

Town of Candia  
Budget Committee  
Approved Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2025  
Supplemental Hearing on the Town and School Budgets  
Town Hall Meeting Room

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Lynn Chivers, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members Present: Lynn Chivers, Katrina Niles, William Saffie, Ryan Young, Stephanie Helmig, Susan Gill, Susan Young, Steve Tremblay, Joshua Reap, Janet Lewis, Admin. Assist.

Old Business: Approval of minutes from previous meetings- Bill made a motion to approve the Dec 9<sup>th</sup> minutes as corrected. Steve seconded. Susan G. abstained. All in favor. Motion passed. Ryan had a correction to make on his statements. The committee decided to postpone the correction until Ryan has had a chance to review the recording. Katrina made a motion to approve the Dec 10<sup>th</sup> minutes. Sue seconded. Stephanie, Susan G., Ryan abstained. All in favor. Motion passed.

Review of School warrant articles/make recommendations/take final vote on school budget: Lynn asked about the proficiency scores being reported on the warrant. Bill Rearick, SAU Superintendent, replied that it is required per RSA. The Chair opens the floor for comments & recommendations and then the committee can vote. Article #2. Stephanie states that the Pinkerton busses and a teaching position are two potential budget cuts. Being already under staffed, it will be detrimental to the children. Maybe cut some on special ed., could amount to \$10,000. Susan G. asks if left over funds from special ed. are returned to the town? Lynn replied yes. Susan Y. said there is a special fund of \$200,000 that is to be used for special ed. if the budget was fully spent and a new child came in. Ryan asked if a special meeting would be needed to raise those funds? Bill Rearick, Superintendent, replied it is up to the school board to determine how much is needed. A public hearing would be required to draw on those funds. Ryan asks about the typical cost range per student for special education. Becky Wing, Principle, replies that out of district residential placements can cost over \$200,000.

Susan Y. asked if the funds have ever been used? Bill Rearick said, no. Not in the last seven years. Danielle Davis commented on the scrutiny placed on the school budget and not on the town budget. She believes the town budget should be examined for potential savings. Susan Y. defended the Selectmen saying they are very fiscally conservative. She suggested going back to the parents paying for the high school bus rides, like what used to be done, to cut back on the bus expense. Danielle D. said she is speaking about the budget committee's scrutiny not being the same for the town and school budgets. Stephanie expressed how the school board is open and cooperative, while trying to provide a good education. The cuts make a difference in the quality of what they can provide. One resident asked if the budget committee has any real specific recommendations that can help? Steve T. said they go through both budgets thoroughly, making small cuts where we can. We are asking for a smaller increase. Bill Rearick, states how they do not have control over special education expenses and having obligations that are state mandates. The default budget includes state mandates that are based on the previous year's budget, plus contractual or legal obligations. The default budget increase is 6.3% for the basic education obligations and the operational budget includes the wants. Ryan asks if the cost for a special ed student is cut and dry? Bill Rearick states how they base their projections on what they know; estimates from out of district placements, past averages of 3 years, and potential needs of a student. It is not a predicable outcome. Michael R., asks if the school applies for grants available for special education? Bill Rearick replies, yes. We go after all available grants each year. A resident comments on the majority of the budget committee's decision to send a budget to reduce the school's budget without a clear strategy to find the funds necessary. Steve T. replies that the budget committee sent one to the school board to discuss. Stephanie H. asked if taking the default budget and minus the \$15,000. for the high school busing, if that would be acceptable. Susan Y said we are not reducing the budget; we are just not increasing it as much as they wanted. Stephanie replied it was default, we are not asking for extra things, we asking to operate as we are today. Because of all the increases for things like insurance, busing contract, Pinkerton increases; it is becoming more than 3% due to inflation. A resident from Brown Rd. stated, the default school budget is increasing, the school is relying on that increase to operate. The default budget is going up anyway, but we are cutting back the budget from what the school would need. Lynn replied the default budget is based on the budget for this year. This year is not over. No one knows how much the school is going to spend this year. Often, they return a substantial amount of money to the town. We are all at a disadvantage

because we do not know what it costs this year to operate the school. Then we come up with a default budget based on this year's budget. Michael R. said the school is anticipating that default budget and will feel the impact of the cuts. Ryan said the committee is not cutting the default budget, but proposing a different budget. The voters decide between the proposed and the default budget. Steve states that the encumbered budget for 2025-2026 is \$10,085,000., while the current budget is \$10,008,000., so the proposed budget of \$11,800,000. is an increase. Tara Walker, questions where the money is going to come from for the mitigation of lead in the school's drinking water? Stephanie said the lead pipe mitigation is not currently in the budget. Ryan said in his opinion, the current budget is unsustainable. It could double in the next ten years, which may not align with growth. Ryan Y. suggests a warrant article to address the issue. He believes it would have widespread support, although does not relieve the present problem. He questions if any work has been done, or estimates obtained for the lead mitigation? Beck Wing, Principle, states that they just found out about the extent of the issue on January 8th and will be working on it. Ryan said he would support increases in the budget for that. Stephanie stated the town's budget is up 6%, compared to the school's proposed budget being 3%. Bill S. states that the town's budget increase is due to retirement money. Stephanie replies that the school's increase is due to health insurance and high school education. Dana Buckley, school board member, states that NH has the second highest property taxes, but the third lowest state for overall tax burden and that is shifting responsibility to the local level. We are not spending more than the state average. Bill S. questions the cost per student and the accuracy of \$22,000. average cost. Becky W. states that does not include high school. Bill Rearick, Superintendent, explains how the state calculates the cost per student based on specific categories, not just the total budget divided by the number of students. Stephanie states high school tuition \$2,185,020 and special education is \$3.8 million. One resident stated that proposing lower numbers implies a willingness to cut services. Danialle D. expresses concern for the town becoming a safe haven for people who cannot afford homes at the expense of our children. They should not have to suffer the consequences. She is embarrassed with the water situation and the school having to use bottled water. A resident suggests creating a reserve or revolving fund for the school, using the unused returned funds for maintenance and other needs. Lynn states the school can encumber funds for unfinished projects, acting like a revolving fund.

Lynn closes the public hearing. Bill Saffie makes a motion to accept Article #2 as read. Susan Y. seconded. Susan has a question about the proficiency scores and what is considered adequate? Becky W. states that proficiency scores represent the percentage of students that scored proficient or above, not a percentile. Proficient and above includes advanced levels. Ryan suggests adding money for the water system. Lynn asks if cost estimates might be available by the time of the school deliberative session? Becky W. said they will have preliminary estimates. Further testing will need to be done after the repairs. Bill Rearick states that additional work may need to be done later. They will be applying for grants however, the state requires spending the money first before reimbursement.

A vote is taken on Bill Saffie's motion. 6-No, 3-Yes. Motion fails. Josh explains his no vote, saying how the Budget Committee does a decent job for a volunteer board, working with the different departments, and has to critique and analyze, making some small cuts where they can. He appreciates the professionalism of the officials that have to come up with the budgets. The school budget is an unsustainable business model with large amounts of increases every year, especially with decreased enrollment. The cost of the healthcare being a major portion of the default increase, he questions if more of the cost can be shared by the school employees? This could be a possible cost containment factor in contract negotiations. Josh suggests a 5% increase instead of the 3% proposed. Josh makes a motion for a \$11,669,138. budget, which was seconded by Steve. Lynn states last year's budget of \$11,113,465. With a 5% increase off of last year's budget amounts to \$555,673.25. , a decrease of \$148,000. from the default. Stephanie suggests reviewing the next year's budget with Josh before next contract negotiations. Vote taken on the 5% increase motion. 7No 2-Yes. Steve backs his yes vote on the town's increasing revenue from new home construction with increased density being an estimated 6.25% increase. The town could absorb the increase from the school budget. Ryan makes a motion for a 4% increase, for a budget of \$11,558,004. The cost of living increase at about 2.8% was discussed. A second vote was taken on the 4% increase. 6-No 3-Yes. The board discussed finding a compromise. Lynn suggested splitting the difference between the budget committee's proposal and the default budget, resulting in an increase of \$185,230.53., an estimated percentage between 4.6% and 4.7%. Steve T. stated with a 4% increase, and estimating the town's tax base at \$942 million, with the average house value at \$589,000. Would result in about one dollar per thousand, \$500,000. Total. Susan Y. commented on additional tax burden on top of existing

assessments. The 3% tax increase would be more acceptable to elderly and young tax payers. Lynn stated that the number could be changed at the deliberative session and they need to reach a consensus. Ryan reminded the committee that the increase in the teacher's salary is not included in the budget. Ryan makes a motion for a 4.25% increase and the resulting budget would be \$11,585,787. Susan stated she is worried about the teachers losing out. They are the important element to consider. Ryan's motion for the 4.25% increase was seconded by Steve A vote was taken. 4-No 5 Yes. Motion recommended. 5 to 4.

The teacher's contract, Article #3: Bill asked if it is just a salary increase? Stephanie replied it is a salary increase with health insurance contributions. Susan Y. asked who was covering the health insurance increase? Stephanie said it was the town. Bill asked if it is a new contract? Stephanie said it was and going into effect in July 2026 2027. The contract was voted on by the school board and the teacher's union. If it fails, they would have to go back to negotiating. Josh stated the committee's recommendation would not be binding and would be determined by the voters. Josh questions if they are voting on something where they do not know all the details? Lynn said they had voted on it on Dec. 9 and had the opportunity to request to see the contract then. Stephanie stated the increases in salaries for the contract at 3.5%, 3.75%, 4.3%. which are less than the previous contracts. Steve makes a motion to keep the warrant article as written. Susan Y. seconded. No-1 Yes 8. Recommended by a vote 8 to 1.

Article #4-A citizen's petition warrant article, which cannot be amended. The article proposes a 3% tax cap on the amount to be raised by local taxes for the Candia budget. It was questioned on whether to vote on it or not. Josh stated that they should and if not necessary, then it can be taken off before it goes to the warrant. Susan Y. makes a motion to recommend article #4. Bill S. seconded. No-6, Yes -3. Not recommended by a vote of 6 to 3.

Town Warrant Articles: Lynn reminded the committee to make sure they have the warrant with the last two articles #30 and #31.

Article #1 Stephanie made a motion. Steve T. seconded. Vote 9-0. Recommended

Article#2 Susan Y. made a motion. Bill seconded. Vote 8-1. Recommended

Article #3 Bill S. made a motion. Ryan seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article#4 Susan G. makes a motion. Ryan seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #5 Steve T. makes a motion Bill seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #6 Katrina makes a motion. Ryan seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #7 Steve makes a motion. Bill seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #8 Bill makes a motion. Susan Y. Seconded. Vote 8-1 Recommended

Article #9 Josh makes a motion. Bill seconded. Vote 8-1 Recommended

Article #10 Steve makes a motion. Ryan seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #11 Josh makes a motion. Susan Y. seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #12 Not voting on

Article #13 Stephanie makes a motion. Katrina seconded. Vote 9-0 contingent on #12 being approved. Recommended

Article #14 Steve makes a motion. Susan Y. seconded. Vote 7-2 **Not** Recommended

Article #15 Susan Y. makes a motion. Katrina seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #16 Katrina makes a motion. Susan G. seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #17 Katrina makes a motion Susan G. seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #18 Bill makes a motion. Ryan seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article # 19 Susan Y. makes a motion. Katrina seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #20 Susan Y. makes a motion. Bill seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #21 Steve makes a motion. Bill seconded. Vote 9-0 Recommended

Article #22 Not voting on.

Article #23-#28 Steve makes a motion to lump together articles #23-#28. For a single vote. Susan Y. seconded. Recommended. Susan Y. makes a motion to vote on the articles. Stephanie seconded. Vote 8-1 **Not** recommended

Article #29 Scenic Road designation. No vote.

Article #30 Keno. No vote.

Article #31 Games of chance. No vote.

Lynn stated there is a new state law that allows these activities in any town unless the town explicitly restricts them. They have been on the warrant 5 times and voted down.

Jason Miller explained that the tax impact in parentheses in the warrant articles that say ‘no impact’ means it is less than one cent per thousand.

Lynn stated the Deliberative session is on January 31 at 9:00 in the school gym for the town. Lynn said the committee meets at 8:45 am on the deliberative session day and opens a meeting, then suspends the meeting until the Deliberative session is over. When it is done the committee meets again and if any of the warrant articles are changed, then they re-vote and close the meeting. The school meeting is on February 6 at 6:00 pm in the school gym. The budget committee will meet and open a meeting before the school deliberative session starts and then suspend the meeting until the close of the school meeting when they will re-vote on any changes and close the meeting. Lynn will do the minutes for both sessions. There

was a question about when the town reports would be available. Susan Y. said one week before session two voting on March 10.

A motion to adjourn was made by Steve. Seconded by Katrina. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Lewis  
Admin. Assist.