

Town of Milton
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
November 29, 2022

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Laura Turgeon (Chair), Bob Carrier, Mike Beaulieu, Lisa Gautreau, Stephanie Mills, Kimberly Ward, Peg Hurd, Humphrey Williams

School Board Representatives: Peg Hurd- Chair, Travis Corriveau, Don Diamant, Elishia Slattery, Larry Brown

SAU #64 Representatives: Adam Houghton – Superintendent, Mackenzie Campbell – Finance Manager, Andy Rawson – Facilities Director, Jennifer Leavitt- Principal of Nute Middle High School, Kathy Randall – Principal Milton Elementary School, Michael Saufley- Special Education Director

Laura Turgeon, Chair, opened the session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Laura Turgeon, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Roll Call:

- a. Ms. Turgeon, Chair, led the roll call of members to determine if a quorum was present. Laura Turgeon (Chair), Mike Beaulieu, Lisa Gautreau, Peg Hurd, Stephanie Mills, Kimberly Ward, Bob Carrier. A quorum was present. Note: Humphrey Williams joined the meeting after the roll call was taken.
- b. Ms. Hurd, School Board Chair, led a roll call of School Board members. Larry Brown, Elishia Slattery, Don Diamant, Travis Corriveau, and Peg Hurd. All members were present.

3.) 2023-2024 School Budget Review and Discussion:

Mr. Adam Houghton, Superintendent, presented the Milton School District FY2024 Budget Overview: This is a high-level overview of their proposed budget.

Slide 1: About our Process:

Staff salary & benefit review – added in salaries correctly per school to give an accurate picture. Detailed line by line review.

Review of historical data (salaries and benefits)

Review and updated with meetings by Principals and Department Heads

Slide 2: New Split Lines:

Added several new lines to budget to correctly split expenses between Nute Middle and High Schools. NH Dept of Ed requires a per pupil cost at both ‘buildings.’ The goal is to create a more accurate per pupil cost. Lines are without historical comparisons.

Slide 3: FY 2024 Budget Summary:

Purpose to keep moving on in a consistent manner. The information represents a best guess of how and where we are going to expend monies.

Slide 4: Budget Comparison – School Districts with all levels:

Providing an apples-to-apples comparison as closely as possible between comparable districts.

Slide 5: Breakdown of Proposed Budget:

Represents an increase of 1.9% over last year. Noted FY24 Health insurance increase is 14.4% or an increase of ~\$190,000.

Slide 6: Steps Toward Reducing Expenses:

FY24: Improvements include Affinity Lighting, School Temps/Thermostats, Specialized Purchasing Consultants to assess the District's printer and copier needs, reviewing replacing PowerSchool to Alma via the state contract, Improved maintenance procedures, Cooperative purchasing, Line by line analysis of budget, P-Cards (school credit cards designed specifically for schools – paid off each month with 1% cash back with all purchases).

Long Term: Creation of additional Special Education programming (establish District level programs to keep students at the school), Examination of alternative energy use opportunities (solar panels, etc. to help reduce electric), Improve culture and climate (to reduce teacher turnover), District resource review (examine how District aligns staff and resources).

Questions and Discussion:

1. Transfer for Grant Expenditures: Ms. Turgeon – the loss of transfer to grant expenditures – where is that going? Mr. Houghton – we are researching, not sure why it was placed there in the first place. This should not have been in the budget to begin with as it is a wash.

2. Improvement of Instruction: Ms. Turgeon – where is the increase in this area applied? Mr. Houghton – this is contractual – the budget reflects \$400 that teachers may use toward workshop attendance. As well as college course credits that are also written into contracts. This has been chronically under-budgeted over the years.

3. SAU Expense: Mr. Beaulieu asked why this area reflects an 17.8% increase. Mr. Houghton – this is due to his position salary not being budgeted with enough money. Also reflects his membership dues and fees, along with an increase in contracted services which was massively under-budgeted.

4. Office of Principal: Ms. Turgeon asked for clarification for increases in this line. Mr. Houghton – mainly due to Cheryl Brissard's move from Assistance Principal role to that of District Curriculum Coordinator. MES has been designated a comprehensive school in need of improvement. Ms. Brissard's position is critical to improving academic outcomes. This includes salary and benefits, along with secretarial salaries which was part of the employee retention plan.

5. Operation & Maintenance: Reflects a 22% increase which according to Mr. Houghton is primarily due to oil and electric costs.

6. Food Service: Now at post pandemic, the costs are back to normal. But food costs in general have increased substantially.

Ms. Turgeon asked how much does it cost for voc-tech and is there any difference between the current three vocational schools instead of just one? Mr. Houghton – there is no difference cost wise between the three – some voc-techs offer different services. Ms. Turgeon questioned if other schools also go to different voc-techs? Mr. Houghton – yes they do. Ms. Turgeon explained her concern is when she sees empty school buses traveling to different schools especially with the higher fuel costs. Is there a way to use a smaller bus or van which may be more economical? Mr. Houghton explained the bus or van may not be necessarily going to a voc-tech, it may be used for special education as well. Ms. Leavitt said the bus or van may also be doing both pick-ups and drop-offs at the same time. The transportation costs are now reported separately by school to give a more accurate representation of the associated costs.

Mr. Carrier asked about the 22% decrease in IT. Mr. Houghton – we looked at all the contracts and found that some items like math specific software, were applied into this area but should instead be put into curriculum-specific categories. Ms. Turgeon would like to see all contracts broken out in the future.

Ms. Wells asked if the decrease in the substitute lines indicated they were not needed as much currently? Mr. Houghton – this reflects that benefits which were previously applied should not be applied and have been removed.

Mr. Houghton explained they have been looking for inefficiencies in the budget. For example, they were paying for wireless hot spots which were not being used. Mr. Campbell said their goal is to fix all the inefficiencies.

Ms. Turgeon asked about last year's grants and if the school was receiving monies from grants? Mr. Houghton said unfortunately they did have to give money back, although they were hoping they would not lose any ~~monies~~ monies this year. They continue to correct and improve procedures to ensure all monies received are expended. Mr. Campbell said they continue to move forward under Adam's guidance.

Ms. Mills asked if the Budget Committee members could obtain a list of all items that had previously been inaccurately placed? Both Mr. Houghton and Mr. Campbell said they could provide that information. Ms. Turgeon said that would be very helpful.

Ms. Turgeon – the Budget Committee will not vote on the school board's budget at this meeting. This has been an excellent presentation and there is a huge difference between this year and last year's presentation. She thanked the School Board and School Representatives for all their hard work.

Ms. Hurd, School Board Chair, said they have their Warrant Articles. Mr. Houghton said they add up to \$151,000. Mr. Williams thanked the School Board for their quick turnaround and indicated they have come a long way since the last year.

4.) Other business that may come before the board: There was none.

5.) Public Comments or Questions on Budget Committee Meeting Topics: There was none.

6.) Next Meetings: December 13 and December 27, 2022

7.) Adjournment:

- a. Ms. Turgeon stated she would entertain a motion to conclude the meeting. Ms. Gautreau motioned to adjourn at 7:16PM; Seconded by Mr. Beaulieu. All were in favor.
- b. Ms. Hurd, School Board Chair, stated she would entertain a motion to conclude the meeting. Mr. Corriveau motioned to adjourn at 7:16PM; Seconded by Ms. Slattery. All were in favor.
- c. Meeting adjourned at 7:16PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Winslow-Weiss, Recording Secretary – Budget Committee