

**Dresden Finance Committee
Hanover Town Hall**

**Monday November 20, 2006
Hanover, NH**

Present: Cheryl Lindberg, Thomas Blinkhorn, Bill Bender, Henry Scheier, Kari Asmus, Paul Tierney, Al Converse, Dick Podolec, Karen Kayen Peter Christie, William Garrity and John Hochreiter. Also attending, Dresden Auditors; J. Mark Lindberg (Norwich), Jay Pierson (Hanover) and Stewart Yaguda(Norwich), School Administrators John Aubin and Wayne Gersen and School Board members John Chamberlin and Mary Sachsse.

Cheryl called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM and working from the agenda, asked for a review of the draft minutes of the October 16, 2006 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Tom and seconded by Dick; the minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Item 2: Discussion/Action on the Dresden Finance Committee Charter, (an electronic copy of the DRAFT dated 11/10/06 is attached). Kari began the discussion with a recollection that a similar draft met with a good deal of dissatisfaction from a number of people present at the Annual Hanover Town Meeting the year before last. Kari also noted that this is a topic that deserves a great deal of discussion and that it should be publicly warned with enough advance notice of time and perhaps various places to give the entire Dresden community a chance to have input. Cheryl agreed and noted that the document is a draft and encouraged discussion among ourselves as to our perspective on the charter. There was general discussion on what those at the meeting thought of the document, how and what would consist of public input, and designation of sub committee to analyze concerns and suggestions. Thoughts regarding the Charter should be communicated to either Bill Garrity or Cheryl Lindberg.

Item 3: Dresden School District Auditors – Introduction / Discussion, Cheryl introduced the three auditors J. Mark Lindberg (Norwich), Jay Pierson (Hanover) and Stewart Yaguda (Norwich) and noted that the compact calls for this group of essentially inside auditors to act as a balance to outside auditors. Jay Pierson asked the administration of some prior notice to when the outside auditors report comes out and perhaps a face to face meeting with the outside group. Paul asked that the inside group provide some comment to the Dresden Finance Committee and the public on the Financial Compliance of the information presented by the outside auditors. There was some indication that the administration would facilitate such a meeting.

Item 6: F/Y 08 SAU Budget Update, Chairperson Lindberg opened the discussion suggesting that the SAU Board had approved a budget for FY 2008 and was immediately corrected by Kari. The SAU Board needed to put a figure in the newspaper as an indicator of proposed expenditures. The Board has not take action on the budget at this time. This prompted further discussion.

The primary initial focus was the inclusion of a new position for the SAU, the position as initially described was to be Director of Technology for the District. Wayne reported that he had recently met with the technology teachers and has subsequently generated a new job description to share with the principals for their input. Bill noted that given his experience in Information Technology that he had concerns about the mix of a “nuts and bolts person with a visionary” as described in the initial job description. Bill suggested that if vision was the main focus of the position that the District might want to take a longer term strategy in hiring such a person. Bill further asked if the taxpayers might not react well to a \$100,000 place holder in the budget absent a plan to address the District’s IT challenges. Both Wayne and John Aubin suggested that something needs to be done quickly that there are tasks and opportunities that go unfulfilled because there is no one in the SAU office who can perform the functions. Wayne reported that he has sought information about the Fairfield Connecticut and more specifically Falmouth Maine districts and their Technology Directors role and responsibilities. Wayne reported that he has both short term and long term ideas about our “quest for a coordinated and comprehensive plan”. There was support and acknowledgement offered from both Henry and Tom regarding Wayne’s thoughts.

Wayne told the group a bit more about the possibilities of outside contractors and is almost ready to show us what he thinks he needs. Dick suggested that in our search we not forget to look inside our own district and Bill noted the availability of talent in our community to act as both a resource and a potential pool of talent.

Wayne went on to explain that he is now even thinking of the possibility of a collaborative effort between multiple towns, multiple districts and given our geography both states. Most of all, he needs to get someone in place in this next budget cycle at the latest.

Mary Sachsse told us that at the very least having the money in the budget would get things moving and prompt discussion.

Discussion followed that blended topics of further SAU budget and salary increases, Dresden Budget guidelines and the impact of negotiated agreements.

John Aubin reported that the DFC had provided guidelines to keep budget increased in the bounds of CPI increases on a year to year basis. John reported that the October to October CPI Northeast Regional increase was reported to be 1.75%. A year ago when that increase was 4 plus percent it was a realistic budget goal. At 1.75% John felt that the guideline was unrealistic. There was some discussion of which a part included Henry’s comment that the index provided highs and lows over time which averaged out over time just as budgets should.

John Aubin explained the rationale for a 5.1 percent increase in SAU staff salaries in that the percent increase would be consistent with Dresden District Support Staff increases. Kari suggested that in a position by position analysis the SAU employee was more likely to begin the analysis from a higher wage therefore making the comparison of 5.1% increase invalid. Al asked for a clarification on the number of positions and where they were. Information will be forthcoming.

Cheryl asked for a discussion of the assessments to the SAU. There is to be an overall 3.2% increase in budget to budget. John noted that without the Technology position the increase would be negative.

Paul but does not have nearly enough information available to him that would allow him to make a well supported judgment about the appropriateness of the SAU budget. There followed a general discussion as to who might supply the necessary data with opinions running the gamut from provided by the district to members of the DFC researching data from any and all available sources. There did however seem to be a sense that modeling be done by staff and the DFC in collaboration.

Chairperson Lindberg asked what we should do relative to this budget as presented. Tom suggested that he would be in favor of incorporating Paul's ideas moving forward and that we might be premature in offering any action or endorsement of the SAU budget without the additional information coming on the Technology position. Wayne, Kari and Bill all asked what data would be required in the future.

Tom Blinkhorn offered a motion to support the SAU budget in principal pending information on the technology position but suggesting strongly that we incorporate suggestions of compilation of data for future budget deliberations. The motion was seconded by Henry Scheier. (no middle initial). The motion carried unanimously by voice vote by all who voted with Paul abstaining.

Item 8 Teacher Contract – Update and Discussion. John Aubin provided a handout titled TENTATIVE AGREEMENT Board and Hanover Education Association Negotiations, and referred people to page 5 about the middle of the page to the table titled Dresden/Hanover Teacher Negotiations for FY 2007 and beyond. In the row Total Salary & Benefits (total compensation) and fourth column % Chg the key is a 3.57% change in 2007 and in the seventh column that 5 Chg in 2008 is 2.76%. John reported that as a committee we had provided the guideline of keeping the contract increase in line with CPI which was then reported to be 4.44%. The agreement provides for a 1.5% increase to salary base in 2007 and a 3% increase to Salary base in 2008. Mr. Aubin would like to see the DFC's support for the agreement noted.

Tom commended the parties for their work and the outcomes but would have liked to have seen a timeline for outcomes of the study committees. He

additionally hoped that within the compensation study committee that they comment on the question of “the premium”.

There then followed general discussion as to the equal roles of the district and the teachers in providing a final decision or report out of the committees. There were additional comments as to the role of the public in both committees and the value attached to that public input. There was also discussion about the realization of all parties that a good and realistic outcome was necessary from these committees. There was significant conversation regarding the evaluation committee and members of the DFC noted how important it was to the community that a superior level of transparency be established between this committee and the community.

Noting the time Peter Christie and Tom Blinkhorn needed to leave the meeting. Both offered their proxy to the secretary in support of the contract negotiated settlement. It was noted by John Hochreiter that the Hanover Finance Committee had voted to support the settlement agreement at their meeting earlier this month.

A number of the members of the DFC suggested that they were uncomfortable voting on the question only having just received much of the information handed out and not having the requested time to digest the information along with minimal notice of an impending vote.

Karen Kayen offered a motion to table the question of support until our December 18 meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Bender and voted unanimously by all present.

Chairperson Lindberg asked that we remember to provide input on the Dresden Finance Committee Charter and on the information on the Quality of Education Study Group now on the SAU web site.

A motion was made by Henry Scheier to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Kari Asmus. With a unanimous voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 PM.