

Approved by the Rye School Board at its December 21, 2007 meeting.

**RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Budget review meetings of the School Board of the Rye School District were held at the SAU #50 Administrative Office on November 19th and 20th 2007.

November 19, 2007

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Ian Grant, Michael Schwartz, Gary Dodds,
Betty Anderson and Peggy Balboni

Administrators: George A. Cushing, Superintendent
Lane Richardson, Principal of Rye Elementary School
Chris Pollet, Principal of Rye Junior High School
Mary Lyons, Director of Pupil Services
Jim Katkin, Business Administrator

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Grant called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

Mr. Katkin explained to the Board that after the budget books went out, a PHS tuition estimate came in higher than expected which will increase the budget over what is in the budget book.

Section One

Enrollment: Enrollment is dropping at the elementary school. Mr. Katkin highlighted live births which are dropping compared to previous years. This will effect staffing and per-pupil costs in the future.

Section Two

Analysis and Comparison of Operating Budget: A rule of thumb is that a budget doubles itself in 10 years. Rye Schools are slightly below that.

Cost per pupil for the 2006-2007 school year for the Rye schools is \$13,405.37. This is due to escalating costs and a drop in enrollment.

Mr. Katkin discussed school tax rates and its impact on the total town tax rate. He explained that it would be 64.65% if you counted the state education tax. If you counted only the local tax it would be 39.73%. The state education tax raised stays in the town and is a transfer to the school district to help off-set the total cost of educating Rye students.

Comparison of Tax Rates: The town has the ability to lower its tax rate by using overlay monies. When the overlay is reduced, the taxes are reduced. Schools do not have the flexibility to move money to reduce the tax rate.

Section Three

Proposed Budget Comparison Analysis: non-capital reserve fund helps reduce the overall budget.

Elementary School is up 2.26%

Middle School is up 9.51%

Mr. Katkin distributed a revised chart 3-B which reflects the increase in high school tuition.

Overall budget without warrant articles is up 2.26% for an estimated .09 on the tax rate.

For the year 2007 – 2008 we budgeted for 186 students and there are actually 187 students. This year we will be budgeting for 175 students.

Mr. Grant asked the administration to figure out a way to be responsive to declining enrollments, particularly at RJH.

If the Board was to vote yes on everything in the books including warrant articles and building administrators' requests the total percentage would be 4.67%

Section Four

District Wide Expenditure: Details of the elementary and middle school expenditures.

Section Five

Special Education: Very little increase in this account --about 1%

Section Six

Budget narrative by principals. Mr. Katkin complimented the principals for thorough budget narratives detailing their budget needs.

Section Seven

Portsmouth High tuition – discussed earlier.

Section Eight

Proposed operating budget comparison report

Warrant Articles

- Article I The operating budget
- Article II RESPA contract needs to be aligned to show it is a 5-year contract
- Article III Standard language to meet again if Article II is voted down
- Article IV Potential article if the Board decides to go in the direction of leasing technology hardware
- Article V School building and grounds maintenance expendable trust funds

Middle School Budget

10-1100-120-20 – Tutors for regular instruction. This is a new line in the budget and reflects a move toward meeting the needs of those few students who have gone significantly beyond the regular curriculum and are in need of accelerated learning opportunities beyond what is available at the school level.

Ms. Anderson asked the principals to look at reducing printing costs in light of the new electronic communications emphasis that is now in place.

Life Skills budget – Ms. Anderson asked if programs to address bullying are included in the budget. Mr. Pollet said he would look to the C.A.R.I.T. Committee and the PTA for help in establishing bullying programs.

Science – Mr. Pollet discussed the digital microscope that costs \$1,450. He pointed out that Ms. Elwood requested two microscopes and he reduced that to one.

Ms. Anderson asked about the special education line of \$200 for training of tutors. She suggested that this money could come out of the general professional development account. Mr. Katkin agreed that it could.

Admission/Competition fees – Mr. Grant asked why the increase when last year we spent less. Mr. Pollet said the increase reflects the cost of admission for field trips with the exception of Merrowvista.

The Board consensus is that if the administrators believe a field trip is important then we need to budget for those trips and not charge parents.

Artists in Residence – has been underspent and the question to Mr. Pollet is “how will he use the budgeted amount”?

Mr. Schwartz stated that it might be a good idea to move the Artist in Residence account to a district account ensuring that the whole amount will be used. Mr. Katkin said budget-wise that can be done.

Guidance Department – Dr. Cushing told the Board that JoAnn Costanzo is looking to retire at the end of this year and would like to work an 80% position next year. The Board requested that they have the opportunity to look at how the guidance department is structured.

Ms. Anderson said the reference to D.I. should be deleted from the 610-00-20 line item.

Athletic Uniforms – Mr. Pollet explained why Mr. Fortier (athletic director) ordered unisex athletic shirts. Mr. Fortier does this to provide flexibility for providing uniforms to the many sports teams at the middle school.

Nurses – Mr. Grant asked if this was a line that could be reduced by both schools if there was a nurse at one school and an LPN at the other. Discussion followed about what the nurse does at both buildings. Mrs. Lyons said the RN would need to supervise an LPN. Ms. Richardson said that, when a student needs significant nursing care, you want someone with a good head who can handle the matter. Mr. Grant suggested that an RN isn't needed to do the day-to-day things. Ms. Anderson asked what New Castle has. Mrs. Lyons responded that there is an LPN there.

Ms. Anderson asked the administrators to remember to raise line item 10-2410-110-50-20 next year.

Technology – Tim Moynahan joined the Board review of the budget to discuss the technology portion of the budget.

Software/site licenses – Mr. Moynahan explained that the increase in this account is due to bringing both schools to the same version of anti-virus software.

Both schools need Microsoft Office licenses and the software will be 2007 instead of 2003. The new version offers Publisher and standardization between both schools which is the goal Mr. Moynahan is working on.

Line item 532 – new line item to support school messenger, Tech Paths, Assessment builder and sonic wall.

Line item 340 – Contracted Service – the need is to connect the two buildings. Mr. Moynahan needs help in this area to figure out what we have to do to connect the two schools to each other. Mr. Grant suggested we connect the buildings now and not wait a year. Line item 340 will be reduced to \$1,000 (a \$4,000 reduction).

Technology training – How is this account different from the collective bargaining agreement? The answer is that this money is designated for the elementary (line 322) technology technician only who will then take care of training others.

Elementary School Technology Contracted Services – This line can be reduced if we connect the buildings this year.

Line 734 – Teacher laptops (Qty – 21) Mr. Moynahan explained that teachers needed laptops to complete their school-related work even when they are at home.

Warrant Article IV – Computer/technology equipment, hardware, and related software to be leased up to the amount of \$118,720.00 for 37 months. The first year would be \$40,108.00. It would cost \$8,000 to add another two years to the current computers. The negative is that those machines would be 5 or more years old and running slow.

As part of the warrant article Unified Arts could use some of the current equipment if we go for the lease.

Replacement of 8th grade cart (24 computers)
Replacement of 7th and 8th grade cart (24 computers)
New cart for Unified Arts
computers with docking station for library
laptops for office staff
laptops for Unified Arts teachers

This warrant article is just for the middle school.

Some of the middle school equipment (i.e. – 3 years old) could have the warranty extended and sent to the elementary school.

Mr. Schwartz asked if we could terminate the lease in the future. Mr. Katkin is researching that.

Ms. Anderson discussed an e-mail she received from budget committee member, Paul Goldman, asking that the budget committee be forewarned of any large expenditure that they are not currently aware of.

New Web Designer/Technology Technician - \$45,893.00 salary and benefits. Mr. Moynahan discussed why he needs this position. He highlighted the many hours that need to be devoted to this area of his job. A discussion ensued about the pros and cons of budgeting for such a position at this time.

Mr. Grant discussed the philosophy of creating Tim's position which was to have the technology coordinator pick up the many technology needs of the Rye district. He asked if the web designer/technology tech. could be contracted out.

Mr. Schwartz asked about Judy Prince's role. Mr. Moynahan said she was a '100% trouble shooter' at the elementary school.

Discussion ensued as to the level of technical support needed at both schools.

Ms. Anderson asked what we are doing about teaching the children the technology skills that they need. What is asked for in the budget is just for technical support and shouldn't more be for direct teaching of technology to students?

Mr. Schwartz asked what the computer needs are at the elementary school.

Mr. Grant made the following observation:

1. New role for Mr. Moynahan
2. We have plenty of areas that need fixing
3. Let's give more time (a full year) to assess where we are and what we will need before we add new positions

Line 424 – Lawn care – Ms. Anderson made the point that we are budgeting nearly \$25,000 to maintain our fields. This includes mowing, fertilizing, and aeration.

Line 435 – Heating system repairs – This line is more than boilers; it also includes heat traps.

Line 2640-735 – Telephone system – Mr. Pollet explained the need to replace the current telephone system. One benefit to an update is to connect the two schools so they can interface. Currently teachers aren't getting voicemails.

Line 2725-519 – Field trips – This line went up significantly due to a need for a handicapped bus. Also each field trip in the school is budgeted within this line for transportation.

Account 1115-641 – New 7th grade Social Studies books – Mr. Pollet cut this line because there has been no determination of what series to use. After discussion the Board added \$2,000.00 to this account to ensure there was enough money to purchase a new series when it is determined which series to buy

Co-Curricular Stipends – Middle School

(changes from last year)

Boy's soccer coach (11)	new	\$800
Boy's basketball coach (7 th)	up	\$100
Boy's basketball coach (7 th)	new	\$900
Girl's basketball coach (7 th)	up	\$100
Girl's basketball coach (7 th)	new	\$900
Track/cross country assistant (spring)	up	\$100
Track/cross country assistant (spring)	up	\$100
Track/cross country assistant (spring)	up	\$100
Math club	up	\$300

Co-Curricular Stipends – Elementary School

Basketball coordinator	new	\$350
Fifth grade basketball coach	new	\$400
Telephone communication support	new	\$1,200
Teacher mentor	cut	\$600
Science curriculum lead teacher	new	\$800
Social studies lead teacher	new	\$800
Chess program	cut	\$900
Aquarium	new	\$600

Literary journal – Ms. Anderson asked if the stipend is enough compared with other similar stipends.

Ms. Anderson pointed out that co-curricular opportunities and stipends are not the same between the junior high school and the elementary school; she asked the principals to review that and make sure they are comfortable with how things currently stand.

Rye Elementary School

Ms. Richardson distributed a staffing proposal and reviewed the staff changes + and – for the Board. The only position in flux is the 3rd kindergarten position which could fluctuate. Mr. Grant asked that we hold the 3rd kindergarten position until we have firm numbers to justify it. We will revisit this in March. We will also revisit the grade 3 position.

Ms. Anderson asked that Swim Safe be flagged for discussion when Merrowvista is discussed.

Line 1115-641 – Social Studies books – Lane explained that the increase reflects updated curriculum needs.

Line 1410-595 – Admission & fees – Mr. Grant asked Ms. Richardson to figure the full amount of the cost for admissions and to add it to her budget.

Line 1410-610 – Club Supplies – increase in this line is to establish an account for travel to World Competition and the fees for the competition. Discussion ensued regarding the costs of the entire program.

Line 2142-110 – Psychological testing – increase based on need.

Line 2213-246 - \$8,000 is for NEASC visit, the additional \$4,000 can be cut.

Line 10-2410-550 – Talents by the Sea (printing); need to decide if we should add more to this account.

Support Services

Line 10-2810-120 – Teacher-to-teacher initiative – summer curriculum work that the principal needs done.

The elementary budget was reviewed. Mr. Grant asked if, after reviewing the elementary and middle school budget, if any Board member felt anything was missing.

The following items were mentioned:

- Speaker system for gym
- Fire-retardant curtains for gym

Warrant article ideas:

- If there is excess in tuition account; it should be put into a high school tuition account
- Up to a certain amount that goes back into building fund

ADJOURN:

Mr. Dodds proposed, seconded by Mrs. Anderson, a motion to adjourn at 12:55 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

School Board Secretary