

Minutes of Hudson Budget Committee Meeting, November 16, 2021

A.- Call to Order

Chairman Weissgarber call the meeting to order at 6:59 PM

B.- Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Hopkins led the Pledge of Allegiance

C.-Attendance

Members present Chairman Weissgarber, Vice-Chairman William Cole, Mr.Shawn Murray Mr. Norman Martin, Ms. Kathy Leary, Ms.Grace Hopkins, Mr. Robert Clegg, Mr. Ted Trost, School Board Liaison Ms. Diana LaMothe , Board of selectmen Liaison Mr. Brett Gagnon, and Alejandro Urrutia Clerk.

Members absent none

D. Public Input

None

E.- Acceptance of Minutes (03 Nov & 10 Nov 2021)

Deferred for later meeting the acceptance of 11/10/2021 minutes.

Mr. Martin made a motion to accept 03/November minutes second by Ms. Leary; the motion passed (10-0-1)

F.-Report from Liaisons

a. Select Board

Selectman Gagnon was recognized with nothing to report at the time.

b. School Board

School Board member Ms. LaMothe was recognized with nothing to report at that time.

G.- SAU 81 FY 23 Budget Presentations (continuation)

Before beginning the Budget presentations, Mr. Murray made the following motion for the year 2023 the budget be level-funded at \$59,627,501. Mr. Martin seconds it for discussion. Mr. Murray explained that he had reviewed all the minutes and the proposed budget for 2023. Mr. Murray said that concerned about the increases in the budget for seeing over the past three to four fiscal years continually is an increase in the budget itself. He found bothersome the increases in salaries and benefits over these past few years that continue to rise, which in the end, takes away from the operating budget. Mr. Murray said that there is a repetitive request for funds for furniture areas, that it's consistently the same amount

of money year after year. When looking at the budget through the year, many budget transfers are done by taking money from unexpended accounts and used for another purpose in the school district. The school has that right to do that right to transfer and do whatever they want with their money, which comes down to the bottom line. Mr. Murray feels it's time that, as Vice-Chair Cole has said, this is now the budget committee's budget. Looking through the budget, said Mr. Murray, "we see the increases that are occurring. I submit that this budget be level funded, the school district has the funds to be able to do what they're asking for this year it is to add additional staff some of that can be used some of the projects that they have going. One of the things we saw was a new curtain for Memorial School but somewhere in the school district deliberations I also heard that it could be taken out at the end of the year."

Mr. Murray complimented the school board because they have taken proactive actions and cuts this year. That's a start, said Mr. Murray, but for years this budget committee listened to the budget of the school leaders and everything. However, the Budget Committee hasn't taken the step to bring this budget under control.

Ms. Hopkins commented that the 2023 default budget is 62 million, including things that have already been contracted, so how we could take three million off the default budget legally.

There was a discrepancy between the data related to the default budget shown by Mr. Murray and what the Committee had. Chairman Weissgarber asked Ms. Burk to explain the default budget for clarification.

Ms. Burk explained \$59,548,804, which was the warrant articles that voters approved. The school started with that number, and then subtract out all of the one-time obligations and then add back in what the school has for food service for the federal funds for the collective bargaining agreement salary increases special education tuition, and the transportation contractual expenses, and that makes up that Baseline of the default budget which is \$62,023,797.

Mr. Murray said that through the school budget overview sheet, the revised budget for fiscal year 22 was \$59,627,501 unless that number changed. Ms. Burk indicated the increase in the federal funds make up that other fund. The operating budget itself only went up by 1.37%. Mr. Murray asked how do you level fund the budget for fiscal year 2023? Mr. Trost suggested considering using the default budget amount because that is basically the fiscal year 2022 approved operating budget, minus deductions, and plus the additions for contractual obligations.

Mr. Murray agreed to amend his motion accordingly with Mr. Trost's suggestion, which is \$62,023,797. Mr. Murray asked for the district's budget amount. Ms. Burk explained that the operating budget is \$56,774,801; the \$5,471,733 is all the other funds, grants for food service, etc. The general fund amount of \$56,774,801 is "the ask". The default budget is about \$200,000 different from the total request after the School Board made about \$600,000 in reductions.

Before the vote, Mr. Clegg asked for more information to understand the facts behind the default budget. Ms. Burk explained the default budget calculation is in tab 7. Mr. Trost indicated that technically the default budget by law is the responsibility of the School Board. Mr. Clegg suggested to Murray to table his motion to get time to study the numbers. Mr. Murray accepted.

Mr. Clegg made the motion, to table the motion Mr. Murray seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Clegg made a motion to ask the School District for a detailed report on what is, what isn't part, and what they consider part of the default budget. Mr. Clegg would like to know what that means, including every detail of bargaining, including how many teachers are there. Selectman Gagnon seconded it.

The motion passed (10-1-0)

a. Alvirne

Chairman Weissgarber recognized Alvirne's principal, Mr. Steven Beals.

Mr. Beals explained that the budget creation every year involves department heads down to the staff level for each department. Overall budget is up 1.18%. Salaries and benefits increased 1.3%, including new positions requested, English teacher for Capstone implementation, Strategies for struggling students, Alternative Education Coordinator, and Alternative education Teacher decrease of .4%

Mr. Beals explained that there is an increase in the cost of transportation and equipment in the music department and lab science supplies. School wants to continue doing the labs because that enriches the experience of the students. In addition, Alvirne acquired a commercial-grade treadmill. In the co-curricular area, there are transportation increases; many of those are contractual. Athletic Training Services also has an increase. Most changes are deducting over \$5,000. Alvirne trustees Grants for the High School starting with an increase of \$50,000 is a placeholder. Mr. Beals pointed out all the deductions, which are the past year's activities that the trustees funded. Also, he said that in his ten years at Alvirne, the trustees have been incredibly generous and have given much more than the \$50,000. The trustees asked us to come in with a placeholder amount. They accept proposals through the course of the year, which comes to the trustees in early March and April to decide what will be funded for the following year. Alvirne doesn't know what the proposals will be for this year; they get first vetted through the school board, then they go to the trustees.

Mr. Murray asked if the reductions in the trustees go into the operating budget. Mr. Beals explained that they're one-time purchases and gave an example. Alvirne bought a new farm cultivator that piece of equipment is purchased at the one-time expense it goes into the inventory. If there is a need to repair the farm cultivator, it will go through the Farm revolving account. The trustees are very straightforward about what they want to purchase.

Mr. Murray questioned if the 50,000 goes into our budget. However, when the trustees purchase something, it comes back to the school as a revenue? Ms Burk explained that the expense and revenue zero each other out. Mr. Beals, after a comment from Mr. Murray and Mr. Weissgarber, explained that if Alvirne has an issue with a piece of equipment that the trustees have bought, the school takes it out of the farm revolving account, which is funded by selling milk to Cabot and selling hay. Mr. Beals referenced earlier fitness equipment bought by Alvirne trustees as they previously have been supportive of buying a piece of equipment every year for the fitness area. Still, the trustees changed the focus, so this year, the replacement has been placed in the budget. The trustees have other priorities; a good example is they funded co-curricular transportation for specific activities like going to a competition funding for music related activities. The trustees do not want to be providing funding for co-curricular transportation anymore; they want to focus on one-time

purchases to buy equipment and other needs for the building. Mr. Beals said that they still have the same needs that is why those needs are shifted, showing an increase in the budget. A new English teacher was hired to fully implement the desire to have a senior Capstone as a culminating project for students before they graduate. Alvirne has 1070 students and is expecting to have 1070 or 1065 students next year, so Mr. Beals highlighted that enrollment is level for enrollment purposes. But in the past four years, Alvirne implemented a program of American sign Language without a change in Staffing. Mr. Beals explained that American Sign Language now has eight sections, but an English teacher from the English Department was transferred. Alvirne has an English certified teacher who had a background in college in American Sign Language and is now fully certified. Alvirne is running a vibrant program. Mr. Beals explained that the Capstone program is a culminating experience where the senior chooses a passionate interest and focuses on a project that involves research, reading, and writing activities. Alvirne is running two sections of the Capstone with 18 students each. There is the intention to expand the program.

Mr. Trost asked if the teacher went from teaching English to teaching American Sign Language. Also, the students are moving from something else to learn American Sign Language. So, where are those students coming from, the students going to American Sign Language? This is taking the place of something else they were doing. Right now, explained Mr. Beals, who spoke about Capstone following Mr. Trost's comments saying that specifically, kids at Alvirne have a 1 Credit requirement for their Senior English, the same for their freshman, sophomore, and junior years. Still, during their senior year, they don't take Senior English, choosing an elective-based English program. Alvirne offers 12 different course options. Some of the students sign up for self-discovery or True Crimes and literature, some sign up for British literature, some sign up for AP English, etc. So those students in the Capstone will have two interest areas; one will be required Capstone. The other one will be elective when talking about American sign language that is an elective program.

Beginner American Sign Language 1 is a trial course for American Sign Language. In addition, Alvirne offers French level 4 and Spanish level 4, including AP Spanish, but the student can't get there until they have done the precursor courses.

Mr. Murray commented that in the School Budget book it has two vacant security monitor positions. Mr. Beals said they had been empty for a long time but they hired two new people this school year; one started as school began, and the other started approximately three weeks ago. Mr. Beals indicated that there are currently 12 vacant positions; four are full-time teaching positions, three are in special education, one in ROTC, and several paraprofessional positions.

Service workers on the foodservice are a district-wide problem because some are assigned to Alvirne high school. The needs are all over the place. A significant aspect of the job fair at Alvirne was that the number of substitute teachers is as low as ever seen with paraprofessionals and food service workers. It is challenging to get Math and Science teachers, it is also very hard to hire an ROTC, one because the candidate needs to be certified by Air Force, and two the staff member needs to be retired from the Air Force. As Mr. Beals described the Alvirne expenses, Mr. Murray refers to a point he made earlier concerning many costs that are seen year after year. Mr. Murray, to highlight his observations, gave an example line under furniture replacement student musician chairs.

Principal Beals explained a 3-year replacement for the music seats because if the band has 200, the school does not want to change 200 chairs at a time. Alvirne High School tried to have a three-year cycle replacing x amount this year some of the years before. Mr. Murray suggested that will help the budget Committee have more detailed information like a three-year cycle replacement explanation when the school presents their budgets. Mr. Beals concurred with Mr. Murray and labeled that for a future year's clear furniture replacement plan. Mr. Beals took note of the suggestion for a replacement plan.

About athletic training, Principal Beals highlighted that area because it is contracted to provide athletic Training Services. It is an annual contract with the vendor that provides a service. They look at how many hours they're going to assist every year, and Alvirne gets a cost increase pretty much every year. They are there, for every single match, like football hockey home games, travel to some of the away games with the team's, every single day for practices have on-site care instantaneously and accessible from radio or cell phone a certified athletic trainer who works for a physical therapy company doing athletic Training Services in the Office during the day. They come to Alvirne roughly, every day and running through the practice time or the evening activity. There is also a cheerleading choreographer, but that's a service Alvirne's pays to put their routines together through music and dance. Also, it is necessary to have portable toilets.

Mr. Beals also spoke regarding professional development, some of it being contractual teacher workshops for advanced staff placement every year. Alvirne High School staff members go to the advanced placement summer workshop if they're going to teach an AP course; never have been better professional development. Finally, principal Beals reported an extensive conversation with the School Board about comparing the advantages to graduation at the Alvirne campus versus renting an arena; everything points to the advantages of having the graduating ceremony outside Alvirne's premises.

Mr. Clegg asked about the impact of the new law that went into effect that allows students to take SAU 81 money to go to a private school. Mr. Clegg wanted to know how many kids Alvirne lost.

Mr. Beals indicated that the school doesn't know the families that may have accessed the money. Alvirne always lost some kids to some private schools. There are some Hudson students at Bishop Guertin, and they've done well there. Still, the School doesn't have a specific tally of kids that have accessed their monies because they had to have a qualifying aspect of getting money: that's a level of detail that the school building does not know about the families' privacy. Ms. Burk indicated that overall, at all schools there are 12 students accessing EFA funds.

b. Wilbur H. Palmer Career and Technical Education Center (CTE)

Dr. Eric Frauwirth, Director of the Palmer CTE Center presented. All renovated spaces are open six months earlier than expected. With a student population of almost 700 students with 100 students increase in a count prior to COVID; 170 area students increased by 80 students pre-COVID which increased revenue by approximately \$500,000. New positions have been added, but the revenue coming in will offset the expenses, and the CTE has capacity for additional students since the renovation increases square footage, which allows larger classes. The programs run 45 minutes, but next year will be 90 minutes

classes. The students do not bus in for a 45-minute class to get back to their schools after the class.

The school can increase the class size in engineering, drafting, computer science, accounting, marketing, and digital media programs. In addition, there is the need to hire one part-time Culinary Instructor, one part-time Health science instructor, one part-time Computer Science instructor, and shop aides to support programs and teachers for welding, heavy equipment, and construction. The idea to have one shop assistant for each block of time between the three shops. If the welding instructor had all the students working on the welding floor, the shop Aid would be in that room, but the next day might be over in the heavy equipment lab because they're working on several pieces of heavy equipment. They are shifting as needed during the day. There is a vacant ROTC position; it is a requirement to have 2 teachers in ROTC programs at the high school, but a waiver was received. This is a national challenge. Because Alvirne has the ROTC as a CTE program, students from other regions can participate in the program. There are now 90 students per one instructor. However the teacher teaches 7 periods out of 8; a 2nd teacher is needed. The Perkins grant has increased 5% every year despite that the allocation of Perkins funds is a complex formula that is based on not only the student population in the region but also the student population in the region living under the poverty line.

c. Hudson Memorial School

Mr. Keith Bowen, principal of Hudson Memorial School, indicated that FY 23 overall budget is up 2.28%. 3.13% of the increase results from salaries and benefits. Other proposed expenditures within the budget are down .85%. Supplies costs went up primarily due to the cost of wood for tech ed. The Spanish eBook got more connections online for kids, and there are some significant repairs and maintenance for the laminating machine. There is a \$50 increase in the reference books for coding of our robots, and things of that nature for their various software accounts increase their licensing cost in pre-engineering computers classes. Athletic officials this year increased per game by \$2 dollars which is an overall impact of \$188.

There is snap software we have an anticipated an increase of \$47 because we always find out what the increase for this license is after the budgeting process is over. The school looked at the last three years and then averaged it out and came up with the \$47. American Library Association had a slight increase and music equipment; there is a need to repair or replace four keyboards and five guitars.

There are decreases in cost in online music subscription went down \$53. Spanish professional membership went down \$50. Project Lead the Way annual participation fee is down \$200, because we are using old technology. They're in the process of transitioning from one platform to a newer platform. We can stay on the one that we are currently on, but down the road, we may not have a choice. This year we added to the budget contemporary literature novel sets. Budgeted \$2,000 which is \$200 for each of the 10 literature teachers to look at their current units in the current selections for reading to bring new selections to that process. NH Library Association's membership was added to this Budget 8th-grade social studies textbooks license ends at the end of this school year. There is the need to investigate a potential of a new textbook. Last year the school put in a

\$23,000 placeholder for the 7th-grade book and will do the same this year for 8th grade, which provides both the online and the hard copy text.

Mathematics would like to add IXL Math intervention licenses instead of ALEKS; with IXL, you can intervene K-12. Where they're at is where they can be met. With the pandemic and the learning loss that is particularly in math, this is a vast resource for the teachers.

CPALMS pilot program: STEM teachers in science and ELA teachers liked this program and would like to use it moving forward.

Memorial is moving out from Geography Bee to a National History Day to compete at \$50 each student for \$200 new to the budget. Mr. Martin asked how important it would be to HMS staff to add the monitoring software.

Mr. Bowen said it would be ultra-important.

H.-Vice-Chairman Cole asked Ms. Burk about 700 employees and 20 vacancies, but he counted 62 vacancies. Ms. Burk clarified that those numbers were the September numbers when the budget was crafted, but the school has been actively recruiting since then.

Vice-Chairman Cole asked Ms. Burk to provide a vacancy report. She will give the information.

Mr. Cole asked if there are an X number of vacancies, but the school has proposed appropriations against those vacancies. What happens with that money if the positions are not filled? Ms. Burk indicated that money would be returned to the taxpayers, it is part of the fund balance.

Mr. Murray asked if the money goes back to the taxpayer after using other unexpended funds. Mr. Murray added that school goes through the annual exercise of picking various projects and using that money to do those projects.

Ms. Burk explained that the principals bring those projects to the Administration, which are then brought to the school board for consideration things that might have just come up during the year things that you know the Board may have reduced out of the budget with the thought of potentially looking at year-end fund balance to be able to accomplish some of those things.

Ms. LaMothe added to what Ms. Burk said by explaining that the approach to the budget is they try to minimize what the budget is going to be. So, for example, in the girl's locker room needs renovation at HMS, why wasn't it done years ago; the answer is they are trying to keep the budget at minimum.

Mr. Murray To replace the girl's locker rooms should be in the regular budget, but the school will turn around and use end-of-year money if that money is available to use somewhere else in the School Budget.

Ms. Burk said that it is not accurate that it could happen only if it is dangerous. Mr. Murray insisted that that had been done before. He used the example of the tennis court. Ms. Burk indicated that it was done before her time and she did not have information to comment about it. Ms. LaMothe indicated that the tennis court was not in the budget.

Chairman Weissgarber reminded the Committee that there was another agenda item about SAU81 position descriptions. Mr. Cole made a motion as follows: "Hudson Municipal Budget Committee request to SAU 81 a complete listing of all positions full and part-time authorized by the SAU81 organizational manning tables. The requested list only needs to include job name, positions title number classified by name title, qualifications, and

geographic location. Mr. Clegg seconded the motion. During the discussion, Mr. Urrutia said that the information requested by the Vice-Chair was already available thru the School and HR departments. Ms. Burk indicated that the data is available. Mr. Urrutia asked Vice-Chairman Cole if that information was already available what was the reason for the motion. Vice-Chairman respectfully answered that he was not elected to be a scavenger, but he wanted to have the information that the school should provide if it is easy to access. The Vice-Chairman highlighted that he was asking for a list. Ms. LaMothe said that she was trying to understand the link to the budget and noted that the school is very transparent, and she said I never vote down a request for information. Still, she was not sure what the usefulness of this information would be related to the budget. Mr. Clegg said today somebody talked about an English teacher who is teaching sign language that confuses everybody else. Mr. Clegg wanted to see the list to see where that sign-language person is and if they are listed as a French teacher, and it says that the job is to teach sign language. That is what the Vice-Chair is trying to get. Why is the teacher not listed as a sign language teacher? That's if the list is readily available should be no problem to supply it. Mr. Murray concurred with Mr. Clegg's observations to try and understand the cost of the salaries and benefits it would be seeing how many positions there are and the different positions are a simple request that ties directly with the budget.

Mr. Trost said wanting to understand the 80% of the school budget dedicated to the salaries and benefits is reasonable.

Ms. LaMothe indicated that to ask for what the school employees are hired for and what the qualifications are extends out of the purview of the budget committee.

Chairman Weissgarber asked the school that the description doesn't get down into the weeds of what kind of teacher and so it's not going to give the Committee any clarity on how the school breaks out the budget for the different teaching positions.

Mr. Murray asked Ms. Burk if the School District could give the Committee a listing of how many English teachers, math teachers, and science there are, and general job descriptions.

Ms. Burk answered Mr. Murray affirmatively.

Ms. LaMothe stated that the budget proposed will serve student's best needs; there are changes in the school district, but the budget is developed based on needs and programs that will meet the student's requirements and the teachers as well.

Mr. Weissgarber asked Mr. Clegg if he seconded the motion he said yes.

Mr. Murray made the motion to move the question; Mr. Trost seconded it; the motion passed (6-3-2)

Ms. Hopkins asked Vice-Chair Cole to make the motion again. Vice-Chair Cole made the motion as follows: "Hudson Municipal Budget Committee request to SAU 81 provide a complete listing of all positions full and part-time authorized by the SAU81 organizational manning tables.

The requested list only needs to include job name, positions title number classified by name title, qualifications, and geographic location as appropriate."

Mr. Trost second it. 8-2-1 the motion passes.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Murray second by Ms. LaMothe the motion passed unanimously.