

# CONWAY MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Professional Development Center

Kennett Middle School, Conway, NH

Jim LeFebvre called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The following Budget Committee members were present: Chair Jim LeFebvre, Vice-Chair Peter Donohoe, Randy Davison, Bill Marvel, Bob Drinkhall, John Edgerton, John Colbath, Caitlin Hickey, Frank Jost, Dave Jensen, Erik Corbett, Ellin Leonard, and Stacy Sand.

Absent: Terry McCarthy

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mr. Corbett.

**Mr. Marvel moved, seconded by Mr. Edgerton to cancel the January 24, 2022, meeting and combine the agenda items into the January 19, 2022, meeting. Motion Carries. (13-0-0)**

## Discussion:

It was determined there was proper notice of this meeting and the January 24, 2022, meeting is not able to go forward due to not having a facility to hold the meeting.

3. Approval of Outstanding Minutes (1/12/2022)

**Ms. Sand moved, seconded by Mr. Edgerton to approve the meeting minutes as amended from January 12, 2022. Motion Carries (12-0-1)[Mr. Drinkhall]**

**Mr. Marvel** asked that the minutes acknowledge he was present, which was objected to.

4. School General Update (as needed)

**Mr. Richard** stated the district is navigating, shifting things around, and doing everything we can to keep students in school.

**Mr. Edgerton** presented additional data pertaining to moving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students into the middle school noting the consolidation should occur by September 1, 2022. **Ms. Sand** stated there are increased expenditures with some being out of everyone's control and would like to investigate alternative ways to save money. Further noting, it is unfair to put a deadline on the school during unprecedented times of dealing with the pandemic and making sure the students are safe, healthy, and educated. **Mr. Marvel** confirmed KMS has space available for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. **Mr. Davison** followed up with the committee letting regarding their concern of when the School Board will discuss the potential closing of a school, noting School Board Chair Lentini advised the board this topic will be a priority upon completion of budget season. **Mr. Donohoe** stated he conducted an analysis using similar school districts and found that Conway is plant/property and equipment heavy and salary light.

**Mr. Richard** provided the proposed default budget, which will be voted on by the Conway School Board on Monday, January 24, 2022.

5. Detailed Overview of Units 6-10

- ▶ The rotating fund of \$60,000 goes to one elementary school each year for minor renovations. When you see a reduction in CES (unit 5) budget, part of it is the shifting of the rotating fund. There will be an increase in the PTS (unit 7) budget as they will be the recipients of the rotating fund.

- 50 ▶ The Elementary school principals do a great job of coordinating to ensure consistency in the  
51 educational experience.

52

### 53 Unit 5 – CES

- 54 ▶ Reduced one full-time teacher for the second year in a row (line 1403 reduced from \$116,348 to  
55 \$62,000). When a teaching position is reduced it is typically the lowest paid person due to  
56 contractual protocols.
- 57 ▶ Vacant teaching positions are budgeted for a master’s degree with 4-8 years of experience and a 2-  
58 person health insurance plan.
- 59 ▶ School Nurses who have been critical over the past two years are significantly underpaid.
- 60 ▶ Custodians are part of the AFSCME which is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of their contract and all increases are in  
61 the budget.
- 62 ▶ Line 1657 reflects the transfer of the \$60,000 rotating maintenance fund.

#### 63 Questions / Comments:

- 64 — **Chair LeFebvre** clarified the health insurance can’t go any higher than the 12.73% increase. **Mr.**  
65 **Richard** advised it will likely decrease; however, it could increase based on the School Board not  
66 locking in as they want to shop around
- 67 — **Mr. Marvel** inquired of the roles the Family Support Liaison and the Student Advocate have within  
68 the schools. **Mr. Richard** stated the Student Advocate is more specialized and focuses on at risk  
69 behaviors. The Family Support Liaison supports the general population with social, emotional, and  
70 mental health needs. This is a shared responsibility with outside resources to help students and  
71 families. **Mr. Davison** stated the Family Liaison is critical in supporting the transient population.  
72 **Mr. Marvel** commented that the Town has an individual who performs similar duties to the Family  
73 Liaison at a lower salary. **Mr. Marvel** asked for clarification on the discussion around the Family  
74 Liaison position 4 years ago when CES had one since 2001. **Mr. Richard** stated the discussion  
75 pertained to having a Family Liaison on each school.
- 76 — **Chair LeFebvre** inquired of the number of transient students that transfer within and outside of the  
77 Conway School District. **Mr. Richard** stated he can get those numbers as he does not have them  
78 available.
- 79 — **Chair LeFebvre** inquired if being short 5 custodians is impacting the cleanliness of the buildings.  
80 **Mr. Richard** stated they are holding their own, but it is a struggle. Additionally, the Conway School  
81 Board approved to increase the substitute custodian pay to \$20/hour.

82

### 83 Unit 6 – JFS

- 84 ▶ No changes to personnel.
- 85 ▶ Utilize flexible grouping to flatten out class sizes.

#### 86 Questions / Comments:

- 87 — **Mr. Donohoe** inquired of the increase in salaries for substitutes. **Mr. Richard** stated the pay  
88 increased from \$85/ day to \$125/day. Additionally, federal dollars were used to offset the cost for  
89 substitutes as it was related to COVID.
- 90 — **Chair LeFebvre** inquired if the multi-age classrooms influenced students’ development. **Ms.**  
91 **Nutting** stated JFS has been utilizing multi-age classrooms for 4 years and overall, it has been a  
92 positive experience.

93

### 94 Unit 7 – PTS

- 95 ▶ No changes to personnel.
- 96 ▶ Line 1647 reflects the \$60,000 rotating maintenance fund.

#### 97 Questions / Comments:

- 98 — **Mr. Colbath** inquired of the retention and turn over of school nurses. **Mr. Richard** stated the school  
99 nurses have become health administrators working 7 days a week. There has been one nurse who  
100 resigned due to unwarranted abuse and another retiring. **Mr. Colbath** asked if there was discussion

101 of increasing the salary. **Mr. Richard** stated it is being done incrementally and the proposed budget  
102 includes at merit and \$2,000 increase in salaries. **Chair LeFebvre** asked what is being done to  
103 address and restrict the abuse. **Mr. Richard** stated no trespass orders have been issued; however,  
104 there still needs to be communication with parents, they still need to pick up their student.  
105 Unfortunately, there is only so much yelling, screaming, and cursing that can be tolerated before it  
106 wears people down.

107 — **Mr. Edgerton** inquired of the increase on page 58 from \$274,000 to \$414,000. **Mr. Richard**  
108 clarified the \$274,000 is the total expended amount and the budgeted amount is \$329,832.

#### 109 **Unit 8 – Technology**

- 111 ▶ Budget is down.
- 112 ▶ Personnel is lean (Director, Technicians, & Support Staff), who are non-union and get up to a 3%  
113 salary increase.
- 114 ▶ Line 1711 shows an increase for licensing upgrades.
- 115 ▶ ESSER funds were used to bring the district current with technology needs.
- 116 ▶ Mr. Anderson has developed a technology replacement schedule for each school

#### 117 Questions/ Comments:

118 — **Chair LeFebvre** asked if ESSER funds were used to replace chrome books and the license is only  
119 good for 4-5 years, meaning they will all need to be replaced at the same time without the use of  
120 ESSER funds. **Mr. Richard** stated ESSER funds were at inception to accommodate remote  
121 learning. Additionally, with the replacement schedule the chrome books will be replaced  
122 incrementally each year.

123 — **Mr. Marvel** stated the salary and benefits equal 2/3 of the budget and the Town has one person who  
124 can keep the cost down based on her expertise. **Mr. Richard** stated if the school was to outsource  
125 technology it would cost 5x as much.

126 — **Mr. Marvel** discussed the teacher student ratio. **Mr. Richard** stated staff and student ratios is the  
127 hardest part and always concerning; however, the building principals are staying on top of it while  
128 addressing the tremendous amount of student needs.

#### 129 **Unit – 9 CTC**

- 131 ▶ Instructors are part of the CEA.
- 132 ▶ Some of the supply lines are bigger than usual due to inflation in consumables.
- 133 ▶ Software costs are often covered by the Perkins Grant.
- 134 ▶ Part-time Career Tech Guidance is for the ELO's that allow credits for alternative learning.

#### 135 Questions / Comments:

136 **Mr. Marvel** stated he did not see a teacher for the aviation program. **Ms. Schrader** explained the  
137 program and stated Aviation is a part-time program and the CAD instructor became certified by the  
138 Aircraft Owner and Pilot Association to teach Aviation using their curriculum. Additionally, the program  
139 is supported by the Eastern Slope Aviation Academy. **Mr. Marvel** inquired if there is any intention to  
140 expand the program. **Ms. Schrader** stated like all the CTC programs it depends on enrollment and at this  
141 time the enrollment does not justify expansion of the Aviation program.

142 **Mr. Corbett** asked how many students are in each program. **Ms. Schrader** stated most of the programs  
143 can accommodate up to 18 students and they are typically fully enrolled.

144 **Ms. Sand** inquired how often the programs are evaluated to determine what to offer. **Ms. Schrader**  
145 stated there is a regional advisory committee that meets six times year, and they are constantly looking at  
146 interest to stay current with industry and student interest.

147 **Ms. Hickey** inquired if anyone could take the courses. **Ms. Schrader** explained the protocols for taking  
148 courses and what is achieved at the complete of the programs.

149 **Mr. Davison** stated in his opinion the students in the valley are fortunate to have the vocational center.

150  
151

- 152 Unit 10 – District Wide
- 153 ▶ Primarily consist of any programs and personnel that cover all buildings in Conway.
  - 154 ▶ Health insurance is a large part of the budget.
  - 155 ▶ Bond payments and interest.
  - 156 ▶ Food services is budgeted at \$825,500 and offset by revenue and typically cost the district \$150,000
  - 157 ▶ Anticipated grants
  - 158 ▶ Last years warrant articles, get removed out of budget

159 Questions / Comments:

- 160 — **Mr. Donohoe** asked why the “moth ball space” budget increased by 26%. **Mr. Hill** stated it is due to
- 161 the fuel cost.
- 162 — **Chair LeFebvre** asked how large the “mot ball space” is. **Mr. Hill** stated it is 48,000 square feet.
- 163 **Ms. Sand** inquired of the increase to Superintendent Services. **Mr. Richard** explained it is
- 164 determined by equalized valuation which is up in Conway due to development.
- 165 — **Ms. Hickey** asked if the legal representation budget is conservative as it was only half expended last
- 166 year. **Mr. Richard** stated they are being careful in case there are investigations that need to occur as
- 167 well as the MWC Cooperative will require legal consultation for Conway.
- 168 — **Chair LeFebvre** stated the district is only required to transport K-8 students.
- 169 — Mr. Marvel inquired why the retirement insurance coverage is going up as he thought negotiations
- 170 ceased the retirement coverage. Mr. Richard explained what was negotiated is that employees who
- 171 were hired before a certain year will still be eligible for health insurance coverage after retirement.
- 172 — Ms. Sand inquired why the North Conway and Conway precincts don’t have to present to the Budget
- 173 Committee as they support other towns, yet the School District supports other towns and are required
- 174 to present to the Budget Committee. Chair LeFebvre stated the are governed by different RSAs.

175

176 **Overall Questions / Comments:**

- 177 — **Chair LeFebvre** commented he hopes the Conway School Board and Facility Committee will look at
- 178 the Budget Committee’s recommendation to get a better feel for long-term cost factors. **Mr. Davison**
- 179 stated the Budget Committee was provided with a capital improvement plan and the primary focus in
- 180 the proposed budget is the KMS roof.
- 181 — **Ms. Sand** inquired if the district investigates bulk purchasing, such as the proposed upgrading of
- 182 security cameras. **Mr. Richard** stated they do consider that and any expense over a certain amount
- 183 by policy must go out to bid.
- 184 — **Mr. Colbath** stated the Annual Spring Report is a well-produced document. **Mr. Richard** stated
- 185 Siiri Chase and Kadie Wilson put a lot of time into preparing the document.

186

187 6. Overview of School Warrant Articles

- 188 ▶ **Article 2-4** are obligated by tuition agreement.
- 189 ◆ KHS Balance; \$668,071
- 190 ◆ KMS Balance; \$242,265
- 191 ◆ Elementary Balance; \$124,498

192

193 Questions/ Comments:

- 194 **Mr. Marvel** asked what would happen if the articles failed, are the sending towns still required to pay.
- 195 **Mr. Richard** stated Conway would be in violation of the contract and the sending towns are still required
- 196 to pay.
- 197 **Mr. Edgerton** asked if there is a bond do the sending towns have to pay a percentage. **Mr. Richard**
- 198 stated there is a notification process to which the sending towns can respond to.

199

- 200 ▶ **Article 5** – CESP Contract

- 201       ♦ As previously stated, this contract if passed will cost negative money based on a significant
- 202       change in the health insurance. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year the benefit cards and longevity will be removed.
- 203       There is a salary increase of \$1.50/ hour for the first year and up to 3% in years 2&3.
- 204
- 205   ▶ **Article 6 – Operating Budget**
- 206       ♦ Includes default budget and anticipated offset from grants.
- 207
- 208   ▶ **Article 7 – Project SUCCEED**
- 209       ♦ \$88,000 for the before and after school enrichment support program in addition to the grants.
- 210
- 211   ▶ **Article 8 – Heavy Equipment and/or School Bus fund.**
- 212       ♦ Adopted 2 years ago.
- 213       ♦ Includes anticipated cost for purchases over the next 5-years.
- 214       ♦ Currently balance is \$196,000.
- 215
- 216   7. Old business: None
- 217
- 218   8. New Business:
- 219   ▶ January 26, 2022, joint session with Select Board in Marshall Gymnasium.
- 220   ▶ Non-profit packets are available and can be picked up at the Town Hall.
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- 222   9. Public and Media Questions/Comments:
- 223
- 224   10. Adjournment
- 225   **Mr. Edgerton moved, seconded by Mr. Marvel to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 PM. Motion Carries**
- 226   **(13-0-0)**
- 227
- 228   Respectfully Submitted,
- 229   *Lisa E. Towle,*
- 230   Recording Secretary