

**Hillsboro-Deering Cooperative School District  
Deliberative Session**

**February 6, 2023 – 7:00 pm**

**Hillsboro-Deering Middle School Gymnasium**

School District Moderator John Segedy opened the meeting at 7:00pm and made introductions: School Board members; Chair Chris Bober, Vice Chair Paul Plater, Jessica Morris, Heidi Welch and Michael Kenney; School District Clerk Megan Shower, Superintendent Jennifer Crawford, Legal Counsel Matt Upton, and Business Manager Grant Geisler.

He then asked military veteran Michael Kenney to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. John Segedy followed with a moment of silence.

**Article 01 - Election of Officers**

To choose by nonpartisan ballot the following School District Officials:

- One School Board Member from Hillsboro for 3-year term
    - Paul Plater
  - One Moderator for a 1-year term
    - John Segedy
1. Comments/Questions on Article One
    - a. None

**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 2023-2024 Budget?

School Board Chair	\$1,800
School Board Members	\$1,000 each
School Treasurer	\$5,000
District Clerk	\$100 per meeting
Moderator	\$100 per meeting
Ballot Clerks	\$10 each per voting session
Recommended by School Board	

Presented by Paul Plater - Moderator was increased from \$90 to \$100 and from per year to per meeting. Explained the school board recently discovered that per RSA 198:5, II, the cooperative school board appoints the school treasurer and determines the sum for services.

1. Plater moved to amend article two by removing the "School Treasurer - \$5,000". The amended article shall read "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 2023-2024 Budget? School Board Chair \$1,800; School Board Members \$1,000 each; District Clerk \$100 per meeting; Moderator \$100 per meeting; Ballot Clerks \$10 each per voting session" Riche Colcombe seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Comments/Questions on Article Two
  - a. Jon Daley - would like to know what was discussed at the school board meeting regarding the ballot clerk position
    - i. Bober - Ballot clerks in Deering are volunteers, compensated for their service. Hillsboro uses a ballot counting machine.
    - ii. Supervisors of the checklist get paid \$10/hour

- b. Riche Colcombe
  - i. She was a ballot clerk for the town of Deering for the last count. The school board did not inform the Ballot Clerks that they had to submit an invoice to be paid the \$10 compensation.
- c. Joyce Bosse
  - i. Ballot Clerks do more than just counting the ballots at the end of the day.
  - ii. They are present at the place of voting from 7am until the end of counting the ballots at night.
  - iii. The \$10 compensation is primarily a “thank-you” to the volunteers.

### **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 \$24,072,133 (twenty-four million, seventy-two thousand, one hundred and thirty-three dollars)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$23,898,076 (twenty-three million, eight hundred ninety-eight thousand, seventy-six 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 2023-2024 but does not include appropriations in other warrant articles, except Article #2)  
Recommended by School Board

Presented by Chris Bober who gave an overview of the school board's mission and goals, the budget and budget key factors. The budget is a \$16,095 increase over the FY23 budget.

#### **1. Comments/Questions on Article Three**

- a. Riche Colcombe
  - i. The state has no influence on the local tax rate
  - ii. The bond payment was finished in August of 2022,
  - iii. Schools are meant to be educational institutions, not psychological
  - iv. Questions the amount of staffing and funding the school is spending on psychological services.
  - v. Has requested the surplus value for FY 2022, but has not received it yet.
  - vi. Riche moved to reduce our FY 2024 budget by \$1,000,000 dollars, including the appropriations set forth by the special warrant articles 6 and 7. This motion is made with the recommendation that the school board first consider reducing our psych expenditures, our school clothing expenditures, our maintenance phone expenditures and other administration costs. Dennis Cavaganaro seconds.
    - 1. Requests a secret ballot
      - a. Keith Cobbett
      - b. Marc Colcombe
      - c. Betsy Suzor
      - d. Karin Reed
      - e. Harold Herbert
      - f. Russ Galpin
      - g. Phoebe Galpin

Atty. Upton - noted that a reduction to appropriations from articles 6 and 7 to this motion can not be acted upon as this is a negotiated collective bargaining agreement.

- vii. Riche moved to amend her previous motion to reduce our FY 2024 budget by \$1,000,000 dollars, excluding the appropriations set forth by the special warrant articles 6 and 7. This motion is made with the recommendation that the school board first consider reducing our psych expenditures, our school clothing expenditures, our maintenance phone expenditures and other administration costs. Dennis Cavaganaro seconds.
- b. Robert Hassett
  - i. Conval School District and Claremont School District have both sued the state over the inadequate aid provided by the state
  - ii. Thinks that people need to think hard about reducing the budget
- c. Kathryn McGinn
  - i. This is the smallest increase in the budget she has seen over the last 19 years.
  - ii. Recommends that if anyone has strong feelings about where our money is going, she suggests they spend time in our schools.
  - iii. This is a very fair budget.
- d. Jason Buck
  - i. A great deal of the psychological staff time is spent on testing
  - ii. If we pull this service we would not be able to meet our legal obligations and would be out of compliance with Federal Law.
- e. Michael Kenney
  - i. Would like to know if the motion is just for the mental health services in the budget.
- f. Robert Hassett
  - i. Thank you to the people who were able to give the \$1.4 million back to the taxpayers.
  - ii. Would like to make an additional amendment when appropriate.
- g. Riche Colcombe
  - i. Would like to reiterate that the proposed decrease is the smallest we have seen, we do not have the \$753,373 Middle School bond payment anymore and this budget has absorbed that.
- h. Vanessa Gaffey
  - i. Would like to thank the school board for taking the money that we were spending on the bond payment and have re-allocated them to the needs of the students.
- i. Alex Luhtjarv
  - i. Commend the Board for a fiscally responsible budget.
  - ii. The voter approved teacher agreement did absorb most of the bond payment
  - iii. Does not want his children in a classroom of 24-26 students
  - iv. A million dollar cut to this budget would represent staff cuts. This would make it very difficult for teachers and staff to do their jobs, and class size would increase further.
  - v. Hillsboro-Deering did start their year by comparing staffing vacancies to other districts, and there were fewer vacancies at a time where finding staffing is very difficult.
- j. Jon Daley
  - i. Does not see the necessity to cut the proposed budget by \$1,000,000.
- k. Riche Colcombe
  - i. Feels that the snow removal contract is too much for the amount of snow we have had in the past year.

- ii. Bussing Contract does not have a clause that allows the school to cancel the contract for the same reasons that the bussing company can cancel the contract.
- I. Jason Buck
  - i. The absorbing of that money is about \$400,000 which is about 1.6% if you do see this as an increase.
  - ii. The \$1,000,000 reduction number is arbitrary
- 2. Vote on the motion to reduce the budget by \$1,000,000
  - a. 21 - Yes to 39 No. Motion is defeated.
- 3. Chris Bober submits a motion to restrict reconsideration of article 3. Kelly D'Errico seconds. Motion passes.

#### **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

Presented by Mike Kenney

- 1. Comments/Questions on Article Four
  - a. None

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

Shall the voters of the Hillsboro Deering School District adopt a School Administrative Unit budget of \$1,185,145 (one million, one hundred eighty-five thousand, one hundred forty-five dollars) for the forthcoming fiscal year in which \$1,005,714 (one million, five thousand, seven hundred fourteen dollars) is assigned to the school budget of this district? This year's alternative budget of \$1,216,432 (one million, two hundred sixteen thousand, four hundred and thirty-two dollars) for the forthcoming fiscal year in which \$1,032,264 (one million, thirty-two thousand, two hundred sixty-four 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 School Board.

Presented by Heidi Welch

- 1. Comments/Questions on Article Five
  - a. None

#### **Article 06 - Collective Bargaining Agreement**

To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hillsboro Deering School Board and the Hillsboro-Deering Support Staff (AFT Local #6219) which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year Estimated Increase

2023-2024 \$95,917

2024-2025 \$75,781

2025-2026 \$81,419

And further to raise and appropriate \$95,917 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the most recent collective bargaining agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. (Majority vote required) Recommended by School Board

Presented by Chris Bober

1. Comments/Questions on Article Six

a. Leigh Bosse

- i. Supports article 6
- ii. protests the way this information is presented. What is not obvious is that the \$95,917 is paid three times, the \$75,781 is paid twice.
- iii. The total cost of this is over \$400,000
- iv. These figures need to be shown to people before going to the polls.

b. Alex Luhtjarv

- i. Would like to join Mr. Bosse in his support for article 6
- ii. We would be hard pressed to be as effective as we are if we did not have our support staff.

**Article 07 - If Article #6 is Defeated**

Shall the School District, if Article # 6 is defeated, authorize the School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 6 cost items only? (Majority vote required) Recommended by School Board

1. Comments/Questions on Article Seven

a. None

**Article 08 - 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, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer after July 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by the School Board

Presented by Heidi Welch

1. Comments/Questions on Article Eight

a. None

**Article 09 - Fund School Building Maintenance Expendable Trust**

Shall the Hillsboro-Deering School District vote to raise and appropriate up to \$150,000 (one hundred fifty thousand dollars) to be added to the School Building Maintenance Fund previously established? This sum to come from the Jun 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer after July 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by School Board

Presented by Jess Morris

1. Comments/Questions on Article Nine

a. Riche Colcombe

- i. Building maintenance fund can be used for a variety of purposes, as stated. We used to have specific funds for things like HVAC or Paving funds.
- ii. There are very few guidelines on how this money can be used.
- iii. Moved to amend article 9 to "HDSB to raise and appropriate up to \$25,000 (twenty-five thousand dollars) to be added to the School Building Maintenance Fund previously established. This sum to come from the June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer after Jul 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from taxation. Jon Daley seconds.

b. Jon Daley

- i. Speaks in favor of this amendment.

- c. Joyce Bosse
    - i. Is the school board able to just spend these funds, or do they have to have a public hearing?
      - 1. Yes, the board has to have a public hearing to use this money.
      - 2. The money that is put into these trust funds can only be used for the purposes of the funds.
      - 3. having a fund like this is to prevent a future need to borrow money if unexpected maintenance issues occur
      - 4. This is not an arbitrary pool of money
  - d. Jason Buck
    - i. Will not be supporting the amendment
    - ii. The amount of money that was spent on maintenance this past year exceeds the amount of money being requested to put into the trust.
  - e. Alex Luhtjarv
    - i. Will also be voting no on the amendment.
    - ii. We have three buildings on campus, two of which are showing their age.
    - iii. There has never been a serious effort to build a pool on campus.
  - f. Riche Colcombe
    - i. This trust is for the purpose of maintenance and repair of the school grounds.
    - ii. Would like to share that we have received over \$4 million dollars in covid money that has been used for maintenance and repair of our buildings in the past year.
2. Vote on amendment
- a. Amendment is defeated by voice vote - No votes were greater than Yes votes

#### **Article 10 - Fund Technology 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 Technology Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommend by School Board

Presented by Jess Morris

- 1. Comments/Questions on Article Ten
  - a. None

#### **Article 11 - 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

Presented by Mike Kenney

- 1. Comments/Questions on Article Eleven
  - a. None

#### **Article 12 - By Petition**

Shall Hillsboro-Deering Cooperative School District remove the School Treasurer compensation from the set salaries of the school board agents/officers warrant article that is linked to the salaries set forth for the school board chair, school board members and moderator. The School Treasurer is a hired outside professional, not an elected officer. The voters of Hillsboro-Deering Cooperative School District request the compensation for the School Treasurer shall be carried in the budget without the request in a warrant article.

1. Comments/Questions on Article Twelve
  - a. Riche Colcombe
    - i. Would like to retract this position based on previous conversations

### **Article 13 - By Petition**

Shall Hillsboro-Deering Cooperative School District establish and adopt a Budget Committee consistent with the mandates of RSA 32:14, RSA 32:15 and RSA 195:12-a, with the said Committee having at-large members who shall be elected for a term of one year, as required by RSA 32:15 III.

1. Comments/Questions on Article Thirteen
  - a. Riche Colcombe
    - i. Would like the HDSD to form and adopt a budget committee
  - b. Marjorie Porter
    - i. We should not be setting up a permanent board without the people knowing about the responsibilities and functions of a budget committee - it is unwise
    - ii. Moved to amend Article 13 to read "Shall Hillsboro-Deering School District establish an Advisory Budget Committee in accordance with RSA 32:24, with the said Committee having five (5) at-large members who shall be appointed by the Moderator each for a one-year term?" Vanessa Gaffey seconds.
      1. Requests a secret ballot vote.
        - a. Kelly D'Errico
        - b. Kathryn McGinn
        - c. Vanessa Gaffey
        - d. Stephani Martin
        - e. Alex Luhtjarv
  - c. Robert Hassett
    - i. Putting together a \$25 million dollar budget doesn't happen overnight.
    - ii. The budget is built from the ground up - with the students in mind and
    - iii. Sees no merit in adding another layer of governance to this process.
    - iv. Is not in favor of either option presented for article 13.
    - v. We elect people to handle the budget.
    - vi. Suggests forming an advisory board to study this first - don't jump into having an advisory board
  - d. Kathryn McGinn
    - i. Adding a budget committee to a community of this size is redundant.
    - ii. The Board members were elected to oversee this process
  - e. Jessica Morris
    - i. Is concerned about the reality of finding people to fill the committee
  - f. Jason Buck
    - i. There is no mandate to have a committee
    - ii. Often budget committees do not have the same perspective of the budget needs that a school board has.
  - g. Joyce Bosse
    - i. Echoes what Jessica Morris said. It will be difficult to find people to fill the committee positions.
  - h. Jason Buck
    - i. Points out that the language in these articles is incomplete and requests more time to develop this.

2. VOTE
  - a. Amendment Passed - 39 Yes to 14 No paper ballot votes
  - b. Article 13 now reads ""Shall Hillsboro-Deering School District establish an Advisory Budget Committee in accordance with RSA 32:24, with the said Committee having five (5) at-large members who shall be appointed by the Moderator each for a one-year term?"
3. Questions/Comments on the new Article 13
  - a. Robert Hassett
    - i. Proposes that we amend article 13 to read "To have a study committee of stakeholders to determine if a separate budget committee is in the best interest or not of the communities.
    - ii. Kathryn McGinn Seconds.
  - b. Jon Daley
    - i. Argues that this amendment changes the original article 13 drastically and should not be voted on.
  - c. John Segedy as moderator
    - i. After consulting with Atty Upton, moves that the motion is within the parameters of Article 13.
  - d. Jon Daley
    - i. Moves to override the moderator. Riche Colcombe seconds.
  - e. VOTE
    - i. Voice vote. Motion defeated.
  - f. Kathryn McGinn
    - i. The study of an advisory committee is a good compromise.
  - g. Jason Buck
    - i. The RSA language supports the motion Robert Hassett put forward.
4. VOTE
  - a. on the Amendment
    - i. Motion to amend passes 28 - Yes to 10 - No, raised hand counted votes.
    - ii. Article 13 now reads "To have a study committee of stakeholders to determine if a separate budget committee is in the best interest or not of the communities."
5. Continued Questions/Comments
  - a. Leigh Bosse
    - i. Recognizes and congratulates Paul Plater for his 21 years of service on the School Board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Megan Shower

Hillsboro-Deering School District Clerk