

Budget Committee Public Hearing School Budget Jan. 10, 2024 Approved

Donna called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Present: Jeff Chella, Dan Newton, Kayla Chandler from the AEMS School Board; Supt. Randy Wormald and Finance Director Hillary Denoncourt from Merrimack Valley School District; Donna Duclos, Aimee Herling, Jim Reed, Mark Cowdrey, Dana Swenson, Greg Stetson, Janet Moore (volunteer secretary) from Budget Committee; Gretchen Hildebrand, Julie Matz as Grade 2 teachers, and members of the public Deb Rees, Beth Page.

Approval of Minutes moved to next meeting.

The School Board presented the Warrant for the Annual School District Meeting on March 4, 2024.

Article 1. To accept reports

Article 2. To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,036,540 for the support of schools, payment of salaries of School District officers and agents, and payment of statutory obligations of the District. (The Budget Committee and the School Board recommend)

Article 3. To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the cost items included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) reached between the Andover School District and the Andover Education Association (AEA) which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level: (now in line with Kearsarge and MV)

fiscal year	estimated increase
2023-2024	\$65,799
2024-2025	\$44,800
2025-2026	\$45,000

And further to raise and appropriate \$65,799 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. (Majority vote) (The Budget Committee and the School Board recommend)

Article 4. To see, if Article 3 is defeated, if the School District will authorize the governing body to call one special meeting at its option to address Article 3 costs only. (Majority vote)

Article 5. To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$55,000 to be deposited in the Special Education Expendable Trust for the purposes of special education tuition and/or transportation costs with said funds from the June 30, 2024 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No additional amount to be raised from taxation. (Majority vote) (The School Board and the Budget Committee recommend)

Read this carefully. They don't retain unassigned fund balance. Check RSA 198:4

Article 6. Any other business.

Notes on Budget:

1. Hillary D meets twice, once with admin. Then with DSS and principals.

2. Increase 21.8% based on usage since COVID, people going back to doctors. Health Trust cannot keep excess, has to go back. Dental was big chunk. Work with legislature to allow 3 big companies to hold excess, balance things out. Money should stay in pool to buffer. Could we have an expendable trust, a rainy day fund? Mark asked if unique to Andover-no. Other 2 providers said the same. 3: Health Trust, School Care, Inter Local
3. SAU 46 assessment line increase, 2 positions brought to SAU level: student services director and admin assistant. Providing more resources to Andover. Tuition contract set for next 10 years. When AEMS sends kids to MV, services and personnel will be known.
4. Went through special ed line by line SEE BELOW: 11-15
5. Collective bargaining already set
6. Dana asked for descriptor of changes-Hillary will send it along
7. School population 180 in Andover-has been going down; 67 high school currently
8. Support staff health and dental increased; didn't need teacher increase
9. Estimating 78 high schoolers, at \$14,545.
10. Curriculum materials: new math program, new ELA program-it's materials. Chapters based on real life. Cursive is now mandated. Kayla spoke positively to these changes. Kids are excited.
11. Tutor not needed-decrease
12. Other special ed increase.
13. 2140-2190: contracted services increased, different levels of service.
14. K-8: 48 students with IEPs, Randy W
15. Work very hard to provide services on site. Some contracted services multi-year.
16. 2313 salary for treasurer increase-Deb Converse-recommend stipend of \$500.
17. Copier costs increase
18. 2610-decrease in heating, with new boiler. Huckleberry bundles school, town offices, MV
19. Plant manager responsible for snow removal; using state pumps for gasoline
20. Transportation-3 runs for elementary, 1 for high school. Don't have enough enrollment to run 4 elementary, New drivers being trained. First Student owns buses. Contract just for full size. Mark asked about smaller vehicles. Contract up at end of next year. MV owns their vehicles, employs own drivers, mechanics (Kayla asked) MV looking at electric and solar panels for charging. Randy spoke eloquently re: treating people right. MV has transportation director and principal with bus license. Special ed transportation new quote: \$600 per day
21. Gretchen H and Julie M commenced to speak about the current 2nd grade. They have raised concerns about the current Grade 2 class, which has been "on notice" since the Kindergarten year. Gretchen is the full time teacher (note: retiring in June after over 40 years) and Julie is full day only Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Support staff attend to the students on a regular schedule: paraprofessional, math interventionist, reading specialist, Title 1, special ed teacher. However, those support staff also serve students in need grades K-5.

In the current grade 2, there are "massive" behavior and academic issues. Although both teachers have raised their concerns repeatedly, no other assistance has been forthcoming. The Early Literacy and Reading Tests demonstrate a wide range of abilities, from early K to middle 3. Almost half of the students require constant redirection. 2 students have 504s for speech or hearing; 7 have IEPs.

The teachers recommend Tier 3 special education; a general interventionist; and that the extra full time person move with the class through AEMS until...

Greg Stetson, speaking for the Budget Committee, moved to ask the SAU for a full time position to be added to this class as it moves through AEMS. He requested a salary figure be forwarded to the BC. The motion passed unanimously.

Janet Moore volunteer secretary