

School Administrative Unit #101
Wakefield School Board – Special Meeting
Monday, August 26, 2019
SAU Conference Room
Minutes – Approved

Present: Bob Ouellette, Chair, Tracey Kolb, Vice Chair, Jen McCawley, Sandy Johnson, Relf Fogg;
Administration: Jerry Gregoire, Business Administrator Marie D’Agostino, Admin. Asst. Larissa Mulkern;
Public: Donna Martin, Clearview TV

Call to Order: Mr. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Public Comment: None

New Business: Legal Representation: Mrs. Kolb, the School Board’s representative to the town’s Budget Committee, and members discussed the possibility of asking/hiring the school district’s attorney, Gordon Graham of Soule, Leslie, Kidder, Sayward & Loughman, PLLC, to assist the board during the presentation to the town’s Budget Committee set for the following evening, August 27th. Mrs. Kolb said she wanted the meeting to go well; the Budget Committee has been adversarial with the School Board and she doesn’t want the board to appear inept. She had asked Mr. Gregoire to investigate having legal representation at that meeting. Discussion ensued about this request as well as the results of the final FY19 school district budget.

Mr. Gregoire said the cost for Attorney Graham is \$250 plus travel time cost from the firm’s closes office, which is in Wolfeboro. The district pays a retainer to the firm of \$500 a month. Mrs. Kolb offered to donate her school board member stipend of \$500 towards the cost of paying for an attorney to accompany the school board at the Budget Committee meeting. Members debated the need and pros and cons of hiring an attorney for this purpose. Mrs. Johnson questioned the need, as did Mr. Fogg, adding that the presentation tomorrow is black and white.

Motion: Mrs. Kolb made a motion to use the funds out of the monthly legal retainer fee to have Mr. Graham assist at the Budget Committee meeting; seconded by Mrs. McCawley. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Johnson offered an amendment to the motion that stipulated the hiring if the board is assured the Budget Committee will allow Mr. Graham to speak; the amendment was seconded by Mrs. Kolb; members voted 4-1 in favor with Mr. Fogg opposed.

Mr. Gregoire clarified that he was to ask Budget Committee Chair Jerry O’Connor if the School Board could go first in the presentation (to control legal costs/time), and whether the Committee would grant Mr. Graham permission to speak at the meeting.

Other: Mr. Gregoire clarified that he has no problem with the Business Administrator answering questions and providing information to the school board. Board members, Mr. Gregoire and Mrs. D’Agostino discussed the schedule for preparing the budget for next year FY21. Mr. Gregoire said it was important to know what actual costs are to run the school. Mrs. Johnson said there are certain costs that are fixed, so let’s work on those first. Mrs. D’Agostino said the last two years’ budgets had some omissions which have since been corrected – it’s going to take a longer to get the budget to where it should be. They are accounting for every invoice coming this year so that they can budget appropriately for next year. Mr. Fogg said four opportunities for the board to work on the budget would be advantageous. They can review fixed costs first, second meeting in September, then work on projections in October, with a more accurate budget outlook by Thanksgiving. Mrs. D’Agostino said she might not have the numbers by the second week of September. Last year the Budget Committee received a budget draft in November.

Adjournment: Mr. Fogg made a motion to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. seconded by Mrs. Kolb, all in favor, 5-0.

Respectfully submitted: Larissa Mulkern, Administrative Assistant