

<b>RSU 54/MSAD 54</b>
<b>Educational Policy/Program Committee</b>
<b>Minutes</b>
<b>March 12, March 19 and April 9, 2024</b>
<b>6:00PM</b>
<b>Skowhegan Area High School - Library</b>

**March 12, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Samatha Delorie, Sarah Bunker, Jeannie Conley, Anmarie Dubois, Michael Lambke, Amy Rouse, Michelle Taylor

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jon Moody, Mark Hatch, Jason Bellerose, Zachary Longyear, David Dorr, Christy Johnson, Deidre Mitchell, Myla Kreider, Erin Madore, Julian Payne, Valerie Coulombe and Melannie Keister

The Superintendent reviewed the individual budgets for Instruction K-12, Student Activities, Guidance, Library, School Administration and for the Somerset Career and Technical Center. Across the board the status quo budget is essentially flat in the areas of supplies for programming. Increased costs in the budget are predominately the result of negotiated salaries and benefits, increases to contracted services, utilities, fuel, and other fixed costs that have gone up both regionally and nationally.

The Superintendent presented the first draft of a Status Quo Budget. The total budget as presented was \$48,427,763 which is up just under 15.75%. The vast majority of the \$6,587,291 budget increase has no impact on local taxpayers, as the majority is comprised of non-local funds (state and fundraising dollars). Budget increases include \$4,258,290 for the new school, and \$403,505 for CTE programming, both of which have no impact to local taxes as they represent non-local dollars. In addition to the non-local increase (\$4,661,795 state, etc.), the budget includes \$1,925,496 in additional spending – representing roughly a 4.6% increase from the prior year. The Superintendent explained that the district has been incredibly fortunate to receive tremendous support in state funding for the new school and CTE, but that because those are dedicated funding streams that

don't impact any other areas of the budget, the funding formula requires this to be included in the overall budget calculation, it will be imperative that voters understand that the budget increase without those funds is 4.6%. He reminded the committee that like the current budget year, the proposed budget for FY25 has no impact (\$0), from the new school project, and thanked the state and community fundraisers who have made that possible.

The Committee asked questions about sections of the budget and discussed areas of the budget that increased or were reduced. The Superintendent indicated that the budget as presented includes several cuts. Because not all staff have been notified, reductions will be shared at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed health insurance, which is flat in the current budget. The district's approach is to wait and budget actual anticipated expenditures once the FY25 health insurance rates are released, which the Superintendent expects in early April.

The committee will meet again on March 19 to continue reviewing the FY25 budget.

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### **March 19, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Karyn Curran, Sarah Bunker, Amy Rouse, Michelle Taylor, Lynda Quinn, Annmarie Dubois, Michael Lambke

**ALSO PRESENT:** Valerie Coulombe, Jon Moody, Mark Hatch, Renee Stevens, Erica Thompson, Dan Dwelley, Myla Kreider, Melannie Keister, Jeremy Lehan

The Superintendent reviewed the "Budget Overview" page including the draft 6 year budget timeline, which included the overall budget increase and local impact to voters over the past six years. During that time the Board has managed to limit impacts to local taxpayers by keeping the local budget impact to 2.216% annually, significantly below inflation. He shared that because of state property valuation shifts and reductions in poverty (locally), the FY25 budget will have a more significant impact locally than it has in the past. As a result, the Superintendent indicated he will recommend the use of a significant amount of fund balance to help offset the impact locally. He shared that even with fund balance, some towns

will see a large increase as a result of their state valuation having increased significantly.

The Superintendent reviewed the individual budgets for other instruction, special education, health, district wide technology, other student support services, improvement of instruction and adult education.

The Committee asked questions and discussed the few areas of the budget where changes occurred. The committee commented on the need to provide adequate programming supports for students. The Superintendent reiterated that the budget was called “Draft Status Quo Budget” because it is designed to continue programming and limit costs (especially in the areas of supplies, etc.). Budget increases primarily represent increased costs from negotiated salaries and benefits and rising fixed costs (contracted services, supplies, utilities, fuel, etc.). The budget also includes significant cuts.

The Superintendent reviewed the following cuts: eight covid-sub positions, three tutoring positions, two educational technicians, one nursing position, one administrative support position, and four teaching positions. The Board was reminded that this budget is the third year of a five-year budgeting plan which leveraged federal covid relief funds to support district work while gradually reducing spending to reflect adequate programming for students.

The committee asked questions which were answered and discussed.

The committee will not meet on March 26<sup>th</sup> in hopes that insurance rates will be released by its next meeting on April 9, 2024.

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### **April 9, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Karyn Curran – Chair, Sarah Bunker – Vice Chair, Jeannie Conley, Michael Lambke, Peggy Lovejoy, Amy Rouse, Sara Smith, Michelle Taylor, Lynda Quinn, Michael Lambke

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jon Moody, Mark Hatch, Jason Bellerose, Myla Kreider and Melannie Keister

The Superintendent gave a final overview of the budget.

Dawn Fickett reviewed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Application and the Formal Sustainability Plan, including:

- Program Summary
- Vision
- Program Collaborators and Advocates and their roles for Sustainability
- Current and Future Funding Sources and Steps Toward Securing Them
- Quality Program Offerings
- Management Systems in Place
- Evaluation Data

(See attached details)