

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024

Un-Official Minutes

1 **Members Present:** Michael Kelly, Chairman; Owen Friend-Gray, Vice Chairman; John Decker, Member;
2 Sandra Jones, Member; Jeffrey Morrison, Member; Brent Tweed, Member; Thomas Butkiewicz,
3 Member; Charlotte Fyfe, Member; Robert Kelly, Member; Megan Sebasco, School Board
4 Representative; Steven Welch, BOS Representative

5

6 **Members Absent:**

7

8 **Others Present:** Bill Roy, School Business Administrator; Ronna HasBrouck, Superintendent; Susan
9 Levenson, School Board Chairperson; Christine Boston; Linda Przychodny

10

11 **Call To Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

12

13 **Approval Of Minutes:** The Board chose to table the minutes to the next meeting.

14

15 School Final Proposed Budget

16

17 Ms. Levenson stated that the School Board met with Ms. HasBrouck and Mr. Roy again to review the
18 budget and the suggestions from the Budget Committee. From that meeting they had brought an
19 adjusted budget and default budget. She stated that they were able to reduce the budget to
20 \$168,534.91 and increase revenues by \$8,000. They removed the math interventionist from the budget.
21 They removed one regular education para-professional. They are going to be looking for other sources
22 to fund the textbooks. They also reduced and removed some annual dues. This brought the budget
23 down to \$4.16 million.

24

25 Mr. Robert Kelly asked if there was an open para-professional position now. Ms. HasBrouck confirmed
26 that there was a recent opening in the past few weeks.

27

28 Revenues

29

30 Mr. Roy stated that they increased interest income by \$5,000. They added a thousand to direct costs
31 (?). They added \$2,000 to lunch sales.

32

33 Mr. Michael Kelly stated that the proposed revenue for the General Fund was \$16,454,484.53. The food
34 service revenue was proposed to be \$211,956.57. Total proposed revenue was \$16,666,441.20.

35

36 ***Mr. Butkiewicz made the motion to approve the proposed budget revenues as read. The motion was***
37 ***seconded by Owen Friend-Gray. The motion passed by a vote of 11-0-0.***

38

39 **Proposed Budget Expenses**

40

41 Mr. Michael Kelly read off the total regular school proposed budget expenses to be \$9,183,947.72.

42

43 Ms. Levenson stated there was an increase (?) of \$103,528.96. This included where the math
44 interventionist and para-professional were removed.

45

46 Mr. Michael Kelly then read off the total special education proposed budget expenses which were
47 \$2,669,554.68.

48

49 Mr. Butkiewicz asked for the total number of special education students. Ms. Levenson stated that pre-
50 school has ten (10) students, the elementary school has 57 students with four (4) active referrals, Coe-
51 Brown has fourteen (14) with one (1) active referral, Dover High has thirteen (13), a charter school has
52 one (1) special education student, and there are seven (7) out of district placements for a total of 102
53 special education students with five (5) active referrals.

54

55 Mr. Michael Kelly continued to read off the totals as follows ...

56

57 Medicaid \$4,000.00

58 Co-Curricular Salaries \$25,458.02

59 Athletic \$45,533.98

60 Summer School \$17,047.70

61 Guidance \$249,243.50

62 Nurse & Health \$122,424.14

63 Special Contracted Services \$50,127.16

64 Contracted Eval \$0

65 Speech \$250,032.36

66 Contracted OT & PT \$117,876.16

67 Other Physical & OT Therapy Services \$3,400.00

68 Student Service Support \$82,209.68

69 Improvement Of Instruction \$81,206.23

70 Instruction & Curriculum Development \$151,605.44

71 Library & Educational Media \$149,823.08

72 Computer Assisted Instruction \$206,763.60

73 School Board Services \$39,247.56

74 District Secretary Clerk Services \$2,960.38

75 District Treasury Services \$2,153.00

76 Election Services \$0

77 Audit Services \$23,250.00

78 Legal Services \$31,000.00

79 SAU Expense \$535,369.13

80 Office Of Superintendent Services \$0

81 Principal's Office \$421,959.80
82 Business & Financial Service \$12,150.99
83 School District Bookkeeper \$42,758.69
84 Supervising Fiscal Services \$166,543.65
85 Operation and Maintenance of Plant \$686,730.05
86 Care Of Ground Services \$25,950.00
87 Regular Education Transport \$734,662.08
88 Special Education Transport \$361,659.31
89 Athletic Transportation \$5,826.02
90 Field Trip Transportation \$12,209.69
91 Homeless Transportation \$28,801.00
92 Food Service \$211,956.67

93
94 Ms. Fyfe wanted to clarify that House Bill # 1656 would increase the special education grant from \$2,100
95 to \$27,000 per student.

96
97 Mr. Butkiewicz asked how much that proposed budget would need to be reduced to hit the 4%. Mr. Roy
98 stated that it would need to be reduced by \$21,000.

99
100 Mr. Michael Kelly opened the public hearing at 7:36 p.m.

101
102 Christine Boston, 7 Shannon Drive, stated that she wanted to make sure everyone fully understood the
103 district's obligation under IDEA, Federal Regulations, and New Hampshire rules for students with
104 disabilities, ED 1100. Ms. Boston stated that in 20 USC Chapter 33, From Title 20 Education, Congress is
105 clear about the purpose of educating students with disabilities. She read quotes directly from the
106 regulations. She spoke about the previous meeting that the school had with Budget Committee where it
107 was suggested to hire a full-time special education teacher who would take on multiple special
108 education children in a separate classroom. This would allow the school to then remove some of the
109 para-professionals from the budget. She read off the regulations from IDEA about the least restrictive
110 environment. Ms. Boston stated that only the school district could legally remove children from the
111 classroom but only after proving that the disability is so severe that the general education environment
112 is no longer the student's least restrictive environment. This could not be done by a board, an
113 administrator, or any town entity.

114
115 Ms. Boston stated that if she did have any suggestions to make for the budget, she would ask that they
116 look at increases in staffing, mental health support, professional development, and library funds. She
117 stated that she did not feel that the budget, as presented, is enough to provide what our students need.

118
119 Linda Przychodny, of 16 Camelot Court, asked about the pre-school and if it was run by the school. Ms.
120 Levenson responded that it was run by the school. Ms. Przychodny asked what it costs to run the pre-
121 school. Ms. Sebasco stated that the school district is required to provide special education services to
122 children starting at the age of three (3). Therefore, the pre-school is not just a public pre-school, it is

123 also a requirement. Ms. Levenson explained that it is a mixed classroom of special education and
124 general education children. Ms. Sebasco added that the students who are not in special education pay
125 tuition to go there. Mr. Roy stated that the salaries are about \$138,000 for one teacher and one para-
126 professional. He stated that the revenue is around \$20,000 for the students that pay.

127
128 Ms. Przychodny stated that she was trying to figure out if the taxpayers were subsidizing the general
129 education children at the pre-school. Mr. Butkiewicz stated that the school charged well below market
130 rate. She stated that most pre-school age families that she knows of have to pay for pre-school. She
131 wanted the taxpayers to know that it sounded like they are subsidizing for children to go to the
132 Nottingham pre-school.

133
134 Ms. Levenson stated that they consider the general education children at the pre-school to be part of
135 the special education children's IEP's, which help them grow into the school environment.

136
137 Ms. Przychodny asked if the parents of the non-special education children could pay more. Ms.
138 HasBrouck stated that they could charge more. She also pointed out that it is a half-day pre-school.

139
140 Ms. Przychodny asked what the homeless transportation was. Ms. HasBrouck stated that it is a Federal
141 law that the school district is required to pay for transportation for any children that are deemed
142 homeless. This could mean that they are temporarily staying in another town and were still enrolled in
143 Nottingham School.

144
145 Mr. Robert Kelly left the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

146
147 **Default Budget Revenues**

148
149 Mr. Michael Kelly read off the default budget revenue totals.

150
151 General Fund \$16,322,219.90
152 Food Service \$194,952.16
153 Total \$16,517,172.06

154
155 **Default Budget Expenses**

156
157 Mr. Michael Kelly read off the total default budget expenses as \$16,517,172.06.

158
159 ***The motion was made by Ms. Jones to accept the school's default budget as presented. The motion***
160 ***was seconded by Mr. Butkiewicz. The motion passed by a vote of 10-0-0.***

161
162 Mr. Kelly asked if there were public comments regarding the default budget.

163

164 Ms. Boston returned to the table to speak. She asked if the default budget includes any increases in the
165 actual costs for special education for new students, placements, and needs. Mr. Roy stated that it does
166 include that for the ones that are IEP driven or mandated.

167
168 Mr. Butkiewicz stated that there is a Special Education Fund that can cover those costs for move-ins. He
169 stated that there is \$173,000 in that fund.

170
171 Ms. HasBrouck stated that the current amount in the Special Education Fund would only cover one (1)
172 student. She stated that she thought Ms. Boston was pointing out that the default budget is extremely
173 risky since there are five (5) students who could be coming in with special education needs.

174
175 **Warrant Articles**

176
177 Mr. Friend-Gray and Mr. Kelly read off the warrant articles.

178
179 Mr. Friend-Gray invited the inhabitants of the school district of Nottingham to the Deliberative Session
180 on Wednesday, February 7th at 6:00 p.m. This session would consist of explanation, discussion, and
181 debate of warrant articles 1 – 6. The warrant articles could be amended subject to limitations. The
182 second session of the annual meeting would be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2024, from 7:00 a.m. –
183 7:00 p.m. Both sessions would be held at the Nottingham School.

184
185 **Article 1**

186 To choose the following school district officers ...
187 School Board Member – Term of 3 Years
188 School Board Member – Term of 3 Years

189
190 **Article 2**

191 Shall the Nottingham School District raise and appropriate an operating budget not including
192 appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately the amount set
193 forth on the budget proposed within the warrant or as amended by vote at the first session for the
194 purposes, set forth therein, \$16,666,441. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be
195 \$16,516,172, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the
196 Nottingham School Board or by law ...

197 The estimated tax impact is \$15.48 per \$1,000. The estimated tax impact if this article does not pass is
198 \$15.31 per thousand.

199
200 **Article 3**

201 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be
202 added to the Building Repair Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The current balance on
203 12/31/23 was \$266,648.

204 The estimated tax impact is \$.06 per \$1,000.

205

206 Article 4
207 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$25,000 to
208 be added to the Text Book Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the
209 June 30, 2024, Unassigned Fund balance available on July 1, 2024, with no additional amount to be
210 raised by taxation. The current balance on 12/31/23 was \$11,925.96
211 The estimated tax impact is \$.00 per \$1,000.
212
213 Article 5
214 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$25,000 to
215 be added to the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum is to come from
216 the June 30, 2024, unassigned fund balance available on July 1, 2024, with no additional amount to be
217 raised by taxation. The current balance on 12/31/23 was \$173,394.88.
218 The estimated tax impact is \$.00 per \$1,000.
219
220 Article 6
221 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the
222 provisions of RSA 35:1-C to be known as the Tuition Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of
223 unanticipated student tuition costs and further raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be placed in
224 the fund with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2024 year end Unassigned Fund balance and
225 further to appoint the School Board as agents to expend from the fund.
226 The estimated tax impact is \$.00 per \$1,000.
227
228 Mr. Butkiewicz asked about what the actual cost of the Curriculum Director was. Mr. Roy stated that it
229 was \$147,766.44.
230
231 There was discussion regarding the Unassigned Fund balance. Ms. Levenson stated that they were not
232 able to fund some of the Capital Reserve Funds last year because there was not enough in the
233 Unassigned Fund. Mr. Butkiewicz stated that the better the Committee does their job, the less there will
234 be in the Unassigned Fund. Ms. HasBrouck stated that it is a concern because the budget is so tight that
235 there may not be enough money to fund the warrants.
236
237 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if it was too late to change the warrant articles to remove the portion about
238 paying them from the Unassigned Fund balance. Mr. Kelly stated that it would be a legal question but
239 they would have time to look into it.
240
241 Mr. Kelly opened up the public comment on the warrant articles.
242
243 Linda Przychodny, of 16 Camelot Court, stated that if the school were charging more for the pre-school,
244 about \$142 per week, there could potentially be no need for Article 3 since they would be raising
245 enough money to cover that.
246
247 Mr. Michael Kelly read of the tax cap worksheet.

248 Proposed Budget \$16,666,441 offset by revenue of \$3,786,582.
249 Amount to be raised by taxes \$12,879,859.
250 Assessed Valuation \$832,146,848
251 Tax Rate Per Thousand 15.48%
252 Current Tax Rate 14.86%
253 4.16% Increase
254
255 Default Budget \$16,517,172 offset by revenue of \$3,776,582.
256 Amount to be raised by taxes \$12,740, 590.
257 Assessed Valuation \$832,146,848
258 Tax Rate Per Thousand 15.31%
259 Current Tax Rate 14.86%
260 3.03% Increase
261
262 Estimated tax impact is \$15.48 per thousand not including warrant articles and \$15.54 per thousand
263 including the warrant articles.
264
265 Mr. Michael Kelly ended the public hearing.
266
267 The Committee decided to continue to deliberate about the school.
268
269 Mr. Butkiewicz questioned why the school was only planning on getting \$97,000 in special education aid
270 when his calculations were much higher. There wasn't a specific answer but Ms. Sebasco stated that is
271 what they received the previous year and they would not want to overestimate revenues.
272
273 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if the school had a dog. Mr. Hasbrouck answered that the guidance counselor has
274 a personal dog that is a therapy dog that she sometimes brings in. It is more of a school mascot.
275
276 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if having it's own SAU, the Town has saved any money compared to having a
277 shared SAU. It was discussed that it was still hard to tell but it looked like a small amount had been
278 saved so far.
279
280 Mr. Butkiewicz asked what the school has done to reduce the use of paper. Ms. Sebasco answered that
281 the school uses Chromebooks and workbooks, but there are still pencil and paper activities since the
282 school wants to balance that use with technology.
283
284 Mr. Butkiewicz asked for the current enrollment K-8. Ms. HasBrouck answered that it was 516 including
285 the pre-school. He also asked about the district wide enrollment. Ms. Sebasco stated that it was 806,
286 not counting home school. She also stated that the school district does not financially support any
287 home-schooled children. But they just like to be aware of the number just in case they do decide to
288 come to the school.
289

290 Mr. Michael Kelly asked about the “Teacher Pay Teacher” program but the school had already removed
291 that from the budget.

292
293 Mr. Michael Kelly asked about the \$20,000 to pay staff to develop and update curriculum, technology,
294 and other lesson materials over the summer. He thought this was a large amount. Ms. HasBrouck
295 stated that it is mostly due to helping the IT person update the technology. It is also used to pay
296 teachers to work on their own curriculum. Teachers must apply to be a part of this. It is not part of the
297 teacher’s 184 day contract. Ms. HasBrouck stated that this is also supplemented with grants whenever
298 possible.

299
300 Mr. Friend-Gray stated that in previous meetings, the school had the need for a math interventionist.
301 But, since then, the position was cut out of the budget and not added to a warrant article. He asked
302 how the needs of the students would be met without that position. Ms. Sebasco stated that the School
303 Board decided to think outside of the box to look for other enrichment services. She also stated that
304 there would still be one math interventionist.

305
306 Mr. Butkiewicz pointed out that according to his calculations, the percent increase of 4.16%, as stated
307 earlier in the meeting, was incorrect and that the school’s proposed budget was really a 6.7% increase.
308 His chart showed that the school’s budget increases have been much more than the Town’s budget
309 increases.

310
311 There was a lengthy discussion about how large the school budget is and how fast it is growing
312 compared to the Town budget. This brought in opinions on a variety of topics other than the budget.
313 Mr. Michael Kelly felt that it was o.k. to let the discussion continue as many of the current members of
314 the Committee would still be there next year. The main discussion was on the cost of Special Education
315 and why it can be so expensive for the taxpayers and the community.

316
317 Mr. Tweed explained that he would like to see the budgets increase at a rate closer to the inflation rate.
318 Ms. Sebasco said that is not always possible since most costs are not tied to the inflation rate and often
319 increase at a much higher rate.

320
321 Mr. Michael Kelly stated that he was concerned about the culture of the school and the sexualization of
322 children in the library books. He asked the school to reach out to the community to get more opinions
323 in regard to these topics.

324
325 Mr. Butkiewicz spoke about how social emotion learning is infused throughout the school budget. He
326 explained that many parents are concerned about this new approach to learning and that many parents
327 disagree with it. Ms. Sebasco stated that parents do have the right to ask about their children’s
328 curriculum if they are concerned.

329

330 Mr. Decker asked if the School Board had reviewed their stipends. Ms. Levenson stated that they had
331 not. Mr. Decker stated that he felt that the Board Of Selectmen and the School Board should be paid
332 equally.

333
334 Mr. Butkiewicz suggested reducing the Moderator's pay. Mr. Decker and Mr. Welch disagreed. Mr.
335 Friend-Gray suggested lowering the budget for material items before personnel.

336
337 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if the school has thought about ways to use up the impact fees before they expire
338 such as shipping containers for storage. Ms. Sebasco stated they could not be used for that. She said
339 the Facilities Committee had been asking about that as well and would be looking further into options to
340 spend the impact fees.

341
342 Mr. Michael Kelly stated that the Committee would meet about the school budget next Thursday,
343 January 18th at 7:00 p.m. to do their recommendation on the proposed budget and warrant articles.

344
345 Mr. Michael Kelly stated some updates that Ms. White had sent including re-naming the line in the
346 budget for pistol permits. He said that she had provided an updated form MS-1, which is the Town
347 official filing to the State. Ms. White had provided new methodology for the tax cap worksheet as it was
348 calculated differently in the past. There was discussion about whether the calculation should use
349 warrant articles or not.

350
351 Mr. Michael Kelly listed the additional items to be addressed at the next meeting in addition to the
352 school budget.

353
354 Mr. Decker made the motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Mr. Tweed. The motion passed by a vote
355 of 10-0-0.

356
357 Transcribed per video.
358 Respectfully Submitted,
359 Alana J. Kenney