



HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ♦ Hudson, New Hampshire
Hills Memorial Library 18 Library Street

**6:30 pm Budget Meeting
Non-Public Session**

School Board Meeting Minutes – October 25, 2023

In Attendance

Board Members

Gretchen Whiting, Chair
Maureen Dionne, Vice Chair
Ethan Beals
Mike Campbell
Gary Gasdia

SAU Staff

Dan Moulis, Superintendent of Schools
Kimberly Organek, Assistant Superintendent
Of Curriculum & Instruction
Rachel Borge, Director Special Services
Jen Burk, Business Administrator

A. Call to Order [0:00:07]

Chair Gretchen Whiting called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Mike Campbell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Public Input [0:00:31]

There was no public input.

C. New Business [0:00:43]

1. Special Services – FY25 Budget – Rachel Borge

Highlights of the Special Services FY25 budget include:

- Proposed budget increase of 21.62%, mostly in the areas of staffing increases due to student needs, increased cost of new transportation contract, increased number of students needing out-of-district programs, and 5% increase in out of district tuition rates
- Areas of greatest impact include contracted services and increased cost of professional development

- Salaries and benefits are 71.4% of the operating budget
- Part-time para vacancies are accounted for in the account totals but do not appear on the report due to software glitch
- 18 new full-time paras are proposed, converting current part-time vacancies to full-time next year
- There are 26 remaining part-time para vacancies. There are approximately 70 part-time positions currently staffed.
- 6 new part-time kindergarten paras are proposed
- There are currently 22 full-time paras staffed
- There is a request for a new ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) Coordinator. There is one position now whose caseload went from 22 to 38 this year.
- The EBD (Emotional/Behavior Disorders) counselors began with ESSER funding and were proposed to be moved to the general fund during last year's budget development for FY24's budget. For this FY25 budget, the EBD counselors were supposed to be included in the general fund budget, but had not been updated at the time this initial budget was prepared. The number of students with greater needs requiring this service has increased. There are about 520 identified students, though overall student enrollment is decreasing.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to add \$65,791 to account line 10152120-110 (Hills Garrison EBD Counselor) and to add \$75,920 to account line 10242120-110 (Middle School EBD Counselor). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

- A new preschool teacher is proposed. Preschool class sizes: 3-year-old class sizes ranged from 12 to 16 students last year with a total of 61 students; there were 62 age 4 students with class sizes from 14 to 17. Currently, there are 47 age 3 students with 14 in process. Because 3 year olds become potentially eligible upon reaching the age of 3, these classes begin the year with smaller class sizes and grow as the year unfolds. A majority of referrals are coming in with significant developmental delays. Currently, there are 62 age 4 students with one in process. ARP funds for Special Education were granted and utilized for services to support students with disabilities. In anticipation of this need, materials to outfit an additional preschool class were purchased with these funds prior to the expiry of the grant.
- The current Early Learning Center Special Education Administrative Assistant will go from part-time to full-time. This will help with IEPs.
- 26 students are anticipated to be out of district next year (one of which is court-ordered). Last year, there were 18. Out of district placements in NH could increase up to 5% each year; that is used as a guideline. 8 locations are in MA; open spaces in NH are difficult to find.

- The new staff requests (which includes both new position requests, as well as requests to increase some existing positions from part-time to full-time) total \$1,308,076
- There will be an increase in costs for workshops and membership with two administrators now (added for FY24)
- Transportation in-district and out-of-district is up due to a change in contract and increases in fuel and driver costs
- There was review of out-of-district services and contracted providers vs. in-district personnel
- There was a request to have a trend/chart on the number of students receiving special services as well as students receiving out of district services (over a 10 year span), as well as workload/number of students requiring more intense services
- There was a request to ask comparable districts what their Special Services percentage increase is
- There was a request to determine where a cut could be made. There are requests for a full-time school counselor and a full-time SEL interventionist; Ms. Borge prioritizes the counselor if she must choose. An issue is that if the \$3 million worth of services are not provided, the district will be at risk.

2. SAU/District-wide FY25 Budget

Highlights of the SAU/District-wide FY25 budget include:

- Overall decrease of 2.56% (\$246,923)
- Increase of 1.4% (\$80,764) in salaries and benefits
- Decrease of 8.84% in other expenses
- There are increases in areas such as the substitute line, vacant and new position benefit assumptions, new position requests, transfer of the Curriculum Coordinator position from ESSER into the general fund budget, increase to district clerk and moderator stipends and a “merit pool” for support staff based on performance evaluation results
- Increase of \$41,818 in transportation
- Decrease of \$19,635 in interest (debt/fund transfer)
- New positions are finance bookkeeper (\$69,438) and HR recruiter (\$126,812) (Ms. Burk noted that this will help the volume of work and turnover in those departments)
- Two positions not recommended by the superintendent due to priority include an employee training specialist and a STEM specialist
- There was review of the School Board budget line items
- The merit pool line item for support staff (not covered by a bargaining unit such as HR, IT, tutors, etc.) is \$60,591
- There was review about new staff screening for medical capability. RSA states that all staff need a (physician) signoff; the district paid for certain employees to have a screening done at a third party – this will be followed-up.

- Increase in the substitute salaries line: \$140,000 due to actual expense for substitutes (due to more absences, etc.)
- The Curriculum Coordinator is favored as a new position vs. a STEM employee because that person covered all curriculum levels (K-12). There was discussion that due to struggling student scores, the STEM position might be beneficial.
- There was discussion about transportation costs

3. Warrant Articles – Draft

Warrant Articles include:

1. Operating Budget: \$69,767,506 (default of \$67,454,823)
2. Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson School Board and PSRPs
3. Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson School Board and AFSCME
4. Roof Replacement at Dr. H. O. Smith Elementary School (\$250,000, est. tax impact of \$0.05)
5. Science Labs at Hudson Memorial School: \$200,000 with no tax impact
6. Renovation of Checkers Kitchen at Alvirne (\$250,000 with tax impact of \$0.05)
7. Establishment of Capital Reserve Account for the Alvirne Farm (\$150,000 with no tax impact)
8. Update to the Fund Balance Retention (up to 5% of net assessment)

Ethan Beals made a motion to remove Warrant Article 8 (Update to the Fund Balance Retention). Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion about spending from the capital reserve fund for the Dr. H. O. Smith roof replacement project and if necessary, changes to the warrant article to add money to that fund. The end of the year fund balance estimate is \$1.5 million.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to change the roof replacement warrant article to reflect using capital reserve fund money. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to amend Warrant Article 6 to add wording to have the amount come out of the June 30 fund balance. Ethan Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

There was a request to ask the farm about projects and budgets.

4. Default Budget

The default budget for 2025 is \$67,454,823.

Revenue: expect additional adequacy per student; catastrophic aid is estimated; vocational aid is kept level; other State revenues; Medicaid reimbursement (process); local revenue other than taxes; portion of preschool program cost; tuition from non-residents; eRate placeholder; facility rental; project 3 and ESSER grant

closeouts; food service program; \$50,000 placeholder for Trustees; farm and CTE funds; earnings on investments, and CTE revenue. Perkins funding was reviewed.

D. Recommended Action [2:41:47]

1. Minutes – October 16, 2023 – Draft

Maureen Dionne made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2023 as written. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

E. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II a [2:42:13]

At 9:15 pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to enter into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II a. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Roll call vote.

Personnel matter discussed

SAU Staff dismissed at 9:37

F. Leave Non-Public Session and Adjourn

At 10:32pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to exit non-public and adjourn. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5- 0. Roll call vote.

Submitted by

Susan DeFelice

Non-public submitted by Dan Moulis, Kim Organek and Gretchen Whiting