

Ad Hoc Committee for Inter-district Education Cost Sharing
Programming Sub-Committee
Special Meeting
Minutes
February 24, 2022

7PM

Call to Order: Chairman Bisson called the Meeting to order at 7:02PM.

Roll Call: Rose Bisson, Kathy Donahue, Wendy Sears, Juan Arriola, Cassidy Martin

Audience for Citizens: none.

Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2022 Special Meeting

By general consent, the Minutes of the February 18, 2022 Special Meeting were approved.

Work Session for Budgetary Issues

Wendy Sears reviewed the changes made to the draft version of the *Combined Budget Model* spreadsheet which was distributed to members. These included a decrease in paraprofessionals from 18 to 14 and a recalculation of their average salary, adjustments to Repair and Maintenance line items, and transferring the Enumerator, Public and Private Tuition, Adult Education, and Pupil Transportation and Fuel from this budget to the towns' budgets. To Kathy Donahue's question on the amount of buses Scotland uses and the cost of their fuel, Ms. Sears explained that Scotland uses three buses and that propane has proven more efficient, as evidenced in the actual costs. Ms. Donahue advocated for combining the bus routes. Ms. Sears reported that the Testing and Scoring line items involved apps which the school uses, and Rose Bisson will ask Hampton's administrators if, and where, these costs appear in their budget. Ms. Sears also subtracted the costs transferred to the towns to reach the estimated total savings of combining the schools. There was discussion on where to report anticipated grants. Ms. Sears reported that the Superintendent cautioned against including grants that are not guaranteed, such as the School Readiness Grant. Ms. Donahue advocated for the inclusion of current grants. There was discussion on including grants in a separate appendix versus including the information in the budget spreadsheet and subtracting the amount from the schools' total costs. There was also discussion on labeling "savings" as the result of combining the schools where there are savings to individual schools in next year's proposed budgets. Though Ms. Bisson advocated for noting the distinction, using as an example the decrease in paraprofessionals due to a decrease in Hampton's budget for next year, Ms. Sears, Ms. Donahue and Juan Arriola disagreed. Ms. Bisson suggested that the proposed budgets, rather than the current budgets, for both schools be used for the combined budget. Ms. Sears objected, stating that the budgets will not be approved until later this year, and Ms. Donahue noted that Hampton's proposed budget for next year is higher than the current year. Though Ms. Bisson acknowledged that the issue was discussed long enough, she stated her belief that it remains unresolved.

There was also discussion on the proposed principal's salary, currently estimated at \$100,000, the average of Hampton and Scotland. While this is low compared to similar towns, Ms. Donahue suggested that Scotland's receipt of 18 applicants for the position when it was last posted indicated that it was sufficient, also noting that experience, length of service, degrees and larger populations in schools could account for higher salaries for administrators. With suggestions of \$105,000 to \$120,000, it was decided that the proposed amount would be \$115,000, with the explanation of a range of \$110,000 to \$120,000, depending on different factors.

There was also discussion on the estimates for substitutes, which Ms. Donahue suggested were too high. After checking with actual expenses, the substitute line items for both regular and special education were reduced to \$15,000 each.

It was decided to leave the Superintendent's salary as \$70,000, with an increase from .4 to .5, though it was noted that the position might lessen to .4, with the salary associated with that amount of time.

Ms. Sears suggested that the sub-committee create a report on the process used to determine the estimates. Cassidy Martin agreed, stating her belief that the townspeople would want to know how the committee arrived at the numbers. Ms. Bisson noted that the committee has consistently erred on the side of caution with respect to potential savings.

General Discussion

Wendy Sears stated, for the record, that the school building to be used has not yet been decided, and that it will be a decision of the full committee.

There was also discussion on including stipends for after school programs in the combined budget, and the possibility of including an additional page with other curricular and extra-curricular programs which could be available as a consequence of combining the schools. These included world languages, with Mr. Arriola advocating specifically for instruction in Spanish as beneficial in today's world. Both he and Ms. Bisson advocated for the use of a teacher for instruction, rather than a computer or other program.

Members volunteered to different assignments with respect to researching world language instruction.

Ms. Sears suggested providing opportunities for the 5th and 6th graders to participate in competitive sports, as is the practice in many middle schools. She suggested that the 7th and 8th graders, who currently use Scotland school's gymnasium for basketball, could use the combined school's facilities to include fifth and sixth graders on their teams.

Members scheduled the next meeting for March 3 at 7PM. The presentation to the full committee could take place the third or fourth week of March, after which the committee will present to the Scotland Board of Education.

Audience for Citizens: none.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the special meeting adjourned at 9:38PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola