

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
January 30, 2008**

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, Pat Libby, Phil Dighello, Karen Umberger, Doug Swett, Bill Jones, Rick Paquette, Jim LeFebvre, Betty Boucher, Crow Dickinson and George Fredette. Also present were Dick Klement, Randy Davison and Sheryl Kovalik.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Bill Jones moved, seconded by Jim LeFebvre, to approve the Minutes of January 16, 2008, as amended. Motion passed unanimously.**

Phil Dighello stated on Page 4, last paragraph, add "referring to the funding of No Child Left Behind Program".

BIRCH HILL WATER PRECINCT

Bill Jones presented the budget. Bill stated this is exactly the same as the last 3 or 4 years. Karen Umberger asked if this is simply overhead and Bill stated overhead, advertising; money that we have not spent but anticipate some small expenses. Advertising for annual meeting; had approached the Town about a route to refund to the taxpayer some money that has not been used. Water line is complete; North Conway Water Precinct connected the water meters.

Crow Dickinson asked what is done with the \$4,726.00; only spent \$900.00, what happens to the monies raised and not spent. Bill stated it goes into CD's, so generating funds; have to have money in case it is needed. Crow stated but you spent only a quarter of what you raised; how much is in the bank and Bill stated he was not apprised of that. Chairman Stacey read Article 2 of the Birch Hill Petition:

"(OPERATING BUDGET) To see if the district will vote to raise and appropriate the budget committee recommended sum of \$4,726.00 for general district operations. The commissioners recommend \$4,726.00. This sum to come from fund balance (surplus) and no amount to come from taxation. (Majority vote required.)"

Crow stated he would be interested to see how much is actually in the bank. Bill stated that every year they draw from the balance.

Betty Boucher stated under Legal Expenses appropriated \$1,000.00, but didn't spend it. Bill stated we have to cover ourselves; so far have done our own negotiating with good results. Betty stated in Other General Government appropriated \$1,000.00, spent \$50.00. Bill stated when meeting we don't have a public facility and have to rent a facility; pay for advertising; have to legally post at Town Hall, Post Office and paper.

Chairman Stacey thanked Bill for the presentation.

TOWN RECOMMENDATIONS

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Melissa Stacey, to recommend that the proposed Warrant Article concerning an increase of \$500.00 for the five (5) members of the Board of Selectmen be eliminated. In favor: 9; Opposed: 2 - George Fredette and Rick Paquette; Abstain: 2 - Bob Drinkhall and Crow Dickinson.**

Karen Umberger stated she felt it was not necessary and that the time spent as a Selectmen is a privilege. The stipend earned is not to be considered for anything other than the fact that the voter is saying they do want to compensate for some of your time. Crow Dickinson stated if that is the criteria, the last time it was increased was in 1983 and the price of gas has increased substantially; the gas without any question has gone up. Personally I don't care one way or the other; would be nice to do it.

Bill Jones stated he thought the amount asking for is fair and equitable; however, he would vote to take it out because this is not the year to do it; appreciate the time and effort, but should be a public service and not compensated. A lot of people make the government work without compensation including the Budget Committee. He gladly gives his time, but trying to protect the taxpayer. Bill commended the Selectmen, but will vote to eliminate.

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Rick Paquette, that the proposed Warrant Article concerning an increase of \$400.00 for the three (3) members of the Supervisors of the Checklist be eliminated. In favor: 10; Opposed: 2 - Crow Dickinson and Jim LeFebvre; Abstain: 1 - George Fredette.**

Karen Umberger stated we had talked at the last meeting about the Supervisors of the Checklist and the increase they are asking for. The Town voted to raise from \$750.00 to \$1,000.00 in 2005 and now requesting an additional \$500.00 and again recommend that we do not support.

Pat Libby stated she thought they were coming in on Monday to explain and Chairman Stacey stated no. Pat stated she listened to the meeting and part of the justification during the presentation was for the Presidential election years, but that is not what the Article says. Pat further stated that apparently data input used to be done by Town employees but Supervisors do it themselves now.

Karen Umberger stated that was the reason for the change in 2005; was for that particular reason. If the Supervisors are simply looking for compensation for one year then the Article needs to read that, but that is not what it says.

Pat Libby stated she was not comfortable arguing an increase; should have them come in. Chairman Stacey stated the Selectmen will review the letter with our recommendations and Crow will come back to us with a response.

Crow Dickinson questioned that he would be the one to come back and explain the position of the Selectmen and Chairman stated that is correct.

Chairman Stacey reminded Crow Dickinson that he needed to vote as a Selectmen tonight, vote the same as they would. Crow stated that he did not know that. Chairman stated that George Fredette had to vote the same as the School Board. Bill Jones stated that it would also be up to Crow to justify why the Selectmen voted the way they did. Rick Paquette stated just for clarification, are we going to have a letter requesting in the election year only and Chairman stated we can ask to remove, but they can come back and say whatever they want. Jim LeFebvre stated we could move to modify the recommendation to what Rick is suggesting. Crow stated for example if the Selectmen come back with a different Article, what happens then. Chairman stated the Budget Committee votes on it after the Public Hearing.

Karen Umberger stated she needed a clarification on the Police Vehicle Trust. She thought Chief Wagner said no, but either they are or they aren't. Chairman Stacey stated she would call him and ask.

Karen Umberger stated she needed a clarification on the Elderly Exemption for income tax. Tom (Holmes) said he feels that it needs to be in every time, not automatically escalated. If you read the RSA, he believes this has more of a legal standing. The last time this was done was three years ago. He feels about every three years is the right time to bring back. Also on the Petition for disability, he felt that the last time it was not worded correctly. Crow Dickinson asked if there was some question about the elderly age and Karen stated 65. Rick Paquette stated he was not sure and Crow stated it is 65. Bill Jones asked if that would apply to both sexes and Chairman Stacey stated it is 65 and yes, applies to both. Betty Boucher asked if property was owned jointly and if the wife was disabled and the husband was 65, do they get both exemptions or just one and Karen Umberger stated she thought they would get just one.

Rick Paquette asked Crow Dickinson if he had anything more to add about the Rec Revolving Fund. Crow stated he had spent a couple of hours with Earl Sires trying to figure it out and he could barely figure it out. There should be a separate section for the amount from Albany, the amount from Eaton and from Conway; it probably shouldn't go into the Revolving Fund. If that is not in the Revolving Fund and goes into the General Fund, then a lot of anxiety is taken care of. Chairman Stacey stated except what to do with the Revolving Fund. Crow stated it is a bookkeeping issue. Chairman stated she would not have this debate with Crow again.

Bill Jones questioned the computer server for the Police Department and whether or not that should be looked at more closely. Pat Libby stated she thought the School had an extra one and that someone might make mention of it and check into it. Karen Umberger stated she read the technology inventory sheet; have 5 servers not being used.

Crow Dickinson stated in the letter going to the Selectmen you are going to say on a certain date a response is required and asked what happens when the Town gets the letter, how do we communicate our response to this Committee. Chairman Stacey stated to Crow, you come back and tell us what

the Selectmen thought. Crow stated he didn't know that and that he needed to have a date put in the letter. Chairman stated the next meeting is on the 4<sup>th</sup> and Crow stated the Selectmen won't have had a meeting. Chairman stated then I assume the 6<sup>th</sup>; can present on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Crow again asked that a date be put in the letter. Chairman Stacey stated next meeting date is the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Betty Boucher moved, seconded by Melissa Stacey, to recommend that the ending balance in the Recreation Revolving Fund in amount \$29,786.51 be left alone for one more year; see where we are at that time. In favor: 10; Opposed: 2 - Pat Libby and Rick Paquette; Abstain: 1 - Karen Umberger.**

Karen Umberger stated the Budget Committee really doesn't have any authority over the Revolving Fund. You can make a recommendation, it is not like our authority over other portions of the budget. As she said to Earl Sires, when the Selectmen discuss Revolving Funds she will go and discuss this with them. Rick Paquette stated he agreed with Karen; the taxpayer expects the Budget Committee to review everything and when we see something and have questions, we are to question it; that is our responsibility, to hold the Selectmen responsible on managing taxpayer money.

Crow Dickinson questioned the way it was being presented; didn't think it over inflates the Revolving Fund. Crow stated that he hadn't discussed this matter with the whole Board of Selectmen. It makes good sense to take out the monies from Eaton and Albany and treat the same as Conway. In the Revolving Fund will only be the fees and any contributions. Chairman Stacey stated contributions are made by Friends of Rec.

Jim LeFebvre stated he was not sure that just because the amount equals what Eaton and Albany paid, doesn't mean that is where the excess came from. Chairman Stacey stated the issue is what was the intent the Budget Committee supported. The intent was to have a Revolving Fund to take the pressure off the taxpayer for the summer program. Crow Dickinson stated this has to get straightened out.

Rick Paquette stated the number that people keep bringing up; it may be somewhat close but has nothing to do with the money collected. Jim LeFebvre stated Earl (Sires) mentioned the RSA gives them the greater authority. Crow Dickinson stated he was convinced we can resolve the problem; only have an interest in complying with what we thought we were doing; this is driving me crazy. Chairman stated the reason no one was turned away was because the Friends of Rec did sponsorships. This year will be the first year John will have the money to help those that can't afford the program.

Bill Aughton asked if there was a plan to take it out and Crow stated no; Selectmen want to leave the Revolving Fund in place, in the same manner. Since he now has a grip and understands exactly this Committee's concerns, he will see if it can be presented in a different way; money will still be available. The money being talked about is the money from Eaton and Albany. Chairman Stacey stated that is the money left over from the Summer Program; just happens to be the same sum as what Eaton and Albany have contributed. Crow stated he didn't think the Chairman was correct and would get it

straightened out. Doug Swett stated the more he hears, the more he worries about it.

Bill Jones stated around \$74,000.00 generated by fees, \$45,000.00 offset, with \$30,000.00 now being held; what is the big deal. We are talking about a situation that worked very well for one year; let it ride for one more year. Bill moved the question.

Karen Umberger stated she abstained because she didn't believe it was the Budget Committee's business; should talk directly to the Selectmen.

#### SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Bob Drinkhall, to recommend removing the portion concerning cameras from proposed Warrant Article 10. In favor: 6 - Karen Umberger, Doug Swett, Bill Jones, Phil Dighello, Bob Drinkhall and Betty Boucher; Opposed: 7; Abstain: 0.**

**Crow Dickinson moved, seconded by Jim LeFebvre, to ask if the School Board would consider removing the cameras from Article 10. In favor: 11; Opposed: 2 - Karen Umberger and Betty Boucher; Abstained: 0.**

Karen Umberger stated she was not a big camera fan, not that they don't have their place and wouldn't provide security outside of the buildings, but she did not hear any discussion about malicious vandalism and excessive costs. On the security systems she thought that if people keep the doors closed like they should for the safety of children in the school and if you want to monitor people coming and going, she believed there are other ways to do it other than by spending \$219,000.00.

Jim LeFebvre stated he believed that the camera systems and locking systems should be separated. Since one School already has and has been effective, the School Board would be better to do away with the cameras and go with the locking systems.

George Fredette stated Point of Order. Chairman Stacey stated just commenting.

Bob Drinkhall stated he could not support the talk about reducing that which would pertain to maintenance; it would be a horrendous mistake.

Dick Klement stated you asked us to do this last year. You wanted to see a comprehensive article together. The comment about the security lock system not in those schools: If a child or teacher opens a door no one else knows it is opened or if it is propped open; without these systems no one is going to know that a door has been opened. If somebody breaks in and opens a door, an alarm sounds and that is what the security system gives you.

Crow Dickinson stated it should be separate. Karen Umberger stated to Dick Klement that she appreciated what he just said, but she does know you can walk into Conway Elementary without a problem during the school day, through the front door. George Fredette stated that is where we want you to

come in. Chairman Stacey stated the front door is not locked during school hours.

Bill Aughton stated the bigger problem is the overall picture of the budget; we may have said that last year, but he didn't expect a 28% increase. Bill understands and believes the School Board is doing what they can and think what is needed, but it is a huge amount of money; don't know where the cuts will come. Bill further stated he sometimes wonders if we are looking at a traditional way of budgeting and not looking out of the box; not sure money is the solution. If you look at the whole picture, the average in this country is up less than 4%, this budget is up 26%. Bill proceeded to read a Letter to the Editor that was published in December of 2007 and stated when you look at that and look at the overall picture, at some stage need to look closely at moving staff. He would support anything that would reduce, but also questions if \$219,000.00 was going to make the difference.

Rick Paquette stated people deciding heat or eat and it is shocking to me because there is no end. He was livid; trying to do everything we can do for people who actually live here and what they can afford. He would like a Lexus, but he can't; got to drive the Chevy.

George Fredette stated misrepresentation; we did this Warrant Article because you people asked for it. You asked for it last year, asked for a complete package. We are giving you what you wanted. Chairman Stacey stated she thought this is where there is a lack of communication; we requested that you give us a comprehensive package price, what was it going to cost. George stated could be miscommunication.

Jim LeFebvre stated his only concern with the cameras: is the risk high enough to warrant having. If you are living in Alexandria, Virginia maybe; living in North Conway is a different level of risk and should accommodate accordingly.

George Fredette stated he would defer to Dick Klement. Sheryl Kovalik stated she was interested in seeing whether or not that passes; could put forth a second modification.

Jim LeFebvre called the question.

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Betty Boucher, to recommend eliminating the proposed Warrant Article 13 concerning a boom lift and continue to rent. In favor: 7; Opposed: 5 - George Fredette, Pat Libby, Jim LeFebvre, Bob Drinkhall and Bill Aughton; Abstain: 1 - Crow Dickinson.**

Bill Jones stated he could see the need in some areas, but he would be afraid that if the unit is given to the Maintenance Department and then used by a subcontractor with no compensation. He would like to see some kind of picture of the usage for the last three years on this kind of equipment. George Fredette stated pay \$8,000.00 per year on this. Bill stated clears that up; support removal. George stated they were not looking to rent to anyone; would not be available to anyone except the Town. Bill

asked if it would be towed by the new van and George stated with the van they got last year.

Bob Drinkhall stated he thought it would be foolish to oppose only because money would be saved in the long run. It will obviously pay for itself in a short period of time. George Fredette stated it does have a 5-year pay back and we expect to have it for 20 years.

Bill Jones asked if there was fuel consumption and maintenance in the budget. George Fredette stated he didn't recall. Chairman Stacey stated the Town would do maintenance, oil changes and Jim would be able to work in the fuel in his budget. Dick Klement stated an inspection once a year is required. Chairman Stacey stated the Town's response was the offer was very generous, but prefer to rent equipment and its operator. Bill Jones stated this type of equipment requires compliance with OSHA Regs. George stated it was part of the training and annual inspection, has to be inspected. Chairman stated Jim's people are trained on the machine.

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Jim LeFebvre, to recommend on proposed Warrant Article 16 to go with money coming from the surplus. In favor: 7; Opposed: 5 - Rick Paquette, Bill Jones, Bob Drinkhall, Melissa Stacey and Bill Aughton; Abstain: 1 - George Fredette.**

Karen Umberger stated she thought we were all in agreement that it is essential that we look at the figure for maintenance at the High School but would agree to some decrease. She would agree that 20 years is probably a little bit long to be putting money away for expenditures that would occur in a 20-year range. She was not particularly sure the right number is \$234,000.00, but she was suggesting that whatever the "up to" amount was that the School Board would use the surplus to put money in there. She totally agreed that we don't want to end up in a situation like the old High School where we had to spend \$11 Million to refurbish the Middle School along with all money put into it over time.

Bob Drinkhall asked what happens if there is no surplus and Karen Umberger stated nothing goes in. Bob stated then we could end up with another old school possibly. He didn't believe that the new school was built as well as the original school; more maintenance involved in his opinion. Bob thought it would be wiser to come up on a gradual basis than come up with massive amounts for on-going problems.

Pat Libby asked if the fund could be set up with no funding. George Fredette stated can't put money in without approval of taxpayer every year. Chairman Stacey stated the Town has to do it every year. Pat stated she thought that was anticipated every year. Chairman stated can technically go with the first part from surplus; if none the next year, can raise and appropriate. Karen Umberger stated she assumed so; what really attempting to do is to establish the fund and that has to be done prior to money being put in and normally you establish the fund and put money in. Karen felt that there has been a surplus the last 4 or 5 years and she anticipates this year also. In April, May or June we will receive \$400,000.00 to \$500,000.00 from Special Education; may not have a Million dollar surplus as in the past, but expect to have something.

Betty Boucher asked the School Board Members present if they expect to see a surplus this year. George Fredette stated he didn't know; Special Education was eating up a big chunk; just don't know. As of yet, we haven't gone into a spending freeze; being told that it is going to be close. Sheryl Kovalik stated we are only one-half of the year over; could be we are off at this point, have been given a rough suggestion of \$100,000.00 but there is no way of verifying. Dick Klement stated Special Education is overspent in 3 to 6 places by 10 or 11%. We are told don't know. Randy Davison stated last year \$600,000.00 received back and he believes if a tax dollar is raised for special service then it should be returned for that specific purpose.

Phil Dighello stated he believed we should use surplus. First, for the last 3 years very hard to estimate; Carl has simply said \$100,00.00 and end up with over \$1 Million. Second, recommend coming up with another \$250,000.00. He thought set up the fund and at least you know it is going to go on maintenance as first priority.

Sheryl Kovalik asked if there was an interest in compromise; possible to consider keeping a number the first year to raise and appropriate \$150,000.00 to be funded first through surplus balance then through taxes. Bob Drinkhall stated that is certainly not a bad idea; this is too important not to follow through on.

Karen Umberger stated she was not sure if an Article could be written like that. The tax rate for 2008 is not set until October, maybe can be written that way. Karen thought that is something the School Board could look at in their deliberative. Her recommendation is that all come out of surplus.

George Fredette stated he just wanted to keep it all on the table. Instead of going back and forth, we are looking for a recommendation on this particular Article.

Rick Paquette stated he was having a problem with the sniff test. Asking School Board and they are trying, but how can we say we want to plan for a \$250,000.00 surplus, can't understand supporting that; think it is wrong. He would support raising this money and not taking out of surplus.

Pat Libby stated she disagreed; there is a surplus with the health insurance increases. Betty Boucher stated this was not a meeting for the School, it is our meeting. Chairman stated School Board does not have to call a meeting, only we need to. George Fredette stated it was not his intent; his intent was to have everybody on the same page. He can not guarantee anything, but there are four of us here, let's get a common understanding. Funding with surplus, over the years there has been a constant; this is a way of providing an opportunity to park the surplus somewhere. This year we are trying to set up a fund. Chairman Stacey stated she agreed with Rick; Bob has a valid point; Rick has a valid point; what if there is no surplus, can't see turning the school back into what we had.

Bill Jones stated looking at two ways to fund the request; he would like to see guaranteed money in the bank as has been discussed; he intends to support raising and appropriating.

Sheryl Kovalik stated the net effect should be the same. If there is a surplus, should have same result in expecting to offset future taxes; keeping it clean and neat.

Phil Dighello stated he had heard some good points; we look at you saying a wash; maybe if you don't spend the surplus, some part can be earmarked for the maintenance article.

Jim LeFebvre called the question.

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Jim LeFebvre, to recommend that the proposed Warrant Article 17 be used only for catastrophic situations during the school year. In favor: 11; Opposed: 1 - Rick Paquette; Abstain: 1 - George Fredette.**

Karen Umberger stated that she needed an explanation about the Special Education Trust Fund and what that whole thing is about because what she didn't understand was how it would be used. Chairman Stacey stated it was to be used at any point in time if it would help offset what the deficit would be. Karen stated this year for example, the need for 12 new Aides and if money had been set aside then is that where the School would have gone to pay for the 12 Aides; doesn't say only for Catastrophic to offset future Special Education costs. Karen further stated she did not look up this RSA and had no problem if limited to Catastrophic, but thinks it would be a problem otherwise.

George Fredette stated he didn't think they talked about it; can certainly look at that coming into play. Twelve people in the budget have an impact that is great. If we had this fund, would be able to pay for some of the 1:1 Aides. Chairman Stacey stated only way used is if in the form of a deficit. Karen Umberger stated that required two public hearings or one or whatever. Chairman stated she thought it is just one, but don't quote her on that. Karen stated she didn't remember the last time there was a public hearing and Chairman stated there was a hearing on Grants. Karen stated her concern is there a sum of money; have not looked at RSA 198, but she did have a problem with open-ended anything with Special Education.

Sheryl Kovalik stated she could get the follow up information to the Budget Committee; she didn't know the answer either. Chairman Stacey stated on the whole what you are saying is it should be more for Catastrophic Aid.

Randy Davison stated only need one individual for a \$100,000.00 placement; some surrounding towns get hit; it is a good thing.

Karen Umberger stated she had no problem with the Warrant Article; her only problem is she didn't read what the RSA said; have spent 45 minutes on this and don't want to get in a situation where this comes back next year or year after year with a different interpretation of what we are looking for.

Bill Jones stated what it is doing is creating a fund so next year you will be coming in again. George Fredette stated they were looking to cap at \$500,000.00 and not looking for more. Bill stated every year looking for something. George stated depends on next year's School Board. Jim LeFebvre stated the purpose is to eventually have a \$500,000.00 cap. Rick Paquette stated he was wondering why this was not funded with surplus and George stated it does say that. Dick Klement stated educate me, if two Articles are taking from surplus and not enough to fund both, fund one and then the second gets nothing. Randy Davison stated it was a great thing setting it up this way; does get funds back.

Jim LeFebvre moved the question.

Bob Drinkhall stated the budget proposed by the School is up 26.37%; for a \$100,000.00 home, tax increase will be \$274.00; a \$200,000.00 home, tax increase will be \$548.00; a \$500,000.00 home, tax increase will be \$822.00. Think we all know how tight the economy is; need the taxpayer to know there are other costs we can't control; understand the people proposing the School Budget believe in it, but he believes can't afford to approve as is.

Karen Umberger stated she would suggest to the School Board to seriously look at cutting the budget. She thought they needed to look at what is being recommended and try to skinny down significantly what is proposed.

Bill Jones stated according to comments from the School Board members this budget has been determined to be their required budget without change; very difficult to have the same School Board look and cut. We have to do something drastic; can not afford this school budget. It is up to the School Board and its members to resolve that problem.

Phil Dighello stated he read an article in the paper for when the School Board voted on their budget. Dick Klement recommended trimming by \$500,000.00. Looking at the tax impact of that he could, in good conscience, support it. Sheryl Kovalik made a motion to cut \$250,000.00 and after discussion the comment was the only alternative is to bring forward the budget and let the voters decide. Even with \$250,000.00, only 7/10 of 1%; so for us to make a recommendation is fruitless; 7/10 of 1%.

**Pat Libby moved, seconded by Rick Paquette, to recommend that the School Board reconsider the position of the High School Family Liaison. Pat Libby amended her motion, seconded by Rick Paquette, to recommend that the School Board re-visit all new positions at the High School except for the custodian and the 12 Special Education Aides already employed. In favor: 11; Opposed: 1 - Pat Libby; Abstain: 1 - George Fredette.**

Karen Umberger stated she would like to have the motion amended. She thought it important to re-look at all of the new positions which account for \$800,000.00 and also the Assistant Maintenance Director, but was not sure if Pat was willing to go that far and if Rick was willing to second. Did feel that a position can always be added and justified for whatever reason and she was sure there was a million reasons why, but from the data she has seen about class size she was not seeing the need.

George Fredette stated the recommendations need to be realistic for us to consider; 11 Special Education Aides can't be eliminated by law. This Motion is completely unrealistic. Chairman Stacey stated if you come back with 12 Special Education Aides, by law there is nothing we can do. George stated why come back, the School Board is unable to consider any request.

Karen Umberger stated she had no problem taking out those 12 people and recommended that the Special Education Aides be taken out; she had no problem with that.

Rick Paquette stated this has echoes of last year when the Budget Committee asked the School Board to take a look at the Junior High to see if any teacher could be moved and the taxpayer wouldn't get hit. Talked about the Middle School getting fat; now nothing has changed. This Board was told by Carl last year that there were some English teachers that could be moved up to the High School. Again, School Board think about looking at that; you have a bubble that has moved into the High School; leave as is or do we make adult decisions about resources and do whatever we can to meet that need with existing resources. Hope they will review again, thinking out of the box, these are tough times.

Doug Swett asked if that included the Assistant Maintenance Director which is the back up for Andy; a custodian is not an assistant. If Andy is in the Caribbean and something goes wrong, he would be the one called on. Crow Dickinson stated motion doesn't say cut, just review. Jim LeFebvre stated a simple question to George Fredette: do you have an assistant today by title and George Fredette stated Jim Hill would coordinate that.

Dick Klement stated there are training issues. We are not sending everyone to school, very expensive; increased 200,000 square feet. Right now one guy is running around. George Fredette stated it is important to keep up, not fall behind.

Sheryl Kovalik stated she was in an awkward position right now. On the list of recommendations attached to the budget was a Family Liaison going into each school. She didn't vote to support because so many things were not there. She felt it should be delayed; difficulty in getting recommendations from other sources. Obligated to bring forward to the budget. May have to make some grown up decisions and are trying to make them; will make best effort.

Betty Boucher stated have asked not to touch Maintenance Fund and positions, why falling behind. George Fredette stated Andy is flat out with the additional 200,000 square feet and the process of converting the Middle School. He is not getting to each place he needs to at this time.

Jim LeFebvre recommended that every effort be made to make adult decisions. George Fredette stated in talking about the Family Liaison, concerned about taxes, and he appreciated that the best thing to do is to give kids a good education and get them out of there. The Family Liaison will reach out to families where a kid is; tough vote on the Board but understand what we are really trying to do is reach out.

Rick Paquette stated he heard of somewhere in New Hampshire there is a principal who has the students identified and she goes to the family and she sits with the family to develop a program with the family to help them get John that diploma; very successful. This stopped me in my tracks; anything we can do to get same support.

Chairman Stacey stated her concern as she sees it is a position that is duplicated in this town; there are different organizations filling that gap. George Fredette stated they are not seeing that. Karen Umberger stated if recommended the new position can be justified in and of itself; won't argue that at all; think we should prioritize those new positions. Karen further stated she has heard if we don't have an Assistant Maintenance Director, the buildings will fall down; if we don't have a groundskeeper, things will fall apart. She had called Jim to find out why \$88,000.00 for a contract with an additional groundskeeper was in the budget; hopefully he will call back. What we are asking the School Board to do is to say their #1 priority is the Assistant Maintenance Director, #2 is the Family Liaison and then less priority. That is where she feels it is important that if the School Board believes so many positions are going to make or break the school, then she was not sure; can accept that maybe that is the way it is. She is not suggesting eliminate positions, but asking to re-think every one of those positions and try to come to grips with if we don't have a Family Liaison or is there something else that we can do to offset taxes. There are all kinds of different options. No one is eliminating, just suggesting.

Bill Jones stated this has been discussed so many times and the intent is to ask the School Board to take a look at re-visiting in the motion.

Karen Umberger stated this is just a discussion item, but she did ask some questions about computers reported on the material received on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January and it said the goal is for a computer for every student; second thing said was that the Middle School is significantly under, currently 50 computers that meet industry standards. If you go to computer lines to see how many Middle School is asking for and the Middle School is not asking for replacement computers; everything, \$25,590.00, is all new equipment; not replacing, buying new ones to add to what they have. If you go to the High School, the High School last year requested \$25,400.00 for new computers with \$4,000.00 in replacement. High School this year asking for \$53,000.00 in new computers and \$5,000.00 in replacement; currently the High School is at 574 computers out of 900 or about 2:1. If you figure used at \$1,000.00 a computer, the High School is looking for 53 new computers and 5 replacement computers and Middle School is looking for 25 additional computers. The total in the High School goes up to 625. All she is suggesting is that if we are replacing computers then should budget as replacements. Line in Administrative for \$1,600.00, that would tell her that one or two are without computers or they are hiring two new people. Looking at \$11,000.00 for new computers. This is a discussion that she feels needs to be had and she is not against the money being spent, but concerned about not looking at what is being spent. Next year, she should be able to take \$76,000.00 out of the Default Budget because you won't have to replace those next year. She thought we would be recommending a \$76,000.00 cut or subtraction in the Default Budget. Again, attempting to increase the number of computers is what she should have been told; she

didn't have a problem with that. Karen doesn't think 1:1 is the right answer. She found it particularly interesting that the School has talked about computers in the Library, but the Library did not ask for any. Those are just things that caught her off guard.

Sheryl Kovalik stated they have been asking for a 5-year plan, want to know how many computers and how old. At this point should plan ahead for that process; should not be that complicated. Jim LeFebvre asked if using Windows 98 and Sheryl stated Windows 98, provide some other low level functions that are not necessary for replacement. Sheryl does have a complete inventory that was done after the budget. Dick Klement stated obsolete machines and Windows 98, have a problem keeping running and use in the Middle School setting; maybe we should shove them down to the Elementary Schools; can't clone hard drives. Chairman Stacey asked on the total, did it include children that needed a scribe and Sheryl Kovalik stated that came under Special Education. Sheryl further stated that the Library was gifted \$100,000.00 for the purpose of technology; did not come out of the bond or the budget and welcomed any Budget Committee member to volunteer to be at the Library to help.

Chairman Stacey stated the Committee had not yet received the 5 years cost versus actual on insurance and George Fredette stated he would remind Carl.

**Karen Umberger moved, seconded by Rick Paquette, to recommend to review the positions previously funded by the Perkins Grant, i.e. vocational advisors. In favor: 13; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0.**

Pat Libby questioned the vocational advisors previously funded by the Perkins Grant. Several years ago it was put into a Warrant Article before being put in the budget. George Fredette stated that was a little gray; the Perkins Grant gives money and suggests that after a period of time you put in the budget. Warrant Article 18, that went away, had no choice, not there any more. This is a choice; could spend grant money on those positions. Not exactly sure where you are coming from. Pat stated she thought it was not necessary to have new positions funded out of the Operating Budget. Betty Boucher stated she was one of the original writers and that she thought Pat was right. George Fredette stated he would look at it.

Sheryl Kovalik stated Neal has come to us for fear that he is going to see that retribution; you are correct he is worried.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Betty Boucher stated she would like to talk about the Default Budget and Petition; not clear on what the Board wants to do. Karen Umberger stated she thought that we would be better off not to vote in the positive for this at this particular time. She believes we need to give the voter a rest, give ourselves and the School Board a rest. There are people continuing on the School Board; if we say that the Default Budget is getting out of hand, we can look at it then. Karen thought the Default Budget this year is probably the best one brought forward in many years and so, from her perspective, she certainly would not support bringing this to the School Warrant this year.

Phil Dighello stated that this was the first time a list of one-time expenses has been provided and it is fairly accurate; we will probably never agree, but suggest we have some input. Next year six positions are gone and he wanted to know if they will come off the Default Budget or not; people gone should not be in the default; just a little thing he would like to have fine tuned. Phil further stated that he does have the list, which is a lot more than what he had before.

Pat Libby stated even though the School Board has done a pretty good job giving us the information, it doesn't change the basic oversight; it really doesn't matter, only need 25 voters. Karen Umberger stated she had no problem with the Petition; she thought Betty asked if the Budget Committee was going to support the Petition and her argument was that the Budget Committee should not support it.

Crow Dickinson stated that he had heard a rumor: if the Budget Committee didn't do this Petition this year, then next year the School Board would join us; is there any truth in that. George Fredette stated he had no idea what the School Board would be doing next year, he will not be a part of it.

Betty Boucher stated she would like to hear from the School Board to see if that is how they feel. Sheryl Kovalik stated she was not clear on what the questions was. Betty stated if we do not put the Petition in this year, whether or not you folks will go along with us next year; don't have to be for it, but would endorse it. Sheryl stated this was the first time she had heard about it. Bill Jones stated Point of Order; suggestion is do we, as a Board, submit a Petition to comply with RSA. Chairman Stacey stated the Board as a rule can't submit; the Board can choose to take a position. Bill Aughton stated he hadn't heard any rumors and was strongly against putting it on; have made great strides and didn't see it as a positive move.

Chairman Stacey stated the next meeting dates are 2/4 and 2/6. Phil Dighello asked what was going to be discussed on Monday. George Fredette encouraged the Committee members to attend the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> with the School Board.

Karen Umberger stated it may be just as well to have the School Board and the Town send a written response to the Budget Committee members so that we can look at it and discuss it prior to the Public Hearing. Any discussion that needs to be done on that can be done after the Public Hearing.

Chairman Stacey asked about canceling all meetings until the Public Hearing; meetings presently scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

George Fredette asked about the space for the Public Hearing and Chairman Stacey stated she assumed it was at the High School Auditorium. Sheryl Kovalik stated there was a significant sound system so we should make sure that somebody is on hand to make sure the equipment works. Betty Boucher asked where the Auditorium was and George Fredette gave directions.

Bill Jones asked whose job is it to invite the media and Chairman Stacey stated Valley Vision was faxed the schedule; Conway Sun was faxed the schedule; have not contacted the Mountain Ear. Chairman reminded everyone of the meeting on Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 AM; lunch will be provided.

Crow Dickinson stated he had heard a rumor that the Cafeteria at the High School is open to the public and anybody can go for lunch. George Fredette stated the price is reasonable and food is very good; open from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

**Jim LeFebvre moved, seconded by Betty Boucher, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary