

## **Hillsboro-Deering Cooperative School District**

### **Deliberative Session**

**January 30, 2021**

School District Moderator John Segedy opened the meeting at 9:15 am and made introductions: School Board members Herla Iadonisi, Richard Pelletier, Chris Bober, Chair Kathryn McGinn, Vice Chair Paul Plater, School District Clerk Joyce Bosse, Superintendent Patricia Parenteau, Legal Counsel Edward Kaplan, and Business Manager Mary Henry.

He then led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for all those we've lost during the past year. He then explained the rules of the meeting and stressed that everyone should wear their masks and try to stay a safe distance from others.

#### **Article 01 Election of Officers**

To choose by nonpartisan ballot the following School District Officials:

Two School Board Members At Large for three year terms

Rich Pelletier

Heidi Welch

Jessica Morris

Leon Stearns

One Moderator for a one year term

John Segedy

#### **Article 02 Set Salaries of School Board, Agents/Officers**

Shall the Hillsboro-Deering School District set the salaries of the School Board and compensation of any other officers or agents of the District as printed in the 2021-2022 Budget?

School Board Chair \$1,800

School Board Members \$1,000 each

School Treasurer \$3,400

District Clerk \$100 per meeting

Moderator \$90 per year

Ballot Clerks \$10 each per voting session

Recommended by School Board

No action.

#### **Article 03 Operating Budget**

Shall the voters of the Hillsboro-Deering School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the

first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$23,640,619 (twenty-three million, six hundred forty thousand, six hundred and nineteen dollars)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$23,761,765 (twenty-three million, seven hundred sixty-one thousand, seven hundred sixty-five dollars), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the school district or by law; or the School District may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Funding the operating budget for 2021-2022 but does not include appropriations in other warrant articles, except Article #2)  
Recommended by School Board

Presented by Kathryn McGinn who gave an overview of the mission of the District and highlights, along with the explanation that the State is reducing the amount of State aid. NH Retirement and CBA increases that can't be changed are also contributing to higher overall costs. The budget reflects a decrease of \$421,138 in personnel and \$46,000 in non-personnel. The proposed budget is less than the default budget by \$121,147.68.

There was much discussion by members of the audience: Casey Patterson, questioned the debt and the current bond and asked what it is for. The answer was it's the bond for the Middle School. Riche Colcombe, Hillsboro, questioned where to find the detailed information on the SAU contribution and retirements. The answer is that retirement figures are set by the State and the SAU costs are found on the last page of the handout that was available as people checked in. She commented that she would not like to see reductions of staff. Don Mann, Deering, commented that he would also like to see more detailed information about the SAU budget. He also noted that the school resource officer was not included in the reduction, but is on the spread sheet. Jeff Smith, Deering, can't find line items dealing with out of district placements. The answer was that the budget plans on what is currently known, but there is also a trust to help in that area. He also questioned when we would know about State aid, and the answer is in May. Leigh Bosse, Hillsboro, would like to know the current amount in the unassigned fund balance. The answer is that 90.27% has been spent or encumbered for salaries, leaving \$2.3 million but there is still 5 months left in the year. He also asked if the proposed staff reductions were subtracted prior to calculating the default budget and commented that the figure of \$38,589 seemed very high for a part time employee. Jon Daley, Hillsboro, feels that the SAU Budget appropriation in Article 5 can be modified by this body. The moderator responded that only with the cooperation of Windsor and Washington can it be changed, not with the body present. Dennis Cavallero, Deering, asked if the Board had specific target goals such as graduation rates, math scores, etc. Chair Kathryn McGinn answered that there are strategic goals and a masterplan setting bench marks. Superintendent Parenteau mentioned that there is a handout in the room that shows the District's Strategic Plan. Marion Baker, Hillsboro, stated that the reductions don't make sense because they're in math, science and technology. The response was that they made changes in the curriculum to include more STEM in the classrooms, eliminating the need for an additional teacher. There was also a change from using ZOOM to using Google for meetings. Henry Lemieux, Deering, questioned the line item for principals and looking at accountability-with a 77% graduation rate and test scores of 38%, why are people getting raises. The response was that the line item was not for just one person, and includes benefits. Russ Vassar, Hillsboro, asked why the elimination in the budget of the School Resource Officer. Chairman McGinn answered that they were restructuring the guidance department so they would no longer need the SRO.

The question was asked if anyone in the school was armed. The comment was that they were looking into having the Town pay. Kelly D'Erico, Hillsboro, spoke as the President of the Support Staff and a HDHS graduate and stated that she was proud of the staff, students, and leadership. Also, sometimes benefits are more than wages for lower paying jobs. Katie Lavoie, Deering, asked Superintendent Parenteau how long she had been in the District. She answered by saying that her grandparents, parents, she and her sons all lived in Hillsboro and she has worked in the District for 20 years, but this is her first year as Superintendent. Jim Peters, Deering, commented on the lack of funding from the State and everything being passed through to the taxpayers. Chair McGinn suggested that he contact the State representatives to express his concern. Lenace Watson, Deering, asked what special programs were available to students. The answer is that there are vocational programs through Concord Vocational Technical School. She also noted that she was looking for line items for the SAU and why they weren't included. Chair McGinn responded by saying that there had already been a public hearing regarding the SAU and since changes can't be made by the body that details were not included. However, she noted that they will make a note to include details in the future. Bill Whisman, Deering, said that there should be integrity and honor regarding cutting the budget and Board members should volunteer to cut their pay and have transparency. Also, some people may not have access to the internet nor the ability to print, and to stop hiding behind COVID. Board member Herla Iadonisi replied that being a School Board member is a thankless position and there have been countless meetings to determine the budget.

Riche Colcombe noted that she had considered running for the Board, but opted not to because of the extraordinary amount of time that is involved. She also brought up that the numbers in the line items for the HS Principal didn't add up and asked that the Board go back and check the FICA lines. Also there seems to be a disparity between teachers and principals and asked where to find the info on the website, because she couldn't. Don Mann, Deering, commented that Marge Porter, one of our State representatives, had noted that there are two bills in the Legislature, but he believes that the relief bills won't pass. Leigh Bosse, Hillsboro, spoke of an Independent study that had reported that we have had ineffective teachers, and have had low rankings for the past 20 years, yet not one teacher had been non-renewed due to performance. We need to demand excellence. Nationally, NH ranks high, but HD ranks low and that it needs to be recognized that Hillsboro has a problem. Sean Austin, Hillsboro, said that the students are not good people, especially with remote learning, and we need to demand more. No action was taken. Herla Iadonisi moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 3. Motion passed (although it was noted that the motion was moot).

#### **Article 04      Appropriation for Food Service and Federal / State**

Shall the Hillsboro-Deering School District raise and appropriate \$1,862,000 for the support of school projects as follows: \$700,000 (seven hundred thousand dollars) for Food Service and, \$1,162,000 (one million, one hundred sixty two thousand dollars) for Federal and State projects? Such sum to be offset by school lunch sales and State and Federal grants. Majority vote required. Recommended by School Board

No Discussion or action taken.

#### **Article 05      Appropriation for SAU Budget**

Shall the voters of the Hillsboro Deering School District adopt a School Administrative Unit budget of \$1,202,033 (One million, two hundred and two thousand, thirty three dollars) for the forthcoming fiscal year in which \$1,018,442 (one million eighteen thousand, four hundred forty two dollars) is assigned to the school budget of this district? This year's alternative budget of \$1,185,316 (one million, one hundred eighty five thousand, three hundred and sixteen dollars) for the forthcoming fiscal year in which \$1,004,279 (one million four thousand, two hundred seventy nine dollars) is assigned to the school budget of the district, will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all school district voters in the School Administrative Unit. Recommended by the School Board.

It was noted that the budget includes contracted raises and increases for non-contracted employees, and that Hillsboro and Deering pay about 85%, with Washington and Windsor paying the balance. Leon Stearns, Deering, noted that the cost per pupil of the SAU is high and the lower paid employees are not part of the default budget. Don Mann, Deering, wants to vote to defeat the SAU, but only as a line item. The Moderator and Town Counsel both agree that this Article cannot be adjusted. Casey Patterson is concerned with expenses, with debit service, why are we spending money when we owe so much. Board member Paul Plater stated that the increase is about \$24,000 and HD pays 85%.  
No action taken.

#### **Article 06      Fund HVAC Expendable Trust**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$50,000(Fifty Thousand) to be added to the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by the School Board

Rich Pelletier stated that expendable trusts are a way to pay for big ticket items and the moneys can only be appropriated if there is money left at the end of the budget. The Board is concerned that there may be some unfunded mandates due to COVID.  
No action taken.

#### **Article 07      Fund Special Education Expendable Trust**

Shall the Hillsboro-Deering School District vote to raise and appropriate up to \$50,000 (fifty thousand dollars) to be added to the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund previously established? This sum to come from the Jun 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance available for transfer after July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by the School Board

Board member Chris Bober stated that we never know when one or more students will move into the District and require out of district placement. Riche Colcombe, Hillsboro, asked if there is a per student cap on special education services. The answer is no.  
No action taken.

**Article 08      Fund Technology ETF**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars) to be added to the Technology Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommend by School Board  
Presentation by Chris Bober.

No discussion or action taken.

**Article 09      Fund Paving Expendable Trust**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$10,000 (Ten thousand dollars) to be added to the Paving Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by the School Board

Presentation by Herla Iadonisi. No discussion or action taken.

**Article 10      Fund Roofs Expendable Trust**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$10,000 (Ten thousand dollars) to be added to the Roofs Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by the School Board

No discussion or action taken.

**Article 11      Retain 5.0% Contingency Fund**

To see if the school district will vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain year-end unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed, in any fiscal year, up to 5.0% percent of the current fiscal year's net assessment, in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II. (Majority vote required)  
Recommended by the School Board

The Moderator stepped down, appointing Hillsboro Town Moderator Leigh Bosse as temporary School District Moderator. Don Mann, Deering, asked about the per student cost difference between Deering and Hillsboro. The Business Manager Mary Henry spoke on the fund, saying that having it would help level out the tax rates and that Towns have this ability. Jon Daley, Hillsboro, stated that this is not like the Town and that Hillsborough doesn't have a contingency fund. John Segedy, Hillsboro, moves to amend this article to 0%, John Daley seconded. Mr. Segedy further noted that this fund does not specify

on what the money should be used. Riche Colcombe, Hillsboro, asked for which budget would this be used. The answer is 2022, but the Board doesn't have a projected amount. After a vote by the body of 51 yes, 53 no, the motion was defeated.

**Article 12      Accept Annual Reports**

Shall the Hillsboro-Deering School District accept the reports of agents, committees and officers chosen as printed in the Annual Report? Recommended by School Board

No action taken.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joyce Bosse

Hillsboro-Deering School District Clerk