

**Town of New Hartford
Board of Finance Workshop - Special Meeting
March 16, 2019 @ 8:30 am**

PRESENT: Chairman Regina Wexler, Members: Kerry Guilfoyle, Dan Charest, Steve Tuxbury, Reggie Smith, Jr., Ben Witte (in at 8:33), Alternates: Lourena (Lou) Helt, Paul Leclair, Bart Baxter.

Others Present: Supt. of Schools Brian Murphy, BOE Chair Tim Goff, Reg. 7 Supt. of Schools Dr. Judy Palmer, Reg. 7 BOE Chair Molly Sexton Read, Reg. 7 Director of Finance Jim Gaskins, Reg. 7 BOE member Rob Jerram, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Bookkeeper Annie Witte (in at 10:30), Members of the Public: Dave Krimmel, David Rosengren, John Burdick, Connie Kremski, Shelley Lloyd (in at 10:30), David McHenry (in at 10:30), Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton (Republican American) and Penny Miller Recording Secretary.

Chairman Wexler called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. Paul Leclair was seated for Ben Witte.

Board of Education Chair Tim Goff started the local board's 2019-2020 budget presentation. The budget was approved by the local board on February 19th. Over the last 5 years the average increase was 0.074%. Over the last 10 years the average increase was 1.013%. He said they have been responsible with their capital requests. The capital request for 2019-2020 is \$104,500. The total budget increase is \$392,271 (4.93%). Breaking that down it shows Special Education Costs - \$218,000 (2.74%) Salary increases (contractual increases) - \$130,833 (1.69%) and Remaining Increases - \$43,438 (.50%).

Ben Witte in at 8:33 am.

Superintendent Murphy said in the \$218,000 for Special Education there is \$131,500 tuition for two outplaced students. A 12-month Special Education nurse (\$42,000) will be hired for another child in the Pre-K program. In Special Education 1.5 tutors were added this year at \$37,500 and health supplies at \$5,000. Because of the nurse hired the child with special needs, there will be 2 nurses at New Hartford Elementary. Special Education classes during the summer months will now be at New Hartford Elementary. To mitigate costs an in-house program was developed called R.I.S.E. (Resilience/Inclusion/Student Centered/Excellence). This program works with children who have specialized needs keeping them in the district instead of out-placing them.

Regular education is down because a teacher was hired at a lower rate. Next year a 6th grade teaching section (\$63,000) will be eliminated. Capstone and Tinker software are the drivers for the increase in the Library Media Centers. Technology is up because of curriculum on-line resources.

Increases in the budget include a full-time Math Interventionist at Ann Antolini School for \$25,000; Health Education will now be offered to grades K and 1 at a cost of \$5,000. The 1.5 Special Education tutors are not in this year's budget but are included in next year's budget and then the full-time Special Education Nurse for \$42,000.

Contractual increases are Administrators at 1.3%, Teachers at 2.9%, Tutors at 2.0%, Custodians 2.0% and Secretaries 2.0%. There is a one-time equity adjustment for the Director of Student Services and the Primary School Principal for 2019-2020 included in the Administrators line item. The Teachers contract negotiations will begin this fall.

There are 448 students in the current year. Next year the enrollment is down about 24 students to 424. The per pupil expenditure is \$17,290 which is around the middle of the state. We are lower than our neighboring towns.

For this coming year there are 57 students who have submitted their paperwork for attending Kindergarten. When asked by Mr. Charest about the incoming kindergarten class, Mr. Goff said according to the Malone & McBroom projection that was done about 5 years ago the current class was supposed to be 42 students and currently we are at 57. The projection for this coming year was 39 and we are projecting 55. Of those, twenty-eight have completed all of their paperwork. Mr. Goff feels that the 424 total students for this coming year will be the lowest number that will be seen for the near future and that the student population will hopefully start to increase.

Mr. Tuxbury asked about the pre-school program. Mr. Murphy said that there will be 12 four-year olds and projected to have 5 three-year olds. The Pre-K program is designed for 4 year olds and they go all day. The 3 year olds only go part-time. There is a waiting list of four 4 year olds and a few three year olds.

Supt. Murphy continued going through the budget and the increases / decreases. The Instructional Assistant line item includes the Math Interventionist. There are 19 CREC students this year and 17 is being projected. There are 62 students identified for Special Education. This number has been similar over the last few years. There are 2 out-placed students in that number. Legal fees were increased by \$2,000 as teacher negotiations will start this fall.

Ms. Guilfoyle asked about the reduction in the Emergency Repairs line. Supt. Murphy said they are comfortable with the reduction in the number and trying to stay on top of emergency repairs with the capital budget. Mr. Charest asked about the retrofits. Supt. Murphy said they have a couple more years to pay them off but they are seeing a 25-30% savings.

Chair Wexler asked about the island removal In Plant Operations as it is also in the Capital Budget. Supt. Murphy said there are 2 different islands that will be removed at Bakerville. The Site Plan will need to go through Zoning. With dismissal of the children in the afternoon they need more parking spots. There has been an increase in pick-ups over the last few years. Mr. Tuxbury asked if they are not using the buses can the number of buses be reduced. Mr. Goff said they are actively looking into that. It is possible the some bus routes can be redone. The children can only be on the bus for 60 minutes. The bus contract runs for another two years but the number of buses required can be reduced at any time.

Under Service Contracts – Supt. Murphy said before contracts are renewed they look at several contractors for the best pricing.

When Mr. Smith asked about Special Education overages Supt. Murphy said at this time they are okay and he doesn't think they will need to ask for additional money.

Presentation ended at 9:30 am.

Region 7 Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judy Palmer started their budget presentation at 9:38 am. She said the increase to the New Hartford is \$375,260 (1.77%) over the current year. This increase includes two additional teachers – Middle School Special Education (hired last month) teacher and a STEM (Science, Technology, Education and Mathematics) teacher. The STEM teacher is necessary for the high school reform mandate which has been on the books since 2010. The mandate requires that the credits needed to graduate are increased from 23 to 25 in specific areas. This includes 9 credits in Humanities, 9

credits in STEM, 1 in Capstone, 1 in World Language, 1 PE or Wellness and 4 electives. The mandate kicks in with next year's 9th grade class. Chair Wexler asked how this will affect the number of electives and the amount of teachers who teach electives. Supt. Palmer said in 2 years they will need to go to an 8 period day. If a student isn't able to get all the credits during the school year they can attend the credit enhancement program which runs during the summer.

Supt. Palmer said previously in Employee Benefits object 200 they have held money for emergency repairs that might happen throughout the year. After hearing from various towns, that money has been moved to Buildings, Grounds and Technologies.

Mr. Smith went out at 9:47 am and back in at 9:48 am.

She said in the Professional/Technical Services there is an increase of 13.6%. This is due to the reallocation of funds from Benefits into this account. Special Education student needs increased by \$130,000 due to one out-placed student with increased medical needs. Additionally, 2 teachers have been specially trained in Wilson Reading.

Purchased Property Services (400) is up 26%. There is a new snow removal contract/contractor and an increase in licensing software fees. Previously the Wi-Fi was covered under a grant and now it isn't.

Other Purchased Services (500) is down 5.38%. The Connecticut Education Network was previously paid for by the state and now the increase to the school is around 14%. They had one Special Ed Outplacement student that aged out at 21. There is another out-placement student coming up and that student reflects a savings. The money associated with the wheel chair van with the aged out student is now longer needed and that cost will now be saved.

Supplies (600) is up 2.4%. This account is for items that are consumed, worn out or have deteriorated through use. It includes an increase in AP Computer Science and Pre-Calculus Textbooks.

Property (700) has increased 71%. This money won't be spent until the end of the year when they are sure they don't need it for emergencies. The reallocation went into Computer Replacements, line 730 and 733. In the plan for this year are 2 high school business labs, 1 high school language lab, additional Chrome books, projectors and smart boards. There is one special ed. outlay of \$4200 for 1 student who requires technology with braille. Mr. Smith asked how many IT people are on staff and if a security audit had been done. Supt. Palmer said there is one IT person and a security audit hadn't been done. She will look into having one done.

Other Objects (800) is down 13.77%. This account includes \$15,239 reduction in bonding interest costs.

Other Use of Funds (900) is down 42%. This is due to a bond retirement of \$245,000. There will be no new borrowing until 2022 when the last large bond is paid off. At that point they will be looking at a new roof or replacing part of one. Currently there are leaks in the small gym and in some hallways by the custodian offices and cafeteria of the Middle School. Mr. Charest asked if the roofs were still covered under the roof warranty as roofs typically have a 20-year warranty. Mr. Gaskins commented that they are 3 different types of roof product. It wasn't felt that the solar panels are the cause of the leaks as they aren't attached.

Supt. Palmer said on the revenue side the Regular Education Tuition is up around \$81,000. This line represents the students coming from Hartland. The Ag-Ed tuition is down because they over-estimated the number of students they would have this year. There was a waiting list at Wamogo and once it

opened up a lot of the students from Torrington went to Wamogo. Going forward she felt they would be okay. The Ag-Ed grant from the State of Connecticut is up about \$93,000. Overall the revenues are up \$105,000.

The assessment offset is down about \$26,000. The assessment to the towns is \$296,249 or 1.54%. New Hartford is down 24 students for 2019-2020 which means the assessment to the town is down \$217,299 or -2.19%.

Chair Wexler said the incoming class from New Hartford is large and she wanted to know if Region 7 had any idea as to where the town will stand. Dr. Palmer said she didn't have the numbers for New Hartford broken out but would get an estimate to them for the 2020-2021 budgets.

Mr. Charest asked for the total student enrollment. Supt. Palmer said in October 2018 the number is 971 for the 4 member towns and the total for all enrollments is 1063.

Their presentation ended at 10:26 am.

The Town of New Hartford budget presentation began at 10:33.

First Selectman Jerram presented the first draft of the town's budget. He stated that some of the numbers are soft – Paramedics, Bakerville Library, Probate Court and Farmington Valley Health.

The Education page is showing large variations. The local board has some challenges with Special Education. Region 7 has a reduction of about 5% in students. Bonding for the Town Hall is expiring. With the equalized mill rate the anticipated increase is 1.67%.

Through contract negotiations there is a 3% increase in Salaries. The total cost of payroll is up 1-3/4%. The total package request is \$24,856,649.65, a \$194,559.71 increase. The salary of the Bookkeeper's Assistant increased because of an increase in hours and duties. She will be taking over some of the administrative work, for instance, Berkshire Hall reservations, fire burning permits, Call Before You Dig, etc. The average salary for a full-time employee remains in the \$50,000 range. There have been several retirements and change-overs. Liability is down because of fewer claims. In Engineering – the MS4 state requirement for GIS Mapping of sub-surface water systems – there will be an increase of engineering costs.

There are salary savings in the Tax Office. There will be a one-year transition for the new Tax Collector with the former tax collector agreeing to 200 hours of support time. The Tax Collector as a union employee is obligated to work 35 hours. Mr. Jerram said with the combining of the tax office and the assessor's office a savings will be realized and there won't be any significant overtime cost.

Chair Wexler asked if the line Supplies for the Board of Finance would be better titled as Legal Notices & Expenses. Mr. Jerram said they can talk about it. Mr. Jerram asked if \$2400 would be a good number for that line item. Chair Wexler said that a new letter will be coming from King & King with some new numbers for the budget. The 10% increase is actually only 3%. Mr. Smith said the new numbers are: The fee for their services at their standard hourly rates not expected to exceed \$30,420.00. The Town will be billed \$28,545.00 and the WPCA will be billed \$1,875.00.

Mr. Jerram continued on the Education page one of the soft numbers is the Teacher Pension Assessment of \$42,270.00. It hasn't been codified through the statutes. Chair Wexler said that Region 7 had been asked what their number was and they didn't know.

Dan Charest out at 11:12 am.

Public Safety. The 3% salary increases for Constables is actually 1.07% due to a change in staffing. One of the constables transitioned into the DPW. The Resident State Trooper is up 16.2% because of wages and benefits. The Paramedic line is a soft number with Medic 6 contract negotiations going on.

Dan Charest in at 11:15 am.

Highway. Mr. Jerram said that many lines are flat. Tree cleaning is continuing. Paving funds is increasing \$60,000.00. This increase covers furthering the West Rd project to South East Rd. There is significant work to be done to get the road straight – poles moved. Mr. Tuxbury asked if the Road Sweeping was contracted. Mr. Jerram said that line should be renamed to Catch Basin Cleaning. Road sweeping is not contracted. Because of MS4 – we are required to document every catch basin. We rent the road sweeper through the Council of Governments.

Planning Development. There are not a lot of changes. There are three people in the office and one of them is new. The Zoning Officer salary includes a consulting/mentoring fee for a former employee who now works in Torrington.

Libraries. This is a soft number. Bakerville Library will be speaking to Mr. Jerram in the next week. He heard that they are having furnace issues.

Health, Sanitation, Welfare. Farmington Valley Health Dist. Is a soft number. RRDD will see an increase in tipping fees.

Parks and Recreation. The Browns Corner complex is inundated with grubs. The initiative is to get the grounds back into shape.

Debt Service. The Town Hall Debt is out of the budget for the coming year.

Commissions and Other Agencies. There is a new Senior Director with renewed energy in that department and the Senior Van. Chair Wexler asked where the bus driver's salary was. Mr. Jerram said it was in Supplies. There are 2 bus drivers and their hours are variable. Both of them are certified per state regulations.

Projected Revenues. ECS funding will probably down another \$100,000.

The total increase for the Proposed Budget is 1.67%.

MOTION: by Guilfoyle, second by Charest to adjourn at 12:00 pm

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary

Available for review in the Town Clerk's Office
Region 7 Working Budget
New Hartford Board of Education Budget
Town of New Hartford Workshop Draft Budget