

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
February 3, 2011**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:32 PM in the Meeting Room at the Conway Town Hall with the following members present: Chairman David Sordi, Bob Drinkhall, Doug Swett, Bill Masters, Ray Shakir, Janine McLauchlan, Linda Teagan, John Edgerton and Karen Umberger (arriving at 6:55 PM). Members excused from meeting: Joe Mosca. Also present: Bob Goods, Asst. Superintendent; Neal Moylan, Principal at Kennett High School; Kevin Richard, Principal at Kennett Middle School; Pam Stimson, Director of Special Education; Syndi White of the Conway School Board; and Lloyd Jones of The Daily Sun.

Chairman Sordi lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Sordi stated that Karen Umberger would be late for this meeting so there will be 7 members present and that he would need to step out of the meeting at 8:30 PM for a call. Chairman stated that he would be passing out a couple of documents: a revised Center Conway Fire Precinct budget; Nancy Leavitt sent an e-mail stating there was an error in the original as they had included in the Revenue for the Fire Truck \$175,000.00 but it would be financed; she has corrected this. The other document being passed out, and some may have received it via e-mail, it's the East Conway Fire Precinct documents that will be presented at Monday night's meeting. He will wait until Karen Umberger gets here before going over the schedule for meetings next week and the voting that the Committee is going to have to do.

Chairman Sordi stated tonight we will be talking about the School budget; we've got the overall school, the High School, the Middle School and Special Ed.

SCHOOL REVIEW

Bob Godowski, Assistant Superintendent, stated that Dr. Nelson sent his apologies but he was in Jackson tonight at a previously scheduled Board meeting and budget hearing. He had a few things to hand out and noted in the Agenda that the Committee would be discussing the High School, the Middle School and Special Education. They have administrators from all of those places to answer questions specifically and asked, if okay by the Committee, to take one at a time: the High School, then the Middle School and then release the administrators so they can get out at a reasonable hour would be appreciated.

Mr. Godowski stated to start with there were some questions from the last meeting that was sent to their office and hopefully they have answered the questions and have either given an answer or given back up material that will take care of all of those that were sent to their office. He stated that he would be happy to entertain any questions on either clarifying the material given or questions members may have from past meetings.

Doug Swett stated at a prior meeting, the principal of the High School, Neal Moylan, brought up the fact that they provided 5 courses that were higher level courses or college grade and they were going to add 2 this year. What are we doing that for in these times. Mr. Godowski asked if the Committee wanted to move right into the High School. Chairman Sordi asked that Doug wait until the High School is up and asked if there were any general questions for Mr. Godowski before proceeding to the High School.

Linda Teagan stated she had one general overall question. The budget packet talks about a zero increase for all non-salary items which is back in September which doesn't necessarily apply; what was the percentage increase of the School budget from last year to this year with the Warrant Articles and the health and pension; is there a sheet that we have. Mr. Godowski stated he believed that information was already given to the Committee. A total percentage increase is in the booklet and, if he remembers correctly, originally it was a decreased percentage.

#### KENNETT HIGH SCHOOL

Neal Moylan, Principal and Lori Babine, Career Tech Director, made the presentation. Chairman Sordi asked if there were any preliminary comments or information or did Mr. Moylan want it opened up to questions. Mr. Moylan stated he thought they had explained just about everything they could have at the Conway School Board meetings.

Doug Swett stated you have 5 courses up there that are college level and that you are adding 2 more. Mr. Moylan stated actually he was going to add 3 more. Doug stated in these times, what are you doing this for. Mr. Moylan stated it has nothing to do with the economy. They are adding 3 new Advanced Placement courses and, as a matter of fact, it does have something to do with the economy. These are AP courses that will be taught by existing staff; they have shown the initiative to go out and be willing to go through the AP training during the summer when they could be on vacation and what it does in this economy is that for the parents and the students that take those AP courses it gives them a college credit for each of those particular courses. It is possible for some of their youngsters to be able to get to college and be almost three-quarters of the way through their Freshman year even before they start. Secondly, the other reason is because they have a good High School and their objective is to have a great High School. They want to go from good to great. It's always been before any of the preliminary talk about Coalition For Excellence or anything like that, it's always been their objective, the staff is quite in line with this, to continue to push the bar of academic excellence at every opportunity.

Doug Swett stated that doesn't help the man in the street that's losing his home and trying to pay his taxes. Mr. Moylan stated that has nothing to do with the man in the street, Doug, it is not doing anything to their budget numbers at all. Doug stated are you telling me that you had teachers sitting around until you brought these courses in. Mr. Moylan stated he did not. Doug stated there has to be some answer here. Mr. Moylan stated the answer is we're going for education excellence. Some of these courses that may have been advance level courses before, they are

going to up the ante one more time and they will become advanced placement courses. Doug stated but you've got personnel to teach these courses that weren't on the docket until this year. Mr. Moylan stated no, they're on the docket this year. They are taking an advanced level course and they are going to up it one more time to become an advanced placement course. Doug asked if the number of total courses increased or are you swapping one off for another. Mr. Moylan stated the total number of courses in the High School is going up, but they have not for one second added an additional staff member to do that. Doug asked what was this teacher doing before you upped the course numbers. Mr. Moylan stated he had just told the Committee, they were teaching an Advanced Level History course or an Advanced Level German course or German 5; they are going from a German 5 to an AP German. They have AP Calculus 1 and they are now going to an AP Calculus 2. A student can take the AB Calculus exam, they can also take the BC Calculus exam. The third course they are adding is Psychology; they are going from an advanced level Psychology to an AP Level Psychology. For members of our community, this is a tremendous savings and it pushes their academic achievement at the High School.

Chairman Sordi asked which subjects are they adding or going from Advanced to AP. Mr. Moylan stated AP Calculus 2, AP German and AP Psychology.

Linda Teagan asked if Mr. Moylan could clarify the Science and Math AP courses. Mr. Moylan stated they have AP Probability and Stats, they have an advanced Bio class which not next year but the year after their goal is to make that an AP Bio class. They offer AP English Lit, AP English Comp, AP History and there may be one more in there that he can't think of. Linda stated what she was looking for is AP Physics, Calculus and Chemistry. Mr. Moylan stated they do have AP Calculus 1 and will be going to AP Calculus 2. Linda stated she just wanted to say one thing about AP courses; she is a big supporter of AP classes if they are done correctly wherein the children take actual AP exams at the end because it's a third party evaluation of what is learned. We have all heard about grade inflation and all that, but this is sent to an outside evaluator and therefore you know what's being taught in these classes are equivalent to what's is being taught countrywide. Linda asked if they could give a 5 year summary of the AP classes and the number of 3's, 4's and 5's in them. Mr. Moylan stated not off the top of his head. Linda stated not right now, but next week. Mr. Moylan agreed.

Bill Masters stated with respect to the college credits being awarded, as a tradition, going back to his own years in college, we paid for those credits in terms of their attendance. Are the taxpayers subsidizing college credits for the kids taking the AP courses and being awarded credits by the participating post-secondary school systems. Mr. Moylan stated no because those students would be taking an advanced level course where they might not be looking to get a college credit. Either they are taking an advanced level course or an AP course. These youngsters, the best and the brightest and the most talented and they are willing to take on this challenge because there is a considerable amount of work, there's no question about that. These kids have to produce a significant assignment that's due on August 13<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> in order to stay in AP. It's exceptionally rigor; it's an opportunity for them to challenge

themselves; they've stepped forward and taken this challenge. They would have to get the Math credit one way or the other, whether it's AP, whether its advanced, whether it's College Prep. It has nothing to do at all with the taxpayers subsidizing the education. Bill stated so if the College awards the credits for the courses that they've taken, that's a freebie. Mr. Moylan stated for the family and the student, that's correct. Bill stated would it be safe to assume through that process that we, the taxpayers, are in fact subsidizing the advanced education. Mr. Moylan stated no, that's just not logical. In order for the student to get that college credit, they need to take the AP test which is at the end of the year in May. They can only get that college credit if they score, on a scale of 1 to 5, they can only get that college credit if they get a 3 for some colleges, a 4 and a 5. If they score a 2 or a 1, they may have taken that AP course but they don't get any college credit. Bill stated but for those that do score a 3 and above and are awarded college credits for the curriculums that they are taking, that would appear that the taxpayers are in fact paying for that. Mr. Moylan stated no more so than any other student that takes a credit at Kennett High School.

Chairman Sordi stated he understood what Bill (Masters) was saying but he had to agree with the last comment. If we have people going through the normal education and they get a job right out of school, you could say the same thing if they went through Career Tech. A class is a class. If a teacher is going to go from an advanced to an AP, then it's just making the class more rigorous and giving those people taking those classes already a chance to get credit when they go to college. When he was in High School, AP was a common thing.

Chairman Sordi stated he did have one question for Mr. Moylan; there's been a lot in the papers that we need to make improvements to the school, enough education is not being given to the students, but he hasn't seen any indication of what the schools have done to become more efficient or to use the money more wisely to save money so that you can then take the money you save and apply to other curricular or other extra-curricular activities. What's been done at the High School to make it more efficient, to use the money more efficiently so you can save some money and apply it to other aspects of the High School Education.

Mr. Moylan stated for the last 2 years, they've had a flat budget. That's a misnomer; it's not a flat budget. They still need to be able to pay for utility increases, for health care increases and so consequently in order to stay within the parameters that they've been directed, they've had to slowly but surely whittle away at books, whittle away at supplies, or professional development or any of those other things. The fact that they are still moving forward with professional development, the fact that their SAT scores improved last year for the first time in several years, the fact that they have gotten teachers that are so passionate and so engaged in education that not only are they looking to add advanced level AP courses, but they have also gone out on their own accord and have redesigned the English curriculum so they offer a much greater array of student options to begin to improve the academic attainment of their school.

Chairman Sordi stated that Mr. Moylan didn't answer his question. Mr. Moylan stated he did. Chairman stated he didn't; number one, you said you've had a flat budget, you haven't had a flat budget; the budget has gone up over the last 2 years. Mr. Moylan asked and what has been driving the budget up. Chairman stated salaries, benefits, utilities; he didn't disagree that those costs are going up, but to say you've had a flat budget is not correct. What have you done within the school system to be able to operate the schools more efficiently with less costs. He doesn't disagree that costs have gone up; he doesn't disagree that we need to offer an excellent education to our students, but any type of business that is run if they took the mentality that we're going to say we have a flat budget, but our salaries, our benefits, our utilities are all going up 10%, 15% so the bottom line is we'll have to go up 15% and raise our prices to our customers. That doesn't happen and it comes down to the people managing the business to do it more efficiently and reduce the overall costs, find ways to do it better. What he is asking is what have you done at the High School to do that in order to generate those savings that can then be used to improve the education of our students.

Mr. Moylan stated they have improved the education and he could point to the courses they are offering, he can point to the increase in scores, he can point to the fact that they have been recognized by outside agencies as having a school of excellence. They are doing more with less. The bottom line is they have had to roll back on professional development, they have had to pull back on some of the other supply line items or what not. The quality of education that they offer is outstanding there and it's not because he's been increasing this or increasing that. It is the fact that health care and utilities continue to drive that budget up.

Chairman Sordi stated he wanted to make sure that he gave Mr. Moylan a chance to answer, but you have not given me one example of what you've done to try to make the school more efficient. You talk about an excellent education, Chairman wasn't going to dispute that; you talk about what you've tried to do for the students to better prepare them for the world, he doesn't dispute that. What he is asking Mr. Moylan as the principal of that school, what have you done to operate that business, that school more efficiently. Mr. Moylan stated and I'm telling you that we've worked within the confines of our budget and they've been able to improve the educational quality of that school. Chairman stated unfortunately that is not an answer; it doesn't give any examples of ways to think either outside the box or to think of better ways to educate the children in the school using the money more efficiently. The points you made are very valid, but it's not answering the question.

John Edgerton stated the part that bothers me is the same amount of students for 10 years and the budget has doubled and that's 7.2% a year increase for the school budget. That's a lot of money and he didn't know of any teacher who gets a 7.2% raise; he didn't know of any administrator who gets a 7.2% raise every single year for 10 years. That's our problem; we're for the taxpayer, that's what we're here for and if taxes have doubled in 10 years and nobody's getting a raise at that amount then everyone's being pinched in the Valley. He didn't want to see their budget turned down; he didn't want to see an uprising of the people that say "absolutely, forget everything; we'll give you \$28 Million and live

with it". Mr. Moylan stated that was good to hear. John stated he didn't want to see them do that, but that's what they may do.

Mr. Moylan stated there's no better investment that this Valley, this State, this nation can make than in education. It'll pay back multifold not only in the quality of the student that comes back with either a new enterprise, new business, new invention, etc. but the price of housing and the health of our community, this is not education 1950 style. These kids are competing, not against Concord, not against Hartford, CT, not against California, this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the world is a flat place. If we are going to continue to be competitive, we need to prepare those kids for education.

Chairman Sordi stated he understood what Mr. Moylan was saying but the example he was using; Chairman agreed the world is flat and we need to prepare our kids better. What he is disappointed in, and he's not worried about what classes you're offering that's up to the School Board to decide, this Committee is here to look at the way the \$33 Million plus that is provided to the School is being used from a holistic perspective and to sit there and intimate that this Budget Committee doesn't care about the level of education that's being provided to our students is insulting to be honest. Mr. Moylan stated those are your words, not mine. Chairman stated but that's what he was hearing. The comments that Mr. Moylan was making, that's what he was hearing. There's a great example of a company in this country that continued to have to absorb high benefits, high pay increases, but they didn't sit down and they didn't figure out a way to do their job more effectively and that's General Motors and they went belly up 2 years ago. If we don't figure out a way to operate our schools more efficiently so that we can take the savings and apply it to better educating our students, then the only answer is to have the budget to continue to go up and the taxes continue to go up at 4% or 5% every year and to him that's not sustainable. John Edgerton stated it's been 7% a year.

Ray Shakir stated preparing kids for an adequate education is acceptable; preparing kids for a good education is acceptable; preparing kids for an outstanding, fantastic, the best education in the world in this particular environment is not acceptable. We have to balance what is required for an adequate, good education to the needs of the community and that balance is a very fine line. Everybody here wants to do as best they can to provide an adequate education for the community but you have to balance that requirement with the fact that this is not a community that has a higher echelon of income and stuff like that. As a matter of fact, it's kind of like a blue collar level. So when you balance that to the requirements of the education, you come to having to develop an education as efficient as possible to get the best results. What does that mean? It means that there's you and there's us, that's what it means. He was sure that both are going for the same target, but we have to approach it and balance it so that the kids are provided a good education and the taxpayer is also recognized for the level of income, the average income that they have. All he was saying is that both need to come to an agreement that it becomes a balance and if you're going to push for the best, most outstanding and most prolific education that you can possibly get, it's not going to work, it's just not. If you work with

us and realize that the community is at a certain income level and we have to abide by that income level, then we'd probably all come out to an agreement. But the way it goes now, it's going to be you against us and it's just going to be up to the voters and he hoped Mr. Moylan understood where he was going on this.

Chairman Sordi stated he agreed with everything Ray was saying except the point that we can provide the best education possible, but you've got to find ways to do it more efficiently so that we can save money. If he goes into a business and he looks around for ways to save money, you may have to change the way you do something whether you manufacture a widget, whether you service a computer, whatever, the people that are successful in this country are the ones that learn how to do it cheaper so they can take that money and use it for other reasons to make their business better and he was not hearing that here. He'd love to be able to say we have the best educational system in the State, but our cost per student is right in the middle of the pack. That would be a win-win for everybody. When you hear people make comments in the area, yes our cost per student is in the middle of the pack, but we want to be at the top of the pack which means we will have the best educated students in the State. It doesn't work like that.

Janine McLauchlan stated she thought there was a need for clarification. As you know, the School Board spent hours and hours and hours pouring over the budget. They asked a lot of questions of the administrators; asked them to present the budget in a number of different ways and the main goal of the School Board is to be able to come forward with a budget that they honestly felt that every question that could possibly be asked was asked and be able to present the best possible budget for what the Principals and Administrators needed to do to deliver an education whether it be adequate, good or outstanding. Neal has just said here that he's able to provide additional courses to up that level of education at no additional cost. She was not sure if anybody heard that; to her that's an efficiency, that's a way of working more efficient with the resources that he has. If you're asking specifically about whether or not he's turning lights off or whether or not there's fuel being saved because he's doing different things, then that's a whole different thing, that's a facilities issue. So when you say efficiencies, where has he been able to save money, she guessed they needed a clarification as to what resources are you asking him to work more efficiently with.

Chairman Sordi stated first off, when you sit there and talk about the budget and go through it line by line, you're probably not going to get the answer that you're looking for. He knows that when he sits down and has to go through his budgets with his Manager, they talk about how much money he has for the projects that he has. He's not talking about using less fuel, using less paper clips. He's talking about a quantum leap in the way you think about educating students to do it more efficiently and that has to be done or you're going to get the same answers year after year on the budget. There has to be innovative ways that the school systems out there are teaching their students more efficiently. When we go out and look at a Plant and they look at the way something is being done, whether it's a service or whether it's manufacturing, they look at it from a holistic perspective and look at it microscopically, they try

to find where there's waste in the process. Is that done in our school system? He doesn't hear that. Just because they are offering a class here or offering a class there, or their using a little bit less fuel, that's not what he is talking about; he's talking about what has been done over the last couple of years that has provided these quantum leaps in the way we use the money to teach our students so that we can then do more. He just doesn't hear that.

Janine McLauchlan stated you'd have to separate the budget in a way that you can say let's separate out what it costs to run our buildings, what it costs to pay for health insurance and specifically get down to only the cost to teach the student. She didn't know how you would come up with that break out. You're asking Neal for examples of how he's more efficient, but you're not specifying in what areas you're looking for that efficiency.

Pam Stimpson, Director of Special Services, stated she collaborates with all the Administrators and they are all very, very passionate here tonight and asked if she could just jump in for a second. She knows that Mr. Moylan has made huge changes in the High School; there's been a huge shift in scheduling this year that has allowed for 80 and 90 minute blocks in teaching our students, they have a longer teach time; increased collaboration among Special Education Office, the Guidance Office and the regular education office to insure that all students are getting the supports they need before issues arise.

Chairman Sordi asked what did going to the 90 minute blocks do, what benefit did that provide, how did that make teaching more efficient. Ms. Stimpson stated that she would let Mr. Moylan speak to that but was wondering if there were a few others that they could pull out. They work together every single day to work with the decrease in funds that they have every year to make it better for their kids, for their staff and for the community.

Bob Godowski stated that Pam (Stimpson) was talking about the 90 minute blocks and your question was "how does that lead to efficiency". They have to balance the efficiency of the educational aspect along with the financial aspect. He is sitting here trying to understand how best to answer your question and he guessed that the best answer would be in the Elementary Schools if they doubled the classroom size, they could reduce a teacher and he wasn't saying that's what the Chairman was saying, but that would be an example of how to reduce the budget because you'd be cutting a teaching position. They have to balance the academics and the academic worth of what they are doing and he thought Janine (McLauchlan) brought up a good point; they've looked at restructuring the health insurance, they've looked at different ways to contract out the oil and lock in for 18 months instead of running the risk of \$4.50 a gallon, they look at all of those things and he knows academically in all of their buildings they are constantly asking themselves can we cut a teaching position, is that going to raise our numbers to a point where academically it's not sufficient to teach those children. They are constantly asking themselves what kind of certifications do they have at the High School and the Middle School that they can double up and perhaps have a teacher teach a Physics course or a Math course when they may be

Science certified. Those are the types of questions they are constantly asking when it comes to staffing which comes back to being fiscally responsible, but they have to balance that education.

Chairman Sordi stated let me give you a perfect example of what he is talking about. Right now, if he understands correctly, you have blocks of teachers that teach sets of students. Bob Godowski stated teams. Chairman stated that wasn't the way they used to teach when he was back in High School and he imagines there are many benefits to teaching that way; you get a better education and he imagines it's probably less costly in the long run. Those are the kinds of things he is talking about. Have we continued to make changes like that within the School system that makes it more efficient and, if so, what are they.

Bob Godowski stated they had a K-8 Committee a while back, a year or year and a half ago, looking at the possibility of restructuring their Elementary Schools and the Middle School and possibly is it time to close an Elementary School. The K-8 Committee looked at all of that and came back with a recommendation. He understands where the Chairman is going and he is trying to best answer his question, but it's not as simple as a business where you can make some financial and staffing changes and decisions when you're not dealing with a child's life and all of the other things that go on.

Chairman Sordi stated he was loath to use examples in business but that's where his experience comes from. He understands that it's not perfectly translatable to the School system, but the fact remains that if he can take a Plant and he can make it 20% more efficient by figuring out how to make a widget better, then he can now make 20% more. If you could figure out how to educate students 20% more efficiently, you can either add courses, you can handle 20% more kids.

Bob Godowski stated he thought they were constantly attempting to do that, balancing what's best for kids. Distance learning opportunities, those types of examples that they are constantly looking into, but he couldn't stand there and say since they are increasing their distance learning that they can cut a teaching position. Are they looking at those balances? Absolutely.

Chairman Sordi stated those are the things, you may be doing them, and it sounds like you are already doing them. What you need to start learning is how to communicate the benefits of what you are doing and the value of it and if you hadn't done that stuff then the budget would have gone up another 10%. It seems to me that there's two schools of thought in this community: there's the people on the education side that think the only way to educate our kids is to spend more money and then there's the Budget Committee which is viewed as the ogre that wants to just cut costs and forget about education and there's a middle ground of spend the money you have to as wisely as possible to get the best education possible. You need to start learning how to communicate what you're doing, not only to educate our students perfectly, but how you are doing it efficiently and how you've saved money and he's not talking about not buying as many pieces of paper, he's talking about quantum leaps in that savings.

Communicate it to the community so that they can say "okay, they're saving money here and we're still making improvements".

Mr. Moylan stated he too has a manufacturing background and he too has taken a lead time of a product for 48 weeks to 26 weeks and he does understand very well manufacturing efficiency and cost of goods saved. You asked what have you done to get more from what you have and he can say, now that he gets what the Chairman was looking to drive at, the old schedule allowed the kids to take 6 courses; the new schedule which is an alternating black and white schedule allows the kids to take 8 courses. When Doug (Swett) asked if they were hiring more people to teach those AP courses or teach whatever new additions they have put into the English Department, his answer was no. The rationale is they are doing more with less. They use to teach 6 courses a semester, now they can teach 8 courses. The other thing, and he guesses he really wasn't sure where exactly the Chairman was going, the other piece too is professional development, they've had to pull back on their professional development. The way to improve a High School is to either a) hire better teachers, or b) improve the teachers you have from an academic stand point. They have done a couple of things: at faculty meetings, they've cut back on their professional development, they will take one person that is doing something well, one of their initiatives over the last year and a half is differentiated instruction: trying to teach students auditory, hands on, visual, etc. They will have a teacher get up and they will have in-house professional development that way and then once a month they will also have a teacher share their knowledge without actually bringing in any experts or sending them out for their professional development. From that stand point, they tried to leverage the strengths and expertise of their teachers and spread it out over the entire High School. Those are two examples of where they have been able to do more with less just by realigning a schedule and also realigning the way they deliver professional development on a consistent basis with an attempt to be able to raise the affectivity of the teachers they have.

Chairman Sordi stated that's fine and he thought for next year's budget those kinds of things need to be quantified so the Budget Committee can see how you're using the funds more effectively. We ask questions about what courses you're offering or things that have to do with the School because we're interested and we want to see how that impacts the budget, but we understand that's the School Board's purview. Hearing information like that is exactly what he is looking for.

Janine McLauchlan stated a point that needs to be made is that our Principals, our department heads, they make these types of decisions every day, every week, whatever. They're not always necessarily major initiatives like the change in the scheduling at the High School; they are typically smaller things that add up to a bigger amount, but they don't think of them as major issues and don't necessarily step forward because it's just how they manage their buildings. It just comes natural for them to make a decision to say "I can work a little bit more efficiently with my custodial help if I make some changes to the shifts". She thought it was just a natural thing that they do from day-to-day and because it's not a major initiative that they are putting forward, it doesn't get out to the public and you are right, it's something that

should because she knows that they do them all the time and it is happening; but to the Chairman's point, it needs to be put out there to the public so that the public understands that they do have responsible people running these buildings and running these departments.

Chairman Sordi stated he agreed with what Janine was saying and no matter who is managing a School or a business or whatever, more and more is being asked of them to explain what they are doing and how are they using the money and one of the things that he's been really troubled with, and the first answers Mr. Moylan was given he was troubled by the lack of transparency of what we are learning about what is going on, how the money is being used in the School. That kind of information that you were just talking about will help to make it more transparent so people understand how you're using the money.

Mr. Moylan stated the other piece too, if he could have gotten this question in advance, they have made some improvements within the products that they use within the custodial staff. That is an easy one to see. Everything that we are talking about, we have the team concept in the Freshmen House and using the same amount of teachers, they have been able to take the failure rate amongst the Freshmen from 13.7% four years ago to a student failure rate now of 3.87%. As a result of that, one of the other things which they always used to do which they are getting away from next year is have repeater classes. A student might fail a course and then they would have to take it again. What they've done going forward next year is they are no longer going to have repeater courses. If a student fails, they can either make it up by going to Eagle Academy, they can do VLACS (Virtual Learning Academy Charter School) an on-line school offered out of Spaulding High School, doesn't cost the District a penny, doesn't cost us a penny; and the third option is that the student can take an Ed Options course, similar to a distance learning piece just a different option for the student. By getting rid of those repeater courses and then putting the onus on the child to say "listen, you now have to go forward and figure out a way to get this credit" has allowed them to focus on additional courses as well. There are a couple of things that they have been able to do to enhance the educational process and also to try to improve the educational process.

Chairman Sordi stated he appreciated it and apologized for monopolizing the conversation.

Bill Masters stated suppose the students who came to the High School were all performing at the proficient level, in other words in the Reading, Writing, Math, would you be able to operate at a less of a cost. Mr. Moylan stated probably. Bill stated if all of the students that came out of the Elementary into the secondary system were at a proficient level, that would reduce such things as Special Education within the certain categories. At Level I you may have special problems to deal with that, but everything at Level II the bulk of the kids if they were at the proficient level would certainly reduce your need for Special Education, or a demand, in terms of overall. Mr. Moylan stated he supposed if somebody had a magic wand and in a typical bell curve you're going to get a group of kids that are going to be above and then you're going to get a group of kids that are going to be below. He honestly thinks that you

will not ever cross their threshold with everybody being on that same page; it's just not the way things are.

Bill Masters stated the reason he asked that is he's taken some time and visited a number of the Elementary Schools and Kennett Middle School and he wanted to thank Kevin (Richard) and his staff very much for taking the time, a full day of him wandering around, and that was to educate himself as to what went on within the school and the classrooms. One of the things that he was left with from the teachers he talked to and the staff members he talked to, they're really hardworking and certainly dedicated. The classrooms were phenomenal from his view point, the point he was left with is there is a policy to promote children from one grade level to the other, to the next advanced grade level that are not proficient at that grade level. In talking with a number of staff members, he asked what happens when they are behind the learning curve and generally the information he got back was they are always behind the learning curve and probably always will be behind the learning curve because it's catch up. To him, that left him with the impression that we needed to look keenly at promoting students that are not at a proficient level. The Elementary, from his perspective, having visited the Elementary system and not having spent time in the High School, that is the foundation and it does not seem practical to him to expect a child to perform at a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum level who can not perform at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. That would be like sending a child out or an employee that he had who couldn't do the work at one level and asking them to perform a task at a higher level. That's an unrealistic expectation.

Bill Masters further stated in the educational system, if we look at it and if we do not do something to address those issues when they are very young, by the time they get to High School and are reading at the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade level, they can't possibly, maybe you can explain how they can comprehend what they're being asked to do at the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade level. That defies his ability to understand the rationale in promoting children at the foundation level. Poor Kevin (Richard) at 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and if they are only reading at the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade level and they've taken the assessment tests which are worded at a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade level, how do you expect a child to comprehend that. He's just lost with that. Now the emphasis to him should be at the Grade School level; if you have to keep them back for a year, tough decision but they should be kept back for a year. Obviously you can't have a 16 year old in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade but there is a point whereas if you have a Level II, you can't get them up to Level III by making Summer School mandatory and making some tough decisions with that, then we're setting the kids up for failure and you're setting the teachers up to an administrative policy; employees do what the boss wants them to do and if the boss says "listen teachers if they can't do it, don't promote them" or give the family an option they either get them up so they are proficient through Summer School or they stay back, but somewhere in those policies that has to be addressed because you can have a phenomenal staff but you're trying to catch up the kids at the High School level. That's all Special Ed and if you look at the cost of Special Ed for High School Level, it's twice what it is for all of the Elementary Schools and it just leaves him flabbergasted. That's not cost efficiency. You're product is that student and that student has to come

out at the Elementary levels to be able to perform the task; otherwise we're throwing good money after bad and it's just a vicious cycle.

Mr. Godowski stated this is exactly why they have such a dilemma in explaining very clearly what they're spending the money on because retention in every school he has ever been at in his career, is one of the most difficult conversations that he's ever had. It's not as simple as saying all we have to do is teach them one more year and teach them harder and they'll learn it. They've got so many social issues, they've got intellectual issues, they've got a variety of different needs that these kids have and research has shown that if it isn't supported by the parent, if it isn't supported by the student, if it isn't supported the teachers and there's a change in program meaning there are additional supports, that it doesn't work. Having looked at that though, he agrees 100% that if students keep going on, they need to do something different and they're doing response to intervention and hopefully providing them with interventions and supports along the way but if they take, and he was not suggesting Bill (Masters) was suggesting this, but if they just do "you're not cutting it; you're not going on" then they are going to end up with 7<sup>th</sup> Graders that are 16, 17, 18 and they are dropping out.

Bill Masters stated the point he was getting at is that's a policy, we need to have an administrative policy which says those are the tough things that you have to decide. Where is the age group; is it impossible to have and he will go back to when he was in Elementary and he had a 16 year old class mate in his 6<sup>th</sup> Grade class, the individual went on to be relatively successful. Are we trying to do too much for the kids. The kids have to take some responsibility for their own actions, the students, the parents have to and he can guarantee the parents if you say you're going to keep back a child they'll come storming in because no parent wants to see their child taken out of his social or her social environment. That's not doing the kid any favors.

Mr. Godowski stated research shows the earlier you retain somebody the better. If it's in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, that's the easiest place to retain. As you move through Elementary School and certainly in to the Middle School that's more difficult because of all of the other issues that arise. He doesn't disagree with what was being said, it's a very, very difficult conversation and an ongoing conversation with staff and parents to try to find out how best they can serve that child. He can't give Bill (Masters) a straight answer of "yes, retention" or "no, retention", he thought it was an individual discussion.

Chairman Sordi stated he wanted to keep moving on and was not sure if there's a question there for the budget itself and this might be something better to bring up at the School Board, he didn't know but is there a budget question that Bill (Masters) is driving at.

Bill Masters stated simply to control the costs above Special Education and focus on it. The point is Special Education in High School is as much as the Elementary Schools. If the problem is solved at the Elementary Schools that means they won't have to use so much of their resources to deal with Special Education. If the children are all at the proficient level, they can be. There will be some that can not be because of their

limitations, but those limitations have to be identified and that can relate to cost. Special Education, one on one tutorials, all of that is phenomenally expensive.

Chairman Sordi stated that he understood what Bill was saying, but did he have a question and, if so, what is it.

Bill Masters stated the point in question is if all of the children you receive were at a proficient level, could you reduce your Special Ed fund. Mr. Moylan stated sure, of course.

John Edgerton stated the percentage of students that are mentally incapable of ever achieving a rank; they're in Special Ed; they're assigned to the School Department, but they'll never make it and you try to have a 100% graduation with people who absolutely aren't going to make it. Mr. Moylan stated they have given a couple of pathways for youngsters to get a certification or to graduate. Part of it as you know, they had a drop out rate 4 years ago, the highest in the State at the time, of 7% and you can either keep kids as tax receivers in the future or we can turn them into taxpayers and obviously we all know that mathematically it's far preferable to turn them into taxpayers than into tax receivers. We do have some of those options; they're all not Special Education students, they have many Special Ed students that do quite well, go on to college, take AP courses; they certainly do not want to broad brush their Special Education students and think they are something less because they're not. Each child is individual and each child is capable of going up as high as they possibly can given the effort that they're given, the opportunity. But they've been able to offer students an opportunity, and have since put it in last year and this year, through the Eagle Academy. They have either 58 or 64 and they have 25 more that are graduating in May at this point; these are 58 students that had dropped out; they were kicking around town; they had no degree, no future, no option. They've graduated a number of them; some of them have gone on to apprenticeships; some of them have gone to White Mountain Community College; some of them are at Keene; some of them are at Plymouth. At one point they would have been a drag on the future economy or what not, these kids now have a bright option. For some of those other kids that are significantly behind, they have the GED Prep Program. They may not be able to do the Eagle Academy, but they may be able to earn a certification and their GED Certification which may then be able to give them the opportunity to have a good solid career and a future ahead of them. So they get all kinds and all levels of intelligence and what they try to do is give several pathways for those youngsters to be successful so they can go out and have a future, so they can be our taxpayers of tomorrow and he thought they had been relatively successful with doing that while still operating within the budget they've been given the last couple of years.

John Edgerton stated he thought Mr. Moylan was doing a super job; he's seen it. He was going to bring up another subject altogether that was brought up earlier and that's the Middle School. He has a Middle School ratio of 9:1. Chairman Sordi asked John if he could wait until the Middle School was up; he wanted to try to focus on the High School right now. John stated he didn't have a question concerning the High School.

Linda Teagan stated she was new to the Budget Committee, new to the School system so anything she says that anyone wants to correct, please send her the material, she's open to correction. Her impression is so far that the number of students over the last 10 years is going down and the budget is going up. The only way she has ever been able to evaluate a school that her children had gone to was with the Advanced Placement numbers, she always looks for those and she's anxious to see those and obviously the SAT's which she has and the John Hopkins Program which comes off of the Elementary School and Middle School standardized tests. The only thing she has now is the SAT's and as she recalls, they were below the State average and were below the State average for a number of years in the past. Mr. Moylan stated he believed it was 3 years. Linda stated that really bothers her. Mr. Moylan stated that they have turned that around. Linda stated you're still a "C"; if you're talking about an average if there's still such a thing as a gentlemanly "C", this is a "C" rated school system, maybe a "C-", that's really bad. Mr. Moylan stated he would have to disagree that. Linda stated all she was saying if you take the SAT's and the average is "x", she would call that a "C". Mr. Moylan stated if you're going to take one small subset, you could go to a bunch of other categories and you could come up with something entirely different. Linda stated that's why she's looking forward to the John Hopkins thing. Mr. Moylan asked if Linda was referring to the young man that just received early admission to John Hopkins University for medicine. Linda stated she was talking about the Center for Talented Youth that comes off of the State assessment; how many of the children qualify for John Hopkins.

Linda Teagan further stated all she has is the SAT's at this point and she would consider that not acceptable and she's not saying they can fix it now, but she guessed what the Chairman is saying is that it would be nice to see some kind of an overall plan. You are below average in your Math; you're below average in your English or whatever they call it now so how to fix that? She thought the obvious way for her, what do you do when you kid comes home with a C, you double what you're doing at home. And then for English for school, you pop in Latin so that the kid has a chance on an SAT to understand the vocabulary. Where do you get the money for that? Well, her feeling is you're in the education business, not in the bus business, not in the transportation business. So, the first thing you do is get rid of the buses, send them to someone who is a bus genius because that's their area of expertise; maybe you close one of the Elementary schools and you have two Elementary schools and if it's tight, maybe you put some of those kids in the Middle School. She's not saying that's the answer, but it seems to her, she would call this an emergency that you have below average SAT's year in and year out and she guessed she would like to see something in the context of recognizing that we are in a very, very difficult economic system both at the State level and at the Federal level to say nothing of the Town level. There as something she pulled on the internet today in terms of States likely to go into bankruptcy and New Hampshire was right up there which was pretty shocking because she thought we were relatively responsible, but it's an issue of pensions which affect obviously the school system. What she was saying is that she doesn't see how this can continue. She would never go in, speaking of a review, if she went in and her review was a C or C-, she'd be out the door and there's no sense of urgency that she sees. She

understands what Mr. Moylan is saying about changing the courses and everything, but it's like nibbling around the edges and we're in for at least 5 years of no increases.

Janine McLauchlan stated she had 3 things and she would let Neal (Moylan) address the SAT scores because there is a plan in place. You mentioned the buses, we're not a bus company; we are contracting with a third party company to do a feasibility study on privatizing the school buses so they have taken the initiative to do that, that has been proactive. You talked about the K through 8 and the possibility of closing an Elementary School, moving 6 Grade up to Middle School. That was a committee that took place a year, year and a half ago which by the way was an entire community effort and not just driven by the School Board or by the Administrators.

Mr. Moylan stated he wanted to start by questioning Linda's (Teagan) C assumption. The NEASC, which is the accreditation association which rates High Schools, not just on SAT's but there are a number of different things that compromise the success of a High School, it's not just an SAT. The NEASC committee is made up of college professors, administrators, teachers from the New England states, it's an independent governing body which assigns the accreditation to the High School. They went through the process two years ago and received the highest possible accreditation from an outside governing body that they give. We could have been below expectation, on warning, etc. They had 13 or 15 accommodations above and beyond. Kennett High School was again in 2009 awarded the New Hampshire School of Excellence, the only High School in the State of New Hampshire to win it twice. So, if you are going to paint a C-, you need to go back and look at some of the accomplishments the kids have done. As far as the SAT, he too has taken a look at the SAT and he agrees with Linda; there's all sorts of scores flying around; the bottom line is right now the SAT is that national bench mark that people see. They came together last year as an administration and as a faculty and talked about it. So this year they put in to the schools during the day an SAT Prep Class that the students can take as an elective where they go through either Math or English. In addition to that, they wrote and received a Grant from the State so that every single one of their students that are Juniors that will be taking the SAT later on will be able to take the PSAT, the preparatory SAT test, back in October at no charge to the District. One of the things that is known is if you take the PSAT, the probability of you scoring higher on the SAT is greater. So slowly but surely they are taking those steps. He too doesn't want to be below average or even average, that's not how he's wired. What they want to do is continue to take steps, continue to push and improve those kids' skill sets and he's hoping that they will be able to start to see some advancement in that.

Linda Teagan stated the other thing that just kills her about that below average SAT is that this is not a District with "English as a Second Language" issue; there are a number of them that she is familiar with and that's a killer; this is not that type of a District. She disagrees with Mr. Shakir about not expecting a great education. She expects that and she didn't think the money was the issue. It's classes and curriculum.

Mr. Moylan stated if you want to improve, and he's said it before, if you want to improve a School system, you can improve the teachers you have or you can hire better teachers. At the starting salary of \$27,600.00, when he goes to look at a pool of candidates to see if he can find somebody that's really solid, the pool that he is looking at is pretty darn dry. Secondly, if a teacher comes out of college, it usually takes two to three years before that teacher learns the art of classroom management, learns the art of curriculum development, and is able to deliver high quality curriculum. What's been happening is that they've been having a great group of young teachers that they've been able to train into the second and third year. What happens after year three, after we've invested money into them, turned them into a real good teacher where do they go? They go down the road and pick up another \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00 more a year and he's right back to where he began 3 years ago. That is a huge factor; whether you want to hear it or not, it's a big, big factor.

Linda Teagan stated it's not whether she wants to hear it or not, she's experienced schools that have been both high paying and low paying and she has not come across the issue of money being the curriculum issue. In fact, she had to say that the poorer the building, the poorer the quality of the building the better the education based on her children's schools. Mr. Moylan stated he didn't know where she had been, but that's remarkable.

John Edgerton stated his biggest question here is awareness. We've doubled the tax rate in 10 years, the public doesn't want to see the tax rate doubled in another 10 years. The teachers will move out of town; we can't afford doubling the tax rate again. He didn't know what they could do about it.

Mr. Moylan stated he takes a look at their Math Department and he believes that almost 50% of those teachers have 3 years or less experience, 3 years or less and that's enormous and that's a big, big problem for them. They have a young English Department, a terrific young English Department and again because they are looking to approve their SAT scores, they sent the entire English Department down to Oyster River. Oyster River is based in Durham and has very, very high SAT scores, above the national, way above the State average; when they've come back this year in their program of studies they completely retooled their English curriculum. Took them as a model, they've also agreed, to help mentor us to get along the way. They are very, very serious about improving their SAT scores. They also know that their Writing scores are low. They know that if you read a lot, your writing will improve. Their Reading scores are low; so they instituted within the High School a reading break. Every single one of their students and they really model this after what Kevin (Richard) is doing in the Middle School, so that every one of their students is reading every single day. It really will begin to pay dividends he is sure.

Bob Drinkhall stated he was chomping at the bit on several items. First of all, he wanted to compliment Mr. Moylan, his enthusiasm is terrific, but truly the amount that we are spending when you take into consideration and most have heard this before from him, since 1979

minimum wage and low wage people in town wages have increased about 93%. As of 2010, taxes have increased 333%. There's a definite problem when you're over taxing the people no matter what the reason is. He used an example and was accused of making it up which really ticked him off at one of the Budget Committee meetings which was a couple whose income and they are retired and of course being retired it hasn't increased in 2 years and their Social Security is \$21,348.00. When he last reported this between property taxes, health insurance and co-pays, they were left with a net of \$9,536.00 a year or \$183.00 to live on each and every week and that includes food, clothing, maintaining a home and two old vehicles. In December of 2010, increases brought that figure down to \$156.00 a week. The point he was trying to make is that you have a large portion of your budget that you say can not be touched because it's either mandated or it's under contract; however, when those areas increase and this is throughout government, doesn't matter whether it's School or else where, it's said that can't be touched and so even though you may hold the other items that you have what you claim more control over at an even keel, these items of course bring the overall budget way, way up. Taxpayers don't have that ability; when you tax them more, their fuel goes up, they don't automatically get an increase in their earnings and that's where the money that you are spending comes from. There has to be a better way of controlling the expenses.

Bob Drinkhall further stated that his other point was one thing that has bothered him on the NECAPs is Reading in Level I which is substantially below Proficient and Partially Proficient, the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade last year 70% were in that group for Reading; in Math 95% and in Writing 85%. That doesn't sound like success. Mr. Moylan stated he didn't disagree and that was why they were reading every single day in the High School now. Bob stated but that hasn't changed dramatically from the year before and he didn't have those figures.

Mr. Moylan stated in looking at the NECAP scores, you want to remember the NECAP scores, and this is not something they as a State should be proud of, but their NECAP scores are at or about the State average and do we like to be at the average. He doesn't; his objective is always to be above whatever the average is; he's not settling for that. You want to remember too that they have put programs in place, the reading program is one of them this year and things take time. It's like moving, you talked about it being a large organization and it is, but just like when you are trying to move a large boat, you don't flip it around as if it is a little speed boat. Some of their initiatives are going to pay dividends, that's why they got the Grant to offer the PSAT's. That's why they did put in the reading program, very similar to what Kevin (Richard) has done at the Middle School and it's terrific. You can walk through their school from 9:00 AM to 9:20 AM and the place is as quiet as can be and you can see 870 kids with their heads down and in a book. They know that eventually, if they continue to read, the reading scores will go up and the writing scores will go up. It won't happen over night, it's going to take some patience. They are addressing it and they will continue to and if there are any other ideas out there, by all means, good Lord, they're not saying that they have the only answers and he is willing to listen to any idea or suggestion. He really is.

Mr. Moylan stated that his goal is to try to get this place so that we can all puff out our chest and crow about it. That being said, we really should because if you take a look at what the kids have done. The NECAPs are at or above the State average, the SAT's need some work, but they've turned out some terrific students; students that have gone to Princeton, just had early acceptance at John Hopkins, the representative from Dartmouth was in yesterday to talk to 5 of the students that have applied there. You can get an outstanding education out of Kennett High School and many, many, many students do. They have a National Merit semi-finalist for the first time in many years in the High School right now and are waiting to see if he actually becomes a finalist some time later this month. The quality of education that they are delivering is outstanding; the quality of student character which also counts for a lot, understanding the relationship between them and the community to give back and be a participating member of the community is unheralded; their Key Club which is all about community service has been the leader in New England, not New Hampshire, but New England for 13 consecutive years, remarkable. The number of students that they turn out in some of the Career Tech organizations is just amazing. The hospitality group, not only won the State Championship 2 years ago, they won the National Championship 2 years ago, incredible. These are not kids that are being taught to make beds or whatever he saw in the paper, these are kids that are looking to be running the Red Jacket or Wildcat or Attitash, high paying jobs, good jobs, which will generate more jobs in the community. They have students that are excelling in Music; they have students that are excelling in the Arts. If you look around at what they are doing as an educational system at the High School and it is also directly attributable to what is being said to them about the Middle School and the Elementary Schools, our kids are remarkably well rounded and we need to stop focusing in on one little area and say "aw, man they are horrible at that, it must be a terrible school", nothing could be further from the truth.

Bob Drinkhall stated he didn't limit the lack of achievement to the Conway School System, it's the entire school system from what he hears, reads and sees all over the country. Mr. Moylan stated you know what's interesting about that? If you take the Math scores nationally, it's either Finland or one of the other countries over there that ranks number one and everybody's lamenting themselves because the United States was 30<sup>th</sup> or something in the global comparison. Take a look at the Free and Reduced Lunch from Finland or Sweden, he forgets which one is was, it was 4%, that's what their Free and Reduced Lunch was and they scored the highest and he thought it was a 540 score. If you go back to the Americans and take a look, our Free and Reduced may go from 10% to 40% or 50%, so let's take the top 10% and let's give Finland a couple extra percentages in terms of Free and Reduced Lunch, where do our top kids then match with the same playing field, apples to apples, we beat them, we're number one. So we need to be very careful and understand what all of the variables are when we start to say "boy, the American School System is horrible". Could it be better? Yes, he actually agrees with Bob and it has to get better because, as he said, it is a global economy, but we need to be careful and look a little deeper than just at the cursory top numbers because there is sometimes an explanation behind it.

Karen Umberger stated it had been requested of Dr. Nelson for the last 5 years of teacher experience for all the teachers in the various schools and Mr. Moylan made comment and, again the latest information he has given us was 2009, and she was not seeing the information that he was portraying in terms of teachers coming and leaving because the mass majority of the teachers are from 4 years and up and we don't have a lot of teachers 4 years and under. She knows the turnover talk has been used for the 8 or 9 years, yet when she goes back and looks at the figures, she is not seeing, maybe the first year teachers turning over and over and over again, she didn't check for names, but she is not seeing that kind of turnover and she does follow the teachers for hire in the newspaper in June to see how many positions happen to be vacant because that tells her about teacher turnover and she is not sure if something has changed in the last 2 years that isn't reflected on what she has; she just doesn't see it from the information given and listening to your conversation. She agrees there may be specific departments that have at this time a new teacher, but she's not seen that since 2004. She's just not seeing it from the information that the members were given that we have a significantly high turnover rate at the High School.

Mr. Moylan stated what he is saying is if you take a look at the two, what he considers to be pillars of education, the Math Department and the English Department, we'll build off of that. They have two solid fundamental departments in Math and English, you are well on your way to some future success. If you take a look at the average age of experience in those two departments, you will find exactly what he just said. In the Math Department, he thought he had 6 teachers under 4 years and maybe under 3 years of experience and he has a number that are 1 and 2.

Karen Umberger stated then perhaps what you could do is send her the figures. Science, Social Studies, they are all important and Mr. Moylan stated he didn't disagree, but if you're going to impact the SAT's as he wants to, it's Reading, Writing and Math.

John Edgerton stated this year reading is new and he has seen the students have a great deal of enthusiasm to read. Mr. Moylan added after initially being shocked. John stated they actually read and are off the computer and the cell phone.

Chairman Sordi thanked Mr. Moylan and Ms. Babine for coming in and apologized for it getting contentious but thought some progress was made.

Mr. Moylan stated he didn't take it as that at all. As he said to the Conway School Board, he is an old time Yankee, give him a nickel and he's going to turn back \$.06 or \$.07 in value and he gets that and he does know these are tough economic times, there's no question so please don't for a second think he takes it lightly, he doesn't underestimate the challenge they have ahead of them but he does appreciate having these conversations and he thinks that's important. He invited Bill Masters to come in to the High School and spend a day or two with them.

Bill Masters stated one of the things that he would like to have from Mr. Moylan is going back through the Kennett High School records, he would like to know the drop outs that occurred, how many of those were in

categories on Levels I and II versus III and IV. Mr. Moylan stated Levels III and IV aren't going to drop out and he can say that they have gone from 7%, and he has seen the unofficial number and is hesitant to release it and he won't, but he can say they have made significant progress.

Chairman Sordi thanked Mr. Moylan and Ms. Babine again for coming in.

John Edgerton stated he thought zero was unacceptable; you can't keep kids in school who don't want to be there and are unacceptable to society. Mr. Moylan stated watch me.

#### KENNETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Kevin Richard, Principal of Kennett Middle School made the presentation. Chairman Sordi asked if Mr. Richard had any opening remarks. Mr. Richard stated no, we've been at it for 8 months it seems like with presentations to the Board.

Chairman Sordi stated you read articles in the paper and you have 4 teams at the Middle School for teaching and there's been talk about whether to eliminate one or not and you feel strongly that you shouldn't eliminate it and there are some people that feel that it can be eliminated. He would like to know why Mr. Richard feels it can't be eliminated at this time and at what point if the enrollment continues to drop it could be eliminated.

Mr. Richard stated those are great questions. He feel that teachers are the most important piece. If it comes down to getting rid of a Hall Monitor, getting rid of supervisory, reducing a half time custodian, reducing a half time Guidance Councilor, reducing his student services position down to 70% to keep the team structure in place he will do that. That's what he has done. What does that mean? It means a little more inconvenience for him; that means that he covers the Caf Duty in the morning; his Guidance Councilor picks up pieces so that the teachers can teach. That's probably the most important piece to him because that will make the difference. If you have good student to teacher ratios and he knows that Mr. Edgerton had some questions, these are the class sizes as of today.

Mr. Richard stated what are those reasonable pieces. In order to move those initiatives forward, and he has been here for 21 years working at the High School and lived through the building when it was 7 through 12 and the conditions were deplorable, it really was, and when you put a lot of kids in a tight situation, you're asking for issues, especially 12 to 14 year old kids. With the team structure in place, that team of teachers, those core academic teachers own those kids. They own those 80 kids throughout the day. They work together. They meet with the parents; 33% of the time during their team time, they are meeting with parents to talk about their kids. On the other days, they're talking about interdisciplinary planning, they're coordinating events, they're working with kids themselves and he thought they have shown that it is a successful model. If you are asking him to keep these other pieces in place and cut teachers, cutting teachers is probably the last thing that he will go to cut.

Chairman Sordi stated at some point you are going to be able to provide just as effective an education with 3 teams as 4 teams depending on the enrollment. Is the answer you will never go down to 3 even if the enrollment went down another 20%. Mr. Richard stated they are teetering on the brink right now. Chairman stated that's what he was asking, at what point or what criteria has been established for going to 3 teams. Mr. Richard stated what you have to understand if you do that, there are other associated costs you will have to pick up. This was all part of the presentation he had to the Board which he wished the Budget Committee members would go to and be part of those conversations so if you do that, you're probably going to be putting alternative programming in for some kids. We can catch those kids through scheduling right now. They have some classes that have 23, 24 kids and they have other classes that have 15, 16 kids. They can program for kids that might need more attention at 15, 16 but if you reduce all of the classes to up over 22, 23, 24, you're going to start losing some of those kids and there will be an associated cost that comes with that. You are also talking about there are costs and there are savings; he's just saying that they have a good, good program in place for all of the kids.

Chairman Sordi stated no one was doubting that they had a good program in place, but this is the frustration that started with the High School. Going with we want to provide a good education, we do provide a good education, there has to come a point where there becomes waste in the education. If you're able to provide a good education with less resources then why keep the excess resources around. He understands what Mr. Richard is saying, but what he is hearing is that no matter what happens you don't think the 1 team should be eliminated.

Mr. Richard stated no, he was saying that that's the last place he went. He did reduce a custodian and a half; he did reduce a Guidance Councilor; it's a trade off.

Chairman Sordi stated he understands that and it's great that he is doing that, but 3, 4, 5 years ago how much higher was your enrollment. Mr. Richard stated 340 kids. John Edgerton stated 20% higher. Chairman asked if they were providing a great education then. Mr. Richard stated they had more staff then. Chairman asked if they had more than 4 blocks. Mr. Richard stated he did; he had an additional Math teacher, an additional Special Ed person, he had an additional Aide, he had an additional custodian and a half. It's a trade off; that's what he is saying. Chairman stated the custodians are there because you have to maintain the building. Mr. Richard stated if he has crowded conditions, the building gets dirtier, there's more vandalism. Chairman stated he understood what Mr. Richard was saying but as he was trying to do with Neal (Moylan), we can't just keep going along the way we're going and use the mantra of "we want to provide a good education". We all want the same goal; we all want to provide a good education, but if all we keep hearing is the only way we can provide a good education is doing things the same way we've been doing it with the same amount of resources even though we may not need it, you start to lose credibility.

Mr. Richard stated we do things a lot differently than we did before. Chairman Sordi stated he wasn't saying they were not. John Edgerton stated the student/teacher ratio; if you take the number of students divided by the number of teachers and it comes out 9:1; 22 students in a class, you've got teachers that aren't teaching. Mr. Richard stated that's incorrect. John stated there are 33 teachers on the list and you've got 299 students. Mr. Richard stated he did not have 299 students and he doesn't have 33 teachers. John asked how many students did he have and Mr. Richard stated he had 320 students and every month he gives the School Board a report and he doesn't know where that number came from. Chairman stated John was looking at next year. Mr. Richard gave the list of the current teaching staff to John.

Chairman Sordi asked what are your plans for the future; if it's not going to impact the education of the students, it seems like a good way to try to help make the Middle School more efficient, but he doesn't hear from Mr. Richard as the manager of the Middle School that that's something he really wants to look at.

Mr. Richard stated if he goes to 3 teams from 4, it will negatively impact the kids. He has done everything he can so as to not negatively impact the kids. It will affect their achievement, it will affect the discipline, it will affect bullying, it will affect all of those pieces that we are talking about. If you go back 8 years and you take a look at the discipline rates; they were suspending kids, 134 outside suspensions, 123 inside suspensions; those are big numbers. They are down to 40 and less than 40. What have they done? He's extended the school day of the teachers and this doesn't make front page of the paper, 15 minutes of teaching time without a contract for 2 years. Those teachers should be congratulated for that. We've increased the reading score and this is in here to 83% of the kids, over 5 years, 2004-2005 was the first year that NECAP was done. They put in reading programs, they put in a response to intervention, they've talked about reading and they've talked about writing. The Means Scale scores have jumped up, the percentage of kids this year, less than 3% of the kids in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade were in the lowest category and that's phenomenal. Their Free and Reduced Lunch is 37%; so he took a look at 43 schools in New Hampshire and took a look at similar size and structure meaning that they had to have no less than 200 kids and no more than 400 kids, guess who had the top 5 scores in the State; what percentage of the Free and Reduced Hot Lunch kids were they; 0% to 4% so we're doing a real good job with those kids.

Chairman Sordi stated he was not disputing the fact that you are doing a good job and that we have a good education system, his frustration comes from the fact that, he finally heard something from the High School, but he's not hearing anything from you about ways that you see other than maybe cutting half a person here and to him that's like saving paper clips, it's not thinking how to make the whole process more efficient. Sure if you had 5 teams of teachers you would probably be able to help your students even more, but at some point there has to be a balance between providing a great education and doing it cost effectively. If you're going from 322 to 299 students next year; you've gone from 357 in 2004 and now you're going to be down almost 60 students since 2004. Mr. Richard stated at one point it was 299 a few years ago. Chairman stated

that was in 2006 and his understanding from reading some of the articles there was talk about cutting the 4 teams and there was a criteria that was set.

Janine McLauchlan stated the direction that they gave to Kevin (Richard) was that when he had actual enrollment of 300 or less, looking at projected numbers, they didn't want to base their decision strictly on projected numbers because those numbers change all the time. She thought there had been between 6 and 8 students come on board since those numbers were put together. They asked Kevin to start developing plans to deliver his education in a different way once his actual enrollment reaches 300 or less and the belief is that he will get one more year of 4 teams and then it will have to be delivered in a different way.

Mr. Richard stated is the question a dollar and cents or is it an educational structure piece. Chairman Sordi stated it's both. Why do people continually want to align education and money and the two can't be hand in hand. Mr. Richard stated they are, that's what he was saying, but if he's shown that for \$150,000.00 he can keep a 4 team structure in place and he found that \$150,000.00 some place else, would you still say keep the 4 teams. Chairman stated no, not if it doesn't make sense. If you can deliver a good education with 3, then that \$150,000.00 you get could go to reduce your overall budget.

John Edgerton stated the Middle School cost per student is \$11,000.00; the High School and the Elementary Schools are around \$8,000.00, it's out of whack. Mr. Richard stated he was not sure where John got those numbers from. John stated he was using the total expenses on the budget he gave the members. Middle School versus Elementary Schools and High School. Mr. Richard stated he was not sure about those numbers; he was going off on the New Hampshire Department of Education website because there are things in his budget that may not be included in each individual Elementary School budget. John stated it's per student, he didn't care how he used it. We're worrying about tax dollars. Mr. Richard stated on the New Hampshire Department of Education website and they calculate it apples to apples, Kennett High School is \$12,970.00; Kennett Middle School is \$13,900.00, the Elementary Schools are \$14,700.00. Now, of the 8 sending schools, those three are the lowest so just keep that in mind. There are pieces that aren't inclusive in other budgets that are inclusive in the Middle School budget. As an example, they have an Essential Skills Program for their seriously disabled students, they fall within the criteria, that is absorbed in his budget. They also have a Behavior Management Program within his budget, he absorbs that in his budget and that's not necessarily in each Elementary School budget, that's pulled out and you'll hear from Pam (Stimpson) later on. He does take a look at those; is his spending percentage out of whack, his regular ed percentage on teaching staff is around 40% to 41%. The High School is about 40% to 41%; Conway Elementary School is 40% to 41%; John Fuller and Pine Tree School. So trust him, he wants to make sure that he is not out of whack; it's just that he does things a little differently that's all.

Bob Godowski stated just to compare apples to apples, in the package passed out tonight, in the back is the latest information from the DOE for cost per pupil.

Linda Teagan asked how many 8<sup>th</sup> graders take Algebra I and over the years how is that falling, is it rising or falling. Mr. Richard stated they've had a big push over the past three or four years on the literacy component. They've really focused on reading district wide; so the Math scores are just about State average right now. Their reading scores and writing scores are above in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade when they leave us and go to the High School. Math this year they've realized it has kind of just done this for a bit (hand motions by Mr. Richard) because they've been focusing on those other areas. They have new programs in place, their Algebra teacher is not only at Kennett Middle School but Bartlett and Tamworth and they will meet with the High School teachers this year so the kids taking the courses will get High School credit for it and they'll also get either a Spanish or a German credit at the Middle School. The numbers have only dropped down a little bit so you're talking about 10% to 12% of their population that, in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, will get that High School credit going into 9<sup>th</sup> Grade for Algebra.

Linda Teagan stated she didn't realize that it was a High School credit; does that mean you don't have to take as much Math in High School. Mr. Richard stated these kids typically are your academically really strong kids so these kids will be the kids Neal (Moylan) talks about getting the Calculus 2 AP class. Linda stated putting aside the AP, if you don't get Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, they don't end up with Calculus as a Senior. Mr. Richard stated they could still. Linda stated Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Trig and then Calculus. Mr. Richard stated it would be Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II/Trig and then conceivably they could take Calculus, Pre-Calculus. Algebra II/Trig would be their Junior year that they would take that. Linda stated that she would still like to see the numbers for the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Mr. Richard stated the members have that on the sheets he passed out, 15 and 16 on each team.

Bill Masters stated if you had fewer Level I and Level II students that were delivered to you to deal with, would you be able to save dollars and cents. Mr. Richard stated we probably would be able to save dollars and cents in supporting their needs, you bet. Bill asked what does it cost for a Level IV versus a Level I student. Mr. Richard stated he couldn't quantify that but typically kids who are at Level I or even a low Level II require additional support, maybe catch up time so there's probably additional needs that they have, maybe specialized curriculum for them. Bill stated remember the dollar and cents signs, suppose we put \$.80 on Level IV which is Proficient with Distinction, Level III is Proficient and what would you put for that \$2.00 or a \$1.60. Mr. Richard stated the easiest thing would be if they had all Level IV's and Level III's you could very easily have classes that are 22, 23 kids with no problem, Middle School kids. The Algebra kids are a little bit different and it just takes more support if they struggle more academically. Bill asked if that meant more staff members. Mr. Richard stated it could be staff members, it could be smaller class sizes for those kids, it could be tutoring after school, it could be more focus in their response to intervention that they have. Bill asked if they reduce that, you reduce

your dollar expenditure. Mr. Richard stated there's probably a strong likelihood you would. Bill stated so III's and IV's would certainly lessen the demand for increases or we might get substantial budget savings. Mr. Richard stated there is potential. Bill asked if that was realistic. Mr. Richard stated there is potential for it, sure.

Karen Umberger asked how long the Middle School had been in operation. Mr. Richard stated this is the 6<sup>th</sup> year, but it's been 4 years since the High School has been on the hill and they've been independent. Karen stated so if a child entered 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 4 years ago, they are now in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade and if they were in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, they would be in 11<sup>th</sup> Grade. So this will be the first year that we can really check out the SAT scores from children that went through the fundamental, the philosophy behind the Middle School was to give them that great bridge. Mr. Richard stated he would say it would be the 10<sup>th</sup> Grade group because his son is in 11<sup>th</sup> Grade now and that year was the year of construction and those guys moved three or four times and that had a significant impact on them. Karen stated so next year she should be able to see something. Mr. Richard stated he thought she had seen some of it in this packet; that's how they've raised the reading scores and the writing scores. You see some of those programs. Karen stated but you haven't gotten to that yet, you haven't gotten to the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Bob Godowski stated to remember answering that question would be for the Conway students. Karen Umberger stated plus Albany, Madison students and if you look at, she hasn't looked too hard at Tamworth because they are in the other SAUL, but you can follow the Bartlett scores and their scores are pretty high. We started the core things in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade so we have done the team teaching for 3 years with those children. She will be very interested to see the results next year of whether or not the educational philosophy that we have adopted has in fact made a difference in what's going on in our education system because if you look from 2000 to whatever it was Dr. Nelson gave us, we really haven't seen a change on the margins, but we haven't seen a significant change in any of those and she will be very interested next year and was sure they will be as well. If we don't see that change, then we go back to what Dave (Sordi) was saying that it may be time for us to re-think how we are delivering education.

Mr. Richard stated he would caution using just one single NECAP score. Chairman Sordi stated he loves those fill in the dot tests, but some people don't take them very well. Mr. Richard stated that he encouraged the Chairman to take a walk around and talk with Mr. Masterson about the climate and culture for Middle School.

Chairman Sordi advised the Committee and visitors that he needed to step away to do his real job for a bit and would hopefully be back before the end of the meeting. Chairman asked Karen Umberger to fill in as the Chair in his absence.

John Edgerton stated the 299 is the real figure that we have to use to divide the money into and the class size and that's where the class size gets out of whack and prices get out of whack when you drop another 10%

of your students. That's the budget we are working on, not today but next year.

Karen Umberger asked Janine McLauchlan if she said that if, in fact, the real enrollment changes in September. Janine stated this is what they talked about at the School Board meeting: the actual enrollment, not the projected because the projected is a moving target, but if the actual enrollment were to be 300 or below then they have asked Kevin (Richard) to look at alternative ways to deliver the education at the Middle School looking at a different approach other than the 4 team approach. Karen stated except for next year. Janine stated right, they have not asked him to make any changes for next year at this point. Karen stated the projections that we have always had have generally been high, so she will be interested to see what the actual enrollment is on whatever day school starts in September. What we can look forward to is that if next year the actual student body is under 300, then the following year we won't go on projections again we'll just reduce a team. Janine stated that's what the general consensus the Conway sitting Board is moving towards.

Bill Masters asked how many Level I and substantially below Proficient and slightly below Proficient, Level II do you have. Mr. Richard stated it varies from subject. The kids in Reading, like he said, 83% of the kids so you're talking 17% of the kids are Level I and II in Reading, you're talking about 34% in Writing and it's probably around 35% as well, off the top of his head. Bill stated he had a concept until he walked in and had a chance to look around and visit some of the structures and he thought there was 4 teachers that wandered around and the structures on the team itself as he understands for disciplines of the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade all on one floor, those 4 teachers work together, they share knowledge on the students, each one has a specialty in terms of Math, Science, Social Studies, what have you and those kids rotate amongst those 4 teachers on class shifts. Is he correct on that assumption. Mr. Richard stated actually there are 5 in the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and then there are 4 with an option, either kids go into Literacy or World Language in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Bill stated but those kids have the same 4 teachers and those 4 teachers work together as a team and share knowledge on those kids. Mr. Richard stated that was correct.

Karen Umberger asked if there were any other questions for Mr. Richard. Karen stated to Mr. Richard that she thought as we just kind of sum up here, we recognize that your school costs money because of the behemoth that you inherited from the School system and we recognize that there is additional cost in that area; but she thought that the one thing everybody here is most concerned about is the 4 teams versus the 3 teams. We all agree that we want a good education for our children and she didn't think there was anyone on the Budget Committee that would argue that because we all recognize they are the future, but we also recognize that we have to balance all of that financially.

Mr. Richard stated he would recommend that you educate yourselves to the fullest extent, come in and see what it looks like, make sure you understand what you're cutting before we get to that. Karen Umberger stated she understood that and his job correctly was to be the advocate for what you believe in and that's okay.

Karen Umberger thanked Mr. Richard for coming in.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION

Pam Stimson, Director of Special Services, made the presentation. Ms. Stimson stated she is responsible for Special Education, English as a Second Language, Homeless Liaison, 504 students, Court involved and CIF involved students.

Karen Umberger stated talk to me about the Homeless Liaison. She saw that the High School has put in the budget to hire a Homeless Liaison person, not sure what that position is called. Janine McLauchlan stated Family Liaison. Ms. Stimson stated that is completely different from the Homeless Liaison. Karen stated then tell me what that's all about because she was told that one of the things this person would be doing would be working with the homeless children; so obviously someone is mistaken. Ms. Stimson stated they do have point people at every school who are the contact people at schools who work with students who are enrolled as homeless students and she coordinates that piece of the puzzle. There's a federal law called the McKinney Vento Act and the McKinney Vento Act insures that children who are homeless are able to access a public education.

Karen Umberger stated the new position at the High School, that wouldn't be their focus. Ms. Stimson stated it would be a portion of their position, but it would not be their only focus.

Ray Shakir asked Ms. Stimson to describe what a homeless student is; is it some kid that goes to school and after that goes to his house in a Chevrolet. Ms. Stimson stated that was an excellent question. The McKinney Vento Act is a bit vague, however, it identifies that a student is homeless when they don't have reliable or adequate housing. A student doesn't know where they are going to be able to sleep the next evening could be homeless; a student living in a car could be homeless; a student who is couch surfing, not sure if you are familiar with that term, just going from house to house to house could be considered homeless and each student is looked at on an individual basis. Ray Shakir asked what the population of that was. Ms. Stimson stated currently she is aware of 8 students this year in Conway and she believes there are many more.

Doug Swett stated what we've really been trying to say all evening and he knows everybody realizes it, there are not unlimited funds for anything, including education. There's got to be a line drawn somewhere. Bob was talking about a couple and he knows Social Security was not designed to retire people but to help them retire and he was around when the law was passed and he can remember it in the paper and it was to help out people, not to be a 100% retirement. This couple here may have worked hard all their life and as they keep cutting into them for other things, you're going to drive them into the street or into a Nursing Home and that's not good.

Janine McLauchlan stated she thought that one of the things that maybe Pam (Stimson) could tell the Committee a little bit more about and Dave

(Sordi) has asked this question of the other two people here today is how to work more cost effectively and obviously there are mandates that surround Special Education and what we need to deliver, but how we deliver it is really up to us. There is a committee currently working on this and Pam (Stimson) can tell us a little more on that of how to deliver those services more cost effectively.

Ms. Stimson stated the Special Education Department has been doing a lot of work towards further including kids in the regular education classroom. One of the biggest costs is the out-of-district placement students. A majority of those students are pre-school students and she will put those aside for right now; one of their big initiatives this year is really stepping out of the box and bringing students back to school part-time so we're fortunate that we have the ability to work with programming close to us and as of this morning, she found that she will have 2 High Schools students this semester, one has already started and one will be starting soon, coming back into the school at least part-time in order to slowly integrate them back and get rid of that out-of-district cost and, as of this afternoon, they are planning for an Elementary level student to start sharing part of his day in the regular education setting in the school. So, these are small steps and they are slow, but she thought they were very significant.

Ms. Stimson stated the other piece that they are looking at is increasing the education and the conversation across the education community from the School Board members to the Administrators and teachers about what their philosophy is for inclusion and how can we make it work because when it starts to work down at the Elementary School level then the students will be included in the Middle School and then the High School level. They really need to give the kids the opportunities to do that. She gets very frustrated hearing the members talk about Level I and II students and Level III and IV students; she wants all of the students Levels I through IV to be included in the regular education classroom to the fullest extent and that's their focus.

Karen Umberger stated as she has looked at the Special Education budgets over time, the focus and she thinks rightly so is at the Elementary School level because if you get them early supposedly they are able to straighten themselves out or whatever. Is that the philosophy to try to get the kids early. Ms. Stimson stated absolutely; the goal is the earlier you get a student who needs any support in any area of learning the better the outcome will be. It's not a fiscal decision, it's about what each individual child's needs are at their age level and where they are in their education level.

Bill Masters stated in focusing on the Levels I and II, the assessment, the aptitudes of Level I and one of the things he was left with in his tours of the schools and having a chance to observe some of the children in those categories, the capacity of the individual and this is always a tough question to try to deal with, but the capacity of those individuals to absorb the material and gain from that in a long term benefit, is that really being looked at in terms of the ability of the child to absorb the material. Ms. Stimson stated absolutely. She wanted to clarify a couple of things: first of all, the NECAP scores that you are referring to as

Level I, II, III and IV, those tests aren't given until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. The pre-school through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students who are receiving Special Ed services have never taken the NECAP tests. The other piece is if a student scores at a Level I or II on the NECAPs, that doesn't mean the student is eligible for Special Education services. If a student is not accessing their education to the fullest and there are many different things that we as educational teams do, not only Special Education per se, but they are also working very closely with New Hampshire Responds, a Grant through the Institute on Disability they received 3 years ago and they have one more year to go with it. They are working with students before they become eligible for Special Ed and students who may never be eligible for Special Ed and students who are eligible for Special Ed, just to take a look at the data. They use universal screening tools that are done every 6 to 8 weeks and they really take a look at how a child is learning so that they can target that child immediately and make sure they are getting the learning that they are needing. Levels of intervention for students does not always increase the financial cost, it may increase the time a teacher is spending, the way that a teacher is teaching a child, but that doesn't always correlate. That's why she wants to move away from that Level I and II question.

Ms. Stimson stated to answer the second part of Bill Masters' question, they do have students who have different levels of cognitive ability and they need to presume competence and she would love to have any member come in and meet some of the students, but they would have to work that out due to confidentiality, but she thought the members would be very surprised. Think about how she looks while walking down the street and what assumptions someone might make about her and then if they sit and have a conversation they may think other things. So we need to presume competence and she asks that when the members look at the budget, they trust them as educators and administrators that we are using the taxpayer money in a very responsible manner and allowing the students access to education.

Bill Masters stated the impression he was left with was a lot of things that we are involved in, in terms of his understanding of how the educational process is run, were things he observed and what he would link with being part of social services and if they are social services, for example 1 on 1 Kindergarten is obviously not taking the New Hampshire assessment test; but a 1 to 1 at that level is really a social service based upon the ability. If we are providing social services, is that really the function of the educational system to educate.

Ms. Stimson stated that was a great question and they are working very closely with other agencies in the area to make sure that they are not picking up the social service piece. She can't think of any Kindergarten student, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> or High School student that Bill (Masters) would have met in his visits to the schools who would have 1 to 1 adult support as a social service. They're 1 to 1's are supporting children so that they can access their education, not working on social services.

Linda Teagan stated usually look on Special Education as federal mandates and understands States can impose additional mandates. What does New Hampshire do or do they go beyond the Federal requirements for Special

Ed. Ms. Stimson stated they do go beyond the requirements in some pieces and she would be more than happy to furnish the members with all of the differences because they have the Federal Guidelines and then State Guidelines. Some of the State Guidelines include pieces, for instance the Federal law says that Individual Education Plans have to have goals in every Individual Education Plan. The State of New Hampshire says that every Individual Education Plan has to have goals and objectives or benchmarks written for each of those goals.

Linda Teagan stated she thought it would be helpful for the Budget Committee if they had an idea of what New Hampshire added to the Federal mandates because there is nothing we can do about the Federal mandates, but it would be nice to look at our own State mandates which are obviously adding to the cost of the program. Ms. Stimson stated she would be happy to get that information to the Committee. Linda stated she was sure all members were open to any suggestion Ms. Stimson may have for changing those. Karen Umberger stated you can slip those to her and she will work on them because education is one of the things that come before her Committee, financing for education.

John Edgerton stated the Constitution of the United States did not create everybody equally; it gave us equal opportunities. If you have people and he didn't know what level they go down to, but if you have people whose intellectual ability is sub-par, do you have to take everyone. Ms. Stimson stated she remembers having this conversation last year. The Federal and State Guidelines all say that all children age 3 to 21 are eligible for Special Education services. John stated that makes it very difficult because you have people who can't understand anything. Ms. Stimson stated she has to assume competence so she respectfully disagrees with John, and she has to say that the 3 to 21 years is the responsibility of the School District. The State takes on, and Early Support and Services takes on, responsibility for children birth to the 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. John stated you feel that anyone is competent. Ms. Stimson stated she felt that anyone can learn, absolutely. Karen Umberger stated half full, half empty.

Ray Shakir stated he respectfully disagreed with Ms. Stimson because there are people that are totally out of it and they are just not educate able and if you have to take care of them, the expense of taking care of people like that who will never become productive members of society is phenomenal and there has to be a place where you draw the line and that's common sense. He respectfully disagrees with her. There's a point which spending money, throwing money out the window for somebody who is never going to be productive in society, who is always going to be a burden to society, it doesn't pay to attempt to educate somebody who has no cognitive ability and unfortunately there are people like that. For whatever it's worth, that's it. Ms. Stimson stated we'll have to agree to disagree and Ray stated that was fine.

Bill Masters stated as far as insurance is concerned, families that do have insurance for medical conditions that are defined as being medical conditions, are we requiring that they provide that information or are we just asking them to provide it. Ms. Stimson stated we can't require, they are allowed to ask and they do ask and the families are very helpful in

sharing medical insurance information with them and signing a release of Medicaid so that they can get reimbursement for Medicaid eligible services. They can get up to 50% if there's a service that is eligible under the educational Medicaid link and if the child is eligible for Medicaid. The parents are very helpful and supportive of that.

Bill Masters stated do you have a percentage that do not provide you with the insurance information that you need. Ms. Stimson stated she did not; they are only allowed to ask for that information, they can't require that the families give them that and they can't require that parents use their health insurance. Bill asked if there was a group of people that refuse to give that information. Ms. Stimson stated there are some people that choose not to.

Linda Teagan stated their refusal to give that information, is that a Federal or State rule. Ms. Stimson asked is it a State rule that they are allowed to ask but can't require, is that what you are asking. Linda asked what the Federal rule was. Ms. Stimson stated it would be less severe than that and she will get that all lined up for the members because she really doesn't have that off the top of her head. Linda stated she was familiar with some of this and it's always been the issue of insurance; there's no question that the child will be cared for, but it's a matter of where those dollars come from, whether it's the education budget or insurance or Medicaid/Medicare or something else. That would also be something that would be helpful for the Budget Committee. Ms. Stimson stated they could separate it out as to Medicaid and private insurance as well.

Janine McLauchlan stated we need to keep in mind with regards to that, they still have to expense for the total cost of that child's education and the rest of it, the Medicaid, Respite and so forth will show up in Revenue so the expense still has to go out in full.

Karen Umberger asked if there were any more questions for Ms. Stimson. There being none, Karen thanked Ms. Stimson for coming in.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL MATTERS

Karen Umberger stated that since this is one of the last times we are actually going to be seeing the School people when we are actually having a meeting, she assumed Carl (Nelson) could not be here tonight and sent his most able assistant, Bob Godowski, that he's had for years and we appreciate the things that he was able to bring.

Karen Umberger stated she did have a couple of questions. As she reads newspapers around the State, one of the things that she had noticed is that several of the Sao's require their student athletes to pay for playing as we do with our hockey team, they have to pay to play and she thinks the Cross Country Bicycle team is the other one that raises money. We have two sports that require the students that participate to pay, yet we have a myriad of other sports that the children are not required to pay. Has anybody looked at this in regards to a way to a) make everything fair, or b) to reduce the cost of the sports program. Mr. Godowski stated those have been discussed; there have been two discussions that he can

think of within the last year: one being paying for parking at the High School, that was a discussion they had at the Board level and did some research on it and had gathered some information on whether they wanted to have students actually pay for parking at the High School. The other discussion was on paying not only for athletics but for all co-curricular activities and around the State it varies a great deal, some schools do charge for certain high priced athletic endeavors like hockey and football and then have a lesser amount for payment for other sports. A lot of schools don't have any pay to play, no fees at all and everything in between. They did look at that, gathered information and he still has that information in his office and the School Board had a discussion about that about a year ago and decided that wasn't a direction they wanted to go in at that time.

Doug Swett stated those two sports you mentioned he thought are the last two that, as far as he knew, came up about 10 years ago and the agreement then with the School Board was that they would let them run as clubs. Karen Umberger stated but they are now both recognized as High School sports. Doug stated because they didn't keep their word.

Janine McLauchlan stated there is a process that the sports, for instance they have Lacrosse now, that's a new sport and that sport doesn't get any funding from the High School. The co-curricular policy, there's a set of rules in place that they have to meet certain criteria and one of them is to be sustainable for she believes 3 years financially before they can ask to get Varsity status at the High School which allows them to compete at different levels. There are a number of other activities that are still funded primarily by the participants. Again, as Bob (Godowski) said, it is something they've looked at and continue to look at. She thought a year ago when they were particularly looking at the parking, the biggest concern was were they just shifting the financial burden from one group to another and does it make sense for that group to have to take on that burden. It is a subject matter that they are always open to discuss and certainly if someone wants to bring it up and ask them to look at it again, they are willing to do it always.

Karen Umberger stated we did the same thing several years ago with the Reek Center by charging the children to use the Reek Center for the summer program. Prior to that, there had been no cost associated with that. Janine McLauchlan stated and more importantly to be able to continue to deliver those services by asking students and parents to share in the cost is not unreasonable. She knows more and more communities are going to that as well as other things. She knows of communities where parents are paying for bus services for their students. Karen stated we know the law says you only have to provide a bus K through 8, we have chosen in Conway to provide bus service K through 12. Janine stated as the District has chosen not to ask for pay to play. Karen stated these are just all policies that could be re-looked at and Janine stated absolutely.

Ray Shakir stated if he understands correctly, last year we satisfied a \$1.3 Million bond issue and yet, even though the bond was satisfied, they conveniently snuck in the \$1.3 Million into the school budget. That's past and that's all budget under the bridge. However, that \$1.3 Million

is carried on to this year also and in fact, unless he misunderstands, that \$1.3 Million is going to be instituted in the Default Budget. He submits that the \$1.3 Million should be removed from the Default Budget, it has no business being in there and it should not be a factor in a Default Budget. If anybody wants to comment on that and tell him why it should be there, that's fine, but that bond has been settled and it certainly should not be carried on in the Default Budget.

Mr. Godowski stated the only thing he would say to answer that is when the \$1.3 Million was retired, it wasn't added to the budget; there were things like insurance and fuel and those type of things that ate into that \$1.3 Million; but it wasn't the \$1.3 Million that was retired that they added to the budget, it was additional costs. He understands what Ray (Shakir) is saying, he was just clarifying it. Ray Shakir stated you didn't remove it, it stayed there. Mr. Godowski stated the \$1.3 Million was removed and then other costs replaced it, that's correct. Ray stated it stayed there. Mr. Godowski stated he was just answering the question. Ray stated nonetheless, even if you justify the remaining of the \$1.3 Million, that does not justify it's existence in the Default Budget this year. Mr. Godowski stated he understood what Ray was saying and he wasn't trying to justify anything, he was trying to explain.

Bob Drinkhall stated he just wanted to say it is a shame that it was kept in, that the money was used for other things but once that was done, you can't take it out of the Default Budget because those items were approved for that year and hence they do carry forward. It is very, very unfortunate, but that's the way it is. We lost that battle last year.

Linda Teagan stated on this \$1.3 Million, the thing that concerns her is that there are definitely things, items that should be bonded and she doesn't have a problem with that, but every time there is a bond, you get up at Town Meeting and say we're going to borrow "x" number of dollars for 5 years, 10 years, 20 years and then it will come off the tax rate and when you look back and see something like this, that argument loses credibility when you have to get up and make it at Town Meeting because the tax total levy never goes down. Based on this, once that bond money is in, it's like the old zero base budgeting, you start with what you spent last year and you just keep adding on and it just never gets paid off; the taxpayers never see the pay off so therefore it makes her concerned that they should never vote for a bond again because they know they are locked in with that forever.

Mr. Godowski stated the only thing he could say to that is unfortunately if the \$1.3 Million stayed in there, if that was the liability of a bond payment and it stayed in there, then the budget would have been "x" number of dollars higher because of the cost that needed to go in. He was not trying to satisfy with an answer other than to say that the \$1.3 Million Bond did come off, it did end. There were other costs separate from that, that went into the budget. Agree with it or disagree with it, that's what occurred.

Linda Teagan stated she wasn't agreeing or disagreeing; the point is once a taxpayer votes that extra bonding, they know they will never see it

reduced once it's paid off, based on this budgeting approach. It is what it is.

Janine McLauchlan stated she would disagree with that because they have done just that this year by the reduction of \$263,000.00 which was a retired bond and the reduction in bond payment. They are not trying to deceive the taxpayers, she thought they had been very open and up front this year in their budgeting as to why they were making that reduction and it was specific to a bond being retired and payments being reduced. Janine further stated that she did have to say from what Bob (Drinkhall) said, and she agreed with him, it's done and, in fact, if you look a majority of the Budget Committee agreed to the budget last year so that voting is done whether you agree with it or not, it's done and the taxpayers have passed that Warrant Article.

Karen Umberger stated she did have another question and it deals with the Teacher Contract. She knows that we say the estimated increase for next year is \$147,000.00 and that's because of the reduction in health insurance this year, but if the figures, and she may be wrong on this, but the cost of the Contract is pretty close to \$500,000.00 and we are going to see a savings this year but we are not necessarily going to see that savings again next year or the year after or the year after because once that \$500,000.00 gets into the budget, if it passes, it will always be there, very similar to the \$1.3 Million. The savings this year in the Contract is because we're switching to a different medical payment system, medical plan, but next year that plan could go up 18% or 22% as with any other plan. The people need to understand that the real cost of the Contract is close to that \$500,000.00.

Janine McLauchlan stated if everyone would take a look at Section B, the Warrant Articles, on the back there is a spreadsheet that outlines each specific piece of the Contract and what the cost is. It's written in black and white; there's nothing being hidden. On the point of next year going to 18%, the positive spin on that is if it is 18% we will be getting an increase on a lower premium to begin with because they have gone to a Plan with a lower base premium, if the Contract is passed. You are right; if we were to look at this and we were not to have essentially been able to apply those anticipated savings, then the Warrant Article would have been much higher as it was last year. We're at a little bit over \$147,000.00 for a Warrant Article and she believed last year's was just over \$550,000.00 and, again she urged everyone to take a look at that because it does break it out individually and you're right if we didn't anticipate those savings because of a change in the medical Plan, then yes the Warrant Article if it was solely based on the cost of living as well as the salary adjustment then it would have been as you can see here \$412,976.00.

Karen stated she had the wrong figure and she apologized. Karen also thought the other thing that needed to be recognized is because the premium is going down, if in fact the Contract passes, then the teacher's share of the cost for health care also goes down based on whether it is single, two or married. Janine McLauchlan stated the estimate for a single person over a year she believed the premium savings is about \$270.00 with the new Plan should it pass. There is savings for both the

District as well as the individual. Karen stated that's a boost for them financially. Janine stated it gives them a little bit more disposable income. Again, their out-of-pocket expenses will increase with this Plan, doctor's visits will go up to \$15.00 and so on. Karen stated this is after the \$500.00 deductible. Janine stated a doctor's office is not subjected to a deductible, there's only specific services that are. Right now the current Plan is a \$5.00 co-payment at the doctor and this Plan would bring it up to a \$15.00 co-payment.

Karen Umberger stated she had one other question on the number of substitute days or the number of days that the staff is out. She knows we give them 10 days a year sick leave and, of course, for every day that somebody's out we're paying someone else to work at \$75.00 a day. Janine McLauchlan stated it depends on if it's a teacher; if it is a teacher, it's \$75.00 a day and if it's an Aide, it's different. Bob Godowski stated unless it's a long term substitute over a period of time, then it kicks up to a base teacher's salary. Janine stated in some cases like at the Elementary level, if the teacher is out, sometimes the Classroom Aide can actually run that class. Bob Godowski stated only if it's a short period of time. Karen stated her concern is the number of sick days that are being taken in the District and she realizes there are 180 teachers, and she did just ask for the teachers, times 10 is 1,800 days.

Janine McLauchlan stated there are incentives in the Contract to encourage teachers not to use all of their sick days; there's certain monetary incentives to not use those sick days and the trade off is that instead of paying someone \$75.00 they would be saving that money if they don't take it and they might get a slight bonus at the end. Karen Umberger asked if that was new. Bob Godowski stated no, it's not new, but the incentives are all part of the negotiated agreement so he would suggest budgetary if that was something you wanted to make as a recommendation, obviously that would be through the next negotiation. Karen stated she just wanted people to be healthy because obviously if they're taking that many days, we have an unhealthy staff and she realizes there are any number of reasons someone takes a sick day or a personal day, but the bottom line is if you are taking that many days, you have an unhealthy staff. Janine stated unless they are taking it for an immediate family member or a child, spouse or whatever; and the healthier they are, then the less of a premium increase we'll get because they'll have a better experience.

Karen Umberger stated that's one of the reasons why the premiums went up so high because of the number of services. It all ties in together and to her that's something that really, really needs to be worked on. Otherwise, we're just going to continue to see and she didn't care what the Plan was, we're going to continue to see those 18% a year increases and we've had that experience, the double digit health insurance increases for years in the School. That is not true in the Town. The Town this year was at 1% or 1.5% increase, it's not just all the big bad insurance companies that deal with the experience. Janine McLauchlan stated the age of the population that's being served is a big factor as well. Karen said listening to what Neal (Moylan) said, all of your teachers are young because of the high turnover. Janine stated no, he said their years of experience, he didn't reference their age.

Bill Masters stated his understanding is that the rate of reimbursement is, we're paying or the District is paying 80% of the health insurance and the employee pays 20%. Bob Godowski stated he believed that to be true. Bill stated that's for the teacher; what about the family, do we still have the 80/20 if they have the family election. Janine McLauchlan stated she didn't have it right off the top of her head, but the District's portion is based on the lowest premium Plan that they have; it's not necessarily 80% of the Plan you're on, it's 80% of the lowest cost Plan that they have in the District. Karen Umberger stated the lowest cost Plan that was negotiated is the \$500.00 deductible. Janine stated she didn't want to quote something; she doesn't have it in front of her. Bill stated what he's accustomed to is seeing the 80/20 for the individual and if they include their family, they pick up the differential between the two. Janine stated she could get the Contract language that gives specifically the break down.

Chairman Sordi asked if there were any other questions for Mr. Godowski or Janine concerning the school. Chairman thanked Mr. Godowski for coming and thanked him for his patience as the members waded through this. Mr. Godowski stated if there were any other questions that come up after he leaves, just shoot either him or Carl (Nelson) an e-mail and they'll be glad to get back to the Committee as soon as they can.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Sordi stated Monday night Earl (Sires) is going to be here, the Police Department is going to be here and the East Conway Fire Precinct is going to be. Chairman advised that he would not be at the meeting Monday night but will be back for the Public Hearing on Wednesday night. If Joe (Mosca) is here, he will run the meeting and if not, John (Edgerton) or Karen (Umberger) can run the meeting. Chairman reminded the members that the Public Hearing at the school was Wednesday night, February 9<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:00 PM.

**Doug Swett moved, seconded by Janine McLauchlan, to have the vote on the Warrants on Wednesday night after the Public Hearing. In favor: 6; Opposed: 2 - Karen Umberger and Chairman Sordi; Abstain: 1 - Bill Masters.**

**Doug Swett moved, seconded by Janine McLauchlan, to rescind his previous motion. In favor: 9; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0.**

**Bob Drinkhall moved, seconded by John Edgerton, to have the Budget Committee vote at 6:00 PM on Sunday, the 13<sup>th</sup>. In favor: 8; Opposed: 1 - Ray Shakir; Abstain: 0.**

Chairman Sordi stated that the latest we can have the voting results back to Karen (Hallowell) is by Sunday night; we have two choices: after the Public Hearing on Wednesday night or Thursday night. If we do it Thursday night, then we need to get someone to replace the Recording Secretary because she's not here. If we do it Thursday night, it will be at the Police Department.

Bob Drinkhall stated Thursday night was not good, there's a Planning Board meeting. Chairman Sordi stated it's the same thing as we had last year; Chairman went to the Budget Committee and Bob went to the Planning Board.

Karen Umberger stated let me just say that Doug and she have experienced trying to vote the same night and it has been an absolute disaster and she thought it's not a smart idea and if Thursday night is not a good night, maybe we could do it Saturday morning. Chairman Sordi stated he would not be around. Chairman stated he agreed with Karen in the fact that last year he had no desire to vote after getting beat up on the head for 2 or 3 hours.

Chairman Sordi asked Bob Drinkhall if he had to go to the Planning Board meeting on that Thursday night. Bob stated there wasn't a gun being held to his head, but there was something coming up that he wanted to be involved in and he certainly wanted to be involved in this discussion and vote. Chairman stated if we do the voting on Thursday night, if we can start with some of the simpler stuff and then get into maybe the School as the last thing, let him know what's of most interest to him, but he thought doing it Thursday night and that way if the Committee had any final questions before taking a vote, we could get those addressed in time.

Karen Umberger stated the problem is he has to be here as the representative of the Town. Bob Drinkhall stated exactly, he has to vote. Chairman Sordi stated that Bob wasn't present last year and Bob stated he was. Chairman stated it must have been another night then because there was a Planning Board meeting. Chairman asked Bob what time the Planning Board meeting was and Bob stated 7:00 PM. Chairman stated it's going to be either Wednesday night or Thursday night. Bob stated it doesn't matter if it's Wednesday night as much as a pain in the neck it is.

Janine McLauchlan stated she had a SAUL 9 Board meeting, but she could miss it for voting. She would check to make sure there was nothing major on the agenda.

Chairman Sordi stated it didn't look like they had a choice; the Committee would have to do it Wednesday night if Bob (Drinkhall) has to be at the Planning Board meeting. We don't have much of a choice. Chairman stated he would find out from Karen (Hallowell) if the vote could be held the following Monday night. Chairman asked Janine McLauchlan if she had a School Board meeting and Janine stated no, they moved their meeting to the 7<sup>th</sup>. Chairman stated the 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day.

Chairman Sordi asked the members if they wanted to try to do the vote on Sunday night, the 13<sup>th</sup>. Chairman stated Karen (Hallowell) has to have the vote during the day of the 14<sup>th</sup>. Janine McLauchlan suggested having the meeting earlier on Thursday, such as 4:00 PM or 4:30 PM so that Bob would still be able to get to his Planning Board meeting.

Chairman Sordi stated if you want to propose an alternative budget, come prepared with something written up showing what it is so that we can discuss it.

Bob Drinkhall stated he believed Karen Umberger asked about the billing on the bus maintenance. He received a call from Jim Hill and they do track the hours with no rate plus parts. He then talked with Earl (Sires) and they take the labor and overhead and a percent of their hours to come up with what the School is billed plus parts. So they are billed for what they use. Karen stated and it is billed by vehicle. Karen further stated she also received a call from Jim Hill as well saying that he just never asked for that information but he has it; it's available to him.

**Bob Drinkhall moved, seconded by Doug Swett, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary