



# TOWN OF HUDSON

## Budget Committee



Charlotte Schweiss, Chairman

Joyce Goodwin, Vice-Chairman

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Meeting minutes August 18, 2011

Chairman Charlie Schweiss called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM

Vice-Chairman Joyce Goodwin present  
School Board Alternate Liaison Laura Bisson present  
Selectman Liaison Thaddeus Luszey present  
School Superintendant Randy Bell present  
Clerk Stuart Schneiderman

Committee members present:

Leo Bernard  
Michael Buczynski  
John Drabinowicz  
Jonathan Maltz  
Normand Martin  
Stephen Nute

School Board Alternate Liaison Laura Bisson reported that The School Board will return \$508,000.00 to the Town of Hudson: \$333,000.00 from Ed Jobs, the rest from the general fund. One administrative position will be left open at Memorial School. One Elementary Teacher position will be left open due to enrollment. The fiber project is coming in under budget and may be completed by the start of school. Just over \$100,000.00 was used to replace a portion of The Alvirne High School roof to protect the technology and prevent further deterioration.

Superintendant Bell clarified that the roof over The Tech Center and nearby areas had been leaking badly.

Selectman Liaison Thaddeus Luszey reported that raises were granted as a result of the town warrant. The new fire truck is in service. The School Department is investigating the merging of catalogue applications with The Library. The Town and Library are performing a proof of concept on creating a virtual cloud looking toward consolidating the back office infrastructure of The Town, The Schools and The Library.

Committee member Leo Bernard asked if it was a tanker truck. Selectman Liaison Luszey answered in the affirmative and remarked “fire truck, tanker truck, ladder truck they’re all fire trucks to me.” Mr. Schneiderman is starting up the business process team. Due to a conflict of interest, a facilities committee member has resigned and further progress will be postponed till after the budget cycle is done.

Committee member Normand Martin asked about tax-payer dollars spent at Benson's on The 911 Monument. Selectman Liaison Luszey answered that less than a day's labor by DPW was used to grub out that site and it was already budgeted.

Chairman Schweiss asked about non-union pay raises and "the compression problem." Selectman Liaison Luszey stated that the compression issue was dealt with as well as parity between department heads because of responsibility, liability and scope of the work.

Superintendent Bell detailed the three year history The Academic Assistance Program and how it measurably improved student performance in The Middle School; 41% of the students have been participating from 4200 hours in 2007-2008 to 3300 hours in 2010-2011. This program is for reducing retention and the need for Summer school. The High School is looking into running some sessions during teacher preparation periods in order to increase participation.

School Board Alternate Bisson added that participation may increase due to increased GPA requirements for sports and extracurricular participants.

The in-school suspension program is aimed at reducing out of school suspensions to keep students in the academic loop. In the first year the number of SPED students was reduced from 16 to 7. Superintendent Bell believes that the dropout rate will also decrease due to in-school suspension. More data will be presented to future Budget Committee meetings as it becomes available.

School Board Alternate Bisson presented the results of the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) reading and math assessments which were performed by students on laptops in the fall and the spring. NECAP (The New England Common Assessment Program) developed in response to the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, is mandated by the state. The NECAP tests measure students' academic knowledge and skills relative to Grade Expectations which were created by teams of teachers. Student scores are reported at four levels of academic achievement; Proficient with Distinction, Proficient, Partially Proficient and Substantially Below Proficient. Reading and math are assessed in grades 3-8 and 11, writing are assessed in grades 5, 8 and 11. The reading, math and writing tests are administered each year in October.

During the latest academic year, NWEA scores at H. O. Smith grade 5 reading went from 78% proficient in reading in the fall to 85% in the spring. For H. O. Smith grade 5 math 68% to 85%. At Hills Garrison, grade 5 reading went from 76% up to 85% and math jumped from 80% proficient to 89%. NECAP scores at Nottingham West, grade 5 reading rose from 87% proficient to 93% and math 72% proficient to 93%.

Superintendent Bell explained that the required proficiency increases during the year, meaning that the "bar continuously rises over time.

Selectman Liaison Thaddeus Luszey sought information on when READ 180 will be no longer used. READ 180 is a reading program designed for students in elementary through high school whose reading achievement is below the proficient level and is a research-based reading intervention program published by Scholastic in collaboration with Vanderbilt University.

Committee member Schneiderman asked about The I4C (Initiative for School Empowerment and Excellence) program and the federal government's Educational Data Partnership. A discussion ensued about data collection and. Topics covered included state reimbursement.

Superintendent Bell gave an overview of budget history. The biggest challenge will be employer's contribution to retirement. The school budget has increased an average of 3.1 % per year over the last 4 years. General Fund budget increased 2.8% per year. Salaries increased 2.5% per year. Health Insurance increased 5.8% per year. Employer's contribution to retirement increased 24% per year because state funding cuts and rate increases due to past deficiencies. Employee contributions to retirement increased 40%. Average teachers' salary has increased over 5 years from \$40,000.00 to \$45000.00 because they are better educated (more Master's Degrees) even though the average age has dropped. More have opted for less expensive HMO coverage (as compared to POS) but the number of two person and family enrollments has increased so costs have also increased.

Recess called at 8:59PM.  
Meeting resumed at 9:10P.M.

Chairman Schweiss suggested that meetings during deliberative budget season should be recorded by a professional minute taker. Chairman Schweiss will check on the minute takers from The Planning Board and The Zoning Board of Adjustment. Board Clerk Schneiderman will investigate the possibility of recording the minutes himself. The Board discussed a help wanted listing.

Chairman Schweiss led the discussion on the Library tour and the future of The Hills Memorial Building.

The Budget deliberation schedule was finalized.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:52PM  
Respectfully submitted  
Stuart Schneiderman  
Clerk