mason to accept article 2. Joe explained that this is a three year deal for the paraprofessionals.

Jeff Buxton asked how many paraprofessionals are included in the contract. Joe said there are 11 in the pool. The increases are 4.5% the first year, 3% the following two years. None of these employees receive benefits such as insurance or retirement.

Jeff also commented that raises don't exist in the private sector with the economy the way it is. In these times we need to stop increasing salaries in his opinion.

Joe added that these employees are only making \$12.00 per hour which is not a high hourly wage. If this warrant article doesn't pass the paraprofessionals do not get a raise.

Article 3. Shall the School District, if article 2 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article 2 cost items only?

The School Board recommends the approval of this warrant article.

The Moderator read Article 3. A motion was made and seconded to accept Article 3. This article is for the purpose of calling a special meeting to re-negotiate the paraprofessional's contract if Article 2 fails to pass. Joe said the special meeting would

be optional. They would have to look at the costs associated with it. The special meeting would have to be noticed, have a deliberative session and then have a vote by ballot.

Article 4. Shall the School District raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the School Building Maintenance Fund established at the 1992 School District meeting for the purpose of repairing and maintaining school buildings?

The School Board recommends this appropriation.

The Moderator read Article 4. A motion was made by Dave Mason and seconded by Jan Trueman to accept Article 4. Joe said the list of maintenance items have not been prioritized yet and they total about \$70,000. The list includes repairing the multipurpose room floor, basement windows, signage, door locks, duct work and painting. Last year the roof and fascia boards were repaired.

Jeff Buxton asked if the Board considered using outside contractors. Nathan said the contractors work for the SAU 16 and are considerably less expensive.

Wes Moore asked for the details on retirement. The employer pays 5.8% and the employees pay 5%. The NH Retirement system is currently 65% funded and rates will be increasing in July 2009 for employees and employers. Teachers may retire at 60 years of age with 30 years of service or 50 years of age with 20 years of service.

Article 5. To hear any reports of agents and committees or officers heretofore chosen. There were none.

Article 6. To transact any other business which may legally come before the meeting. There was no other business to discuss.

A motion was made by Dave Mason and seconded by James McIlroy to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue McKinnon

