Hanover Finance Committee
Minutes
January 14, 2020

Location: Hanover High School, Library
Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Attendees: Kari Asmus, Carey Callaghan, Bill Geraghty, Mary Hakken-Phillips, Kimberly Hartmann.

At the Dresden School Board Meeting tonight, a quorum of the members of the HFC was present to hear the public agenda item: Dresden School District Budget Hearing and Adoption for the Proposed 2020-21 Budget. The HFC members were present primarily to observe the School Board’s Budget deliberations and to offer comments.

The HFC approved incorporating the January 14, 2020 Dresden School Board Meeting Minutes for the agenda item above as its own Minutes, and those Minutes are incorporated by reference here.

The Finance Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Dresden Public Hearing and Budget Adoption Meeting (Tuesday, January 14, 2020)
Generated by Karen Wright on Monday, January 20, 2020

Members present
SAU 70 Administration present: Superintendent Jay Badams and Business Administrator Jamie Teague.

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM

1. Opening of Meeting - 1 Minute

Procedural: A. Call to Order

2. Public Comment - 5 Minutes

Procedural: A. Public May Address the Board - no comment from the public.

3. Agenda Review - 1 Minute

Procedural: A. Agenda Review - Board Chair would like to add one item after the warrant discussion if there are no objections. Seeing none item will be added.

4. Lyme Tuition Agreement

Discussion: A. Lyme Tuition

Board Chair Odell shared there has been lots of information shared with the Board after the conversation with Lyme at the last meeting. This includes historical information as well as a re-discovery of an error.
made in 2017 by the former Business Administrator, John Aubin and the then Dresden Board neglected to update the base amount for tuition charged for students coming to Hanover High School. Kari Asmus, speaking as an individual and not a member of the Hanover Finance Committee, shared her findings of a recent discovery. It is her conclusion that Lyme and other districts are getting a fair deal already due to the error of not increasing the base salary and we deliver above-average services. Dresden would be receiving upwards of an additional $275,000 next year for tuition if the base had been increased correctly. Her slides are attached in the Lyme Tuition Agreement section of tonight’s agenda.

There were some discussions about educational tax rates on Hanover and Norwich. Lauren Morando Rhim offered that Kari's information is powerful and we acknowledge the hardships to our neighbors to the north, but we are unable to offer any further discounts. No motion was made to freeze Lyme’s tuition.

5. Public Budget Hearing - 1 Hour

Discussion, Procedural: A. 20-21 Budget Hearing

Board Chair Odell reminded the Board members they checked with counsel and tonight’s meeting needs to be recessed rather than adjourned. There may be a potential warrant article being brought forward. Board Chair Odell shared there was a new proposal from Richmond Middle School for additional funding since the last meeting.

Business Administrator Teague offered that no bottom line changes, only revenue changes in way of tuition. The assessments have decreased.

Principal Boyle addressed the Board to offer some explanation of the new proposal brought forward. They seek to offer additional help to those academically identified but not eligible by way of an IEP or 504 plans and testing below proficiency. The RMS staff went back to the drawing board to try to find the means to make this happen. A reduction was made by delaying the replacement to the carpet in the library. They will be seeking additional funding methods for the media center renovations and would prefer to wait to do the carpet at the same time. They propose adding an additional academic section and adding the WIN (What I Need) teacher, a one year pilot program. The attached sheet lists RMS’s request in order of number of students served. Principal Boyle reiterated this was part of the original request but was cut in order to be under the requested threshold. Board member Ben Keeney asked if it was only intended to assist those classes listed. Principal Boyle indicated yes, it would focus on English and Math, that’s generally where larger problems manifest themselves. Rhett Darak, Director of Student Services, explained to the Board that Ray School has a similar program and it’s expected to be very similar in process. It is a blending of all the underlying issues to make students successful. Board member Kim Hartman asked what type of students are we helping with these two proposals or is just lower testing students. Principal Boyle indicated its goal is to help those struggling but not yet eligible to receive services by way of an IEP or a 504 and to reduce some of the struggles with students with very tight class schedules. Associate Principal Morrison spoke to the difficulty that scheduling has become with the many variances. Adding one additional section would help them level numbers out. Lauren Rhim asked for clarification on those in the specials roles and if it was possible to have someone in special education help out in the WIN role. The WIN program is not intended to be a pull-out program, rather an addition to their day. This team member would be part of all the teams, not working in isolation. Associate Principal Morrison indicated an additional advantage to having the WIN teacher is an additional staff member that students can form a relationship with and can be their advocate. The goal would be to give them the tools they need to be successful at the high school. Board member Kelly McConnell asked how similar this proposed program is to the one we just initiated at the high school. Principal Campbell answered that what’s being proposed looks like a couple of things happening at the high school; the Dresden Plan and a study skills class. RTI - Response to Intervention is more aimed at a student in immediate crisis and is a bit different than what is currently proposed at RMS. Board member Ben Keeney asked if a student could opt out. Principal Boyle said ultimately yes, but once parents become involved most students will see its advantages; most students want to do well. There was discussion about how it's implemented with a class if everyone is at different levels. Principal Boyle explained it's really like any other class at the middle school with teachers checking in around a structured procedure. Board Chair Odell asked if the cost associated with the carpet was offered as an offset to the fiscal impact of the two new requests. Principal Boyle said ultimately yes, but it really makes sense to do it all at once rather than doing it in pieces.

Public input: Kari Asmus asked if it was realistic to be able to evaluate it by the next budget cycle as it is slated to be a pilot program or should it be put on the calendar of year two to evaluate? Principal Boyle said
that large quantitative information wouldn't be available as they wouldn't have test scores back by then but qualitative information would be available within four months.

Superintendent Badams asked if this position was in addition to Title I. Principal Boyle said they had more than one plan to accomplish this. It would be in addition, but may leverage Title I funds if needed.

Board Chair Odell asked about the offset plus both additional requests and it's tax impact. Business Administrator Jamie Teague explained the Hanover impact would be and extra $36 on a home valued of $400,000 and $168 on a home valued of $400,000 in Norwich. Norwich is looking at a 10 cent increase with these additions. Jamie Teague expected Norwich tax numbers are expected to change with new information coming out. Board Chair Odell said Norwich is still in negotiation and do not have an agreement. That agreement will likely not be a decrease.

Carey Callaghan, Hanover Finance Committee, met with Business Administrator Teague along with the Hanover Finance Committee. Fiscal observations: The Hanover tax increase is relatively modest this year at 2.05% but following a large increase of 5.44%, the property value reassessment from two years ago continues to have a large impact on certain properties in the town, and Hanover benefits during the current year on the 6th-grade tuition swing but that certainly isn't sustainable in the future years, and the adequacy grant from the State can't be counted on either. The Hanover Finance Committee unanimously supported the level of spending in the budget as proposed in December level of spending. The committee seems split on its support of the new requests and they ask that the Board be cognizant of the upcoming technology needs in next year's budget.

Action: B. 20-21 Budget Adoption

Kelly McConnell move to accept the proposed budget offset and remove $30,000 from the budget and postpone carpet replacement in the media center. Kelley Hersey seconded. Motion carries unanimously.

Kelley Hersey move to accept the proposed increase in 7th and 8th grade academics by one section totaling $59,505. Seconded by Jim Mackall. No discussion. In favor Kelley Hersey, Ben Keeney, Dan Rockmore, Jim Mackall, Jonathan Hunt. Opposed Tom Candon, Neil Odell, Kim Hartmann, Kelly McConnell, Rick Johnson. Tie vote, does not pass.

Kelley Hersey move to accept the WIN program proposal in the amount of $76,536. Seconded by Ben Keeney. In favor Kelly McConnell, Kelley Hersey, Ben Keeney, Jim Mackall, Jonathan Hunt, Rick Johnson and Dan Rockmore. Opposed Neil Odell, Tom Candon, and Kim Hartmann.
Motion passes.

Move to approve the 20-21 budget in the amount of $27,792,309.00.

Motion by James Mackall, second by Jonathan Hunt.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Action, Discussion, Procedural: C. 20-21 Warrant Articles

Board Chair Odell expressed they were common articles. Please remove "Board recommends this article".

Presentations on February 27th at the Hanover High School auditorium for the budget presentations with voting on March 3, 2020, 7 AM - 7 PM at the Hanover High School auditorium for Hanover residents and at Tracy Hall for Norwich residents.