

Wakefield School Board
12-8-20 Public Minutes
Held in the Multi-Purpose Room and via Zoom
APPROVED

In attendance:

Board: Relf Fogg, Mary Collins, Lino Avellani. Bob Ouellette and Sandy Johnson via Zoom

Administration: Superintendent Jerry Gregoire, Business Administrator Marie D'Agostino, Student Services Director, Anne Kebler, Principal James Lampron, Assistant Principal Jenn Spector,
Facilities Director Joe Williams. Transportation Director Brennan Peaslee

Public: Parents and community members via Zoom

Call to Order

Mr. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6:00 and led those present in person and on zoom in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None

Old Business

Budget

Mr. Fogg felt that the Budget Committee thought the School Board was trying to bring things in on a different angle as far as the special projects go. Mr. Fogg said their goal was to come in with a 1½% or better, which they did. The Budget Committee talked about items not in the CIP now listed for warrant articles. Mrs. Colbath was asked by Mr. Fogg about his accuracy and she said he was pretty accurate and added that some Budget Committee members thought the projects should be in the operating budget. Mr. Gregoire clarified that when he met with the CIP Committee it was never his intention to put these items in a warrant article. He had them in the budget until they were directed to cut this large sum of money. They were not trying to hide anything. Mr. Fogg said he had asked Mr. Williams directly if these things had to be done now. Mr. Williams responded they can all be done or none of them can be done and it was up to the Board and Budget Committee

Mr. Williams said that One Source Security had given him a quote for thirteen outside steel doors of \$75,000. Five doors were replaced with the window project because they were in the casing. He divided thirteen into the \$75,000 quote and came up with \$51,923.07 for the nine doors that need to be replaced. They are exterior exit doors and are all the same except for one wooden door off the kitchen. This will still have to go out to bid. Mr. Fogg asked if this was a priority and Mr. Williams explained the condition of the doors. He said any Board member could come in and see the deterioration. Mrs. Johnson asked Mr. Williams to be forceful with the other Board members because this is a safety issue. Mr. Williams said he fills in the bottoms of the

doors with concrete. Mr. Fogg asked if the doors could be taken out of the Security Capital Reserve Fund. Locked doors are a safety issue. Mr. Williams said all the doors lock. Mr. Gregoire will check the wording of the Warrant Article. Mr. Williams said the windows and roof have been replaced and he is looking to complete all items on the outside of the building. He explained the drawing of the door locations he had given to the Board members. There were five doors replaced when the window project was done. This was due to built in framing to the windows. These doors that were completed were number 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18. Nine doors that need replacing due to rust, and age are doors are number 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 19. Mr. Williams took thirteen doors and divided them into the \$75,000.00 and that equals \$5,769.23 a door. Nine doors at \$5769.23 equals a price of 51,923.07. The modular doors are still in good condition.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to put \$52,000 in a warrant article for nine exterior door replacements. Mr. Avellani said his only problem with the motion is you either fund this from the budget or you fund this through a warrant article. You can't have it both ways with a warrant article. Mr. Fogg said we need to find out how the warrant article is worded. Mr. Avellani suggested contacting the Trustees of the Trust Fund also.

Mrs. Collins rescinded her second and Mr. Fogg rescinded his motion awaiting further information.

Mr. Williams suggested going through all of the rest of the four projects and then prioritizing them. He believes they're all important. The second project was put out to an RFP but the price came back way over what the original quote was. This project is for the replacement of the fire panel, smoke detector, CO2 devices. The bids were \$34,975 and \$34,950. He said the fire panel does meet state requirements but it will be mandated eventually that CO2's will be mandatory and prices will probably go up then. These items were installed in 1997.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to put this item back into the operating budget for a price of \$35,000.

Mr. Williams asked if we could put this item in the operating budget and if we get a grant that Mr. Avellani mentioned could this go back to the general fund. Mr. Fogg said yes. He also feels this is something the Budget Committee will see as supportable. Mr. Gregoire said one way to make sure this project takes place is to encumber that money at the beginning of the fiscal year. This will go back out to bid. Mr. Gregoire suggested starting the bidding process after the March vote. **Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye, Johnson aye (Vote 5-0)**

Project 3 would be for exterior aluminum doors which might fall under security. The second set and third set of doors in the entryway, the first set of exterior doors on the modular end which would be three sets of glass double doors for a cost of \$9,9975. As of now there is \$74,200 in the Security Trust Fund.

Project 4 would be the lighting project through Eversource and AECOM - lighting for \$37,715.35, NRM - refrigeration for \$3,185 and the three-year savings would be \$3,557. The annual estimated cost savings is \$11,453.18 over 3.3 years. NH saves brings in the contractors. Originally the quote was \$42,000 but after talking to the company Mr. Williams suggests \$45,000. Mr. Avellani believes this is a perfect use for a warrant article. Mrs. Johnson wants to have more than \$45,000 in the Warrant Article. Mr. Williams is still waiting for an adjusted rate from the utilities. Mrs. Johnson said warrant articles don't have to be in until early January so

she thinks Mr. Williams should push Eversource for a monetary figure. Mr. Ouellette said we are meeting with the Budget Committee on December 21st to present our warrant articles. Mr. Williams said you do not push Eversource they will tell you when they want to give you a number. He got an email saying there might be an increase. He recommends going from \$42,000 and making it \$45,000. Three-year savings would be \$3,557

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Avellani, to create a warrant article for the refrigeration and lighting project in the amount of \$45,000 to be placed on the warrant. Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye, Johnson nay (Vote 4-1)

Mr. Gregoire said the warrant articles will be on the next agenda and they will have the wording of the security warrant article and CRF's. Mr. Williams will get a more solid number on the lighting and grant information from the state on the fire panel. Mr. Williams will make informational packets for the Budget Committee. Mr. Gregoire will have budget on the agenda until the Deliberative Session. Mrs. D'Agostino said she has to have a new version to the Budget Committee for December 21st. She said she believes the Budget Committee wants a School Board approved budget. She said the Board can make changes all the way up to the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Johnson's Resignation

Mrs. Johnson said when I moved to Wakefield some sixteen years ago, I took a position as a paraprofessional at Paul school dealing primarily with Special Ed students. I attended School Board meetings regularly and became an advocate for the quality education that was focused on the needs of students. When I was elected to the School Board in 2018, I ran on a kids first platform. During my time on the Board, I have continued to advocate for students needs. I am deeply disturbed by the direction the current School Board is taking. For example, parttime superintendent. We tried that and it didn't work. Deep budget cuts etc., to the detriment of the educational quality. They give more consideration to taxpayers than to the needs of the students. Tax rates are only one part of the equation. Quality Education is the other. We are a town with the ability to raise tax dollars with relatively small increases in the tax rates due to high valuations of lakefront property often owned by parttime residents. We have the ability to pay for a quality education while maintaining a relatively low tax rate and the tax burden falls heavily on those who can afford it most. The Budget Committee has too much power. Both the Selectmen and the School Board are elected officials (inaudible) As it is the Budget Committee dictates the bottom line of both budgets and the School Board determines where to make the cuts in their budget. Many necessary school needs are represented in warrant articles often at the request of the Budget Committee. These warrant articles and the voters too often use their criteria for their vote. Parents need to get more actively involved. Too often the School Board hears from voters with a personal agenda. That's fine, but it doesn't necessarily address the needs of the student body in general. Your children's education is undermined by inadequate funding due to the budget constraints set by the Budget Committee and excessive cuts made by the School Board. Often imposed by the same group of people who seem to be involved in many of the committees that run this town. A good old boys' network although many of them are women. Wakefield needs a broader base of input. Get involved in running for office and in supporting candidates that reflect the needs of your children. I want to apologize to the people that supported me in my term on the Board. I tried to do the best I could for students and staff providing services to them.

I want to apologize to the Unions for being unable to change people's minds regarding how unions work. School Boards (inaudible) and past do not seem to understand the nature of a fair compromise. I urge the Unions to look out for what is best for their members as well as the kids and not to get sucked into chaos. Because of the aforementioned frustrating continued lack of support for public education I'm regretfully submitting my resignation from the School Board. (inaudible) because I'm dealing with a lot of medical issues right now and I can't deal with yahoos on both sides. I can not be part of the deterioration of Paul School. Chairman Ouellette and Superintendent will receive my resignation letter tomorrow.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Avellani, to accept Mrs. Johnson's resignation with regrets. Roll call: Ouellette nay Collins aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye, (Vote 3-1)

Feasibility Committee

Mr. Ouellette filled the Board in on the progress the feasibility committee has made. The Committee is requesting the daily duties of SAU staff members, Bus Coordinator and Facilities Manager. Mr. Gregoire asked if the Board wished for him to provide this information considering that budget, negotiations and the current Covid situation takes up much of their time. Anything they do with all this going on will take away from the priorities. They want this information by the 16th. Mr. Ouellette said they were also requesting copies be made from their materials. Mr. Ouellette wants to make sure this is ok with the rest of the Board members. Mr. Gregoire said he doesn't feel the cost of copies as any kind of obstacle. Mr. Ouellette said the committee is organizing the information so they get put together several proposals to the Board. Mr. Ouellette asked if the Board was ok with the SAU having this information available to the committee by the 16th. Mr. Gregoire said he could not be sure all this requested information will be complete by the 16th. He assured the Board they will do their best to have the information available in a timely fashion. Mr. Avellani said due to the fact that this an authorized School Board Committee he believes the Chairman has the ability to make that happen as he is sitting on that board also.

Public Comment

Mrs. Joy said we are asking for specific staff members to give us their day by day, month to month duties. She believes if each staff member does their own it will take a lot of Mr. Gregoire's plate. Mr. Ouellette said it isn't the job descriptions but what you actually do day to day.

Non Public

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg to enter non public at 7:08 under RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with anybody or board shall not constitute a

threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph. Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye (Vote 4-0)

The Board reentered public session at 8:24.

During non-public the Board discussed negotiations, employee compensation and not renewing a contract.

Mr. Fogg made a motion seconded by Mr. Avellani, to seal the minutes of the nonpublic portion until negotiations are complete. Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye (Vote 4-0)

Adjournment

Mr. Fogg made a motion seconded by Mr. Avellani, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye (Vote 4-0)

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next School Board meeting.

Priscilla Colbath

Secretary Pro Temp