

MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
June 15, 2011

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:35 PM in the Auditorium at Kennett High School with the following members present: Vice Chair Danielle Santuccio, Doug Swett, Ray Shakir, Greydon Turner, John Edgerton, Joe Mosca, Dick Klement, Brian Charles, Kelly DeFeo, Mike DiGregorio, Betty Loynd, Bill Marvel, Maury McKinney, Ted Sares and Maureen Seavey. Excused: David Sordi and Karen Umberger. Also present: Dr. Carl Nelson, Bob Drinkhall, Therese Davison, Randy Davison, John Skelton, Lloyd Jones of The Daily Sun and other members of the public.

Chairperson Santuccio asked John Edgerton to lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Santuccio read a letter from David Sordi to the members:

"Dear Budget Committee Members,

"I apologize for being unable to attend tonight's meeting. An urgent work-related matter required my attention out of town.

"Personally, I would like to thank the School Board and Dr. Nelson and his team for taking the time to reevaluate the School Budget and identify options to reduce the budget while still providing students with an excellent educational experience. I believe that the amount the School Board has proposed to reduce the budget is within the range the School Administration has returned to the town the last few years. For this reason I believe the proposed reduction will not impact the overall education we provide our children.

"I think this is the first step the Budget Committee, School Board, and School Administration can take to begin to evaluate the school budget, the tax base, and what we can all do to manage the budget while improving the education we offer students. I continue to believe if we can reduce costs of existing programs by doing them more cost effectively we can use that money freed up to improve.

"I support the proposed budget, and I hope you will too.

"Sincerely,

"Dave Sordi"

Chairperson Santuccio asked if there was any Old Business to be discussed; there being none, the meeting was turned over to Dr. Nelson.

Dr. Nelson stated he had given the Municipal Budget Committee a copy of the proposed cuts that the School Board had actually acted on at their May 26th meeting. He stated he had additional copies to pass out to the

public which he was really waiting to do at the second meeting, the Public Hearing, and asked Bob (Godowski) to pass same out to the public now. Dr. Nelson further stated that the cuts have come from Special Education which amounts to about \$78,000.00; a Tin Mountain Program which is an outside instructional program; the reduction of a Hall Monitor at the High School, a supervisory type position; the reduction of School-to-Career funds at the Career & Tech Center; reduction of a Guidance Counselor at the Career & Tech Center; then there is a number of small position team leaders, temporary stipends, this is a stipend pool that the High School Principal uses when they have overloads of students in certain classes and need to put on additional classes. There is a State requirement that says you can't go above 30 students in a class. There is a reduction of one-half of an Art Teacher at the High School; they have a half-time position at the High School and that person has opted to move to the Middle School to occupy a full-time position; you will see a \$46,000.00 reduction at the High School level for the half-time Art Teacher, but because of the person bumping the Middle School person, you'll see an addition at the Middle School of \$13,000.00. So, if you do the math, you take the \$13,000.00 and subtract it from the \$46,000.00, you are going to come up with the \$33,000.00 they are proposing and that was a question Karen Umberger had some concerns about and he tried to respond to her about that by e-mail. Then the Strategic Plan money they had at the Elementary School and then 3 part-time, 50% reduction, in three different custodians all at the Elementary Schools which totaled the \$56,000.00. The total reduction that the Board accomplished at its meeting was \$286,739.00. Dr. Nelson further stated that goes on top of the original \$263,000.00 that the Board reduced back in December and they've made some adjustments after that and the total reductions from that December reduction before you guys (Budget Committee) even got the Budget, totaled up to \$285,000.00. So between the two different cuts, that's a \$571,000.00 reduction from the original thinking of the School Board. By way of noting, there are about \$450,000.00 of Warrant Articles that will be disallowed by DRA because of the way they apply the 10% rule. Any Warrant Articles that appeared with the exception of the contracts, the negotiated contracts, any of those Warrant Articles below that will be disallowed by the DRA. Add it all up and it comes to a little over \$1 Million of funds.

Dr. Nelson further stated that also in the packet given out there are a couple of other things that are listed at the top. There is a summary of the Budget and they have bolded where the reductions are; a summary of the Budget by function. The Budget Committee also has the total line-by-line budget that's not in the handout here, that's quite a few trees so they tried to stay away from that. They then give a revised Revenue page and obviously the only thing revised there is the relation to taxes. They also provided an estimated tax rate and this would be the final tax rate because they know that the Warrant Articles have been disallowed and the tax rate before applying the 3 Maintenance Trust Warrant Articles that passed and the 3 Contracts that passed would be a $-.51$ per thousand in the tax rate. So the tax rate would be reduced by $$.51$. After you've applied the Articles just mentioned, the 3 Maintenance Trusts and the negotiated Contracts, it's a $-.33$ per thousand, so the tax rate would go down this year, their estimate by $$.33$ per thousand and that's using last year's assessed values as well. They don't change that and have had word

from the Town that they anticipate it being the same as last year. Dr. Nelson then asked if there were any questions.

Ted Sares stated for the sake of the public, what is the percentage reduction. Dr. Nelson stated the percentage reduction for the first one would be under 1% and the second one would be just about 1% so you'd have about a 2% reduction in the original budget. It actually equates to an increase of .65% in the budget, but because of the revenues that they have, the increase in revenues, it does provide for a reduction in taxes overall.

Betty Loynd stated last fall when the School Board asked the Principals to cut \$1 Million or \$1.5 Million from the School Budget so that we could get an idea of what these cuts would look like, that School Board Meeting was in this Auditorium and was full of people who said "we do not want these cuts". The School Board went back and they did not make the cuts that the Budget Committee asked. They cut a certain amount, \$200,000.00, that Mr. Nelson recognized and went back and gave it to the Budget Committee and the Budget Committee at a meeting at the end of February that she went to, there were 10 Budget Committee members there and 6 out of the 10 voted to cut \$4 Million from the School Budget. She didn't need to tell anyone that the Deliberative Session was full, it wasn't just the Auditorium, we had to move it to the Gym and people were very clear "we do not want these cuts". So we then go to the April vote and people voted for the Default Budget because they did not want the cuts that would ensue with the 10%, but the 10% bit us anyway. So, here we are and she didn't know why there was a cut from the School Board because we don't want that cut, she doesn't want that cut.

Chairperson Santuccio asked Dr. Nelson if he wanted to respond to what Betty Loynd stated. Dr. Nelson stated the School Board made the decision and he would defer to the School Board to respond to that.

Joe Mosca stated first, the lesson in futility that the School Board went through for the \$1 Million, \$1.5 Million, \$2 Million, was not instigated by the Budget Committee. That was something the School Board brought upon themselves. He has told members, those who are current members now but were not members at the time, that the Budget Committee did not ask for that. It was the School Board that asked to do it themselves and he gets irked when the Budget Committee gets blamed for something that we didn't even ask the School Board to do. Did the Budget Committee cut the budget at the end of the year? Absolutely, but we did not ask the School Board to go through the exercise they went through. Thank you.

Bill Marvel stated you stole my thunder on that one, Joe; that's the second time he's heard that correction made to the same person. That same person told us at the last meeting that whatever budget the School Board came up with she would support and now she's not supporting it which is yet another contradiction apparently in an endless stream. He was at the meeting where the School Board discussed this and they weren't talking about a \$4 Million cut, they were talking about a couple of hundred thousand dollars and they went at it quite deliberately and they had thought about it quite a bit. They had the support of the Administrators apparently in their choices and they rejected other choices that they believed unreasonable at the time. He didn't agree with all of the cuts;

he didn't like seeing Tin Mountain cut; he didn't like seeing the Art Teacher cut; he would rather have seen a Team cut at the Middle School and some of that money used to restore an effective foreign language, not German, to the Middle School, but this was a compromise and that's the nature of compromise and he thought it was responsible of the School Board to select the cuts that they did and to recognize that with a declining enrollment. It's not unreasonable to cut a little from the budget and he thought that the gradual cuts that this sort of decision reflects is a responsible way to go about that. That's all.

Dick Klement stated he would like to put this thing to rest once and for all; it was he that made the motion to do the exercise for \$1 Million and \$1.5 Million budget reduction. It was an exercise so that they could sit down and say when they start looking at the budget and it really goes south on them and the Administrators would have put in the time, the thought of what they could deal with, what they couldn't deal with and they would be a couple of months ahead. The idea was not in his mind to cut the \$1.5 Million from the budget, but it was an exercise to see when they go down the list because they knew they were going to down a list, what the Administrators could live, couldn't live with, and their priority. That was the reason for that.

Dick Klement further stated he wanted to make one small addition to what Dr. Nelson said. They still do not know about Teacher Retirement; so whatever decisions are made here tonight, tomorrow night, the next night, the Teacher Retirement piece of the puzzle is still out and that's a \$400,000.00/\$450,000.00 piece of the puzzle. Thank you.

Betty Loynd stated the first thing she wanted to say was "you're right", she didn't know who asked to cut the \$1 Million, \$1.5 Million, but her point is it got people fired up because people did not want that cut. She apologized; she was not trying to blame the Budget Committee, she wasn't trying to point a finger at anybody. Her point was this community supports education and this community did not want a cut like that.

Kelly DeFeo stated it sounds as though the Budget Committee, from what Bill (Marvel) said, they wanted a couple hundred thousand cut or trimmed or something along that line. The million was not proposed by anyone, but somehow when the budget came back with cuts and she didn't know how much the cuts were, the difference between what last year's budget was and what this year's budget was, but it was less than last year, correct? Give or take money. Somehow it changed to 11%, 18%; the Budget Committee got rabid and just went way overboard instead of actually looking at it and saying "okay, what is a doable cut" that wouldn't impact the School, the teachers or the students in a negative light and that's why we're in this position we are in because the Budget Committee went overboard and didn't do their job and these are people that don't go to every school meeting and they don't go at every Budget Committee and they're micro-managing something that they really know little about at this point. You're still doing it. She was just saying we are at this point right now when we didn't have to be at this point right now and now we're cutting things that really shouldn't be cut and it is impacting the kids and it's impacting the community and it's been voted on that this is not what the community wants.

Chairperson Santuccio stated moving on, she has three more names written down wanting to speak but she thought the focus tonight is not what happened before. There has been proposals by the School Board and we need to discuss what our feelings are and whether we want to accept those or not before the public session and the Committee didn't have a whole lot of time before people were going to be coming in and she just wanted to make sure that all questions were answered.

Ray Shakir stated he strenuously disagreed with the comments that this community does not want budget cuts. In fact, he believes the opposite is the case. It is true that the people who were at those meetings disagreed with the budget cuts, but those people did not represent the community at large, they represented a stacked deck for the school people. They were successful in getting those people out to the audience; they were successful in getting those people out to the polls; but they were not successful in getting the people who have to pay these ridiculous taxes and the absurd school demands so he disagreed with the statement that the community was not in favor of the cuts. In fact, if there was a honest cross section taken of the community, he was positive that most people would go for common sense, pragmatic cuts to a bloated, ridiculous bureaucracy.

Joe Mosca stated he believed and asked Dr. Nelson to correct him if he was wrong, but the budget that was presented to the Budget Committee was higher than the budget from the previous year. There may have been some internal cuts that the School Board did itself from its own budget, but what the Budget Committee received was higher than the budget from the previous year. Dr. Nelson stated on the expense side, yes.

Ted Sares stated he simply agreed with Danielle's (Santuccio) point and thought the Committee needed to get on with why everyone was here tonight. We can go on with the accusatory stuff all night long. He didn't know if we were going to resolve this issue; that was then, this is now and now is a point where we have to look at a 2% reduction in the budget. His own feeling is that we move on.

Betty Loynd moved, seconded by Kelly DeFeo, to restore the budget back to what the School Board had originally without this \$280,000.00 cut. MOTION WITHDRAWN.

Chairperson Santuccio stated we can't do that at this point; that would be appropriate on Monday. Betty Loynd withdrew her motion. Danielle asked if there were any further questions on how this might effect or not effect certain educational programs; moving forward or even alternate suggestions regarding these different items.

Ted Sares moved to accept the reduced budget as presented. MOTION WITHDRAWN.

Chairperson Santuccio stated we can't accept the reduced budget at this point in time. Ted Sares asked then what are we doing here. Danielle stated we are here to have a conversation, like a conference with Dr. Nelson about the cuts they have proposed. Ted Sares stated if you have something to laugh at, you go ahead and laugh; he didn't need the dirty looks.

Joe Mosca stated ladies and gentlemen, decorum please. He personally would like to thank the School Board for their hard work and for coming up with this. He knows it wasn't easy for anyone but kudos to the Board for what they have done and hopefully we'll be responsible and do the right thing. Thank you.

Mike DeGregorio stated if he was understanding correctly, the Chair wanted the members to discuss these items that are on this list as to whether members liked them or disliked them with Mr. Nelson. Chairperson Santuccio stated she thought it was more just a discussion about their proposed budget in general and the proposed cuts to the budget; that was her understanding. Mike stated to the Chair that she wasn't limiting it to this, she was just saying. He guessed the first thing on his list if he was just looking at this; he was the Chair of the Facilities Committee when he was on the School Board and looking at cuts of Custodians really bothers him. He realizes it doesn't have a direct effect on education, however, it has a long term effect. We all came from an era, anybody that's lived in this town for a long time, and saw what a lack of a maintenance plan did to the former High School, it was a disaster when we moved out of there. For those of you who take the time to walk around the building, you can start to see things happening already. As you all know, when this school opened and the Middle School opened the amount of Custodians that were put into the budget was less than national standards at both locations. Even with that, even with the hard work that they do, when you look beneath the surface as you walk around the building, things are starting to get to the point where they need attention and it bothers him when we start cutting down on taking care of our buildings, whether it's through cleaning or certain maintenance, we are down Custodians compared to what we should have; we are down maintenance people to what we should have. There are many people in this room that talk about having more educators than we need, but we already know we are down on that. That's an issue for him, right there is our maintenance issue and cleanliness issue. Kids tend to, or people in general, tend to take care of things that are being well taken care of. If they see it not being taken care of, then they just add to it. As a great example, the ex-High School, that was again a disaster when we moved out of there. When he was on the School Board he invited Budget Committee members, invited all sorts of people to go down there so they could see how poorly things were taken care of prior to moving out. If his recollection was correct, out of the 18 people that were on the Board that year, he believes only 6 people showed up to do any tours. However, the rest of the group voted to take additional cuts because somehow they knew how the building could be taken care of without actually looking at it. That would one of the first ones on the list that he has an issue with and he was sure there are others.

Chairman Santuccio asked Mike DiGregorio if he would like to ask Dr. Nelson about the maintenance issue. Mike stated sure and he was sure that he (Dr. Nelson) didn't want to cut them unless he had to.

Dr. Nelson stated what the Elementary Principals have decided to do is to go with 1.5 Custodians and that's where that cut is coming from. They will figure out a rotation as to how to move the half-time person; one half-time person will be stationed at one school and then there will be

another custodian in a full-time position that will alternate between the schools and the Principals will figure out how they will schedule that to be most effective for their particular building.

Dr. Nelson stated another thing that he wanted to bring to attention was on the last page, they have refigured the Default Budget and you can see the Default Budget would now be \$316,000.00 greater than the proposed Budget. This has also been adopted by the Board and he does have a sample Warrant Article which he will pass out later on so that the members can see what they propose, where the numbers go and there will be a spot obviously for the Municipal Budget Committee's number.

Ted Sares stated what Mike (DiGregorio) says he can respect and understand where he is coming from, but he thought that argument was probably being made in just about every town in New Hampshire right now: Littleton, Dover and Bedford. He thought it was being made in just about every town in the country right now and he thought the response to that kind of argument, not to show disrespect to Mike's argument, is that these are tough times and these are times when the City of Providence lays off 50 Police as they did last week, 60 teachers as they did last week; as Littleton reduces the school by an ungodly number of teachers. These are bad times; these are times that this country hasn't experienced at least in his lifetime and he is 74 and these are times that he has never seen before. He had to say that the beat of this country right now is not up, the beat is down in terms of budgets and most budgets are being slashed by a percentage that 2% is very small. He thought the 2% reduction by the School Board was laudatory given the vitriol that we all experienced over the last year. He thought it was reasonable. He thought they looked at different things. They stayed away from the surplus because, even though he brought it up, it was a stupid idea. He thought they had done the right thing and 2% given what's going on is the right thing to do. That's where he's at with all due respect to Mike's points.

Betty Loynd stated she got these property tax rates for the Town of Conway for the past 10 years and she thought it was fascinating. In 2000 our tax rate per thousand was \$19.92, went up to \$21.27, \$20.98, down to \$17.52, and then in 2004 when the property values went up it went down to \$15.38, then \$14.67, \$15.49 and guess what: we opened a new school in 2007 and it went down \$.15 per thousand. In 2008 it went up to \$17.24, 2009 \$17.08, 2010 \$17.87. The School rate has gone from \$13.32 to \$11.82 per thousand so she doesn't see what they are doing wrong at the schools. She doesn't.

Dick Klement stated he would like to talk about the Custodians. They looked at them but what they had on the chopping block was either a maintenance person or Custodians. Both of those were difficult for him to absorb, but they only have 4 maintenance people and if they take out 1, they are down to 3. Do you take away plumbers or electricians; at some point you don't have any support left so they felt that by reducing the Elementary Custodians it would be a lesser impact and he was not saying it was palpable, he was not saying it was nice to do but they felt that the impact was less by taking Custodians down to part-time rather than getting rid of a full-time maintenance person.

Ted Sares stated this tax issue, he was kind of tired of it. There are different ways to look at it. If somebody wants to stipulate that there is no tax problem in this town and that people don't have a problem paying their taxes, let them speak up now and say that for the public and for Lloyd Jones of the Conway Daily Sun. Get up, identify yourself and say "gee I don't think people have a tax problem in this town". He will tell everyone this, his taxes have gone up from \$2,000.00 to \$8,000.00 and anybody can go over to the Town Hall and look at it, \$8,000.00 per year. His house would have sold for \$1 Million 5 years ago, today he couldn't get \$400,000.00 for it, so something's a little out of sync there.

Chairperson Santuccio stated that she again wanted to focus on the proposed budget and would like to move on after Ray (Shakir) to the proposed budget.

Ray Shakir stated his taxes went up \$800.00 last year and guessed that must have been because of the inefficiencies of the Town. Betty Loynd stated it wasn't that at all.

Chairperson Santuccio stated no more tax issues; we're done with the tax issues at this point. Danielle asked that the members just look at the proposed budget and discuss that before the Public Hearing.

John Edgerton stated he thought we had to be very careful here tonight. He went to the Town to find out exactly how the votes went for the Town and the School over the last 5 years and there are a great number of people who voted "no" for the School and they passed the Town every year. We have to be very careful here because if there is a "no" inference, he doesn't like to use the word because he's for the students, he'd like to see the students do better, he'd like to see the School do better and he'd like to see better grades, but 3 out of 5 years a defeat of the School Budget just because somebody says it's the School Budget vote "no", he doesn't like that.

Mike DiGregorio stated he just wanted to comment on the maintenance issue again. Make no mistake about it that he can't imagine as Bill (Marvel) tried to point out earlier when he said that the Administrators approved some cuts in that last budget meeting. They are not sitting here today telling you they want to take \$50,000.00 out of their Custodian budget, they're telling you they're trying to appease people with that. He goes into the Elementary Schools mostly on a daily basis especially this time of the year, we can not afford to be cutting our Custodians or maintenance and Dick (Klement) is absolutely right, if you add up the square footage of all our buildings, we're about a half million square feet being taken care of by a hand full of people. We should walk the halls of these buildings and admire the work that they do with such a small staff and to cut even more because they are doing a decent job and they are making it look okay to the person whose not looking deep into it, he's sorry, but this again, we're going to go down a wrong road if we start letting our buildings fall apart.

Chairperson Santuccio asked Dr. Nelson if the Committee would be able to walk around the schools before Monday to take a look at what Mike

(DiGregorio) is talking about if anyone wanted to. Dr. Nelson stated it could be arranged to set up a tour.

Ray Shakir stated he didn't think he would ever agree with Mike, but in fact he does, he agrees with most of what Mike says. That's why it stands to reason that the venues should be consolidated, some of them closed and made more efficient and there would be significant amounts of money left for required maintenance. Venues now are absolutely under utilized. If they were consolidated, you wouldn't have a problem with renovations or maintenance.

Bill Marvel stated 50 years ago his father was the Custodian at Conway El and he had that job for about 10 years, it was smaller and had fewer rooms and it didn't have a Cafeteria but he also operated boilers, maintained the heating system, he was the electrician and at times the plumber as well, so considering the current size of the building and the reduced duties that go along with the job, it seems that 1.5 is probably reasonable. He did not see what the purpose of a walk through now would be because what we're talking about is what it might look like after the Custodians were cut back and it really wouldn't show him anything to go through it now. He thought Mike's (DiGregorio) main concern seemed to be the High School and the Middle School, but it's only the Elementary Schools that are being talked about.

Betty Loynd asked Mr. Shakir if he had been in any of the schools. Ray Shakir stated as a matter of fact he had. Betty asked which schools and Ray stated Pine Tree. Betty asked if he thought that was not full and Ray stated he thought it should be closed.

Ted Sares stated a follow up to what Ray (Shakir) pointed out. At least at some point the School Board or the Administrators had something in mind when they had a sub-committee, he had the sub-committee findings in front of him, where there was a study done to consolidate schools. One of the findings was that the Committee did not recommend closing an Elementary School at this time. He thought Ray's point was not a cavalier one; at least at some point this was looked at. He did not know when this was done but "at this time" is not now. Not that he is proposing that now, or not that he is supporting that now, but at least it was on the table, so it's not a cavalier point.

Dick Klement stated to try to answer your point. The School Board has taken the vote to put a non-binding referendum on the ballot next April. They'll ask the public if they want us to close a grammar school and as a result of that vote they will determine whether they reopen the investigation or not.

Danielle Santuccio moved, seconded by Joe Mosca, to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM. All members present in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Santuccio called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 PM and deferred opening comments to either Dr. Nelson or the School Board to present the proposed budget.

Dr. Nelson stated most of you were here for the first portion of the last meeting so rather than repeat that unless there is somebody who wants more information about any particular topic, you have the handout that really describes where the reductions are and in the handout it also describes what the tax rate will be, the proposed tax rate which including the Warrant Articles that are passed at this time and the collective bargaining contracts, you would have a reduction of \$.33 in your tax rate and it also provides you with the Default Budget on the last page. They have also given the Budget Committee a sample of what a Warrant Article would like for this second vote which contains the Board's recommended budget number, the Default Budget number and the blank would be for the Municipal Budget Committee.

Chairperson Santuccio opened the meeting up to public comment.

Bob Drinkhall stated he was a concerned citizen. First he'd like to say he supports 100% what Mike (DiGregorio) said regarding maintenance. He couldn't be more correct and he has seen all 5 of the facilities. He went through one years and years ago when what is now the Middle School was in a horrible, horrible condition. He couldn't believe the condition of some of the areas he had not previously been to. He would like to encourage everyone not to cut maintenance in any way, shape or form. With that being said, many things that were said earlier tonight were basically incorrect and not fully explained. One being that the tax rate is relatively in and of itself meaningless because you have to take into consideration the actual assessment. You could have the tax rate go down, assessments go up and the overall amount paid by any given citizen would still go up. He does believe wholeheartedly that the School Budget is bloated, not in the maintenance area, but in many, many areas. Tonight it was mentioned that in the past the Budget Committee hasn't in fact micro-managed and then it was suggested by the same person that it should be micro-managed and when he heard that for 6 years being on the Budget Committee he didn't know what to say whether we're supposed to micro-manage or not. He didn't believe in it, he just believes in going to the bottom line. The actual cut now to the Operating Budget is .87%. If you take into consideration the cut including the Articles that are lost due to the 10% rule, it comes out to 2.2%, \$736,689.00. He does not believe that is unreasonable, he thought it could work very easily for the School to maintain its services. He didn't believe any entity, whether it be a governmental entity or business or a household budget that can't survive a 2.2% cut. The tax rate that Carl's (Nelson) mentioned, does that include the possible problems that could come from lack of State funding or any Federal funding you might lose. Dr. Nelson stated they have additional areas to be cut if that develops. If the retirement doesn't come through, they will have other reductions.

Therese Davison stated she was a resident of Conway and her comments were not necessarily geared towards the current discussion, but she read something in the paper several weeks ago asking community members to step forward and to present what their expectations of the Budget Committee was, so she put this meeting in her calendar before any of this conversation even started. Her comments are really more general. First thing she wanted to do was to thank everyone for filling the seats that they are currently occupying because she thought part of the problem was that our community got lackadaisical, she does not have the time to sit

in that chair so she appreciates the fact that all the members are taking the time to sit in that chair, and she wanted to thank everyone for that before going on any further. The second thing that she wanted to say was that unlike some people, a diverse group on a Board and she wasn't saying people in general because she didn't know who feels what, she thought diversity on any committee is really important and thought it was a large committee and it has some extreme diversity on it and she thought that was going to create, she hoped, some healthy discussions over the next year. The reason she was saying she hoped is because the discussions that happened over the past year and she knows we're not suppose to talk about the past but need to learn from it, so we need to remember it, is that she hopes the conversations stay healthy and her definition of a healthy conversation would be that we use our intellect to examine things from multiple perspectives and then to try to find some synergy that will allow us to move forward in a reasonable way together. She said this at the School Board meeting and she was going to say it to the Committee, she does not want, as a community member, want to see a repeat of the and she couldn't find a word for it, but she wanted to move forward as a community that is intellectually diverse, respectful of each other and that's not what she's been seeing and she doesn't like that. The third point that she wanted to make was that she believes in asking for what you need and what you want. When you do that, you don't do that lightly. The problem that she has with what has transpired is that the Budget Committee, and please correct her if her facts are skewed as she is a very busy woman, that the Budget Committee asked for approximately between a \$500,000.00 to \$600,000.00 reduction originally as we started to move into the budget season. The School Board took that number and what did it feel they could provide an adequate education by using that number. Then when it came time to propose a percentage of cuts, the 11% went beyond what you asked for originally and that reads to her as a power struggle: "I am going to punish you by asking for more than I did originally because you didn't do what I wanted". Whether or not that's what it was is secondary to the fact that that's how she read it and if you (Committee) had come in and asked for a 10.5% budget reduction, at that time you would not have lost my respect. When you went over that, you did. So coming into the next budget season, she may not agree with your decisions or your recommendations, but she certainly would like to respect them. So that is why she is here tonight. Again, she thanked the Committee for doing what they are doing. Thank you.

Therese Davison stated that she just had to say one more thing and it was important to her so she appreciated the Committee's patience. You have the opportunity to do something profound with this group of people, you really do because you are so diverse. You also have the opportunity to mess it up completely. She really hoped that the Committee chose the first; do something profound for this community. Thank you.

Randy Davison stated he was not speaking as a School Board member but was speaking as a citizen with regard to the Budget Committee. He felt in regards to watching the School Board and the Deliberative and all through the scenario that took place and he made a call to Dave Sordi and he didn't get back to him. He was kind of discouraged in regard to this. When they had the May 23rd meeting and this is public knowledge, Dave Sordi of the Budget Committee stated he would take it upon himself to go through the Minutes of the Budget Committee meetings over the past

several months and e-mail the suggestions to the School Board. Remember, he made a phone call. His issue is that he has a real concern with that; he printed off, he went to the Town website and he went through the Budget Committee Minutes and in many, many instances, and this is his issue as a citizen and it's out there because he follows this, all through this consistently it states that the Middle School was overloaded with personnel. An example:

"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."

Randy Davison stated the above was from the Minutes. At the same meeting and he guessed he was frustrated because John Edgerton goes through it again, he (John) goes through the cost of the Middle School. The Budget Committee on February 27th, it was also brought up again:

"To give a perfect example, and he gave the example to the night of the School vote, about some of the ways that you could more efficiently use money and was talking about the teams at the Middle School and how that might be more cost effective to do it, but yet still deliver an excellent education."

Randy Davison stated he could go on an on. Mr. Davison stated Bill Marvel stated:

"... and he was hoping to see the team reduced at the Junior High. He really thought that if that had happened, we wouldn't be here tonight."

Mr. Davison stated his constant concern here is that a few people from your Committee to another Committee made suggestions without a lot of global communication because he didn't know if this group had a communication to the School Board in regards to where people were thinking, so he dug that out. His real issue though is where the cuts are going. All through the documents from the School Board and from the Budget Committee they wanted it to be equitably taken away at certain sections. He can tell you right now that the High School has taken a major hit in regards to programming and when he stands here as a parent, he has a real concern in regards to what programs are being eliminated that are going to affect students and when he did the dollar amount, people need to know that it wasn't equitably put out there. The High School is taking a \$182,000.00 cut from the previous cut and then what the new cut is; the Middle School is \$51,000.00 from the figures that were presented; John Fuller was around \$30,000.00; Conway El was around \$20,000.00 and Pine Tree was around \$20,000.00. One thing that consistently bothers him when he was on that Committee and the Board is that, and he was trying to play the role as a citizen because he didn't want to over step his bounds, his vote was a descending vote so he

thought people needed to know why. One part was the programming, one part was the amount of money that was taken away from different programs, he had a real concern with that. The other issue was the amount of people that came out and supported certain programs, student programming.

Randy Davison stated he absolutely believes that schools are built for students and to fulfill the necessity of programming. When you take programming away, he guessed that's where he was at, he didn't think it was equitable, he thought that the Budget Committee when the suggestions came out, it's in the Minutes, he had a real issue with that. He thought that was the last thing he really wanted to bring up, but he thought and hoped that as people move on that both committees work together and that there's cooperation in regards to where a community should go; there's cuts happening all over the country; there's cuts happening in every single District, Ted (Sares) mentioned some. Districts are really concerned. Earlier when someone said about the tax rate, whenever a community, the realtors know this, whenever a community hits around \$20.00 per thousand, that's an issue; things stop moving. Earlier the tax rates that were passed out here, if you live in a Precinct, it's amazing how high your taxes go up. So people that live in Precincts, what was passed out doesn't even address the Precincts because the Precincts rates are really high. If you go around town, he mentioned this before, the amount of properties that are "For Sale" are a dime a dozen and if you talk with the realtors, the amount that they are paying per thousand is an issue. He guessed his overall thing was that he hoped people go back and look if it affects student programming, that's probably where we should not look at cuts because that was a major concern he had.

Chairperson Santuccio asked if anyone from the School Board or Dr. Nelson wanted to address anything about where the cuts were in the student programming.

Dr. Nelson stated the Administration has reviewed the cuts recommended by the School Board, some adjustments were collectively done. A good job was done on having the least impact on education of the children.

Therese Davison stated she had two thoughts come to mind. First is the major economic impact and a very interesting study she turned into her professors. What she wanted to know is that the immediate aftermath in building this school followed the projection that came up in the study she did which was also typical of any community that builds a new school. There's a big push that improves the economy for awhile and then after a few years, it diminishes and that's exactly what we're seeing here and she thought that was part of the reason why right now it is so much worse; we're feeling it more because we had the good fortune to have the school built when we did. The second, another study she did was about neighborhood schools and there are advantages and disadvantages to both, but the thing you need to know is that although you may create an academic environment that is cost effective by combining schools and taking them out of neighborhoods, you will significantly change the culture of our community if you do that. There's a lot of research out there that says that for the whole child that the neighborhood school is the way to go and that it is better for the whole child. You're a Budget

Committee, so maybe you need to make it only about the budget. She didn't know what the answer to that was but thought if members wanted to go down that road, members needed to do the research or have people who do do the research inform them so that when a decision is made, members will know what the impact will be.

Therese Davison stated to Mr. Sares that she sees him nodding his head at her and she would like to not see that from her Budget Committee. She would like them to listen, they don't have to agree with her, but she would like at least to be listened to with an open mind and she wasn't feeling that impression right now and that she would probably come to more of these meetings to bring that to people's attention because those are the types of things she didn't think belong in a public meeting and that will escalate and she didn't want to see that happen again. Don't agree with me, don't want to see the research, that's okay, but at least hear that some people think that you should look at the research.

John Skelton stated he was speaking as a Conway citizen, not as a current School Board member. He thought there was 16 out of 17 folks that came to the School Board and whether he was on the Board or not he thought that was a great sign. He thought today, respecting you, there are 6 out of 7 of the School Board coming this way. He thought relative to the remarks about the process itself and restoring to more civility and communication that certainly we are moving in the right direction with that and that is a very good thing. He guessed he wasn't a big statistic person but one thought on the discussion about the facilities. The day he signed up for the School Board in April, he went into every single building; other than this one where he only got to the lobby because he was out in the fields a lot that day, since then he has been in each of the 5 schools that we support. The thing that he observed most, he wasn't in the mindset of looking at the physical facilities, the thing which he observed most was the spaces were adequate to engage the kids and particularly in the Elementary Schools that the spaces and the work being done within the schools were reflective of the pride of the people in there and the kids getting their work put up or whatever. Relative to the rate at which our physical facilities ran down as was referred to about the old facility he thought the issues with the rates about that, the most pertinent factor was it was incredibly overcrowded and over used and thus your breakdown of stuff was at a very high rate. He was just looking at all of the scuff marks on this dance floor and auditorium and space, it's good that it's being used would be his thought there. He does see that there is more pride within the schools. Now, if there is more pride a little bit on some of the day-to-day stuff that the Custodians have to do, maybe that's an area that's not totally unreasonable. We certainly need to take care of the pure infrastructure and the electronics and the heating and all that and he gets that, but that's just another angle that came to his mind listening to this discussion. Again, he thanked everybody and looked forward to moving forward productively. Thanks.

Bob Drinkhall stated he left one thing out and had one additional item he wanted to bring up. Regarding the tax rate, there's been some comparisons made between the Town and what the Town has done and what the School has done. You must remember that the School population has gone down about 8% in the last 15 years. The Town population 10 years

ago was about 8,000 something, it is now over 10,000 so there are more people being supported by the Town Budget and less students being provided for by the School Budget and he just thought that was an important item to be brought up. Regarding a thought that he had on adequate education and he brought this up before, he brought this up at the Deliberative, the test scores that we were given by Dr. Nelson are deplorable. The arrests and unfortunately he had been up since 3:30 AM because of somebody who had to be arrested that supposedly went to school here, and talking to the PD and the Chief did not get back to him, but it was stated by the Lieutenant that there was a very unusual amount of arrests at this High School and he didn't remember for sure the figure, but one member of the Budget Committee stated they thought it was 83 in the year, again he was not sure what that was, but it was very high. Again, the Chief did not get back to him today so he didn't get an updated figure. In addition, the expulsions were 226 which if you remember Carl (Nelson) Mr. Drinkhall had brought that up and he thought that was appalling; the dumbing down of the students and he's just talking from personal experience is absolutely phenomenal. He would be here all night if he told about his experiences that he's had being a landlord with young people and he won't go into that in detail. With that being said, he fully believes it has very little to do with the amount of money that is spent, it has much more to do with what he has referred to in the past as "R&D" and that being responsibility and discipline. We need to encourage much more responsibility and discipline by the parents, by the students and that isn't being done.

Chairperson Santuccio stated she had a question on 226 expulsions. Bob Drinkhall stated he hadn't brought his book in with him but he believed the year he was looking at the figure was 226 and the average was in the 200's for several years.

Dr. Nelson stated first of all, there were no expulsions at all, those are suspensions. Bob Drinkhall apologized for using the wrong terminology. Dr. Nelson stated expulsion means you are out of school altogether and they have been doing quite the opposite of that. They're drop out rate is down to below a quarter of a percent. Number two, Bob's comment about 83 arrests, he had no idea where that number comes from; that's far from the truth. They do on occasion have an arrest at the school, but it's no where near 83 maybe 2 or 3.

Therese Davison promised she would not come to a lot of meetings and do this, but since her school year is running down, she has time to think about other things now. One thing, she doesn't have a problem with standardized test scores but she thought please do keep in mind that the educational system in the United States is based on the Linear Sequential Thinking. That means that the way the system works is that we deliver information to students who will receive it best if they think in a linear sequential manner. She is a random abstract thinker and she thinks she is pretty intelligent and she did lousy on scores, she was in the lowest percentile for Spelling when she was a student and she is getting her doctorate. She thought it should be kept in mind that these tests test linear sequential thinkers. So any student in this building or in any building who isn't a linear sequential thinker may know the content but isn't going to be able to express it by coloring a little circle on a piece of paper during an hour and a half on a Thursday

morning when they forgot to eat breakfast. Now she was not saying that those scores are totally invalid, they're not and it is important that all human beings in our culture and all citizens of this country be able to express themselves in a variety of ways and we need to be able to express our knowledge in that way. But it's not the end all and it's not the do all and it is not necessarily a measure of the intelligence of the students who go through this school. If her mom or her dad was struggling because they didn't have a job any more and had to go to school and color dots on a test, she could say it was the least of her priorities. She was just saying, not saying it's a bad thing, she was just saying.

Chairperson Santuccio closed the Public Hearing at 8:00 PM and reopened the Budget Committee meeting.

Bill Marvel stated he was at a Budget Committee meeting as a citizen in January or February and as it was breaking up he asked Chris Perley how much business the Police Department was getting from the Resource Officer at the High School and he explained that the person in that position had changed during the course of the year and he remembered, he thought the total figure was 81 not 83, but he remembered 63 arrests as he called them by one and 18 by another. When Bill asked about arrests he explained that also included chasing after truants and that the new law raising the truancy age had given them a lot to do. So they're not all burglars and assaults. Many of them, he thought, there's probably a more technical term like reported incident but they refer to them as arrests, some of them actually are, but not all.

Mike DiGregorio stated jokingly just so you all know, when he was on the School Board, they cut back on the audio/video equipment and this is the result of it; it was a \$100,000.00 cut for this room alone by the way.

Mike DiGregorio stated he wasn't sure what the procedure was going to be next, is the Public Hearing closed now? Chairperson Santuccio stated the Public Hearing for comment was closed. Mike stated he knows the Committee was set to vote on Monday night, but was curious of why we need to do that and if the Board could be polled and see if they are ready to vote tonight and get it out of the way. Danielle stated you can do that, but she was not really sure how it came about that we are doing this on Monday. Mike stated he wanted to ask around; he was curious if people's opinions are really going to change between now and Monday night or can we move forward. Danielle stated personally she would prefer to read the Minutes before she really decides on it.

Ted Sares stated that he thought Karen (Umberger) and Dave (Sordi) are under the impression that we are voting Monday night. He thought it would be unfair to them and their two votes could be pivotal in any vote taken. Even though he kind of agreed off the record with Mike, he thought it through and said it's not the right thing to do. Dave is not here and we already know his intent; Karen's not here and we should really honor their absence and stay to our original schedule which we all agreed to which is Monday. He would want to go ahead with Monday.

Joe Mosca stated he agreed with Ted. We all know Karen (Umberger) can't be here on Wednesday because she is down in Concord. Karen Umberger is

in Concord on Wednesdays and can't make Wednesday night meetings; there's always been difficulty with that. Given the fact that we set a schedule, two people aren't here believing that they are going to have a chance to have input on Monday night that we should wait and let those people have their vote.

Mike DiGregorio stated he would not be at the meeting on Monday. Chairman Santuccio wanted to speak with Mike about that and the possibility of a proxy vote. Mike stated he didn't think that could be done, had to be present because one wouldn't know what the content was.

Dick Klement asked how many other people would not be at the meeting on Monday night.

Joe Mosca asked Mike if he could phone in, could do it that way.

Mike DiGregorio stated he was comfortable if the whole group was going to be present Monday and it was just his one vote; you all know that his schedule is extremely busy right up until the middle of July; he can not attend. Just for whatever reason others could not attend tonight, we all have busy schedules; none of us expected this in the middle of the summer time, but that's the way it is. If you all want to wait until Monday, that's fine. He thought that most probably know where they are going to lay down tonight, it was an easy vote and that's all he was suggesting. If you don't want to do that, he's fine.

Chairperson Santuccio stated she would like to look into seeing how Mike could still be involved, assuming we wait until Monday.

Doug Swett stated this is going back to another subject but when we were getting ready to build the High School or talking about this High School one of the things that was mentioned and he didn't know if it was voted on or not, but we wanted to keep maintenance separate from education. In other words, he thought taking \$56,000.00 away from the janitorial duties and/or maintenance is a fast mistake. There are very few people involved in it and he hoped that if this goes through this way, they don't go blaming the people who run these things like Andy Grigel as a result because he won't be able to keep up with it. That was all he had to say.

Bill Marvel asked if the vote issue had been laid to rest. Chairperson Santuccio stated no. Bill stated he would love to not have to be here Monday, it would give him the week he needs to get to Washington, but this has long been scheduled and announced for the 20th and he frankly didn't know why either except it gives a few more days for reflection and often times when you get input from the Public Hearing that's helpful. He doesn't read The Union Leader, in fact he doesn't touch it, but he understands from people who do that the Legislature is currently jockeying around, or maybe it's the Feds, he didn't know, he was lost in the 19th Century, they're jockeying around trying to decide a particular issue and hoping for enough people to vote on their side and end this congressional issue he is thinking of. He didn't think we wanted to start even the hint of anyone suspecting that that's what we are doing, so he would rather wait until the actual day that we planned. Chairperson Santuccio stated not to make it look like we intentionally

did it and Bill agreed. Bill further stated he didn't want there to be a question.

Mike DiGregorio stated he wanted to add that since he would not be here, Doug (Swett) has brought up a good point. Doug knows the procedure here and he was sure that when it comes time for the numbers someone will hopefully understand this and make a motion to try to keep those Custodians in there. Unfortunately, while he was on the School Board he focused on the construction and the facilities and during that 3 year process it was a very trying time for him because that was all he was doing. There are many items on here that are important to education and he hoped they get a good infraction of it. The one that stands out for him on this list is Hall Monitor. If anybody in this room thinks that the Governor made a good decision by putting an additional 20 kids back into the School system that don't want to be there and made that Hall Monitor job any easier or to get rid of it, he didn't think anybody could do that job properly, anybody sitting here today. We'd go crazy chasing these kids around. It's a huge babysitting job, it's nothing any of us want to pay for but didn't know how you're going to live by taking an additional Hall Monitor out of there. Perhaps there'll be more cameras some day. Chairperson Santuccio asked how many Hall Monitors were there. Dick Klement stated there was one part-time. Mike stated he believed they had cut some of those already. Prior to the Governor's choice, and to him that was "feel good legislation" and to him that's all it was. You had 45 kids in the building that he understands a tremendous amount of the resources are tied, taking the resources he should say, and now there are 65 in the building. These teachers, these Hall Monitors, the Administrations spend a tremendous amount of time keeping an eye on a small amount of students and taking away that person is going to dramatically affect what the Administrators and teachers should be doing and that's education.

Joe Mosca stated he hears where Mike (DiGregorio) is coming from on the Custodians and, if no one else does, he promised to make a motion to put the money back in the budget for the Custodians. He didn't share Mike's feeling with the Hall Monitors, but if no one else does, he promised that he will make a motion to put the money back in for the Custodians.

John Edgerton stated this list is an emotional list to get people excited like you're getting excited over it. The Budget Committee has tried to never micro-manage, but the feedback here to the Administration and the School Board is saying "these are some items we don't like" and he likes that but he also likes the bottom line as to what the School Board and Administration has given us to pass as a budget. They don't have to follow any of this. We are going to give them a bottom line and that's it and he thought the feedback was going to be stiff here because there are a couple of items that don't go very well, but you could do away with buses and nurses and all the other emotional issues and that's exactly what they are after.

Ted Sares stated guessing with what John (Edgerton) just said, here we are arguing about one Custodian and he just left a town that laid off 50 Police Officers and what are we doing here. When he took an oath to be on the Budget Committee, and the oath he took, he took one to be on the Library and he took one to be a School Treasurer, the oath he took was

to represent everybody in town, not to represent just the School and that's the oath he took and that's the oath he intends to live up to, to represent everybody including the taxpayers. If that translates to having an argument over one Custodian he is going to hold his ground to that and ask the School Board if we're going to vote against that, if we're going to vote that money back in, somehow get that money out some place else because it's the amount of money you gave us, you gave us to look at, the Budget Committee and we took an oath to represent the Town, not you. We took an oath to represent everybody in this Town, that's the oath he took, not to represent the School. So he would ask if we're going to vote, if we're going to come back and vote for the Custodian in, come back with \$58,000.00 from some other place. Thank you.

Greydon Turner stated he understood what Ted (Sares) was saying but that same responsibility also translates to taking care of the assets which the Town has and in his opinion a meager amount of \$56,000.00 to help preserve those particular assets was also a responsibility due to the Town's people. It was a large investment made in these buildings, each and every one and thought it was a fair return for that to them.

Joe Mosca moved, seconded by Bill Marvel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary