

Joint Meeting with Candia School Board and Town of Candia Municipal Budget Committee Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 3, 2020
Location: Town Office Building
Zoom Meeting ID# 81568984069
Attendees: Lynn Chivers
Dick Snow
Sue Young
Susan Gill
Bob Stout
Todd Keating
Stephanie Helmig
Kaycee Vitale (attended via Zoom)
Absent: Jodi Hedstrom
Katrina Niles

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions of the School Board

Approval of the Minutes from November 19, 2020

- Susan Gill motions to approve minutes as amended
- Stephanie Helmig seconds the motion
- Jodi Hedstrom and Katrina Niles absent from vote
- Selectman Young abstains
- Motion passes 6 approve-0 oppose-2 absent-1 abstention

Questions for the School Board 2020-2021 Budget

Chairman Chivers read the below questions to the School Board (in italics) and the subsequent answers are written below:

What is the staffing for special education and paraprofessionals? How many employees and how many students receive services?

- *Written response from Kathryn Duncan-* In grades Pre-K through 8th, Candia has 40 students who qualify for special education services. We have 3 special educators who both case-manage and provide daily direct specialized instruction. Additionally, we employ 12 paraprofessionals. 10 positions are funded out of the regular budget, and 2 positions are funded out of the IDEA grant.
 - Chairman Chivers asked the board to explain what is IDEA.
 - Kathryn Duncan answered that the IDEA grant is a federal grant that we are allocated every year.
 - Bob Stout asked that from the 40 students, does that include students that attend school elsewhere?
 - Kathryn Duncan answered that is just students that attend Henry Moore School and preschool level. It does not include out of district, charter school or high school students.

Why is there such a big increase in the Nurse budget line?

- *Written response from Amy Ransom – Business Administrator-* The school had a change in staffing and the nurse that was hired has more years of experience than the previous nurse. Her salary is based on the collective bargaining agreement on her education and years of experience.

Warrant article #2 – How many members of the public typically participate in school board meeting? What was the participation before and after COVID-19 began? Why is the school not able to use the same type of equipment that is used by the town for meetings?

- *Written response from Matt Woodrow – School Board Chair*- How many members of the public typically participate in school board meeting? The board does not track public attendance at school board meetings and public attendance varies depending on agenda topics. For example, there was a significant increase in public attendance and participation in the Spring/Summer due to COVID-19. All meetings are open to the public and the board provides opportunities for the public to address the board.
- *Written response from Matt Woodrow – School Board Chair*-What was the participation before and after COVID-19 began? In general participation spiked as the community was interested in decisions being made on virtual and on-premise learning models due to COVID-19. Again, we do not keep records of the number of participants.
- *Written response from Matt Woodrow – School Board Chair*-Why is the school not able to use the same type of equipment that is used by the town for meetings? There are legal obligations around ADA compliance and closed captioning which determine the types of media that can be used for recording and broadcasting of the School District public meetings. It costs roughly \$1 per minute for closed captioning services which are required by law.
 - Chairman Chivers asked if pre-COVID-19, was there anything provided for the hearing impaired?
 - Matt Woodrow said correct, we had not provided anything in the past but the Hooksett school district and town were sued because of this issue last year. There are requirements by law for meetings that are recorded and posted to include closed captioning for ADA compliance. There are people that search the web to find people that are out of compliance and file lawsuits.
 - Bob Stout asked if there was a legal obligation to record the meetings?
 - Matt Woodrow said there is not a legal obligation to record meetings but if it is recorded, we have to adhere to those requirements.
 - Bob Stout said so we do not need to record at all?
 - Matt Woodrow said correct, but if the people want (zoom) we have to do it the right way. That is why we wanted to put it in a Warrant article and let the people decide. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for details.
 - Bill Rearick noted that the person that took the initial action to sue lived in Indiana.
 - Bob Stout asked if there could be wording added to the Warrant Article or something in parenthesis underneath to explain the need to have closed captioning if the meetings are to be recorded?
 - Amy Ransom answered that the closed captioning is not required just because you are recording the meeting it is when you post it on your website. You have to have the ability for the software to read out loud for the visually impaired.
 - Selectman Young asked if you inform the public to install read/write on their computer, that will read it to them correct?
 - Amy Ransom answered that it will work but you still have to have the information in a format that is compatible with read/write.
 - Selectman Young asked if Zoom is \$1 a minute for closed captioning?
 - Amy Ransom said that it is a specific company does it, not Zoom.

Warrant article #3 – Please explain the escape clause. Why are we not introducing this as a bond? Why does the wording in the warrant article not name who the contract is with and exactly what work is going to be done? What happens if new problems arise while the contractors are working on the issues listed and the costs increase?

- *Written response from Amy Ransom – Business Administrator*-The escape clause is required by State law when entering into long term lease purchase agreements. We are not introducing this as a bond for a few reasons. The energy performance contracting company (EPC) will pay for the project upfront until the work is completed. When it is finished, we would take out a lease purchase agreement for only the amount of the project cost. If you go with a bond issue you take out the entire amount regardless if you spent it all or not. If the project comes in less, then we finance less. We have not entered into a signed contract with any specific energy performance contracting company (EPC) as of today. That will happen after the warrant article is passed. The school board has said they want to work with EEI back in November 2019 when they asked them to complete the energy audit and recommendations for a project to be completed in the 2021-2022 school year. First if you list a specific vendor, you could only do

business with them. If something happened to that vendor or if you could not come to an agreement with them that it would cause an issue. Second depending on the type of agreement we sign we could have multiple subcontractors on this project and we don't know who they are yet. The numbers we have are very conservative. We would have to make sure that we complete the project at or below budget. If it goes over, we would have to identify funding for that. Savings from a part of the project could be used for items that come in over budget. If something additional arises we would look to see if it falls in the scope of the work being done. If it falls outside of the scope, we would look for funding sources and address the issue.

- Chairman Chivers asked can you explain what specifically the escape clause is?
 - Amy Ransom answered that NH Department of Revenue requires an escape clause when entering into a lease/purchase agreement. The simplest way to explain it is if you enter into a contract and if for some reason the budget does not support it anymore or is removed, the work that has been installed can be repossessed. (Refer to audio for the full legal explanation.)
- Amy Ransom said that one of the possibilities for this contract is to sign a maximum agreement with the Energy Performance Contracting Company and they guarantee that they will not go over that price no matter what happens during the contract. The caveat is that they get to choose the vendors. Everything would still be documented for accounting reasons.
- Selectman Young wanted to verify that the budget for the School was up approximately \$606,000 dollars to account that we are not paying the \$173,000 to Manchester capital improvement costs.
- Todd Keating asked for the current enrollment and the projected enrollment?
 - Principal Becky Wing answered that it is tough for the current year because 10 students that are homeschooling due to COVID-19. Our current enrollment is 269 but we anticipate that growing for next year. Our Kindergarten classes coming in are higher the last couple of years and as we look out at siblings and trends those numbers seem to maintain themselves in the low 30's range.
 - Bill Rearick added that in this budget we did not replace a retiring teacher due to enrollment. We are very aware of our enrollment numbers but moving forward the Kindergarten numbers have been trending upward and we believe that trend will continue.
- Bob Stout mentioned that the School Board has returned money every year. He mentioned that he agrees that these improvements are necessary for the school. With the new tax bills out people are aware of how the Warrant articles may affect their taxes. The fear is that if you leave this as a Warrant Article it will fail. If the cost is about \$204,000 a year (about 2% of the proposed budget) and you consistently return that money to the town, can you just write this into the operating budget?
 - Discussion ensued around savings over the years refer to audio for details. Stephanie Helmig answered that we cannot guarantee that we have that \$200,000 in the budget every year to spend. If we are asked to cut \$200,000 one year, we are now in a lease that we have to default on because we cannot meet the requirements.
 - Selectman Young passed out a paper from the DRA showing what the school and the town has returned every year. It shows that in 2015 \$240,000 was returned, and in 2016 \$306,000 was returned. She expressed the concern that the town budget will pass this year and she is concerned this warrant article won't pass this either.
 - Amy Ransom added that we can put this in the operating budget but it would be in the proposed column and if the budget fails, we would not have the funding for it. The only way to get the annualized payment in the budget is to either get your budget to pass or put it in a separate warrant article. Paying out of fund balance does not guarantee the funding in subsequent years for this project. Also, the first-year payment would be \$204,000 but we would have a guaranteed energy savings of \$25,000 so the next year budget would go down. The savings are guaranteed so if we do not realize the energy savings in the first year, the company writes us a check. Also, to get the rebates of \$62,000 we have to enter into the contract. So, we would lose out on those savings if we do projects on a case-by-case basis.
 - Selectman Young said that she is nervous about COVID-19 and after the tax bills that were just received that although this is a necessary expense, this will not pass. She is also concerned that the school budget and the town budget won't

pass either. We need to relook at both budgets, maybe have a slight increase for this year and see what happens when we are through the pandemic.

- Bob Stout asked if you could still sign a contract but make payments out of the operating budget? In theory the hit on the operating budget could go down every year because of the energy savings.
 - Amy Ransom answered that we could take it out of the operating budget but then the board would have to decide on which items they would not fund. Right now, we are pretty tight in Candia. I expect with COVID-19 we will not have much money in the budget to fund the usual projects. The problem arises if you end up in a default budget, we still have to fund the required items that make up about \$127,000 so now I have to find a way to fund \$204,000 on top of the \$127,000 and I do not think that is possible this year. Discussion ensued, refer to audio for details.
- Amy Ransom wanted to over the difference between the book the Budget Committee previously looked at and the handouts that were provided tonight.
 - The health insurance rates the School Board put in a budget of 10% and it came back at 6.2%. The budget was reduced by \$26,334.42 for health insurance premium.
 - On November 20th we received the rates for Pinkerton Academy. They ranged from 3.54 to a decrease of 9 but we had a net decrease of \$40,027.
 - The budget is \$66,361.42 less than the budget you reviewed before.
 - The bottom-line budget will be \$9,439,642.00

The Budget Committee vote on recommended budget

- Chairman Chivers closed the meeting to public comment.
- Chairman Chivers noted that when looking at the difference between the default and proposed budget there is only a slight increase of \$100,000 and she does not believe that the taxpayers will be upset about that. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for details.
 - Stephanie Helmig made a motion to approve the Candia School District 2021-2022 fiscal year proposed budget of \$9,439,642
 - Chairman Chives seconds the motion for discussion.
 - 4 in favor (Bob Stout, Chairman Chivers, Dick Snow, Stephanie Helmig)
 - 3 opposed (Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Susan Gill)
 - 2 absent (Jodi Hedstrom, Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 4 in favor-3 oppose-2 absent

The Budget Committee vote on remaining warrant articles

School

Warrant Article #2 – Audio Video Equipment

Shall the Candia School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 for the purpose of purchasing audio video equipment for the live streaming/recording of school board meetings and school events.

- 0 in favor
- 7 opposed (Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Chairman Chivers, Dick Snow, Stephanie Helmig)
- 2 absent (Jodi Hedstrom, Katrina Niles)
- Not recommended by a vote of 7-0

Warrant Article #3 – Building upgrade

Shall the Candia School District vote to authorize the School Board to enter into a multiyear (15 year) lease/purchase agreement in the amount of \$2,415,000 (Two million four hundred fifteen thousand dollars) for the purpose of installing energy saving equipment including but not limited to LED lighting, heating systems, roof replacements, HVAC upgrades, insulation, and other improvements to the Candia Moore School, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$204,000 for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Future payments will be offset by guaranteed energy savings and a reduction in utility and fuel costs for the district.

- 2 in favor (Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig)
- 5 opposed (Bob Stout, Chairman Chivers, Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Dick Snow)
- 2 absent (Jodi Hedstrom, Katrina Niles)
- Not Recommended by a vote of 5-2-2

Town

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) in continuation of its support of the Visiting Nurse Association of Manchester and Southern New Hampshire.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 1 in favor (Selectman Young)
- 5 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 5-1-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$1,250) in continuation of its support of the Child Advocacy Center. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 1 in favor (Selectman Young)
- 5 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 5-1-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) in continuation of its support of Big Brother/Big Sister.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 1 in favor (Selectman Young)
- 5 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 5-1-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$1,250) in continuation of its support of Waypoint (formally Child and Family Services).

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 4 in favor (Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers)
- 2 opposed (Bob Stout, Todd Keating)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Recommend by a vote of 4-2-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Hundred Dollars (\$700) in continuation of its support of the Aids Response Seacoast.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 1 in favor (Selectman Young)
- 5 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 5-1-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) in continuation of its support of the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children). (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 1 in favor (Selectman Young)
- 5 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 5-1-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$225) in continuation of its support of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 5 to 0)

- 1 in favor (Selectman Young)

- 5 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 5-1-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) in support of the Home Health and Hospice Care.

- 3 in favor (Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig)
- 3 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Bob Stout, Todd Keating)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Vote is tied at 3-3-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand One Hundred Seven Dollars (\$1,107) in continuation of its support of the Rockingham County Nutrition and Meals on Wheels Program.

- 3 in favor (Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig)
- 3 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Bob Stout, Todd Keating)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Vote is tied at 3-3-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty-Four Dollars (\$1,854) in support of the Rockingham County Nutrition and Meals on Wheels Program for transportation (Formally offered by Lamprey Health Care).

- 3 in favor (Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig)
- 3 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Bob Stout, Todd Keating)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Vote is tied at 3-3-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$3,250) in continuation of its support of the American Red Cross.

- 0 in favor
- 6 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 6-0-1

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Thousand Eight Hundred and Seven Dollars (\$6,807) for the Community Action Program.

- 0 in favor
- 6 opposed (Chairman Chivers, Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
- 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
- Not recommended by a vote of 6-0-1

Additional Business

- The deliberative sessions require masks and social distancing. It is being explored that if people attend by zoom, are they allowed to vote and how would we verify their residency and identity. Currently we are waiting to hear from the Municipal Association as they are currently working on it.
- Next week we have two public hearings. Wednesday 12/09 is with the Town and Thursday 12/10 is with the school both held in the town office at 7 p.m.

There being no further business, Bob Stout made a motion to adjourn, was seconded by Susan Gill and the motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm

Submitted by: Kaycee Vitale, Administrative Assistant