

TOWN OF GILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

BUDGET COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – Gilford Sch'l Dist' Special Education As Amended on Pg 2 / Sec 7

Date : Dec 11, 2017

Time: 4:30 PM

Location: Conference Room lower level SAU Building

Budget committee subcommittee members present: Tim Sullivan, Harry Bean, David Horvath, and Dale Chan Eddy.

School District Representative: Esther Kennedy /Student Services Director.

The budget preparation work sheets as rec'mended by the Gilford School board were reviewed and discussed. Dave Horvath began by stating we would try to go through these sheets line by line. During that process some of the main issues examined were the primary goals of ensuring that special needs students were entitled to and are to be afforded a substantially equal AND effective educational experience to the core student bodies in their respective age/grade groups, by accommodating as much as possible their special needs, as psychological, health, and disabilities. That some of these services/efforts for some will naturally begin in their pre-school years so as to have them progressing by the time they enter the school system as students. Additionally discussions ensued examining the SAU's legal liabilities and how it is of importance to provide services in accordance with Federal and State laws and mandates. So a great deal of effort is put in by administrators and by Esther in particular, insuring that the SAU meets it's SPECIAL EDUCATION obligations as defined. It should also be noted that the district is subject to families with Special Needs children moving into and out of Gilford on a regular basis. This can have un-anticipated impacts on many budget lines in the Special Ed Budget process.

As the lines for High School, Middle School, and Elementary School were examined it is noted that there are many line items with reductions that are consistent through the school system at each school. Increases for full time teachers are CBA obligations and show near 3.7% avg increases. The increases for Elementary School Special Ed Tutors /Aides/NURSES is largely offset by savings at the middle school. It is noted that there is a need in the Elementary School for a few highly affected students to require more intense nursing care and medical supervision. These same costs are rising by an additional 3% over the as operated on current budget and 3.7% over the last budget as approved by the taxpayers. Most of this is due to raises out of the "Holding Account".

Salaries for the Summer, preschool and other as part of the extended school year services ALL showed considerable declines due to fewer servicing requirements being anticipated.

Contracted Services for the handicapped are also dramatically lower for the Elementary School but are offset by near same increases at the Middle and High schools.

In total for all the schools the tuitions to outside agencies or education providers are down significantly, as fewer students are anticipated to need these services.

Teaching supplies as needed for recording and updating IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are basically level funded with the exception of a decrease at the MS. But that decrease is offset in the MS budget by a near equal cost increase in Equipment Replacements.

Psychiatric Testing and Services combined are also down substantially in all 3 schools.

The Special Ed Coordinator/Student Services employee Esther, works with a 2 year INDIVIDUAL contract with the SAU. She is expected to get a 2.5% pay increase from the "Holding account" .

There were some discussions on which employees in the Special Ed accounts were unionized. Esther explaining that she is a 365 D/Year employee as per her contract and that Special Ed as outlined in the Extended Year budget lines goes on year round , making it sometimes difficult to schedule her vacation times. As to her Professional dues she asserts that because of the minefield of Special Ed laws and potential for law suits nearly half her job is focusing on the legal issues, paper work, and staying up to speed on shifting mandates and expectations from the Federal and State guidelines. Professional organization memberships seem vital to this purpose.

There is also an across the board decrease in anticipated transportation costs for all three schools for special Ed TRANSPORTATION.

There are also some expected cost reductions in Speech Pathology services as some of the contracted services are expected to be met in house with the hiring of a Speech Pathologist. This would likely have an over all cost increase for Salary and benefits vs using contracted services. But contracted services in Speech Pathology seem increasingly more difficult to source. vs many potential qualified personnel not enjoying the work with what are mostly children who may have learning issues requiring extra effort. There was a short discussion on whether professional associations lobby to hamper the development of Speech Pathologists who could qualify for public school employment. The position requires a Masters degree PLUS. It seems onl the UNH campus in the SE corner of the State offers this particular program. Esther also opined that the Millennials in general seem not interested in pursuing career paths in Education where they would specialize in working with Special Needs students.

Dave Horvath suggested that the sub-committee NOT take a vote on approving the proposed 2018-19 fiscal year budget, as against the pages being re-examined by the full budget committee on 12/14 at the Regular meeting of the full Budget Committee. Dave requested that for that time The Supt of Schools should provide the budget committee with copies of all the Special Education (C/S) Contract Services contracts. Dave also expressed his concerns as to the seemingly large differential of unexpended funds from the 2016-2017 budget to this year's budget request, as to a further reason for the sub-committee not to vote on the budget requests pending an examination by the full Budget Committee. Some of the sub-committee members feel that there is not a lot of wiggle room in adjusting the Special Ed budget items as to how nearly everything we finance and provide has some gov't mandates attached.

It is to be noted that in addition to some budget line items being a little tight as pg 5/7 lines...51150-47-000000 ~~ Special Ed tutors and aides /High School, there are other possible revenue enhancements that may be forthcoming from Medicaid and catastrophic aid. But these funds would be going back into the TOWN's General "UNDESIGNATED Fund Balance Fund" and not necessarily go back to the School District.

In total the School District is proposing a total Special Education Budget for fiscal 2018-19 of \$3,260,030 a reduction of \$92,367 from what was approved by the voters in the school budget as approved by the voters in the Blizzard of Seventeen, March election. As against the YTD Actually Operated On Special Education budget of \$3,425,691 the reduction in the proposed budget is \$165,661.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Timothy Sullivan (electronic signature)

Timothy Sullivan Budget Committee Member