



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

5:45pm Non-Public Session
6:30 pm Regular Meeting
Non-Public Session

Hudson School Board Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2023

In Attendance

Board Members

Gretchen Whiting, Chair
Maureen Dionne, Vice Chair
Ethan Beals
Mike Campbell
Gary Gasdia
Victoria Tilley - Student Representative

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 [0:00:25]

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

B. Public Input [0:00:57]

William Goulding of 3 Maple Avenue spoke about the Forestry Program, stating that it is a natural resources program.

C. New Business [0:02:34]

1. Forestry Program (Discussion)

Ms. Whiting led discussion regarding the forestry program. Statements were made at the last budget committee meeting that the forestry program would not be continued. In the past, there were two levels to the forestry program as part of the CTE program of studies. The Natural Resources program replaced Forestry I and serves as a prerequisite for Forestry II or Natural Resources II. This year, the high

school has a feeder program of forestry but is not considered part of the CTE program (it is an Alvirne elective). It was noted that the forestry and wildlife management programs enrollment have decreased. This year, there are no students in Forestry I. Requirements for the Perkins Grant are: needs to be high wage/skilled career pathways and natural resources is a designated pathway. The demand is being met. It was questioned if the prerequisite is causing an issue with enrollment in forestry. There will be review of the program and prerequisite to see if it is causing problems with enrollment and in consideration of pathways moving forward.

2. October Enrollment Update (Information)

There is a decrease of overall enrollment from 3,055 to 3,053 from August 28, 2023, to October 1, 2023, however these numbers will not be verified until after October 20, 2023.

3. Nottingham West Elementary School Pavilion Donation (Decision)

Superintendent Moulis and Principal Scott Baker presented information on a donation for Nottingham West Elementary School of a 14' x12' cedar framed pavilion at the cost of \$2,500 to be accepted from the NWES PTO. The space could be used as an outside area for students to read, or for outside enrichment activities, etc.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to accept the cedar framed pavilion at the cost of \$2,500 for Nottingham West Elementary School as presented. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Nominations (Decision)

Nominations were presented for Hudson Memorial School's Winter & Spring Concert Accompanist (Michael Galligan) and a Boys Basketball Coach (Cody St. Claire).

Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the nominations as presented. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

5. FY25 Budget (Discussion)

1. Introduction to the FY25 Budget

Highlights of the Executive Summary include:

- Review of School Board goals
- Priorities in the budget are aligned to the district's strategic plan pillars: strong learning environment, strong connections, and vibrant learning systems
- Maintenance of current staffing, class sizes, curriculum, maintenance and operations
- Increase of elementary support personnel

- Increase of high school academic support
- Investment in school infrastructure including phase II of HMS science classroom upgrades and Dr. HO Smith roof
- Investment in academic interventions
- New budget items
- Budget items not considered at this time
- Budget drivers including salaries, benefits, technology, and capital/facility improvements
- Two separate contractual agreement warrant articles: ASFSCME and Hudson Federation of PSRPs
- Turnover rate (FY23) of staff (11%) and teachers (21%)
- Staff with Alternative Certification was 18 in FY23 and is 19 in FY24
- Warrant Articles
- Grant funding sources and positions funded

2. Budget Presentations

FY25 Budget Overview:

- The FY25 budget increase is 5.01% overall. The general fund budget increased by 7.38%. This increase is offset by the ESSER and Project Aware Grants dropping off.
- Enrollment projection - slight decrease overall
- Staffing: class size targets by grade level
- New/Updated position requests: Reclassification of a Technology Integration Specialist into an Instructional Coach – no budget impact (Curriculum);
New: Recruiter – to manage the recruiting processes across the district including sourcing, onboarding, job fairs, job description updates, etc. (HR);
New: Finance Bookkeeper – for the finance office to provide additional support for accounts payable and payroll (Finance);
New: ABA Coordinator for district-wide student support & services – required certification as a BCBA (Special Services); Convert 18 part-time Para positions to full-time (Special Services)
- Various new/updated position requests per school
- Staffing requests not moved forward by the superintendent
- Salaries and Benefits overview: negotiations for 2 collective bargaining agreements will have warrant articles for any increases resulting from those negotiations, and SchoolCare rate increase projections included in the budget: 10% health, 5% dental, 0% life and long-term disability
- NHRS rates to remain the same: 19.64% teacher classification; 13.53% employee classification; expected to change for the FY26 budget build
- Summary of the 7.83% general fund increase: salaries/benefits increased 7% and all other costs increased 8.71%

Elementary Budget highlights include:

- Overall elementary budget increased by 2.44% of which the salaries/benefits increase was 1.84%.
- Increase in cost of materials caused increase in supply budgets
- Continuation of Math in Focus program - consumables purchased through operating budget as ESSER funding are no longer available
- Magnetic Reading program that was introduced in FY24 (Gr. 2-5)
- Being a Writer program for grades K-5
- Foundations material for grades K-2
- Software subscriptions such as Mystery Science, and new programs such as Math in Focus, Spark, and Type to Learn
- Additional radios for sufficient coverage
- Better alignment of food service expense lines with actual expenses
- Salaries and benefits costs account for 93.8% of the operating budget
- Changes over \$5K such as reading and math supplies, furniture replacement and food service
- Textbook replacement decrease is due to the move to the general supplies account
- There is a request to add Type to Learn software for Hills Garrison

Ethan Beals made a motion to add Type to Learn software at Hills Garrison (\$925) to line 10151100-650. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

- There was discussion about the workload of the current counselor shared between HO Smith and Library Street schools
- The total budget salary/benefit for new elementary positions is \$540,000: Hills Garrison P/T SEL Interventionist moved from the ESSER grant (\$43,476); NEW Pre-K teacher (\$116,000); NEW School Counselor for HO Smith (\$102,000); F/T SEL Interventionist moved from the ESSER grant (\$133,000); 6 NEW P/T Paras to support Kindergarten programming (\$105,000); changing the P/T Administrative Assistant at the ELC to F/T (\$40,000)
- For the 12 para positions which were converted from part-time vacancies to full-time in September, 4 are new external candidates and the remaining are internal candidates transitioning from part-time positions. There was discussion about paraprofessionals (defining assignments, etc.). Having one classroom assistant per classroom at the Kindergarten level is ideal.
- Classroom sizes were discussed. Preschool enrollment is full.
- There was a request to put staffing pieces in the principal commentary for next year
- A pressing need not currently in the budget is for more academic interventionists not tied to Title I. The state dyslexia law was discussed; it is not part of Special Education and is not tied to Title I.
- There was review of emotional regulation such as aggression and anxiety.

- The assistance provided by paraprofessionals is significant and a high need, especially for first year learners
- Interventionists help with tier I (for all students) and counselors work more 1:1 or in groups of students with issues. An interventionist could help teach class lessons and take lunch groups. A school counselor has more credentialing requirements than an SEL Interventionist.
- A cost that could be reduced, if needed, is furniture, such as library bookshelves at Hills Garrison (\$2,676)
- There was discussion about walkie-talkie purchasing/replacement cycle plan for the schools

FACILITIES

John Pratte reviewed the facilities budget. Highlights include:

- Facility operations and custodial budget - 38 full-time equivalent positions: Facility Director, Custodial Manager, custodial staff - 26 full-time, 5 part-time, and maintenance staff - 7 full-time employees
- The proposed FY25 facilities budget reflects a decrease of 1.60%. This decrease includes the elimination of funds allocated in FY24 for the LSS roof replacement, plus the science labs at HMS and the SAU parking lot paving which were all in warrant articles.
- Additions include more fire door replacements and bathroom floor refinishing at AHS, replacement of hallway flooring at HMS, and upgrades to the heating system controllers district-wide (except HMS)
- The FY25 budget includes the sixth phase of window replacement at HMS
- The proposed FY25 budget includes the continuation of outsourced landscaping and the HVAC preventive maintenance program
- Salaries/benefits accounts for 53.8% of the operating budget
- The utilities analysis summary and budget walk were reviewed (equipment replacement, repairs, utilities, building improvement)
- Warrant articles for this year include: two more science labs for Memorial, the HO Smith roof and “Checkers” kitchen conversion for the food service program preparing meals for students at Alvirne
- Excluding warrant articles from FY24’s operating budget, the increase in the budget is 11.4%. It includes the HMS hallway, heating control units, and the Alvirne bathroom updates.
- There was a review of phones provided for staff. There was a request for information as to the number of people included in the \$8,580 cell phone line.
- Line 532 - Data Communications is used for a system in case of an emergency; Mr. Pratte will find out why there was no cost last year
- There was discussion about AC/electrical systems and what it would take to add A/C into schools for the hot days at the start and end of the school year
- A want would be an HVAC technician position (cutting the HVAC preventive program down by bringing more work in-house)

- A new grounds truck included in the budget would be helpful if the current truck doesn't pass inspection

TECHNOLOGY

Kevin Peterson reviewed the technology budget; highlights include:

- Budget increase of 14.35% (\$270,996) (most of which is absorbing funds from other areas such as the ESSER grant and transfer from an SAU account line) and other initiatives such as replacement schedules for devices
- Increase in devices reflected one laptop cart per classroom in the upper elementary schools
- Ongoing items: repair/replace existing classroom technology and support existing infrastructure including firewall
- Increases include educational resources (31.67%)
- Salaries/benefits account for 36% of the operating budget
- The budget is restructured in moving the replacement lines
- Middle school computer lab replacement
- Software increase includes iReady (\$110,000) that was previously funded with ESSER funds that have sunset
- A want mentioned is a cybersecurity position in the department. The state put out a grant for cybersecurity. This was recommended in the security audit done two years ago.
- There is a vacant position in network administration
- Major software lines were reviewed. District Website Software was moved from the SAU budget to the IT budget (\$12,000)
- Classroom management software - due to circumstances, this is not yet implemented across the district (unavailable to teachers)
- PowerSchool training - offered this year

D. Recommended Action [2:41:05]

1. Manifests – all set

2. Minutes: October 2, 2023

Mike Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of October 2, 2023 as presented. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

It was noted that the budget increase minus salaries and benefits is \$1.18 million. The tax rate would be going up about \$1.30 before the school budget is in effect, as was presented at the Select Board meeting last week. There was discussion regarding the proposed budget and the state of the economy. The teacher contract accounts for a good portion of the increase to the salaries & benefits costs in the FY25 budget.

E. Reports to the Board (Information) [2:48:22]

1. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Moulis reported on the following:

- Breakfast at Nottingham West (grade 5 reading of Big Friendly Giant by Roald Dahl)
- The ELC Back to School Night last week included building tours
- Hudson Memorial Informational event on helping children manage stress
- The Evaluation Committee met today and started to review the educator evaluation process
- Review of respondents interested in the Strategic Planning Committee
- October 4th – Bradley Kidder Law Conference
- The Stipend Committee met last week to review stipends at the high school
- Lions Club meeting to review support of school with hearing screenings, etc.
- Board of Selectmen meeting – second meeting regarding restricted use of Memorial Drive during the school day. There will be a notification sent out to the community.
- Senior sports nights last week: boys soccer and girls soccer

F. Committee Reports [2:53:40]

PSRP negotiations are underway.

G. Correspondence (Information) [2:53:53]

The Discipline Reports for August and September were presented.
Revenue and Expenditure estimates were reviewed.

H. Board of Selectmen - Liaison Comments - N/A [2:55:19]

The Board of Selectmen Liaison was absent tonight.

I. Student Representative Comments - N/A [2:55:23]

Ms. Tilley commented that Alvirne welcomed its Freshman Officers.

J. Board Member Comments [2:55:40]

Mr. Campbell gave condolences to the family of a student from a neighboring district. He spoke about mental health and support.

Mr. Gasdia thanked those who were participating in the budget process and attending tonight. He mentioned that there were some Facebook comments, and he cautioned the public to address issues with Superintendent Moulis or the School Board.

Mr. Beals said he helped work on phase II of the HO Smith playground which should be open tomorrow. He thanked the district facilities staff and the Hudson DPW.

Ms. Dionne spoke about the Nottingham breakfast and she thanked the parents and team for putting that together.

Ms. Whiting commented that there is a lot included in the budget. She invited public feedback as this will help prepare a competitive budget.

K. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II a and c [3:01:52]

At 9:31 pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to enter into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II a and c. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Roll call vote.

Student issue

Personnel matters

L. Leave Non-Public and Adjourn

At 9:59pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to leave 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 and Kim Organek