

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
September 25, 2013**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:30 PM in the Professional Development Room at Kennett Middle School with the following members present: Chairman Joe Mosca, Danielle Santuccio, Maureen Seavey, Maury McKinney, Bill Marvel, Doug Swett, John Edgerton, Michael Fougere, Stacy Sand, Dick Klement, Frank McCarthy, Dick Pollock, Steven Steiner and Mark Hounsell. Excused: Brian Charles, Peter Donohoe and Greydon Turner. Also present: Barbara Lyons, Jessica Whitelaw, Evan Lucy and other members of the public.

John Edgerton led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Edgerton moved, seconded by Stacy Sand, that the Minutes of July 31, 2013 be accepted, as amended. In favor: 13; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 1 - Mark Hounsell.

Chairman Mosca stated that the word "Preliminary" should be eliminated at the top.

SCHEDULE

Chairman Mosca stated the next order of business was the Budget Committee's schedule and that all members should have received a copy of the schedule. Chairman asked if any member had any issues with the schedule as proposed. Maureen Seavey asked about the October meeting being blank. Chairman stated for October he did not have a date and that there were two dates available for the Professional Development Room: the 9th and the 23rd. Chairman asked the members which date was best. He did speak with two members who are not present and they stated that either night was good for them. Chairman further stated that the schedule can be changed; this one basically mirrors what was done last year. Same dates and at the bottom the Deliberative Sessions are as he was told by the Town when those are suppose to be.

Mark Hounsell suggested the 23rd as it would follow a School Board Meeting. Chairman Mosca asked the members present if they were alright with the 23rd for the October meeting. Members present agreed.

Dick Klement questioned having the Non-Profits on a Wednesday night and asked if that hadn't been on a Saturday typically to accommodate those people. Chairman Mosca stated we did it on Wednesday last year and it worked out well.

Chairman Mosca stated the only other one that was a real long night was the vote on the Budgets and we may want to schedule a second night just in case because last year we were here until almost Midnight. Mark Hounsell stated we didn't have the time to really get into the School Budget. Chairman agreed and stated what the Committee could do and what has been

done in the past on the Non-Profits is we voted the same night. That would save some time or we can just set up a second night so we would do two nights in a row to working on the Budgets. Whatever the pleasure of the Board is. That doesn't have to be decided tonight, but if we can come up with something by the next meeting so that we can have this finalized and get it up on the web so everyone would know when our meetings are, that would be great.

Frank McCarthy stated on November 13, 2013 his granddaughter is going to be married in Jamaica and he will be away for that entire week so he won't be at that meeting.

Chairman Mosca asked if there were any further questions; there being none, he stated the next meeting will be on October 23rd and we will vote to finalize the schedule.

SCHOOL CLOSURE REPORT

Chairman Mosca stated for those that were there Monday evening it was enlightening, emotional and he opened it up to the Board for any members to start the discussion and state any comments that weren't raised the other night.

Mark Hounsell stated that he would only state that from the opening to the meeting to the adjournment of the meeting his word will reflect the official position of the School Board as their representative. He will hold off any personal comments to the times that follow this meeting or prior to he will be happy to discuss his thoughts. During the meeting, he will speak only as a representative of positions adopted by the School Board. Chairman Mosca stated that's understood, thank you very much.

John Edgerton stated he didn't know how to do this without offending somebody. He was there Monday and it was pretty emotional about individuals who had children in the School system and he could understand that because his kids went through the old Pine Tree School. Do we have the responsibility to rely on the School Board who are professionals to make a decision as to if a school is going to be shut down and which one. He has to consider that the School Board are the experts and that emotional issues are going to drive the individuals and, if it comes to tax dollars, the majority of the voters don't have any kids in school and they're taxpayers, so do the parents that have kids in school, we are all taxpayers. He has to emphasize that there are a lot of other options maybe, but is it better to have a child in the best educational environment determined by the School Board. Say the kids are all in the same peer group; all 1st Grade in one school, all 2nd Grade in one school with their peer group. The way it is now for 2nd and 3rd Grade divided up three ways throughout the town. There's a lot of discussion which school should be shut down and why, but he still has to reiterate that the School Board, as far as he is concerned, is the authority.

Bill Marvel stated he was encouraged to see the Study done. Obviously there are a lot of flaws with that particular option and a lot of the emotion we heard were legitimate complaints about transition, a lot of transition, a lot of bus time. He was encouraged because he thought the

concept of consolidation has to be pursued as enrollment drops. It just has to in simple fairness as well as to consolidate resources for education itself. What he was hoping was that the School Board would pursue that concept of consolidation, not necessarily the Pine Tree issue, because it has raised so many objectionable impediments. He has heard people talking about different concepts; one of which was the idea of bringing the Elementary Schools into this building, the complex of buildings, that used to house about 1,000 students when it was a High School and a Junior High School combined and then moving the smaller Junior High School to Conway El and closing down a couple of Elementary Schools altogether and then you'd have one big campus here. You would lose the problem of multiple transitions. A lot of busing problems would go away. Then the other thing that enters into it is the time frame that this would take and that would require a projection of enrollment into the future to see whether or not that was feasible. He was hoping that the School Board would undertake that sort of examination to the extent of perhaps suggesting as a Committee that instead of going after the Pine Tree option that the Board pursue something like that.

Mark Hounsell stated it would be his pleasure to take back any recommendation that this Committee had to the School Board in time for its October 16th meeting, but would ask that it be formalized with a motion, a second and a vote after discussion.

Frank McCarthy stated he was also there Monday night and he had a copy of the Memorandum put out by Unit 9. It seems to him, and it is just his opinion, that the people who made up this Memorandum bent over backwards to make sure that the amount of savings was as small as possible. They came out with a savings for the first year, the second year, what's going to happen down the road 10 years from now. What's the savings going to be there? What's the savings going to be in retirement costs for the teachers and other people who work for the School. Although he did think they did a good job and he did get a lot of good information out of the Memorandum, but he didn't think it was complete and thought we should have something showing what the savings will be over a period of time and plus there were a lot of things he thought were missing in the Memorandum. They said how many teachers there were for a grade and how many teachers there would be if a move was in fact done and how we are going to save 2 or 3 teachers or 4 teachers. He would like to know, and he has been trying to get the information since Monday, how many teachers do they have right now at the Pine Tree School, how many other employees do they have, what is the total salary costs and also health costs, etc., etc. He would like to have all of that information. According to them it seems that a full year's Budget for the Pine Tree School in total is \$1.6 Million. He needs more information and maybe some members can help him on where he can get it.

Mark Hounsell stated he believed a good number of your (Frank McCarthy) questions, including the roster of Pine Tree, can be found in the latest edition of the Conway School District's Annual Report. Chairman Mosca stated it's also on-line and according to what's on-line there are 8 people in the Administrative section, there are 35 between teaching, Aides and staff and then there are 2 Custodians and 2 in Food Service. Chairman hoped that answered some of Frank's questions.

Steven Steiner stated over the past few months he had some friends come up from New York who happen to be teachers and Superintendents and he showed our Budget from last year to her and in the City of Binghamton for instance they have a \$33 Million School Budget just like we do in Conway, but they educate 4,000 kids and their classroom size is 25:1. He grew up with 25:1 so that's one of the issues. The other issue, and he brought it up last year, we need to consolidate the Elementary Schools. We are mothballing 30% of this School to keep the other buildings open. We have seniors in this community that can not afford the tax bill and, as you all know, he was running for office and that's what he was hearing from the seniors and they are still coming up to him with the same problems. People are having a tough time in this town. He is all for education. One thing he wanted to end with was this: We brought up the Special Ed Budget too and her opinion is that the implementation of No Child Left Behind versus what they are doing in New York State versus what they are doing in this town, are two totally opposites and that's another issue. Just imagine if we could lower \$.75 for every Million Dollars we take off of the School Budget. We make it more affordable for the seniors to live in this town and not be forced out. Thank you.

Michael Fougere stated he was there as he thought all but 2 of the Committee were there at the School Meeting the other night. One thing he did hear a lot of when he was there from his perspective were people that didn't have a lot of information, that had a lot of fears of what it would entail them to transport their child from Point A to Point B and back again. That, to him, was one of the larger concerns he was hearing. It wasn't the school, it wasn't anything along that line. As far as what he can see, the plus side, and he thought that was where we need to focus to have this be accepted is what are the advantages of the kids all being consolidated. One of the things he heard was "oh, you can't do that, that's discrimination", that's economics. There is no discrimination in there, we had to do it. Having all of your kids housed, all your 1st Graders, to him instead of having a town divided into three as people seem to want it would make a town consolidated because now instead of your parents having to drive to 3 different schools to drop their Elementary Schools off, all Kindergartners are going to be going to one.

Michael Fougere further stated as far as the hazards of transition, the only thing that's going to do the autistic or the handicapped kids, to him, harm is none of that. They're going to be having their core in each class. Their core is going to move with them. The only thing that is going to change is when they change the building. Their demographics of who is in their class, who they're around, they're going to have that same demographic all the way through school instead of being blended slowly over the years until they get to High School and now you have multiple villages in a school with them. This is going to give them a chance to know who all their peers are from a very early age. Like he said the other night our children are durable. He took is 10 year old when he got hurt and put her through misery dragging her all over the country through his rehabilitation, brought her back and she's doing quite well. All of his kids at an early age were coded. He dealt with it. He heard a parent say "oh, how can we bring East Conway to John Fuller to bring a preschooler", he did it for 5 years. No funding. It was their school of choice. John Fuller worked for them, but he transported from Green Hill Road in East

Conway to John Fuller every day. It's just information and what we, as a town, want to do. To him, consolidating the schools, bringing it down to our 1st Graders coming to one place and then traveling through their academic careers to the High School with all the same faces except for the ones that move in and move out. He thought those are aspects we need to bring out to have this sell. Thank you.

Stacy Sand stated first of all she wanted to apologize for not attending Monday night, but she had a previous obligation. Her question was, and this is something she didn't understand and maybe Mark (Hounsell) can help with this, did you compare the difference between having Grades 1 through 5 at the two schools, each school having 1 through 5 or K through 5 versus having K through 2 at one and 3 through 5 at the other.

Mark Hounsell stated it was either June or July and he believed it was June, that at a School Board meeting, the School Board voted to instruct Dr. Nelson to have a study completed by the time it was completed by and that a team of the people involved in the Study would be the School Principals. They fulfilled that mission. It was directed by the School Board that they study a scenario where Pine Tree would be closed, K through 2 would be at John Fuller and 3 through 5 at Conway El and the Middle School take in the 6th Grade. They completed the Study and now the School Board has decided to put it out for public review which is what we're doing right now. Other than that, there's been no official position taken by the School Board one way or the other. They commend Dr. Nelson and his team for doing as they were instructed by the School Board. He has nothing else he can say as the representative from the School Board on the matter.

Stacy Sand stated she didn't know if they had a directive for looking at all of the Elementary kids in each of the two. Chairman Mosca stated there is actually 5 different alternatives and he guessed the decision was made to go into an in-depth study on one of the five alternatives. Mark Hounsell stated out of the study of the alternates, it was his understanding "D" was the most favorable. Again, this is the report; this isn't any position that's been accepted. Just to make everything clear, in 2012 the voters directed the School District to conduct a Study of closing an Elementary School. We conducted a Study. Whether or not they have completed the correct Study remains subject of review or that there are not other studies that could be considered. The School Board has completed the mandate given by the voters in 2012.

Dick Pollock stated he found himself in agreement with a lot of people around this table. He thought there was a lot more, the report is preliminary in a lot of ways and they raise more questions than what's answered. He did think that several have spoken about some of the social and educational issues that go with any kind of action like this and he is one of those people who feels like you do Mike (Fougere), that kids are very resilient and often as parents, parents are not nearly as resilient as their kids, but he did hope that we leave the social/educational issues to the School Board. We all have our opinions that's for sure. Thanks.

Frank McCarthy spoke to Mark Hounsell stating he made the comment that the citizens of the town requested that the School Board conduct a Study. That

may be true. Mark stated he believed he said the School District. Frank stated he thought that was tantamount to having a fox guard the hen house. Mark stated would you deny that we completed what the voters directed them to do by the language of the Article. He's read it several times and it says to conduct that Study. Now we are having a discussion that's taking place. There was a fair amount of work done last year. There were things that were identified that got people thinking and they've taken it to the next step. Now they need the review, they value the comments of each and every member and, as a Committee, if you take a further position or an official position, he will be sure to convey it. The only thing the School District is guilty of is doing what the voters directed them to do.

Dick Klement stated he wrote an e-mail to the School Board, he had 22 questions on it. They opted not to answer those questions. In his opinion, the School Board was given a directive to have a Study performed. They advertised for bids, 2 bids were received, 1 was not compliant and the other one came in at about \$250,000.00. There were 5 people on the Board who decided that they didn't want to spend \$250,000.00. There were 2 that wanted to because that's what this Board wanted us to do. He was the one that said "hey, you spend the money or close the subject". He believes that this Study is incomplete and he agrees. He believes that it is a short term assessment, not even a middle term or long term assessment. If you are going to go through the throes of getting the public all in a tizzy, then let's do it right and let's look at the ramifications of what's going to occur in the longer term.

Dick Klement further stated we know that enrollment is declining, how much is a good argument, it is being performed now as he understands it. You know, the Bartlett numbers keep going down, that affects the High School. In 10 years, 12 years actually, the agreement with the sending towns to come to Kennett High School expires and people would have to say they want to re-enter that or not. Regardless of whether we open it up or don't, he believes enrollment will be down sufficiently where we can put the Middle School in a wing of Kennett High School. He has no information, facts or data to back that up. It's his gut feel. If that were able to be done, then you could put K through 6 in this building and in Conway El. That's a long term solution. You go from 5 buildings, 5 campuses down to 2. He thought that's what they want to look at and he didn't think they could get that answer before April. He thought we'd be better off not rushing this thing and getting the correct facts and data.

Dick Klement further stated there are some things that, for example in this report, that he feels need to be further examined. In one case, we talk about eliminating 2 teachers that we wouldn't need right away. If you look at the numbers they gave us, we're going to need them the second year and the third year, so you're up another \$100,000.00. We talked about buying a bus; buying a bus is \$80,000.00 and that's a one time expenditure, but it's not a one time expenditure, it comes around every 10 years. The bus driver is there every year, but we didn't talk about the extra 50,000 miles those buses are going to be traveling every year because they're going back and forth between Conway El and John Fuller. They don't do that now. He wasn't talking about hours the kiddies are on the bus, he's talking about miles, 50,000 miles is a set of tires. Tires on that bus run a lot of money; you're not buying \$49.95 tires for that

bus. Then there's the maintenance on the buses. He believes that the savings are actually far less than we think they are. If you were to put 22 kids in a Kindergarten classroom, how many people want to take a bet that they are going to need Aides in each one of those classrooms. Now an Aide is comparatively cheap, \$25,000.00, but then you throw \$25,000.00 worth of insurance on top of that, so you're talking about another \$100,000.00 plus. He thought the amount of money to be saved is far less than what is advertised in the report and not to do them discredit, but that's what they had available to them in a short time.

Dick Klement further stated you are going to lose "School of Choice", "School of Choice" is very important to parents who work on the north side. They send their kids from Pine Tree to John Fuller and after school the kids go to grandma's or to the parent picking them up at the end of Project Succeed. Kids are moving around for a variety of reasons. Then there's the property taxes; if you close a school, one individual Monday night said "my assessment will go down and the value of my house goes down". He is leaving his house in a wooden box so he doesn't care, but for those people who were intending on selling something, that means less money for them. On the other side, that means they'll pay less taxes and the people who live in Kearsarge and Conway Village will pay more taxes and it's okay by him because he doesn't live there. He thought the whole community is up in arms. He thought we have to research this correctly and in a longer term. Thank you.

John Edgerton stated the real positive thing that came out of this was the 6th Grade is moved to the Middle School and the rest of it is a timeline that nobody even knows about. The 6th Grade should have been moved to the Middle School, as far as he is concerned, when a Study was done 5 years ago. There was nothing in that Study that said it shouldn't have been. For the educational advantage of the 6th Grade to have a Math teacher, a Science teacher and a Social Studies teacher far out weigh one teacher trying to teach everything to 6th graders. They're capable of absorbing a better education. The rest of this is probably going to be delayed 1, 2, 3 years. We need another Study, he agrees, but the 6th Grade should be moved to the Middle School period.

Dick Klement stated the one number that is probably very accurate in that report is that \$287,000.00 additional dollars or loss of revenue that will occur if you move the 6th Grade and if there is no further reduction of teachers or anything else to offset that, we've just added 1% to the School Board Budget.

Steven Steiner stated in New York State he will say that the High School, the Middle School and Elementary are all in one complex, at least where he lived. They are all in one complex, they use the same buses and he had a conversation with the Superintendent there and he simply said that the big kids take care of the smaller kids and if anybody disrupts this situation, they get thrown off the bus and that's basically it. They live in a rural part of New York and parents would have the responsibility to bring them to school. Again, there are seniors that can not afford the tax bill here, we also need to look at it for them.

Frank McCarthy stated he wanted to make a comment about the \$260,000.00 of income that we wouldn't be getting. That's an assumption, he thought. Has anyone actually gone to the outlying towns and said "look, this is the advantage of doing that". Contracts are made to be amended. Until you actually go to them and point out the advantages of what we're trying to do for both them and for us, he thought it was only an assumption that we are going to lose those funds. Chairman Mosca stated it's not an assumption, the language in the Contract is very clear, it's based on usage and number of students and if Conway's percentage increases and the sending towns don't increase on equal par, then the cost of Conway will be increased and the sending towns will send less money. It's very, very clear in those Contracts.

Chairman Mosca stated he had a couple of things: Pine Tree, the staff for the Special Ed Department is 14; no where in the Study does it mention other than 2 teachers, so are those positions going away or are those positions just being absorbed into the other schools. The other night it was mentioned by several individuals that the Town Hall, if we needed a new Town Hall, could go into the mothballed section of this school. Thinking about that, he didn't see how that could work for many reasons but a couple of things are that some parents have Restraining Orders against them that they can't be within certain distances of their children and if their children are in the school; this is just real life unfortunately. Unfortunately there are sex offenders and sex offenders wouldn't be able to go into the Town Hall if it were a part of the school. It's things that need to be thought about and he was not making a joke of this, he thought it was reality and we have to think about these things. For several reasons he didn't think that the Town Hall could be part of the Middle School or we could separate it out.

Chairman Mosca further stated one thing in this Study that he liked is, and a lot of people may not like, class size. He is a huge proponent of the School Board setting a minimum number of students in an Elementary class and this Study is showing any where from 19 to 23 students. He thought if the School Board set class size at a minimum of 20 for Grades 1 through 6 or 1 through 5, the 6th Grade has moved, that in itself would cut one teacher in each grade level and that savings would offset the move of the 6th Grade and would be a net zero gain. He thought that was something that needed to be looked at. His last comment is with as much of a proponent as he was of closing a school, he didn't think this Study answers the questions. He thought several members of this Board said that we need to go more in depth and he personally, and he said it the other night and will say it again tonight, he thought alternative "E" we have two Elementary Schools K through 5 is the only way to go if you are going to close an Elementary School. That way it gives some choice to the parents and it cuts down the disruption of the students moving from school to school to school. That's his comments.

Doug Swett stated this is a national problem, not the schools in this town but this education thing and what it costs here, there and everywhere. He just wanted to mention some figures: from January of 2009 to April of 2011, there's 117,538,000 households; the average monthly Federal increase per household on the national debt was \$1,148.00. Now you talk about being in a tunnel with a light at the end of it, there's no light at the end of

this tunnel. This is what we're facing and nobody's doing anything about it. You can look at Washington today, the only buddy that's tried is a man named Walker, he's the Governor of Wisconsin. We're not facing these facts. Somewhere we've got to cut expenses on every government level and not come here and tell the Town of Conway while they're going to cut the other levels of government and you're going to pick it all up because we're not. He couldn't believe we are. We've promised different things in Contracts. The government's promised different things not even knowing what kind of money they had. The money right now is coming from China, printing presses and other places. We better start facing this thing. We can't cure it here, but we're being affected by it here badly and nobody's straightening it out, whether they're Democrats, Republicans or d**n fools, include them all. That was a 17 month period. The \$31,020.00 per household increase in the Federal debt under this watch thus equals a per household increase of \$1,148.00 per month. It then goes on to say the figure under Obama, just say the government equals more than the average tuition and fees for one year at a private 4 year college and more than 4 full years of average in State tuition fees at a State college. People ought to get interested in facts and not just say "forget what you're reading" and then we keep on going. We can't keep going this way and the elderly are going to suffer, other people are going to suffer and he hears this talk all the time "these children are our future". Thirty years ago these people were our future and look where we're at. We're not doing anything. Thank you.

Maury McKinney stated he was sitting on the Board a couple of years ago when we first started discussing this and asked the School Board to do the Study and he thought at that point the hope was that it would take a potentially, an already divisive issue and hopefully inform the voters so that it would be less divisive and that we could make a better decision. We do need to look at the enrollment; we need to figure out some kind of guidelines for consolidation; be prepared. He feels good that we're at a place now where the issue, even though it is emotional, it appears to him from reading the papers and talking with people that it is less divisive and that people are really trying to look at all aspects whether the social/developmental/financial or whatever to make the best decision possible.

Maury McKinney further stated this is his 3rd year on the Budget Committee and he would like to have some type of an impact on checking, what he feels to be, the unsustainable rate of growth of our Town, Police and School Budgets even though he is concerned about that unsustainable growth, the focus, at least his focus is on the quality and performance of our education. That is not sometimes a metric that comes down to simply a number. There are other factors involved there. Things like transportation, like the expense of transportation. He read Dick's (Klement) article in the paper and he thought some of that was very well presented. When you do start traveling more miles, you do put stress on your fleet, how will it impact fleet turnover, down time for buses, what will be the added expense of that. As far as ratio of teachers and stuff, he would just caution people as a professional educator himself ratios between teachers and students are everything in terms of quality and performance and those should be applied, he thought, on a flexible scale. Case in point is that there's a different ratio for managing 5 year olds,

6 year olds, 8 year olds, 12 year olds and some of that comes down to common sense and some of that comes down to the actual students that you have. The only thing that he wanted to say was that he thought two years down the line we're in a better place; he thought the issue was less divisive and he thought the voters are better prepared to make a better judgment at the voting time. This year he thought our agenda is to really check the unsustainable growth of the departments we have oversight of. Thank you.

Dick Pollock stated unlike Maury (McKinney) over there, this is his second meeting so this is one of those kinds of questions so help him out. We have this report in front of us, are we just taking this in for information sake or are we expected to make some kind of recommendation. Chairman Mosca stated this is for information for us. If we want to as a Board ask certain questions or positions of the School Board, we can do that as Mark (Hounsell) stated. If someone wants to make a motion, we can get that on the record, we can get that to the School Board and they will answer it, but this is for information purposes only as far as he could tell.

Bill Marvel asked Chairman Mosca if he would be receptive at some point, perhaps after we have heard from the public, to a motion expressing what seems to be a growing desire or at least a majority desire of the Board. He was trying to formulate a motion to express something to the School Board. Chairman stated absolutely. Bill stated he would be thinking of that.

Mike Fougere stated another thing that seems to be resonating is a comment that was missed or just no one picking up on it the other night. He hears a comment repeated often that our seniors can't afford this. He hears other comments that others can't afford this. There was a comment the other night and it's a deciding factor of what this town wants to be or what it is and wants to stay. Does this town want to grow and move forward and attract new families or does it want to become a stagnant retirement village. He couldn't imagine a ski destination as a retirement community. He just can't envision that. The simple ice issue he has dealt with that for the last 6 years quite well but that's him. A senior dealing with a northern town as a retirement community is a hard one. Attracting younger entrepreneurs with families to this town is what is going to breath life back into it and the one comment he echoed was "I moved to this town because of that quality of school". That's a whole School system, not just Pine Tree, John Fuller, Conway El, that's a Middle School and a High School system he's moving here for. We developed an awesome multi-town High School and now we're trying to streamline our Elementary School to make it appealing for people to want to move here to help ease our tax burden instead of spreading it on what's here, let's try to make this a little more appealing through our education system to younger families to move here. He guessed that's sort of what he wanted to get across that this isn't, to him, a retirement village. This is a striving, working town as much as we want it to be. Thank you.

Chairman Mosca stated a couple of things before he opens it up to the public. We have no control over this, he just wanted everyone to know that. You are free to speak freely, but he thought what was said the other

night covered most of the issues. Again, you're free to say what you want, but we don't have control over it and he just wanted the public to realize that before they speak. To Mike's (Fougere) point, asking Steven (Steiner) to help him out on this, but he believed something 51% or 52% of the single family units in this town are owned by out of staters, so to your point, most of the people who come here don't use the schools. One other thing, the Charter School in one year has doubled in size.

Steven Steiner stated since he has been in real estate he has learned a lot and he will tell the Committee that a majority of the people that come up here do not want to live in Conway, they're looking in Albany, they're looking in Bartlett, especially Bartlett. If we could save a ton of money by consolidating, he thought what we could do is help our kids by giving them the tools they really need to learn. There is so much going on out there. We just heard about the Jack Frost Charter School. It's amazing and he would love to know what it cost per child to educate there. We're not the enemy, he really thought unfortunately, and he would probably get in trouble here, but by talking to his cousin some of the Special Education money and how it's being implemented is not being done right. Give you a for instance, and he doesn't know who the students are and all, but in New York they have ADHD kids, autistic kids especially that are able to go to the bathroom and able to function. They don't have a teacher, they are mainstreamed. Only when they can not go to the bathroom themselves is when they have someone help them. He didn't know if that was being done here or what's being done here. Chairman Mosca asked Steven to please not talk to the public directly, talk to the Board. Steven stated he always gets in trouble and apologized to the Chairman.

Dick Klement stated just to raised the Jack Frost issue. Maury McKinney stated it's Robert Frost. Dick stated the Robert Frost issue is a Charter School run under the Montessori theme. They work out of a store front that's leased. They receive money from the government for between 3 and 5 years. At the end of that period, they are suppose to be self-sustaining. They have 2 Special Ed children from Conway total he believed so it becomes a lot cheaper when you only have a couple of Special Ed kids that need service. Dick asked Chairman Mosca about Pine Tree and the Chairman stated they have 14 staff members. Dick stated there's an economy in numbers he guessed but at the same time they don't have that issue so it's a lot cheaper. When they run out of Federal dollars, he believes that you can expect that the school will close and the children will be re-assimilated into the public school system unfortunately. He does believe that will happen.

Chairman Mosca opened the meeting to the public for comment.

Barbara Lyons stated she was at the meeting Monday night and just bear with her for a second because she heard a lot of what members said tonight and she heard a lot of what was said at the meeting. She thought what she got too at that meeting was that she didn't think a lot of the people there understood that it was our Principals of our schools that put that report together. They spent a lot of time away from their families this summer to do that, it's not perfect at all, it's not what we want and it's not a good option. However, they were given specific guidelines to work within in a short period of time and they came up with it. They did what

they were asked to do. We're not happy with it as parents, as taxpayers, we're not happy with it, but those people are in the School every day and they see how the School functions and they see how the kids are there and working. She thought a lot of bashing was done about that report thinking that it came directly from the School Board and it did not. You sir, and I did not catch your name, mentioned something about having them do it was like the fox guarding the hen house. She was curious to know who would he (Frank McCarthy) like to see do the report, who would he like to see come up with the Study rather than the people that are in there all the time seeing how the School functions.

Barbara Lyons further stated she sat behind a couple of members of the Budget Committee and it did get emotional, it did and she understands emotion and economics should remain separate. We voted you in, we are trusting you to take care of our money and educate our kids in the best possible way. It's our job as parents to become emotional when we feel that our children's education is being threatened. You're going to have a mix of the two. When I sat behind and somebody got up and talked about transitions and bus time, there was a member of the Budget Committee in front of me that said "I did it and I'm fine". That's insulting. Times have changed. Spend a day in each of those schools and see what those teachers are up against with the kids. She's done it; she volunteered in an after school program and she ran screaming from the building. It is not an easy job. She does her best working. Her husband and she both work seasonal jobs. You talk about the senior citizens being afraid of not making their tax bills, so are we. She can't get emotional about money. It gets scary, but we do what we have to do. It's not just the seniors; it's every single one of us in this town, in this tourist community, with the ups and downs of the money influx coming in, that deal with the ups and downs of our income.

Barbara Lyons further stated she stated she was sorry if she was all over the place, but you said a lot. She stated that she wrote a lot down, but she didn't want to see the School Board bashed for coming up with that report. She didn't want to see the Budget Committee bashed for coming up with that report. We listened to you when you asked for our vote. She didn't recall hearing members platforms on this specific item at that time. It may have changed her vote. She just wants the members to look at other possibilities of where we can save money rather than taking away our kids' education from what it is now. Another point that was brought up that night was that times have changed. She didn't grow up around here. She went through a K through 8 school in New Jersey. This is not New Jersey and she understands that. Her average class size K through 8 was 25. She couldn't walk home from school to her house and do something wrong without her parents knowing about it by the time she got home. That's not the way this community is now. These schools are our neighborhood. This is where their kids grow up, make their friends and get their social and educational experiences. You have no control over this, but you can hear us. Thank you.

Chairman Mosca stated every year when we go to the Deliberative Session, the house is packed because anything that gets cut, gets put right back in again. We hear you. We try to do what we believes is best for everybody, but our hands are tied just as well as the School Board and everybody

else. Is it perfect, no and he thought those present had heard from most of the members of this Board that they don't want to see something rushed either.

Jessica Whitelaw stated she grew up here and has lived her entire life here in the Valley. She chose to stay here because she loves it here, her husband runs a business and she was a student in Madison. When she was younger, they went back and forth several times about building a new High School for SAU 13. She guessed it makes her a little concerned when it is said that the sending towns might pull the money. They might pull their students and then that's going to be a whole other issue for everyone to come up with the revenue that they'll lose from the sending towns completely. She didn't think it was ever off the table for them and she didn't think that point has been brought up or anyone has considered that. We've already had issues here with over crowding. When she was here, there were 6 portables. She has a feeling if you put more kids here, yeah there's a mothballed space and it's great, but you're going to have over crowding and you're going to have the same issues you've had over and over and over again. The Middle School she believes does not teach, like there's not necessarily a Science, a Social Studies, they team teach and so that's not actually how it's run. It's not always designated teachers who does designated subjects.

Jessica Whitelaw further stated after the High School moved out, she volunteered in the Junior High and there's less behavioral problems because the Junior High kids are not trying to act like High School kids. It's kept them very separated and she feels like if you put them all on a bus together, you are going to run into some serious problems. There's serious problems with K through 6 on a bus. If you put older kids, it's just going to get worse. Her daughter is a student at Pine Tree. She is in 1st Grade and there two 1st Grades with 20 kids in each class already. There were a lot of new students at Pine Tree this year and she didn't know the exact number, but their population is definitely not declining at Pine Tree. The Charter School isn't an option for everyone so everyone needs to be aware of that. If you don't believe in Montessori teaching, you will not send your children there. It's great that their population has doubled, it's awesome, but she does believe that some of our tax dollars go to pay for them and that's great, but we also need to think about that.

Jessica Whitelaw further stated she has her points that she brought from home that she already had after the meeting the other night. We already have a quality education system in place and the High School was just rated #10 out of all of the High Schools in the state. That foundation is built from Elementary all the way up to High School and if we take that away from our kids there's going to be changing the schools, they're going to lose their quality of education, their small classes, the value of a home town that they have in the schools and the community and the security that parents and kids have. They know all their friends. If you put them in a big school with all of the 1st Graders, they're not going to know all of the 1st Graders. They might even know the kids in their class. Who knows. If there are 25 Kindergartners, you still might not even know, you know, that's a lot of kids at that age. Education always takes the hits, it's just how it's funded and really it's sad.

Jessica Whitelaw further stated she thought our Valley is a tourist town, but people choose to stay here because it's a great community and she feels like property taxes aren't the only way that we could maybe find some solutions. Maybe we could look into other ways. Tourism is a really big part and maybe the restaurants and hotels are busy and maybe we could do something with them instead of cutting our Budgets to our Schools and to our Police. We have to have extra police because we have extra tourists. Maybe there's something we have to do differently as far as that. Our Schools have been on a zero Budget increase for years so she thought we need to look in different ways in helping the Schools instead of the things that are being cut. Those are her pieces; sorry they were so long. Thank you.

Chairman Mosca asked if there were any other public comments. There being none, Chairman closed the public comment on this subject.

Bill Marvel stated he had a motion, but was hoping that he would have two to give a choice, but it was difficult enough to compose one. The way it reads now and obviously he is open to any criticism.

Bill Marvel moved, seconded by Dick Klement, that we ask the School Board representative to express to his Board the Budget Committee's appreciation for their School Closure Study, but to convey the Committee's request that the Board continue to pursue the concept of consolidation with a more centralized and long-term view, not limiting themselves to the closing of a single Elementary School. In favor: 5 - Joe Mosca, Dick Klement, John Edgerton, Bill Marvel and Danielle Santuccio; Opposed: 8; Abstain: 1 - Mark Hounsell. Motion failed.

Bill Marvel stated it kind of leaves it open for them and he thought it would be inappropriate to say "do just this". Obviously his concept, his idea is to project ahead to the point where we could have a centralized campus here and in Redstone and not distend things.

Chairman Mosca asked Bill Marvel to repeat his motion to the members. Bill did so.

Stacy Sand stated she could agree with some of what Bill (Marvel) was saying but she thought those need to be separated out. She thought she heard here that pretty much a majority is looking at long-term, looking more at the long-term in terms of enhancing this Study. She was not sure Bill's concept of consolidating into the one school, the two campuses was also heard in the majority so she would like to separate those motions if possible.

Chairman Mosca stated if you listen to his (Bill Marvel) motion, it doesn't state that. That's Bill's interpretation of his own motion, but that's not what his motion states. That's his desire, but that's not what the motion states. Stacy Sand stated that's what I heard and asked if the motion could be re-read.

Mark Hounsell asked that the motion be read again. Bill Marvel read his motion again. Stacy Sand stated she hears two concepts. Bill stated

perhaps his explanation of that makes it clear to you that what he would hope is that we would have a centralized campus here, but he didn't necessarily want to impose that. He was trying to leave latitude at the same time that we guide for the direction. Also to express less than enthusiasm for the current Study.

Danielle Santuccio stated to Bill Marvel that when he said centralized it made her think not the K through 2, 3 through 5, 6 through 8 so that there's not 5 schools that all these children will have to go to. Was she incorrect in thinking that because she thought centralized over here was heard as centralized at this location.

Bill Marvel stated much of it would be. If his dream were realized, it would be here and at the High School. There are a couple of ways that could work, all of which would be dependent on enrollment.

Danielle Santuccio stated she thought we need to do something different with this K through 2, 3 through 5, 6 through 8 issue and she didn't know if there was a way to do that within that motion.

Frank McCarthy stated he believed that we could save \$10 Million, \$12 Million, \$14 Million over the next 10 years and \$250,000.00 is a drop in the bucket. He would prefer to see a professional organization with experience in these matters come in and do a proper study and find out exactly what we can save and how we can save it rather than utilizing this Memorandum that we have in front of us.

Chairman Mosca stated there's a motion on the table. Let's stay to the motion at this point in time. There's a motion that has been made and seconded. Chairman asked if there was any further discussion on the motion.

Mark Hounsell stated he would be abstaining on this vote for obvious reasons, but he welcomes motions like this.

Bill Marvel stated he had a question for Danielle (Santuccio): when you said you didn't think that the division of the Elementary grades could be achieved on this site. Danielle stated no, that was not what she was saying. Her concern is that that will remain a focus because, for whatever reason, that was the dictate when this Study was done originally. She wants them to look at that option differently and not focus on just all of those transitions. She wants to make sure that we look at, for example, if we close an Elementary School in "E" and there's K through 5 and K through 5 rather than K through 2, 3 through 5 and 6 through 8. She just didn't want any focus to remain on all of those transitions. When you (Bill) said centralized, she thought that was what he was saying, but when they brought up the point of it being centralized in a certain location, she just wanted to make sure there's no confusion there. Danielle asked if that made more sense and Bill stated less. Maury McKinney stated he understood what she was saying. Danielle asked centralized as far as more grades in one place or centralized as far as a location. Bill stated both.

Maury McKinney stated that is still a sticky point him. He thought he understood what Bill (Marvel) was saying and he agreed with all of it. The

only thing is limiting it to a single central campus, he was not sure if he could support that. One of the other things he did want, and he was happy with all of this, but he would agree with Mr. McCarthy on this in that he thought that some type of a professional feasibility study would be warranted.

Chairman Mosca stated again, he thought that was outside of the scope of the motion. If you want to make a motion to do that or amend the motion you are more than welcome to do that. The motion, unless it's amended, and he thought there was some issues with some of the members of the Board on the motion.

Bill Marvel stated the reason he said more centralized was to avoid saying simply centralized. The idea is that we may not need to just close one Elementary School, it may be possible to close two and, in fact, having all of the Elementary Schools together, even though that's a large school, it does put all of those communities together. He thought there was some benefit in that despite the size of the school.

Chairman Mosca stated so what you (Bill Marvel) are saying is that your interpretation of the motion is to close one and/or more schools. Bill stated yes. Chairman stated Bill was not just saying he wants a centralized campus. Bill stated not a single centralized campus. Chairman stated that was the way he interpreted it. Bill stated that's not possible; you can't get everyone on one site. We have two major sites and it's possible at one point he suspects to consolidate into those two. Chairman stated it may or not at some point in time. Bill stated as far as a professional Study, we tried that and we got one engineering firm that bid. It would be nice, yes, he agrees but he didn't know if it could be done.

Chairman Mosca asked Bill Marvel to read the motion one more time before voting.

After voting on Bill Marvel's motion, Chairman Mosca stated he thought he heard that others may want to make a motion to have a professional study done. Chairman asked if anyone wanted to make that motion.

Maury McKinney stated one of the reasons he didn't vote for it was just the language to not limiting to closing more than one school. He didn't think that was needed and thought some kind of Study would bear that action out and didn't think we needed that in the motion, but as far as recommending, he would like to continue for the Board to continue to review the option of a professional Study, whether it happens or not, it may or may not happen. He knows that in a current feasibility Study that an organization that he is involved with they cut their feasibility Study from \$70,000.00 to \$35,000.00 by doing a lot of the leg work on gathering information. He thought that this Memorandum that just came out sort of fits the bill in flushing out a lot of really good information and he thought we've had a lot of good information from the public and he thought that could go a long way to further reducing the cost and maybe making the voters much more aware of the real costs and benefits.

Steven Steiner moved to centralize the schools with a class size of 25. There being no second, the motion failed.

Steven Steiner moved to consolidate into 2 different campuses as he has said since he has been on this Committee and at least you'll have an idea of what kind of savings we are talking about. We're not talking about, you can't command them to do it, but we need to find out where we are and he thought we should add the size of the classes and he thought we need to add the situation with the credits. Chairman Mosca asked Steven to make his motion.

Steven Steiner moved to centralize the schools and we would like to know it will cost to run the School System with a minimum class size of 25 and he was all for maybe lowering that number for Kindergartners and 1st Grade to 20. We need to go in that direction, we need to get some input. Chairman Mosca stated he didn't want Steven to argue it, he just wanted him to make the motion. You (Steven) are doing two different things here. Make the motion and if somebody seconds it, we will discuss it.

Stacy Sand moved, seconded by Dick Klement, that we ask the School Board's representative to express to his Board the Budget Committee's appreciation for their School Closure Study but would request that the Committee continue in providing a longer term view in their Study towards looking at different means of consolidation. In favor: 10; Opposed: 3 - Steven Steiner, Frank McCarthy and Dick Pollock; Abstain: 1 - Mark Hounsell.

Stacy Sand stated she would like to basically revise Bill's (Marvel) motion just to make it maybe a little more acceptable to the entire Board.

Dick Klement moved, seconded by Danielle Santuccio, that we request the School Board bring any decision to close a school or move students to a public vote at the Annual Town Meeting rather than as a simple decision of the School Board. In favor: 12; Opposed: 1 - Doug Swett; Abstain: 1 - Mark Hounsell.

Chairman Mosca stated he didn't know if legally we could do that. Dick Klement stated he said "request". Chairman stated there may be a legal issue with even requesting them to do that.

Stacy Sand stated just by the Town voting on the Budget it automatically goes before and the only way it's going to happen is to revise the Budget. Is that not true. Chairman Mosca stated not necessarily. Stacy stated if you close an Elementary School there's going to be a zero Budget for that School. Chairman stated it's a bottom line Budget. There isn't a Budget per school, it's a bottom line School District Budget and if a School building is eliminated there may be increases in other places that would far exceed any savings. You may not see it in the bottom line even if they did it.

Maury McKinney asked Dick Klement what the purpose of his motion in terms of the benefit to the voters, the benefit to the community. Dick Klement stated the community then would have a vote into the decision of the School Board rather than the School Board making a unilateral decision to do something of this magnitude.

Bill Marvel stated additionally taking it to the voters would detract from the sense of panic and emotion that would normally go into that sort of thing even though he would find it difficult to believe that a Board would take such a major venture without approval and he saw no harm in the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

Frank McCarthy stated he didn't have a motion to make and the reason he didn't make one about a professional organization doing a feasibility study is the town voted to have the School District do a study. What he would have proposed would be that we ask the Town Selectmen, the Town itself, to spend the money to have a feasibility study done by a professional organization and take it out of the hands of the School District, the School Board. He thought that's the only way we're going to get the answers that we can look at and say "okay, this is it, that's the way it is". He wouldn't go into it any more but the only way that he will feel satisfied that the study is done properly is if it's done by a professional organization that has the experience in doing that. He can't make that recommendation or he can't propose that because that's not what the Town voted for.

Dick Klement stated the School Board actually went out and got bids to have the professional survey done and the bill came back at \$250,000.00 to the one compliant bidder. The Conway School Board in fact decided that was too much money, too much to put in front of the taxpayer so it was not included as a Warrant Article. It was suggested that it be a Warrant Article, but it was not included. He thought the impetus is there to have a professional study done, it's a matter of asking the School Board that they actually have it performed and put it out as a Warrant Article to determine if it would be performed by a private company.

Chairman Mosca stated the difference between this Study and the list of 200+ questions that was put forward to have a private consulting firm are apples and oranges because this Study doesn't answer one-tenth of the questions that the School Board originally put out there for their \$250,000.00 bid. You can't compare the two because they're like miles apart, they're in different solar systems.

John Edgerton stated he agreed; the 250 questions almost made it impossible for a bid to be made.

Chairman Mosca discussed Item #6 on the Agenda - Establish a list of questions for the Town and School for this budget season. Last year we came up with, he thought, 34 questions for the Town and about 50 questions for the School District to answer for this Board going into the budget season. He would like to try to put something like that together again this year. If anybody has any specific questions of the Town or any of the departments within the Town or of the School Board, send everything to the Chairman. He will compile a list like he did last year and get it out to everybody before our next meeting and by November he would like to have the complete list together so that he can get it to both the School and to the Town so that they can answer our questions before we go in to the

actual Budget meetings. Last year both provided answers well in advance so we had answers going into our meetings and it made the public sessions a lot easier. Again, if anybody has any questions, get them to the Chairman and he will compile a list and get everything out to everybody well ahead of time so that everybody has them. It may spark other questions in other members of the Board.

Maury McKinney asked the Chairman Mosca when he wanted them. Chairman stated he would like to get questions for the 23rd, that would be great.

Bill Marvel stated he had the same question for the 3 departments that he had, Police Department, Town and the School District, that he had last year that the Superintendent bent over backwards to avoid giving him, that would be the list of School employees by name; that would be n-a-m-e, Mr. Nelson with their salaries and any stipends that they get. He would like that on the same page rather than numbers or concepts and ranges. The Police Department gave that to him, the Town sort of skirted around it and the School District did Olympic gymnastics. Chairman Mosca stated because they are public employees, it's public information and it can be provided.

Frank McCarthy asked Chairman Mosca if the word "questions" be broadened to include suggestions. Chairman stated absolutely, questions/suggestions absolutely. Frank stated he would like to suggest that they add \$250,000.00 to their Budget so that we can have a private firm do a feasibility study on the school closing. Chairman stated he hears what Frank was saying, he thought that given what was put together if the School Board felt compelled to hire a consulting firm to take what they started and expand upon the different options, he thought you'd find that the price tag would be very reasonable and we would have a professional study. He thought it needed to be expanded upon and he thought if we instead had one option but had all 5 options spelled out so that you could see all of the differences, it would make a world of difference to everybody. He thought it was a good suggestion.

Mike Fougere stated on that same note where these professionals spent so much time on this initial Study, could we send it back to them just to have them compile any extra numbers and then find a consulting firm and give them the whole mess and see what our bill would be then. Chairman Mosca stated that we'd have to make a motion and have this Board suggest to the School Board to do that. Mike stated he would be more than willing to create something. Chairman stated he thought Mike and Bill (Marvel) needed to sit together and come up with something. Mike stated he didn't have the silver tongue that Marvel had. Chairman stated that's something that we can put into our questions/suggestions that we can work on.

Dick Klement stated he thought that was a great idea, however, remember that these people did this work during their summer break. Mike Fougere stated he realized that. Dick further stated now they are up to their eyeballs in young kids, spitballs and everything else so getting them to perform to enhance this Study at this time probably is a toughie to do. Maury McKinney agreed.

Mike Fougere stated the numbers we're wanting could be done by Administration. At this point, we're looking for numbers versus

statistics, something that the Administrators that did this over the summer, yes they looked over the whole thing. Now any extra numbers that could be needed or should be needed could be added to our report and then given to some firm that wants to analyze our report and do a walk through.

OLD BUSINESS

Doug Swett thanked Chairman Mosca for succeeding in getting the microphones and he wanted to see now if he could do it two meetings in a row. Doug asked if the Chairman had threatened them. Chairman stated no, he was going to at the end of the meeting thank the Superintendent and the School Board for allowing this Committee the use of their microphone system. He thought it was a great benefit to us all. Chairman asked Mark Hounsell to let the School Board know that we thank them for the use of the equipment. Bill Marvel asked if we needed a motion for that.

Frank McCarthy stated he stole my thunder because he wanted to thank the Chairman and whoever was responsible for getting this equipment. He really heard every single word of every sentence that was uttered here today and he was elated. He hoped we could have these at our future meetings. Chairman Mosca stated we are going to do our best to have them at every meeting that we have in this building. Again thank you, thank the School Board and the Superintendent and he would definitely send Dr. Nelson a quick e-mail in the morning.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to be discussed at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Evan Lucy stated considering this involves the microphone usage, for those who were involved in getting these public microphones or microphones for the public as well as the Board members to be able to hear the various comments and suggestions made at this meeting and future meetings, as his uncle, Ken Lucy, would say "atta boy".

John Edgerton moved, seconded by Bill Marvel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary