

Sunapee School Board Budget Hearing

SMHS Media Center

January 15, 2014

Call to Order:

Shaun Carroll called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Shaun Carroll, Chair

Kim Denney, Vice Chair

Mike Ripley

Paul Skarin

Brian Garland - Absent

Others Present:

Russell Holden, Superintendent

Kelly Wessells, Business Administrator

Jodi Bergen, SCES Principal

Sean Moynihan, SMHS Principal

Terra Geer, Director of Pupil Services

Ray Palin, SMHS Media Coordinator

Wayne Palmer, Facilities Coordinator

John Augustine, BAC

Pledge/Moment of Silence:

Mike Ripley led the Pledge of Allegiance and Shaun Carroll led the moment of silence.

Budget Overview:

Shaun Carroll explained the process of the hearing to the public.

Russell Holden explained he would go over the following:

- Board goals
- Increases/Decreases

- Enrollment
- Cost Per Pupil
- Warrant Articles

Board Goals:

Russell reviewed the six Board goals including the first goal “to maintain the fiscally responsible, sound financial management of the district to support high quality, cost-effective programs, services and facilities”. He also read the mission statement of the School District.

Increases/Decreases:

Russell presented the big ticket items for both increases and decreases.

The main increases are special education out of district tuition, teacher’s salary and benefits and health insurance costs for a total of \$477,000.

The main decreases are due to a removal of purchasing a new school bus, reduction of staff at SMHS, reduction of staff at the SAU and purchasing of a van for out of district students so as to lower OOD transportation costs.

These are not the only increases or decreases, but they are the largest contributors.

Enrollment:

Enrollment is down at SCES by 13 students, while SMHS is up by 11 students. This is an overall decrease from last year of 2 students. The trend for the District is downward. The Board is looking at accepting tuition students while still following the tuition policy; they are currently in conversations with the Goshen/Lempster School District. Russell will also be presenting during the regular School Board meeting portion starting an international student program.

Cost Per Pupil:

Russell explained the formula the NH Dept. of Education uses to get the cost per pupil for each district. He explained that you add the costs of regular education, other athletics, related services, library services, technology, SAU, School Board, principal and maintenance costs then you subtract food services, transportation, supplies, vocational education and special education costs.

He then showed schools of the same educational quality of Sunapee as a comparison. Overall, Sunapee’s per pupil cost is down \$135.00 from last year.

Warrant Articles:

Russell read through each of the eight articles. The third article relates to the operating budget proposed at \$11,130,784.00 which is an increase of \$318,094 or 2.9% over the 13-14 budget. The proposed default budget is \$11,115,374.00 which is a \$15,410.00 difference from the proposed operating budget.

Parent, Katie Ortiz, asked if it is true that Synthia Liska, Special Education Coordinator, is being cut from the budget. Russell explained that they are cutting a .4 position at the SAU, but cannot speak on personnel matters with the public.

Other parents and public had questions as to how this would affect special education, why the position is being cut, if there was a decrease in special education enrollment and why parents were not involved in the decision making? Parents are upset that Synthia will be leaving as they felt she listens and understands.

Russell explained that services will not be changed; just the positions and what is needed for the District at this time have changed. He stated that this is a transition time for the District. Parents are never involved with the cutting or adding of positions as it is determined by administration. He cannot talk about specifics, but if parents have questions or concerns they should contact their principal, special education director or himself.

Sean Moynihan commented that a .5 administrative position is also being eliminated at SMHS.

More questions arose from the public and Paul Skarin commented that there will be a regular Board meeting right after the hearing which would be a better forum for people to discuss at that time.

Charlotte Brown asked if the teachers are getting a raise across the board. Russell explained that per the contract they receive a 3% increase, but that all support staff is performance based due to the fact that the teachers have a union and support staff does not. Shaun Carroll also noted that teachers will now have to contribute 20% of the health insurance costs.

John Augustine stated that all of the BAC questions were answered at the previous sessions and that 75% of the budget is salary and benefits. He would like to discuss negotiations with the Board in a year or two when they come back around.

Article four is to put \$25,000 in the Special Education Trust fund. Russell stated that there is currently \$287,366 in the fund of which \$150,000 will have to be taken out to cover costs this year. This will bring the fund to \$137,366 which by putting another \$25,000 in will bring it back to \$162,366.

Article five is to put \$25,000 in the SCES Maintenance Capital Reserve fund. SMHS also has a fund, but no money is needed at this time. SCES is older and needs more work completed. This covers issues like a boiler failing.

Article six to fix the middle school roof for \$98,195.00; the north end of the SMHS was done two years ago. This is the second section that needs to be fixed and a third section will need to be done as well.

Article one, two, seven and eight are to choose moderator, treasurer, and clerk, hear reports, appoint deputy treasurer and conduct other business.

Monday, February 3rd is the Deliberative Session in the SMHS Gymnasium and Tuesday, March 11th is the vote from 8AM-7PM at the Sherburne Gymnasium.

Gidget Ducharme asked about the Board's "wish list" of projects they would like to see done in the District and why they weren't included in the budget or warrant articles. Russell explained that they were trying to keep the tax impact low; the proposed articles and budget increase taxes by .69 cents per \$1,000. The Board would still like to look at paving, the connector road, renovating the elementary school, updating the athletic fields and lockers rooms, but felt that this was not the year to do those things; they tried to be conservative.

Shaun Carroll adjourned the meeting at 6:48PM.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Kate O'Connor
School Board Secretary