

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
January 29, 2007**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:30 PM in the Meeting Room at the Conway Town Hall with the following members present: Chairperson Melissa Stacey, Robert Drinkhall, Maureen Seavey, Pat Libby, Phil Dighello, Doug Swett, Crow Dickinson, James LeFebvre, Karen Umberger, Rick Paquette, Bill Jones, Etienne Vallee, Betty Boucher, Deb Deschenes and Bill Aughton. Also present were Dr. Carl Nelson, Pat Swett, Martha Cray, Sheryl Kovalik, Randy Davison, Lloyd Jones, Jack Loynd and other members of the public.

Chairman Stacey advised the members that Earl Sires, Karen and herself had spoken with DRA and have come up with a solution of voting on the night of the 19th. Chairman also stated that the Committee welcomes comments from the public but would appreciate if they would hold off until the end of the presentation.

SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW

Dr. Nelson stated questions previously asked are provided in writing. He had good news, Jim locked in fuel for a savings of \$147,000.00; health insurance reduced by 2% which saves another \$64,000.00; less the \$5,000.00 increase for services by the Water Precinct; leaving a net of \$205,000.00. School Board will meet tomorrow; budget not accurate, then default budget not accurate; will provide on Wednesday night as well as two bargaining agreements. Karen Umberger asked Dr. Nelson to repeat the dollar amounts. Dr. Nelson stated health insurance saves \$64,000.00; \$147,000.00 less for fuel, locked in at \$1.88.

Crow Dickinson stated last week had discussion about telephone systems, not quite sure about decision. Dr. Nelson stated nothing at this point, Board will discuss tomorrow; have a few more Warrant Articles to review.

KENNETT HIGH SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW

Jack Loynd presented the budget for Kennett High School. Mr. Loynd stated he would basically answer any questions and make a few comments. Our Goal is to provide exemplary education to Mount Washington Valley students at a reasonable cost to taxpayers. As Principal, from a moral standpoint, it is our responsibility to provide a top quality education to all of our students. As shown in the passage of two bonds to improve High School, Career/Technical and Middle School facilities and in the per pupil expenditures of Elementary and Middle School in Mount Washington Valley, our citizens are committed to quality education. However, because of complex political circumstances and complicated issues in governance, our High School students have been deprived of educational opportunities in recent years because of inequitable funding. For this reason, comparisons of last year to this year, whether they involve increased teaching,

clerical of custodial positions are grossly unfair. With this in mind, I urge members of the Conway Municipal Budget Committee to focus on the goal of providing quality education at a reasonable cost to Conway taxpayers, rather than on increases to an inadequate budget.

For the last ten years, our school has been on warning status with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Although we received many commendations, our facility and our curriculum coordination and staffing in some areas were found lacking. Ten years ago, we greatly improved our curriculum coordination through the establishment of a Curriculum Coordinator for the Conway School District and re-establishment of department heads for major subject areas. Despite the improvement of curriculum coordination and other services, we have remained on warning status. Thanks to the citizens of our community, we are approaching the opening of a state-of-the-art High School and Career/Technical facility. The time has come to provide the staffing and programming for a High School that meets NEASC Standards and a High School that our community can be proud of. This can be done at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

Need to look at context as well as other High Schools. On page 3, comparison of Class I Schools, Kennett High School is third from the bottom out of 21 schools and according to estimated 05/06 was \$8,304.00, less than a 2.5% increase; average increase was 4.9%. Also see per pupil expenditure for 04/05, not only on bottom, not even close; closest to us is Merrimack School. Estimated median is \$12,000.00 and for New Hampshire, All Schools, under \$9,000.00.

Crow Dickinson asked which RSA is used. Mr. Loynd stated Minimum Standard. Dr. Nelson stated the Committee has already received 306. Crow stated that is an Administrative Rule; this is a statute.

Rick Paquette stated this comparison of schools, is Kennett only High School and Mr. Loynd stated correct. Rick asked if Elementary School is that high and Mr. Loynd stated it is. Rick asked if it was fair to say Jackson almost \$10,000.00 per child; Conway \$11,000.00 per child; wouldn't it be understandable that the High School would be less per child. Mr. Loynd stated if you look at State, should be slightly less; this is the budget he inherited which was \$200.00 to \$300.00 below state average; about \$600.00 to \$700.00 is the average for schools our size. Since increase at Kennett High School has been 18.5%, compared to 25.3% average; 29.3% for schools our size. Project 6% for high school, 7% of class size; \$10,640.00 for New Hampshire High Schools and \$12,000.00 for schools our size; believe total package is in the neighborhood between \$9,200.00 to \$9,500.00 per pupil at Kennett High School. Graph shows what is happening with costs; approximately equal trend actually dropped whereas costs escalated. Bear in mind we are trying to make up for ground lost; disadvantaged population increasing.

The approval of tuition contracts by sending districts in Mount Washington Valley provides significant financial advantages to Conway taxpayers by correcting for the inequitable tax burden that Conway taxpayers carried in recent years. The execution of a funding formula for

operations cost helps to balance per pupil costs for the eight towns sending students to Kennett. In general, towns with lower overall tax rates pay a higher per pupil cost, while towns with higher tax rates pay a lower per pupil cost. While Conway has approximately 34% of the equalized valuation in the eight towns sending students to Kennett, Conway has approximately 48% of the population. Result of this, Conway will pay approximately 43% of the operation costs for Kennett High School for 48% of the population. By meeting the terms of the tuition contract, Conway taxpayers stand to gain a significant revenue increase relative to the previous funding formula. However, to meet the terms of the tuition contract, Kennett High School must meet NEASC and New Hampshire Minimum Approval Standards.

In other words, may increase to \$9,200.00; cost to Conway will be \$8,500.00. As School has been on warning for 10 years, take very seriously our per pupil cost. Overall would be a 90% estimate per pupil cost which would be \$2,000.00 less than average and \$3,000.00 less than high school of comparable size.

In conclusion, while aiming for an exemplary education for the High School students in Mount Washington Valley is a noble goal in and of itself, it also provides significant financial advantages to our community. He urged the Conway Municipal Budget Committee to support the High School budget so that we can provide quality High School education at a reasonable cost.

Phil Dighello asked in per pupil average, what items were used in the calculation and Mr. Loynd stated salaries, benefits, fuel costs, supplies, and equipment deducted, out of district tuition, and transportation costs. Phil stated when comparing with different schools he looked at equalized valuation; much broader tax base has to be considered when calculating cost. Mr. Loynd stated used all schools and Class I schools usually cost effectiveness, also contains some that don't have a large tax base.

Bob Drinkhall asked why transportation costs not increased; are Junior High and High School transported together and Mr. Loynd stated yes. Bob stated no increase costs with two different locations and Dr. Nelson stated not estimated it will; meeting Thursday with Principals and transportation people.

Karen Umberger stated she may be mistaken, but the reason that they had been on warning most recently was because of the facility, not because of the curriculum, nothing on the academic side. Mr. Loynd stated originally it was the facility, most corrected, all corrected to current Standards. Karen asked for examples of change. Mr. Loynd stated modeled changes premised on Mission Statement. Mission to do extensive self-study; look at standard curriculum instruction assessment, school resources, they are pretty stringent Standards. Team will visit, will validate or invalidate; four potential rates, there is exemplary, acceptable, limited and unacceptable. He doesn't get out of bed for acceptable; would like to see exemplary; meet standards of the tuition contract. Karen stated she thought the Budget Committee has always indicated the High School

extremely well run, cost not particularly high. Run into problem because all other areas not as conscientious as the High School has been in the number of pupils per classroom and overall cost. In her opinion, Conway School Board made decision over time to keep costs down and raise the cost of other entities and what they are seeing this year is that the budget submitted is probably a very fair budget, but what's happened is funding has increased in other areas. Look at overall budget and it becomes problematic, at least for her. Not going to challenge what you are trying to do, but will challenge the fact that the School Board wanted to increase the High School and took no action to decrease other schools. She personally feels Middle School and Elementary Schools are too high in the cost per pupil and class size and that's where she runs into a dilemma. She can't support as it stands, not because of what the High School has done but because overall. She has a different philosophy, but didn't think anyone who has been on the Budget Committee doesn't feel you (Jack Loynd) have done a good job. Not happy with 9 custodians but look at size, 9 are very necessary to keep building up. Additional teachers to reduce class size from above 25 to 25 have no problem at all. Her problem with the High School is that every time have discussed opening of new High School we have been reassured the cost, the additional cost for staffing structure was going to be the same. Mr. Loynd stated he does appreciate Karen's comments and needed to respond about additional positions. Some may know he is a statistician by trade. He really looks at things very closely. However, the projections that were given 4 years ago were at his development. He would have to be very good to do that with precision. There has been a significant population increase, disadvantaged students - 13% to 18% rise, significantly more. Can't be blamed for asking for increases particularly with No Child Left Behind. Making up ground lost two or three years ago. When population needs get to a certain point and needed additional staff, there was no place to put that staffing. Didn't ask for staffing, no rooms for them.

Deb Deschenes stated the School Board did look into Elementary teachers; did cut one at Pine Tree and one at Conway Elementary. They did look at reducing those budgets.

Rick Paquette stated looking at increase of student population the last 4 years, goes back to 04, 946 students at Kennett High School; 07, 958. Trying to understand in 04 you didn't have adequate staffing and Mr. Loynd stated no room. Rick stated you would have liked to have more but School Board didn't support you. Mr. Loynd stated he didn't say that. Rick asked about positions taken away and Mr. Loynd stated he believed that year 25% projected health insurance and tried to stay within 3%. At that time, increase in population. He does think once you have the staffing can cut a significant number of support staff. During that time, he does believe they could have used increased staffing. Rick asked if it was possible for teachers to teach in the Middle School and the High School and Mr. Loynd stated some. Dr. Nelson stated 7 through 12 almost all English teachers, may be some Sciences.

Mr. Loynd stated when looking at an 18% rise in disadvantaged students additional assistance is required. Have to consider that we have to have a percentage of that population pass testing; certainly can't do that in

a class of 30. One of the student models is where students have a "D" or "F", put them in a class of 8 to 10 students so that they can perform. In second year of that model and he believes it gives the students a fighting chance.

Bob Drinkhall stated last week made an attempt to get answers and state position. Increase originally was one new teacher now 25; \$1.2 Million to \$1.3 Million. Maintenance \$500,000.00; in January 2003 \$839,000.00; then at \$1,091,000.00; now at \$1.3 Million. Have had taxpayers suggest understated to help get other funding; how could this have been understated by so much. Transportation stays the same; have all sorts of programs that didn't exist. The results just don't seem to be there even by admission of the Principals themselves. He thought those who presented, Jim and the other Principals, stated their case very well; difficult to argue, but we do have to look after the interest of the taxpayer; don't know how to balance. Maintenance has to be kept; don't feel it can change. We have to show some constraint; cutting back on staff; how done, not an educator. Mr. Loynd stated again, he didn't know where the \$1.2 Million figure came from. He has always tried to estimate accurately; he doesn't deal in the transportation field. He has some input, so he really can't answer the \$1.2 Million under estimated. He doesn't live in that work, he lives in this one.

Etienne Vallee asked what is the increase amount funding, the actual amount. Dr. Nelson stated it was in the R Section. Etienne stated no formula and Dr. Nelson stated look at far right column; 07/08 that is projected and \$5.58 Million previous year, will get difference. Etienne stated difference of \$1.92 Million; what share is High School. Mr. Loynd stated there is a quick way, more complicated but 48.5% in the old day; now paying 44%, save 5.5% of the Kennett Operating Budget; 5% would be a conservative estimate.

Bill Jones stated again faced with a tough budget this year; appreciated presentation, very detailed. According to the newspaper, 2 English teachers, 2 Math teachers, 1 World Language Teacher, Dance and Theater. What is a Dance and Theater teacher. Mr. Loynd stated top 3 are what comes from DOE Standards. Bill stated required is mandatory and Mr. Loynd stated in tuition contract. Bill asked if it is mandatory and Mr. Loynd stated suggestion is too weak a word; look at tuition contract, it says "shall comply with the Standards". To answer question, all has to do with the Mission Statement; not satisfied with SAT scores; need to support needs. Have made some cuts; health reduced to one and part-time reading teacher has been eliminated.

James LeFebvre stated looks like two-tier approach, are State Standards lower than NEASC and Mr. Loynd stated they are actually working together to come closer, right now would recognize NEASC more.

Rick Paquette stated 7 additional teaching positions, what is number of increase and Mr. Loynd stated not that big. Rick stated 28 more students.

Phil Dighello stated Karen mentioned looking at entire budget. Ten years ago \$15 Million, right now projected \$31 Million. I did a little bit of

calculating and the biggest reason for doubling are salaries and benefits. Probably why so tough because once in, stay forever. When budget doubles in a 10 year period, that is pretty heavy.

Karen Umberger stated we have heard about Standards; Standards is 20 credits to graduate; Standard raised to 26 credits by Conway School Board. Mr. Loynd stated State measures 26-2/3; we have 80 credits, multiply by three; trying to get rid of fractions. Karen stated another example of problem with Standards. On the people in the Career/Technical Program, how many of those are financially disadvantaged children; what are the required subjects outside of Career/Technical. What academic classes have to be taken outside of Career/Technical Center. Mr. Loynd stated same as all students. Karen stated non-qualified and Mr. Loynd stated there are courses like Graphic Arts that meet Art, in Machine have Math credit. Don't release requirements for Career/Technical students. Karen stated she was running into a problem; we were told Career/Technical side expected 100% of students taking a Career/Technical class. If she was correct, the courses that are being taken in Career/Technical are only used for electives people have to have. None are core requirements other than what has been said. Everything that is over on Career/Technical is elective in relationship to the diploma. Dr. Nelson stated current number is 92%.

Chairman Stacey stated everybody seems to be forgetting one simple fact, the kids. To develop relationship with teachers; she has a hard time cutting teachers. She thought need as a whole group to keep budgets at minimums and not cut programs and teachers. Rick Paquette stated he was not sure anyone was cutting teachers; he thought talking about additional teachers as opposed to cutting.

Bill Aughton stated all of this comes down to a question of money at this particular time; 15% is a big jump. Any thought gone into a gradual period of time, without doing all this year. Mr. Loynd stated he considers this a one year jump not a trend; percentage increases will be relatively small. Bill stated a one year jump will continue to jump in increases. Mr. Loynd stated he wouldn't say more additional staffing, a lot to make up for previous years. Bill stated suggest priorities and cut back a little bit; tough budget; don't want to hurt kids; don't want to damage budget or decrease education you wish to give to student but seriously prioritize and cut back on staffing. He wants to support but also wants to be able to defend it. He has obligation to taxpayer.

Mr. Loynd stated first of all building relationship with students. Look back to previous years, classes of over 30 against ability to give special attention to students. Second, directed study program and look at students struggling badly in literacy and neither get good portion back; don't repeat courses. Third way is to provide high interest electives. Right now have an inordinate amount of Study Hall being offered with more students in them.

Chairman Stacey stated on class reduction, staff is funded. Mr. Loynd stated complicated at High School because DOE says going from 8 to 8.3, very difficult to explain. In High School, have need for a teacher to

teach any section; have more flexibility in dealing with slight increases.

Bill Jones asked what do they (students) anticipate different other than facility; is something getting a hold of these kids. Mr. Loynd stated he couldn't predict but watching a walk through, clear message this community supports education. Deb Deschenes stated they just did a tour on Friday and many were students. Feedback was very positive; students excited.

Rick Paquette asked the mean class size currently in core curriculum and Mr. Loynd stated about 21, again a lot of variation; 15 to 27 not unusual to have. Rick asked if some with 33 and Mr. Loynd stated cut back this year when the Conway School Board committee instructed Guidance not to put 26 in a class unless they meet with the Principal. Won't see large classes this year; 8% in Study Halls at any particular time. Take students out of Study Hall, would put classes back to over 30 students.

Bob Drinkhall stated requirement for Guidance Counselors, how many for the High School. Mr. Loynd stated Standards no more than 300 per Guidance Counselor. Have 4 plus Guidance Director - 5 for 1,000 students. Guidance Director has a small case load; runs scholarship program of \$300,000.00; monitors at risk population and oversees scheduling.

Chairman Stacey asked if there was a Special Education Guidance Counselor and Mr. Loynd stated no. Each Special Education student has a Case Manager to make sure I.E.P. is followed. Chairman asked if there was a transition program for Special Education students offered. Mr. Loynd stated very good onsite and we do have a Special Education Director. Chairman asked if pamphlets available for colleges for Special Education students and Mr. Loynd stated absolutely.

Karen UMBERGER stated the latest results are from 2005 and that particular one was above the State in percentage across the Board for 10th grade students. She was trying to come to grips with the statements that for the 10th grade next year you are anticipating a significant increase in the number of disadvantaged children or 9th grade number of disadvantaged children will require you to hire more staffing to continue to meet test results. Mr. Loynd stated State provides averages; 3 year average is a good place for measuring up; SAT scores bouncing up and down. However, I am concerned about the future because NCLB has a 3 year step up, eventually expect all students to meet or exceed the Standards, 84% and then 92%. For us to continue to meet the Standards will need help for the disadvantaged; need 76% to meet or exceed.

Jim LeFebvre stated trying to get hand on at risk, Free and Reduced Lunch. Mr. Loynd stated for at risk population Free and Reduced Lunch is one indicator, other is grade level, students with single parent where they work at multiple jobs. Jim stated looking at 930 for 9 through 12; percentage of at risk today. Mr. Loynd stated he would estimate upwards of 25%.

George Fredette stated Bill's comment on going to be a tough budget year. If I lived in Bartlett, I would agree with you, but given the cuts, the increase this year is under 1%. People of Mount Washington Valley want a better education from the High School based on the last two bonds; clear mandate to spend on their kids.

Randy Davison stated he definitely believes the last 8 years the High School has been carrying the Middle School and the Elementary Schools. High School under funded. Back when enrollment went down, there was a major increase of population in this district and right now it is at the High School. Those two years are significant, but when students left, staff should have been transferred to other positions; 403 kids down to 300. Huge class numbers are probably doing an injustice, not giving an equitable education. Don't want to eliminate; hard to keep because of where they are; could transfer without cutting.

Nick Goodwin stated he wanted to echo what his principal said; he didn't wake up in the morning and go to school to be satisfactory; imagine if 25% came to school saying they were going to get a "C" today; not going on to college. It is hard when you see 40 to 50 drop out in the course of four years. Community has responsibility to educate, that is why we have a school. Not being responsible would only have private schools. Need to increase funding at the High School to see that all students get an excellent education and are pushed.

Mr. Wolfe stated compared to 10 years ago; square footage; how much larger; have all these custodians. He didn't see how it takes so many people; had 47 students and he got a good education. Mr. Loynd stated SAT scores do not compare well with State and National. We have been up and down. Dr. Nelson stated square footage published 21,429 per custodian. Look at 9, that is a 200,000 square foot building giving you approximately 20,000 per custodian. Middle School looking at 5.

Penny Kittle, English teacher, stated most teachers have 4 classes, need to read papers and give feedback. When 33 in class, no time to give feedback. Have high hopes of getting more English teachers. Kids don't write well enough; better feedback; advocate for two English Teachers.

Ryan Mahan stated he teaches English; started 6 years ago at \$24,000.00; loves the area, loves the small class size. Need more teachers, more Aides, Federal programs, more educators in the building to assist. High School still has literacy issues; want more for these kids. Can only teach 4 courses a day. Please do not cut positions.

James LeFebvre stated awhile back discussed mentor program; is there a program taken out of Middle School. Dr. Nelson stated have had move from High School to Middle School; key is certification. In this State, have to have certified teachers.

Ellen MacDonald stated she wanted to address \$24,000.00 and \$8,000.00. She didn't think that is a lot. The need is great; start at Elementary, spending more at a Middle School. We are going to spend more at Middle School level; cutting a team or teachers at Middle School puts us back to

a Junior High, not a Middle School. Applaud Jack and these guys; she supports whole budget and all Warrant Articles.

Rick Paquette wanted to follow up on the English certification; Karen has had similar recommendations, look at transfers, may have something in Middle School. Rick asked Mr. Mahan what the size of his university class was and Ryan Mahan stated 20 to 22 at a private college. Rick stated most don't have the opportunity to go to private school. As a freshman at Kansas University, he was in the 100's and he wonders what preparation is given to an 18 year old that no education or compromise education will occur if English class at Senior level is more than 25. One of the premises of Middle School is to prepare to move through the system.

Nick Goodwin stated you do need feedback. Smaller classes improve how you learn, more feedback from teacher, better grades, learn more when less students around. Join school improvement team, helps with school pride. With new building, encouraged to have pride. When numbers are determining factor not a good thing; look at quality. Heard tough budget, no offense, but always a tough budget. Got to spend to get back, have to invest. Investing in the community need to spend the money. I will be paying taxes, I can vote.

James LeFebvre stated 05/06 state average salary \$45,263.00; Conway District \$39,717.00 which is about \$5,500.00. Kennett High School project is \$24,722.00, so we are \$5,000.00 behind, which is \$5,500.00 behind the State.

Bob Drinkhall stated due to lack of experience or years of service, realize income is far less than other sections of the State. Mr. Loynd stated our teachers do work for a lot less than State average. James LeFebvre stated average salary higher. What is the median salary v. State. Mr. Loynd stated average was the median.

Karen Umberger stated listened to comments, can't argue with Jack, can't support increases other three are making and so she didn't know how to handle. If we separate out and vote, she wouldn't have a problem. She heard everything; hears the young man - obviously important to him and she doesn't disagree, but her dilemma is she can't support the whole. Have requirement to look at taxpayer and trying to come up with where we are; doesn't know what she is going to do.

Chairman Stacey thanked Mr. Loynd for his presentation.

Chairman Stacey stated on Wednesday will be Project Succeed, Warrant Articles and new Default Budget.

Deb Deschenes stated tomorrow night Conway School Board meets and she would like direction from this Board to bring back. She hears can't support; she would like to try to get a feeling from this Board what she should bring back. She wants to know what is bothering Board; is it less than 1%; additional \$2 Million; need discussion, not getting a solid message.

Bob Drinkhall stated everyone knew funding for new school shared more heavily by other towns expected. Expected a little decrease. What he sees is every entity going up; not just school. Talked about how much teachers paid; how little others are paid. Teachers have benefits; most people in town don't. I don't want to tell a Principal how to run his/her school. I don't want to tell Carl, but think we need some relief overall.

James LeFebvre stated cross leveling is a concern; look at cross leveling without bringing in new staff.

Etienne Vallee stated 1% increase will be change in formula; \$1.9 Million next year, that number will fluctuate. He supports reallocation of staff.

Rick Paquette stated last year had same discussion about Middle School; said look at the level. This year we do something, can't wield the gavel, not flexible; bone in my throat every year. At some point need to take a stand, so did.

Deb Deschenes stated Conway School Board did look at Middle School, did have discussion, did have recommendation on class size. Didn't fall on deaf ears.

Rick Paquette stated maybe he was not being clear, as student count continues to go down, staff remains the same; something could be done. If number keeps going down and staffing stays the same, 1% means nothing. Bureaucracy difficult to change. One person is an expensive item, that position not going away for 10 years at least. To that taxpayer a commitment, taken on for the long run.

Phil Dighello stated he agreed with Rick 100%. Look at spending, look at revenue. There is legislation that takes effect July 1st and may change the budget, could be better or short end if budget gets so high. We don't know what is going to happen. Chairman Stacey stated new Special Ed laws are going to make schools more accountable.

Karen stated it irritated her more than it probably should, but gets very concerned with the picking and choosing of Standards. If that Standard says 20 credits, to provide 6 more credits costs money. She had no problem with a Reading Specialist if class size was up. When you look at class size, State talks about K through 2 maximum 25; with 3 through 5, 30 and core 25; 6 through 12, 30. Can live with all of that if we had class size, she would be the first to say "yes we need those Reading Specialists" because teacher with a larger class doesn't have time to spend. Gotten hung up on Standards, read from cover to cover, have an understanding of what is says. Maybe that was her, maybe her philosophy is different.

James LeFebvre stated in addition to salary look at retirement pay. On Reading Specialist, when you hire a person to improve an issue like reading and persons questioned can not say Reading Specialist has done anything to raise reading skill.

John MacDonald stated with all due respect State Standard of 30 is an undesirable number. Please support this budget; haven't heard one person argue that it is frivolous. Support the budget, professionals doing best they can.

Chairman Stacey stated Pine Tree is being cut one teacher. Pine Tree still has lowest number of teachers; all Elementary should have the same number of teachers. She was concerned with the looping; cut teacher lose looping. No matter what we recommend, can not do tonight, still have Public session and default articles.

Ellen MacDonald stated on class size, not being mean but when was the last time any of you volunteered in a second grade class for an hour on a regular basis. I have done it every week, year after year. You make it sound like teacher not doing their job. She went to private and her teacher had a tool called a ruler and knew how to use it. Teachers don't have that tool any more. Cut teacher, split up teams; it is the teams that allow specialized instruction. Before you decide not to support this budget, go and volunteer week after week. All about budget, have to have custodians, need to maintain, everything is about money. She doesn't like her taxes.

Randy Davison stated he disagreed with that; can't fathom that average in a Middle School of 15. Karen is right, Jack's budget is incredible.

Betty Loynd stated she agreed with Ellen when it comes to Elementary. The number of kids with special needs and autism in classrooms in Elementary school. She couldn't handle some of the handicaps that some of these students have.

Bill Jones stated he didn't think suggesting cutting anybody may be reassigning. Comment to School Board to seriously look at budget decreases, realistically should not be looking at 1% increase. Don't have time to go in classroom, need to work but am apprised of what goes on in the schools. Very concerned about the education and truancy.

Betty Boucher stated she was here as a budgeter; not for or against; here to look at all of the budget. Good taxpayers can't afford, going to move.

George Fredette stated he would like to see a meeting of the minds.

Bob Drinkhall stated what has changed so dramatically; we did a lot more with a lot less many years ago. He doesn't understand teaching so few so little.

Karen Umberger stated the people in this room have totally mentioned what she was trying to say. Can not stand it when they push the Standards. If you are going to use it, use it; if not, don't come back and tell us this.

Crow Dickinson stated health insurance and cost, someone should speak with David Sorenson. He negotiated with Union at County level; contract increased benefits, increased deductible went down by several thousand

dollars. Crow also stated don't have to reinvent the wheel. Have committee that can save \$550,000.00 to \$600,000.00 in premiums; want one year contract. Police and teachers have 2 year contracts.

Bob Drinkhall stated procedural question: is applause considered proper. Chairman Stacey stated never restricted, how does board feel. Rick Paquette stated he was okay with it.

Chairman Stacey reminded members of meeting on Saturday, February 3rd at 9:00 AM for non-profits. Chairman stated she will be running the meeting for the non-profits.

Rick Paquette asked about the Selectmen and the Administrative Assistant. Chairman Stacey stated they are reserving their position. Karen Umberger stated meeting on February 5th.

Etienne Vallee moved, seconded by Betty Boucher, to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary