

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MAY 22, 2023**

**TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM**

***Approved June 26, 2023***

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Christopher Wolfe, Ned Carpenter, Brian Rowley, Scott Foster,

EXCUSED: Vice-Chair Richard Lesavoy, Danielle Honan

NOT PRESENT: School Board Rep Dan Smith, Council Rep Brian Ward, Brian Hickey

ALSO PRESENT: School Business Administrator Janna Mellon, Superintendent Todd Allen

Chairman Chris Wolfe welcomed everyone to the May 22, 2023 Municipal Budget Committee Meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Chairman Wolfe opened the Public Forum; seeing no speakers present he closed the Public Forum at 6:38 pm.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT Q-3 FINANCIALS PRESENTATION**

School Business Administrator Janna Mellon said financials are grouped by category with explanations of variances on the statement. She said there are still some lingering residual economic effects of COVID pandemic, manifested at the School by supply chain issues and lags on orders. She said staffing remains a challenge in certain categories, and a program was implemented in the fall with the School Board to allow the School to offer \$1,000 sign-on and retention bonuses in those categories. The School is now fully staffed in the facilities group; there are still paraprofessional positions unfilled; program ended March 30 with total price of \$50,000 offset by variances in staffing.

Business Administrator Mellon said utility costs are higher; School was able to obtain a fixed propane rate working with the Town, but still expects a negative variance in utilities. Switched to a Food Service Management model and ended up last year with a fund balance due to Federal waiver with balance retained and carried over. Grants: the School was awarded a Dairy Grant; applied for industrial food processing units but only received grant for the Jr-Sr High School; also applied for 4 different State grants: SAFE Grant to increase security with integrated security system and barrier which came to \$140,000; applied for energy improvements grant to complete Elementary School windows which was not awarded; still have ESSER Funding with projects underway.

Business Administrator Mellon said the School expects some remaining expenditure budget funds at end

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of year. She said the School had some significant unanticipated revenues last year: remaining FEMA revenues of \$103,000; Special Education extraordinary need grant; Special Education paid by formula about \$300,000 extra. The School fund balance is not yet calculated; the School has an early financial audit scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July when books are really closed; will report to Budget Committee in August. Chairman Wolfe said the Budget Committee will not meet in July and the School is scheduled for August 28, 2023. Business Administrator Mellon said she needs to process State Revenue forms by end of August.

Questions: Mr. Carpenter asked about the Department of Energy Grant and said just some of that money was earmarked for Elementary School windows. Business Administrator Mellon said that is correct and the School also has an active part of a Capital Reserve Fund through Adequacy Aid, some of which will be used for windows and utilities. She said they did not have the money to do the full window project and a little over half was completed. Chairman Wolfe asked the cost so far and Business Administrator Mellon said about \$300,000. Mr. Rowley asked if the Department of Energy gave a rationale as to why they discouraged the application by the School.

Chairman Wolfe asked about the USDA waivers. Business Administrator Mellon said the food waivers were good for all of last year and part of 2022, but the State of New Hampshire was the only state in New England who did not approve the waiver again. She said the School does not have a robust plan to help underprivileged students pay for meals, but families can apply for SNAP benefits which were recently scaled back.

Chairman Wolfe said the School has almost full professional staffing with only 2.2% unfilled, but paraprofessionals, tutors, and monitors are at 22%. Business Administrator Mellon said that is why they introduced the bonus program last fall and used some ESSER Funds which will terminate in 2024. Mr. Carpenter asked if Professional Services includes Food Service and Business Administrator Mellon said they are separate budgets and there is still money sitting in Facilities Staff and in supplies.

Mr. Foster said he is trying to compare the numbers where one has a surplus and one has a deficit, and asked if the School was saving a little more money or spending more money for what they are getting. Business Administrator Mellon said the Food Service Account is still \$18,000 to the positive at this time even with the model shift. Superintendent Allen said the School went in the direction of a Food Service Management Company as they were unable to do it themselves. He said it is all the same local people just managed by an external entity.

Business Administrator Mellon said there are pros and cons to using Food Service Management: they are now managing a contract but not actual people; for outsourcing it is Food Service Managements role to fund vacation and sick days. She said the Food Service program is highly regulated with monthly audits, and reconciliation payments are required at end of year. For Facilities the School kept all employees and trained them as facilities technicians, reducing maintenance costs and taking care of staff.

Chairman Wolfe asked Superintendent Allen what the student experience has been, and Superintendent Allen said he has been a challenge, but the School did negotiate a new competitive paraprofessional contract for next year and said he is confident the School will be fully staffed. He said they just offered a job for a Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach position and have one more Special Education position to fill.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Approval of April 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Not addressed.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Wolfe said an accounting professional who just moved to New Hampshire will be joining the Budget Committee and his application will be accepted at the next meeting as a quorum is not present this evening. He explained that a quorum is a simple majority of the Committee which would be 5, but only 4 are present tonight.

**Next Meeting:** June 26, 2023

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Carpenter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rowley, all in favor 4-0.

Chairman Wolfe adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary