

TOWN OF ALTON

Alton Budget Committee
Public Minutes

(APPROVED 1/9/08)

December 6, 2007

Members Present: Gregory Fuller, Vice Chair
Richard MacDonald
Elizabeth Dominick
Karen Painter
Jeffrey St. Cyr, Alton School Board Representative
Peter Bolster, Alton Selectmen Representative

Members Absent: Steve Miller, Chair

Others Present: Kathleen Holt, Superintendent
Bonnie Jean Kuras, Principal
Steve Ross, Assistant Principal
Deborah Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Kathy O’Blenes, Business Manager
Karl Ingoldsby, Director, ACS Building & Grounds
Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

G. Fuller called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30PM.

II. ROLL CALL

S. Miller and R. MacDonald were absent.

III. OLD BUSINESS

There were no minutes available for approval.

G. Fuller handed out a copy of the Technology Plan to the Committee. K. Holt noted that this is a plan and not a fixed document. E. Dominick commented that she thought they had received a copy of the plan last year. D. Brown thought it might have been a draft they received last year.

J. St. Cyr distributed some handouts to the Committee about Technology and a computer inventory.

B. Kuras reported that the computers that are being ordered are Windows Vista Operating System (OS) compatible. She noted that the teachers that are upgrading to Vista are teachers that work with multi-media in the classrooms. There was discussion about the cost of Vista.

K. O'Blenes spoke about the cost-per-pupil. She reported that the State had not released the cost-per-pupil for all districts but that report was usually available in January.

E. Dominick reported on the JMA Budget Committee meeting from the previous night. She felt they did very well in their review of the PMHS budget that night. She reported that the health insurance increase was 0.4% from the previous year.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

GIFTED & TALENTED

K. Painter asked about the decrease in the salary budget line item. K. O'Blenes responded that there had been a personnel turn-over in that department.

E. Dominick asked for justification for Supplies. K. O'Blenes explained that more was being requested in this budget to reimburse staff.

CO-CURRICULAR

There was discussion about the activities that were a part of the co-curricular budget.

K. Painter asked why the budget line item for Food had been changed from the previous year. K. Holt responded that they had moved it under Supplies. She spoke about the goal of encouraging healthier food choices.

ATHLETICS

P. Bolster asked if there had been cuts made to the junior high program. K. Holt stated they had combined some sports or activities but no cuts had been made.

J. St. Cyr distributed a copy of coaches' stipends, as requested from a previous meeting.

SUMMER SCHOOL

E. Dominick asked how large the Summer School class size would be. S. Ross reported that it varied each Summer. He stated that they are required to have classes year-around for some of the special education students but the money for those students came from another budget line item. There was a discussion about transportation for Summer School.

GUIDANCE

K. Holt reported this is where they had requested an additional staff person. B. Kuras spoke about the suggested ratio guidelines. K. Holt noted that Guidance Counselors are not mandated but are recommended.

There was a discussion about the Improvement of Instruction budget and the standards for certifications for teachers. The Committee discussed the effectiveness of the bullying-awareness programs.

HEALTH

There was discussion about the justification for the supplies for the Nurses' office.

SPEECH

P. Bolster spoke about what the budget line item for Professional Services was for. B. Kuras stated it was for contracted services.

K. Painter asked K. O'Blenes if she had corrected the Workers' Comp. budget line and K. O'Blenes confirmed that she had.

IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION

K. Holt spoke about the justification for the requested amount. She noted that this account was for paying consultants for their time or for paying teachers for meeting on committees. She stated she had budgeted conservatively here because she didn't want to "play" with tax payers' money.

K. Holt spoke about the Team Leaders program and explained how the teacher/trainer program works. She discussed some of the things they work on when they meet and the objectives of the program.

LIBRARY & MEDIA

B. Kuras spoke about the request for new furniture for the Middle School Library. She reported that the furniture was old and very worn. There's a request for some new tables.

P. Bolster asked about some of the new equipment that has been requested. G. Fuller asked what the video flex camera was for, in the Science budget. K. Holt explained it's for projecting three-dimensional images.

SCHOOL BOARD

P. Bolster asked why there was an increase for the Auditor. K. O'Blenes explained this was for the annual report.

There was discussion about the increase for the recorder's budget line item.

SAU EXPENSE

K. Holt reported that any non-union employees' pay increases are in an account that is in the SAU Expense budget. There was discussion about how these increases were budgeted for and distributed last year. P. Bolster felt the explanation for this budget line and how this was distributed was confusing. E. Dominick suggested some ways that this could be explained to people at the Public Hearing.

K. O'Blenes reminded the Committee that there would be changes in the budget line items for health insurance and dental insurance. There was discussion about the best way to update the budget books.

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

There was a discussion about the copier that is in the budget and possible cost savings. P. Bolster asked about lease vs. purchase for the copiers. K. O'Blenes spoke about the use of the copiers and the cost per copy they had. P. Bolster spoke about experience he had with his church copier and trying to get cost savings. K. O'Blenes reported that the lease amount stays the same for the copier for the service contract but they have a threshold of the total number of copies they can make before they are charged for overages.

BUSINESS SERVICES

K. Holt spoke about the adjustment made to K. O'Blenes' salary to bring it up to the salary range.

There was a brief discussion about the cut to the Electricity budget line item.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

K. Holt spoke about the increases made to improvement of instruction and some of the classes/conferences that the Director of Building & Grounds has been attending.

R. MacDonald spoke about the justification for the part-time custodian. He asked if there had been an increase in the square footage of the building. K. Holt responded that there had not, but noted that the school was an older school and needed more maintenance than a newer school building would need. K. Ingoldsby spoke about some of the formulas he had researched for custodial staffing. K. O'Blenes stated there was no flexibility with the custodial staff for them to take time off or to do special projects because they were "maxed out". K. Holt spoke about the impact that understaffing of the custodian will have on health and safety of the staff and students. P. Bolster spoke about the scheduling of the part time custodian and the flexibility of the new position.

The Committee discussed the new equipment, oil bids, and the cleaning of the building.

E. Dominick asked about the contingency fund that was on last year's warrant article. K. O'Blenes explained that the contingency fund was for PMHS and she thought there might be another one for next year.

TRANSPORTATION

[E. Dominick left the meeting at approximately 8:20PM.]

There was no discussion about Transportation.

FOOD SERVICES

There was a brief discussion about the Food Services requested budget. This is a self-funded account.

WARRANT ARTICLES

P. Bolster spoke about the interest money from the bond for PMHS that is going to be used to upgrade the windows, bathrooms, electrical, etc.

There was discussion about some of the costs that can be incurred by special education.

The Committee decided not to vote on the budget until the next meeting. G. Fuller stated he would let S. Miller know about where they were at with the budget for the next meeting.

R. MacDonald noted that the meeting that evening was not being taped.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2007 at 6:30PM.

VI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

K. Painter motioned to adjourn and G. Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (GF, RM, ED, KP, JS, PB)

Respectfully Submitted,

Recorder, Public Sessions