

**TOWN OF ALTON
ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
DRAFT
November 19, 2009
MEETING MINUTES**

Approved 12/8/09

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Painter, Chair
Steve Miller
Richard MacDonald
Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative
Terri Noyes, School Board Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT: Greg Fuller, Vice Chair
Marc DeCoff

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathy Holt, Superintendent
Bonnie Jean Kuras, Principal
Kathy O'Blenes, Business Administrator

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Painter called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

G. Fuller and M. DeCoff were absent.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

V. AGENDA REVIEW

T. Noyes reported that there were some schedule conflicts with the Budget Committee's schedule and R. MacDonald motioned to approve the agenda as amended and L. Carr seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (KP, SM, LC, RM, TN / absent – MD, GF)

VI. OLD BUSINESS

L. Carr motioned to accept the meeting minutes for November 5, 2009 as corrected and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with one abstaining. (KP, SM, LC, RM / abstain – TN / absent – GF, MD)

R. MacDonald motioned to approve the meeting minutes of November 10, 2009 and L. Carr seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with one abstaining. (KP, SM, LC, RM / abstain – TN / absent – GF, MD)

L. Carr motioned to approve the meeting minutes of November 12, 2009 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of three with two abstaining. (SM, LC, RM / abstain – TN, KP / absent – GF, MD)

VII. NEW BUSINESS

HEALTH SERVICES 2130

[Recorder's Note: This department was reviewed and discussed at the November 12, 2009 meeting but was re-visited.]

There was discussion about the frequency that students visit the school nurse over the year. The Committee discussed the Salary with Retirement budget line item. The school nurse is on an annual contract and works the same hours as the teachers. The teachers' contract does not affect the nurse's hours. S. Miller asked if the benefits were increased for the teachers if the benefits would also be increased for the administrators. T. Noyes responded that there is not a general philosophy about the benefits and increases but that it is negotiated from contract-to-contract. S. Miller asked if there was a professional contract negotiator to help with the contracts. T. Noyes stated that they did not and felt that they did not need one but that the high school used an attorney to do the negotiating. She noted that she did not know about the use of the attorney at the high school until the last Board meeting, earlier in the month. There was discussion about the history of using attorneys during teacher contract negotiations.

S. Miller asked about tuition reimbursement. K. Holt responded that the nurse had to renew her license every two years. The school nurse is an RN. K. Holt discussed some of the training, such as use of epipens, H1N1, etc., classes. There was \$506 spent in this budget line item in the previous year.

S. Miller asked about the Other Professional Services and what the Funds to Assist Families at ACS was used for and K. Holt responded that it was to help students that may need something, such as eyeglasses, that was hindering their learning but couldn't be afforded by the student's parents, and it was also used for pre-employment physicals.

SPEECH SERVICES 2150

The Committee reviewed the budget for Speech Services. There is a Speech Therapist, who works two days a week, and a part-time assistant. The Speech Therapist has a Master's Degree. She works at \$60/hour. There was discussion about how much a speech therapist makes per year. K. Painter felt it was incredible they were able to get a speech therapist at this rate and spoke about her experience with recruiting a qualified speech therapist.

IMPROVEMENT of INSTRUCTION 2210

S. Miller asked why there was a Technology Committee when there was a Technology Director and an assistant. B. Kuras stated it was an expectation of the State and spoke about the technology directives and plans, data analysis, and support to teachers. There are three paid members of the committee and several volunteers. S. Miller felt that the Committee was not necessary. K. Holt stated that they have received some sizable grants because of the Technology Committee. K. Painter spoke about a recent article in The Baysider about the Data Committee and K. Holt noted it was listed under this budget line item as a "TBD Committee". There is \$2,258 set aside for the Data Committee.

S. Miller stated he was pleased about the cut to the Tuition Reimbursement budget line item. He asked of the Administrative Assistants listed under that budget line item were secretaries. K. Holt explained that staff working with students, such as in the case where they have to implement an IEP, may need additional training. There is \$200/para-professional to pay for workshops or other training that may be needed. There was discussion about some of the training that may be needed, such as NECAP alternative-testing training. There are forty support-staff members, most of them are in Special Education.

S. Miller asked what the Staff Services, Professional Development opportunities, \$5,000, was used for. B. Kuras responded that it could be used for workshop days, such as when the three schools (ACS, Barnstead Elementary, and PMHS) met for a collaborative workshop, and that it will be used for a writing program. B. Kuras stated that the writing program was key and the money would be used for that. There was discussion about use of grant funds for Math. S. Miller asked what was being done to bring up Science and Math scores on the NECAP. B. Kuras responded that they have brought in specialists to meet with teachers to discuss strategies, MISSILE (Leaders in Education) program, for teacher to collaborate on Math and Science.

K. Holt asked to go back a bit and clarified that the para professionals are highly qualified and expected to keep up their qualifications.

LIBRARY & MEDIA 2220

S. Miller asked if the Librarian was included with the teachers' contract and T. Noyes responded that the Librarian was a part of the collective bargaining unit. S. Miller asked why the school nurse was not included with the contract and K. Holt responded that it was because the nurse did not teach but confirmed that the librarian did teach.

There was discussion about the way books were budgeted for and K. Holt explained that the teachers reviewed the books according to the curriculum they were teaching. She reported that \$10,000 has been budgeted for the past few years and they looked at budgeting more for books this year but were trying to keep the budget low. B. Kuras spoke about the rotation of books in the library's inventory. K. Holt noted that there was a budget freeze last year so that all of the money in this budget line item was not spent in whole. There was discussion about the monitoring of the inventory and trends in books.

S. Miller asked about Dues & Fees, Destiny Library Manager, and K. O'Blenes explained that it is the ongoing maintenance and card catalogue for the library.

SCHOOL BOARD 2310

There was review of what the Board Members, Treasurer, Clerk, Moderator, Supervisors to the Checklist, and Kindergarten Census taker receive for incomes/stipends.

There will be a new audit company next year, as the current contract is for three years and is about to expire. There was discussion about how difficult it was to find auditors to bid on the school. The last year with the company will be 2010. There was \$12,500 budget for this year and \$14,000 is budgeted for 2010-2011. The exact amount is budget for this year. K. Holt explained that the bid increased each year over the three years, when the bid was given to the school district. K. O'Blenes spoke about the process and some of the new regulations. K. Holt spoke about the bid process and noted that many auditing companies did not want to do schools anymore.

S. Miller asked what Secretarial Services the School Board needed. K. Holt stated it was for the meeting recorder and included Board meetings and some Committee meetings. S. Miller noted that it was listed as "Contracted Services" by the town. There was brief discussion about the Dues & Fees.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT 2320

There is two percent factored into the Salary Increase budget line item. All employees received a three percent increase last year. S. Miller asked if this was an entitlement and felt this was "impossible" that all employees had an "A+" on their evaluation.

There was discussion about the Superintendent's Salary budget line item, Repairs & Maintenance – SAU, and Rentals (copier, etc.), and Dues & Fees. K. O'Blenes reported that there were two new dues and fees items added, such as the National Association of Office Professionals and a second dues/fees items. S. Miller asked for clarification on what the Superintendent made per hour and T. Noyes responded that she makes \$82.40/hr. S. Miller reported on other school districts' part-time Superintendents where they were making less money and responsible for more schools. T. Noyes noted that K. Holt did not receive any benefits and asked if there were any benefits reported in the other school districts' superintendents. K. Holt reported that she has received calls from other superintendents in other districts and noted that some had benefits, life insurance, cars, and other benefit packages that were worked out with their contracts. She reported she received no money for travel and mileage, insurance, retirement, etc. K. Painter stated that the fairer question would be if the benefit packages and salaries compared across the board.

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE 2410

There was discussion about what might constitute Secretarial Overtime. B. Kuras responded that budget season, Open House, and other events where the secretary's services were needed would constitute for overtime. The Committee discussed some of the Dues and Fees accounts. There is no Salary adjustment in the Principal's Office budget, as those are in the Superintendent's budget for next year.

There was a brief break.

S. Miller asked about the Salary adjustment line. K. O'Blenes noted that there was a two percent increase factored in the budget. S. Miller asked how many companies were giving bonuses this year.

BUSINESS SERVICES 2510

S. Miller asked if K. O'Blenes was certified and she responded that she would be certified July 1, 2010. K. Holt noted that she was taking her raise over a two year basis vs. a single jump. It was noted that there was a \$1,500 decrease in the budget line item for Other Consultants. K. O'Blenes stated that it was for the 403-B plan and there was another vendor doing that service but they have moved that in-house now and she is managing the accounts.

There was discussion about Computer replacement, which will be for the Business Manager. K. O'Blenes reported that she has one of the oldest computers in the building and this number is based on an estimate given to her from the Technology Director.

S. Miller asked when the teachers' contract negotiations would be completed. T. Noyes responded that it would be completed by November 24. S. Miller felt that it was necessary for a labor contract to be negotiated by a professional and felt that money could be saved on the teachers' contract. He stated that even if the district went \$60,000 over budget that it would save them money. T. Noyes stated that the Board and teachers have been negotiating since August of this year and that she would take this under advisement.

TRANSPORTATION 2700

This budget function was tabled, as the district is currently taking Transportation bids.

FOOD SERVICES 3100

S. Miller asked if there was any pressure to upgrade the quality of the food. K. Holt stated there was no pressure to upgrade. She spoke about some of the challenges that they have with serving healthy meals that the students will eat. There was discussion about Linen Services, which will be done now in-house, and the cut to the budget line item for Food.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

T. Noyes reported that they are requesting \$150,000 for the Long Range Building Maintenance Fund, which was created in March 2008 for the purpose of general maintenance and repairs as well as setting aside funds for future building/additions. She reported that they considered requesting more money but felt that due to the current economical situation that this was not an appropriate request this year.

S. Miller asked about the installation of the Fire Suppression System and K. Holt responded that when the roof was repaired that the system was plumbed but that the remainder of the system would be installed when the building was renovated/rebuilt in the upcoming years. She stated it made little sense to install the system when they might rip it all out. They are not up to code but they are grandfathered because it is an old building and they are able to evacuate (all students out of the school) the building in about a minute and thirty seconds.

There was review and discussion of the Capital Reserves and Special Education Trusts spreadsheet in the budget books. K. Holt reported that some of the accounts that are no longer in use (have a zero balance) will be eliminated from the spreadsheet in the future.

DEBT SERVICE

This is the Bond for PMHS.

TRANSFER FROM OTHER SPECIAL REVENUES

There was brief discussion about the use of this budget function to show the transfer of funds.

There was discussion about future meeting dates. T. Noyes noted that there is a Christmas Concert for on December 3. There was an additional meeting added for December 10. A budget review work session was added for December 15. The school will meet with the Committee again on December 8. The school

will have a memo for the Committee on December 3 about the transportation contract (budget function 2700). The Committee will make their recommendations for the school district's budget on December 8.

T. Noyes noted that there would not a school board member present on December 1, because there was a Board Meeting at PMHS.

There was no correspondence and no public input.

R. MacDonald motioned to adjourn and L. Carr seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five. (KP, SM, LC, RM, TN / absent – GF, MD)

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis
Recorder