

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 4, 2009**

Present: Gary Winn, Chairman; Dan Cotter, Selectboard Representative; John Zannotti, John Koopman, Elliot Rowsey, Warren Porter, Elaine Levlocke, CF&R Precinct; Bill Bucknell, Judy Idelkope, School Board Representative; Steve Laskowski, Bayard Tracy

Absent: Fred Szmit and Mike Wiggin, Spofford Fire Precinct Representative

Judy stated that there were several things that made the teacher's contracts still a valid negotiation after last night's COLA adjustment. The 1st year is 3.3% increase and the 2nd and 3rd years are both 3.6%. The increase includes the step increases. Once a contract is reached the offer can't be withdrawn as this is considered bargaining in bad faith. There is also an increase to the employee's contribution to the health plan. Bayard stated that the average pay for a Chesterfield teacher is \$48,404. The average for the state is \$48,313. Dan stated that the average pay for the Town is \$37,200. The 3% increase for the School is a much higher dollar amount than the 2% increase for the Town. Town Employees also work year round. An employee could get 4 or 5% under this contract.

1100 Regular Instruction – Elaine moved to recommend \$3,590,488. The motion was seconded by Bill. John Z asked about \$131,128 increase for tuition at KHS. Keene has been trying to renegotiate the AREA agreement for the last 3 years. Surry and Winchester are paying more because they joined after the AREA agreement. The current year \$16,461 for a HS SPED student. Chesterfield only pays \$15,745. For Regular Instruction they pay \$9,939 and Chesterfield pays \$9,338. Chesterfield can say that the formula won't change, but they don't have any say over what is put in the budget. There are 169 regular ed HS students. Chesterfield is the largest town except for Winchester. Judy stated that Hinsdale had approached Chesterfield a couple of years ago when they were trying to build a new school. Hinsdale school tax rate was \$18.42 in 2007. Their expense for an elementary student is \$10,531. Chesterfield is \$10,923.15. The rank is the number of municipalities in NH. There are 222. The state average tax rate is \$12.09. Chesterfield pays \$15.47, which is way above the average. Keene school tax rate \$21.84. The cost to educate an elementary school student in Keene is \$14,922.51. They have a number of elementary schools. The structure that is in place at the SAU is what Keene wanted. Judy stated that there were 2 students that were previously TNT students that were \$48,000. The motion passed unanimously.

1200 Special Instruction – Elaine moved to recommend \$2,362,366. The motion was seconded by Bill. Judy stated that the Board remained behind the operating budget. The Board has not voted on the warrant article for the aides. There are two areas that are overstaffed which are SPED and administration. Having an aid in every classroom causes difficulty when there are some classrooms that need more than 1 aid. The enrollment at the school is down. The plan is to have 1 ½ aides per classroom. Judy stated that the aid cut was not made without consulting administration. There has been some discussion about eliminating the assistant principal position. Elaine asked about individuals that may come in with IEPs on the first day of school and will the classrooms have enough aides to give the student with IEP's attention that they need? Judy stated that this is a concern every year. The schedule can't be set until the administration knows who comes to school on the first day. An interventionist works primarily with emotionally disabled students and integrating them into the classroom. There is a special educator from Brattleboro that is on the School Board. Elaine stated that she had been a classroom aide for 7 years and that it

was really hard to put a price on education. John K stated that his daughter was an educator and that it is the quality of the teacher that controls the classroom and that with the current enrollment it was excessive to have an aid in every classroom.

This year in HS Tuition OOD there are 6 students. Last year there were 3. The two students moved out of TNT were \$24,000 each. The one for \$291,000 is a \$17,000 increase. The one for \$366,000 is a \$90,000 increase. One decreases to \$27,000 because he turns 21 this year. The aides arrive at 8 AM class starts at 8:30 and school ends at 3 PM. Aides are assigned duties like taking children out to the bus. Preschool tuition is \$3,500. The collaborative for this one preschool student is \$16,000. The motion passed by majority. Gary abstained.

1400 Co-Curricular – John moved to recommend \$30,084. The motion was seconded by Bayard and passed unanimously.

2110 Attendance – Elaine moved to recommend a \$1. The motion was seconded by Bayard. Judy stated that for one week, Lester was retrieving a student daily to bring him to school. The motion passed unanimously.

2120 Guidance Services – Bill moved to recommend \$76,545. The motion was seconded by Elaine. Judy stated that this person does testing, evaluation and social work. It is required to have a guidance counselor on staff. A counselor is required for every 500 students. Elementary School and Middle School students have different needs. The counselor is on the same pay scale as the teachers. There are 5 non-union employees in the building; Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, Office Assistant, School Psychologist and the Speech Pathologist. Chesterfield competes with Keene for hiring the Speech Pathologist. Currently, 20 % of the student body is coded special needs. The motion passed unanimously.

2130 Health Services – Elaine moved to recommend \$47,850. The motion was seconded by Bayard. The school nurse has changed several times over the last couple years. The motion passed unanimously.

2140 Psychology Services – Elaine moved to recommend \$107,308. The motion was seconded by Bayard. The in-house Psychologist does testing 4 days a week and the Psychological Counseling is designated by IEP's. The Psychologist does get full benefits even though she only works 30 hours per week. The motion passed unanimously.

2150 Speech Services – Elaine moved to recommend \$90,098. The motion was seconded by Dan. Speech & Psychology are non-union employees. Their raise is calculated at 3% plus retirement contribution. Once the contract passes they will be contributing to the benefit package. The speech pathologist gets a buyout because she doesn't take health insurance. This is the first time that this has been offered. The employee needs to prove that they have health insurance paid for by another source other than the Town of Chesterfield. The motion passed unanimously.

2160 OT/PT Services – Bill moved to recommend \$65,600. The motion was seconded by Elaine. This person provides service for students with IEP's. The motion passed unanimously.

Dan moved to reconsider salaries for 2140 & 2150. The motion was seconded by Steve. The motion passed by majority. Judy voted No. Dan moved to limit salary to a 2% increase. The motion was seconded by John Z. John K asked if there was a merit or step increase available for this person? There is not. Judy stated that this is a very difficult position to fill and there are still lots of opportunities available in this economy. The motion failed by majority vote. Bayard voted

Yes. If the Board had known that this was the position the Committee would take they would have sorted the compensation into steps and COLA. Steve stated that this is a position that has no steps available.

The SAU handles litigation and grievances with the Union. The SAU lobbies on our behalf to increase Catastrophic Aid. They hire and screen new employees as well as payroll and benefit administration. Tim arranged for the snow and ice removal this week. Gary stated that he invariably sees Tim dealing with a lot of different issues.

2210 Staff Development – Steve moved to recommend \$52,087. The motion was seconded by John Z and passed unanimously.

2220 Library Services – Steve moved to recommend \$99,134. The motion was seconded by Bill. A certified media specialist is required at least part-time. The media specialist is responsible for technology education for K-8. The motion passed unanimously.

2290 Consultation – Steve moved to recommend \$3,600. The motion was seconded by Elaine and passed unanimously.

2310 School Board Services – Steve moved to recommend \$31,475. The motion was seconded by Elaine. The audit is put out to bid, but cost has increased because auditing standards have increased. The Stenographer has increased 33%. She is paid on an hourly basis. She may be working more hours as the SPED transcription services. No elected officials received a raise this year. The motion passed unanimously.

Total SAU Services – Elaine moved to recommend \$426,106. The motion was seconded by Dan. Judy stated that even though the SAU is up \$11,000 it is down almost \$9,000 from a couple of years ago and there will be additional staff. The motion passed unanimously.

2410 School Administration – Bill moved to recommend \$310,345. The motion was seconded by Elaine. John K questioned the need for the assistant principal? Judy stated that he is currently doing Staff Development. He has expertise in Mathematics, which is an area that Chesterfield needs to improve in. Judy stated that his management of a particular teacher has been innovative. Warren wondered if the results of the proficiency tests would have anything to do with the cost per student? They do not appear to. Steve said you should measure against the standard, not the other schools. The School Board's intent is to phase out the assistant principal within a couple of years. There is no raise in the budget for the receptionist. The motion passed unanimously.

2600 School Maintenance – John Z moved to recommend \$320,966. The motion was seconded by Elaine. The painting and carpeting has been deferred. The fire code violations have been addressed except for the portables. The motion passed unanimously.

2700 Pupil Transportation – Bill moved to recommend \$434,685. The motion was seconded by Bayard. Steve stated that it is not a requirement to pay for transportation to the HS, or field trips or athletic competitions. Judy stated that the issue with not providing transport to the HS could result in truancy issues. Westmoreland charges a nominal fee for transportation. Gary recommended a pass card. Steve recommended a tax on residents who use the service. Some people who go to school don't own property. The motion passed unanimously.

2830 Staff Services – Dan moved to recommend \$2,000. The motion was seconded by Bill and passed unanimously.

2840 Information Tech – John Z moved to recommend \$46,866. The motion was seconded by Steve and passed unanimously.

5220 Transfers – Bill moved to recommend \$375,000. The motion was seconded by Elaine. School lunch is there because there is a revenue line. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 3: Steve moved to recommend the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the School Board and the Chesterfield Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

2009-2010	\$64,232
2010-2011	\$67,771
2011-2012	\$70,256

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$64,232 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 the prior fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Bill. Warren stated that this is a commitment of almost \$400,000. The motion passed by majority vote. Elliot and Dan voted No.

Article 5: Dan moved to recommend \$116,916 for salaries and benefits to support the costs associated with the addition of 4.5 inclusion aide positions. The motion was seconded by Elaine. Gary stated that the Committee will be supporting the School Board's budget by not recommending the article. Judy is abstaining because the School Board has not yet voted on the article. Gary and Warren are abstaining because they have immediate family who may be affected by job losses. The motion failed by majority vote. Elaine voted Yes. Warren, Gary and Judy Abstained.

Article 6: There is no accepted contract yet between the School Board and the Support Staff. The deadline is February 9th. There is a Board meeting that night. It could be before the Committee at the next meeting.

Article 8: John Z moved to recommend transferring up to \$30,000 of its unencumbered funds, if any remain on hand at the end of the fiscal year, for the purpose of major renovation/reconstruction of the school buildings and related costs, or to take any other action in relation thereto. The motion was seconded by Bill. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 9: Steve moved to recommend up to \$75,000 to reduce the general fund deficit pursuant to RSA 189:28-a. The motion was seconded by Bill. Judy stated that there will be a deficit this year because of the SPED students. This is over and above what can be removed from the tuition expendable trust. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be Thursday February 12th. Elaine moved to adjourn at 10:59 PM. The motion was seconded by Warren and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary