

**Dresden Finance Committee
Town Hall**

**Monday December 17, 2007
Hanover, NH**

Present: Cheryl Lindberg, Henry Scheier, Irv Thomae, Al Converse, Paul Tierney, Tom Blinkhorn, Bill Garrity, Dick Podolec, Peter Christie, Karen Kayen, Robert Bruce and John Hochreiter. Also in attendance was Superintendent Wayne Gersen.

Chairperson Lindberg called the meeting to order at 4:34 and asked if there were changes to the agenda warranted. She noted that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be January 21 in Norwich. She also reminded the committee that in January we would do our annual review of our Statement of Purpose.

A motion was made by Peter and seconded by Paul to approve the minutes of the last meeting. All were in favor with John abstaining as he was not at the meeting.

Wayne spoke to the SAU 70 budget noting that it consisted of mainly salaries benefits and advertising costs. He reminded us of the issues that arose in trying to hire a Tech Director. The successful candidate choose not to accept the position resulting in current budget overruns due to hiring NESDEC for a new search and unanticipated training for other individuals in the use of pupil management software.

Wayne related that the initial budget was presented to the SAU Board with a 4.2% increase. The Board rejected it as too high and sent it back for reevaluation.

Henry asked about inconsistencies in calculations from page 2 to page 5 in the presentation. Wayne was unsure of the answer to the question and will refer it to John Aubin for an answer at the SAU 70 Board Meeting tonight. Henry also asked where the Hanover 6th Grade fit in this budget. Wayne told us that at each grade level in the Middle School there is a core special Ed staff. Then anything over that may be considered an exceptional expense and that cost would be charged to the sending district.

Wayne further noted that John Aubin has established a reserve fund which was voted at District Meeting to balance off the high's and lows of tuition costs.

Special note was made to remind us that the District is in mediation with the Teachers and Educational Assistants so in terms of the budget there is no wage increase built in. There is some indication that a reasonable number is anticipated.

Dick asked about medical insurance and Wayne responded that a 13.7% increase is anticipated.

Cheryl asked about the cost for auditors and the general consensus of those present was that the figure was reasonable.

Irv asked to revisit the question of 6th grade tuition and the allocation of expenses. Wayne was uncertain of a response and suggested that Kari Asmus and Robin Carpenter who are extremely well versed in the subject.

There was some discussion of the chargeback to the districts for buildings and grounds and Wayne explained the use of Jonathan Brush's time and the maintenance staff. He told us that generally Jonathan is charged for one day per week to each of the schools.

Al inquired about transfer of expenses to the districts and wondered if that had not occurred would the proposed budget have come in at the 2.7% increase. Wayne stated that it would not.

There was some discussion of our draft letter to the public and Wayne reminded us that the tax base continues to expand and thus mitigate the lack of income growth. Also as spending increases he said that state funding also goes up. He suggested that in a practical nature there is not a dollar for dollar impact to taxpayers.

Henry suggested that we may want to rethink our next meeting date so that we could share our feelings with the Board about the budget.

A motion was made by Tom and seconded by Irv to support the SAU 70 Budget as presented today. Ten voted yes, one voted no and Bob abstained.

The next item on the agenda was to consider our draft of a letter to the public. Tom began by thanking Bill and Peter for their significant work on the document. Discussion followed relative to the limitation of words in letters to the editor and the content of particular paragraphs. Henry reminded us that it was his desire to convey the sense that education is taking more and more of individual's incomes. Others suggested that such a trend is not sustainable and needs to be more importantly noted in the letter. There was also some discussion on the focus on either tax rate or expense as Al reminded us that the Norwich tax rate for schools has only gone up 1.5% in the last three years. Significant discussion followed

regarding quality, measurement and attitudes toward each among the members of the Committee.

It was determined that Peter and Bill would revisit the document and provide an additional draft. All responses should be forwarded to Cheryl who will send the letter to the Valley News.

A next meeting was discussed and set for _____. (was it the 8th or the 14th?)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 PM.