



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 30, 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 [0:00:20]

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

B. Public Input [0:00:45]

There was no public input.

An agenda revision was made to postpone the item regarding assessment data.

C. New Business [0:01:13]

1. Facilities Update (Discussion)

John Pratte reviewed staffing in the Facilities department:

- Custodial staff = 26 full-time employees and 5 part-time employees
- Maintenance staff = 7 full-time employees including HVAC Tech, Master electrician, plumber, general maintenance, head groundskeeper, groundskeeper level 2, groundskeeper level 1, and part-time year-round

groundskeeper. The total number of staff is 38 full-time equivalents. On average, there is one full-time and one part-time seasonal custodians (\$21,200).

A groundskeeper level 1 position is posted to help year-round; the person will also help maintenance personnel when needed and will substitute for employee absences.

D. Old Business [0:07:57]

1. FY25 Budget Follow-up/Final Action (Decision)

The board reviewed the FY25 budget for finalization.

Ms. Borge provided information requested at the last budget meeting:

- The number and percentage of students in the district receiving special education services
- State data in 2022 is 16.4% (K-12); Hudson kindergarten numbers are high
- Breakdown of student disability by category
- Categories of disability eligibility
- Student population per category: Hudson's population of students identified with an autism spectrum disorder is increasing
- Students identified with developmental delay (youngest learners up through age 9)
- The number of students identified with emotional disturbance is declining (being proactive with social/emotional needs has helped).
- Students identified with intellectual disability
- Students with other health impairments are leveling out.
- Specific learning disabilities are generally the greatest population of students with IEPs.
- Speech and language impairment and needs (mostly in younger grades) are increasing.
- The number of hours and students requiring speech/language or occupational therapy are starting to increase a little.
- The ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) caseload has increased from last year.
- State assessment – math (grade 4 not meeting target; grade 8 met/exceeded; 0% proficiency performance at high school) and reading (grade 4 at 8.7% proficiency: a bit better at grade 8; and increased prior performance at the high school level)
- The budget is largely driven by the transportation and out of district line items.
- 26 students are in out-of-district programs; the needs for whom are profound.
- Staff is necessary to appropriately handle student need (\$1.3 million in new staff).
- Drivers of the per pupil cost include out-of-district placement.

It was noted that the HMH Math software company has not replied yet with a 3-year plan quote vs. buying up front. Ms. Organek will share information on intervention vs. core materials.

There was a \$1.25 million budget reduction to the proposed budget, and administration offered further reduction areas amounting to \$147,463.

Recommended positions to reduce to \$1 through attrition include: English and a wellness teacher at Alvirne; vacant groundskeeping position; 2 SEL interventionists; computer science teacher reduction (remain p/t); 2 proposed f/t administrative assistant positions (keep one p/t); Alvirne math tutors (have 2 not 3); natural resources teacher (keep as p/t); communication director (restructure); new finance bookkeeper (reduce to p/t); vacant full-time para positions (that were proposed to go from p/t to f/t) – reduce 3 back to p/t – so 15 instead of 18 f/t paras). Other proposals included: HMS hallway floor replacement (option to do a warrant article); and to buy Math in Focus supplies for 1 more year where the ESSER grant expires in September 2024 (cost savings of \$42,000) but the licensing fee would go beyond the grant scope. It was noted that reductions made tonight (to \$1) are not cutting positions.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to move the Math in Focus supply line for \$42,069 from the budget to be funded through ESSER (consumables only). Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to move the HMS hallway floor replacement for \$94,000 from the budget to create a warrant article using end of year fund balance. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to remove \$86,763 moving the Alvirne English teacher position to \$1 based on retirement and District recommendation. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to change the Wellness Teacher line item to \$1 due to attrition/retirement. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion about the need for help in the Human Resources Department. The natural resources teacher currently teaches 2/5 of a teaching position; there was a question if the position could be bumped up as a compromise; scheduling and needs will need to be reviewed.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to keep the natural resources teacher position part-time instead of making it full-time. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion about changing paraprofessional positions ahead of negotiations. There is concern about reducing f/t paraprofessionals from 18 to 15, although understanding that it is a placeholder.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to reduce 3 full-time paraprofessional vacancies back to part-time for a reduction of \$151,044. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce 18 part-time paraprofessionals to \$1 (\$314,910). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Thus far, the reductions made by the board tonight equal \$878,832.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce the administrative assistant back to part-time (\$46,034). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to reduce the line item on the current Communications Director role (\$36,354) to a part time Community Engagement Coordinator. Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. After discussion, Maureen Dionne rescinded her motion.

There was discussion about SEL interventionists, instructional coaches and support for staff on alternative certification plans. There was discussion about reducing the Communications Director position back to a that of a Coordinator.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to remove the part-time culinary assistant (\$12,816). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

The reduction value of the Athletic Director administrative assistant position going back to part-time is \$54,640.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to remove the classroom management software for \$20,000 in the technology budget. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-2.

There was discussion about teacher use and the nature of the management software as a pilot program.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to remove the choral risers from the budget for \$15,163. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

The risers were discussed as being an investment and there was a suggestion about reviewing this at the end of the year.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to remove the Yamaha student oboe cost for \$2,014. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

There was discussion about bringing services such as landscaping in-house. If the position is kept, \$21,200 will be cut out of seasonal grounds. There is concern about the overall need for maintenance staff.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to cut the vacant groundskeeper position (\$84,330). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. There was a suggestion about reducing the line item to \$1.

Gary Gasdia amended his motion to reduce the vacant groundskeeper position to \$1 (\$84,329). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. After discussion, Gary Gasdia rescinded the motion.

Ethan Beals made a motion to cut \$21,200 out of the seasonal grounds line. Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

\$996,059 has been reduced from the FY25 budget at this point of the meeting.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to reduce the new finance bookkeeper to part-time from full-time (\$37,143). Ethan Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to reduce the requested new recruiter position from full-time to part-time (\$72,987). Ethan Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce the full-time computer science position to part-time (\$83,605). Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0

Maureen Dionne made a motion to add \$3,125 for 5 additional walkie talkies for Library Street. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

\$1,186,669 is has been reduced from the budget at this point of the meeting.

Ethan Beals made a motion to remove the cost of the HGS library shelves for \$2,676. Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce Hudson Memorial Library furniture replacement for \$1,000. Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce the full-time SEL Interventionist request to a part-time SEL interventionist (savings of \$89,365). This removes two f/t positions from ESSER and two p/t positions from ESSER to the budget. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion failed 2-3.

\$1,190,343 in cuts have been made so far. There was discussion about the heavy workload of the athletic department administrative assistant.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce the athletic department administrative assistant back to part-time for a savings of \$54,640. Gary Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

Supporting the food pantry and other causes that support students was discussed. Ms. Burk explained that the board cannot donate to an outside entity from an expense line in the school district.

Maureen Dionne made a motion to reduce School Board supplies from \$11,130 to \$8,000. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

\$1,248,115 has thus far been cut from the FY25 budget.

There was discussion about district locks and doors, safety, certified maintenance staff for that issue as well as training for that staff. If staff got locksmith training, hours will be tracked for stipends.

Ethan Beals made a motion to add \$5,000 for a locksmith stipend pool line to recognize the priority of building security. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce the \$50,000 (non-affiliated support staff of about 90 people) first-year merit increase pool to \$30,000. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion about the district website increase to add a communication method: \$7,000 for the website itself, and \$5,000 for the messaging/communication part, which is still being investigated. The website will integrate with PowerSchool.

There was discussion about microscopes which are old, but some are still usable.

Ethan Beals made a motion to add \$2,000 to the middle school microscope replacement line item. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

There was discussion about the beneficial communication position which will be restructured from director to coordinator. The position will help publicize what is going on in school and will focus on district messaging and supporting schools. Schools communicate via social media, emails, and their own websites. A year-round Junior Network Administrator position will be posted soon. There was discussion about the vacant instructional coach positions as well; metrics on this was requested.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to reduce the Communications Director position by \$36,354 to a Communications Coordinator. Ethan Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Gary Gasdia made a motion to reduce one of the instructional coach positions from \$124,712 to \$1 (savings of \$124,711). Ethan Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ethan Beals made a motion to reduce one of the math tutors to \$1 (savings of \$35,702). Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1.

There was discussion about reducing a math teacher position due to decreasing enrollment. There is a clear benefit to keeping class sizes at optimum levels to help with student achievement. There was discussion about the 4 school counselors and director positions, the benefits, and workloads. There was also discussion on the preschool teaching positions, inclusivity, rules around class sizes, and more. There was a request for the current caseloads of the 4 school counselors and director. The projected student enrollment next year is 996.

So far \$1,458,682 was cut from the FY25 budget (\$68,446,185 with the reductions). There was a request for a breakdown of the 2023 actuals on the CTE lines. There will be another meeting on November 6.

E. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II a [4:11:21]

At 10:40 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.

Resignation Received

F. Leave Non-Public Session and Adjourn

At 11:09pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to return to leave non-public session 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