

**PELHAM SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY – OCTOBER 12, 2005 – WORKSHOP MEETING**  
**PELHAM ELEMENTARY**

Board members present: Mr. Mike Conrad – Chairman, Mrs. Eleanor Burton, Dr. Steven Tello,  
Mrs. Linda Mahoney, Mrs. Cindy Kyzer

Superintendent: Dr. Elaine Cutler  
Business Administrator: Mr. Brian Gallagher  
Administration Intern: Ben Roy

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**Call to Order**

Chair Conrad returned the board to public session at 6:01 p.m.

**1. Administration Budget**

Mr. Brian Gallagher presented the Administration's Budget for the next year. The budget increased over the default budget by \$240,000, which is a 1% increase, excluding Warrant Articles. This does not reflect what was proposed last year. Mr. Conrad said that the 1% increase was very impressive.

The Board received an overview of the budget. The 15-page budget worksheet used by the School Board and the Budget Committee was reviewed. Mr. Gallagher gave an explanation of how the worksheet was set up.

The School Board members will review the worksheet for their considerations. A question arose about whether there is consistency between each of the 3 Pelham schools. The answer will be researched and presented to the Board at a later time.

**2. Pelham Elementary School Budget Presentation**

Presenters of the Elementary School Budget: Mrs. Alicia LaFrance - Principal and Mrs. Kathleen Turner – Assistant Principal

Mrs. LaFrance went through the Elementary School's proposed 2006-2007 budget needs page by page with the School Board. The Elementary School's budget was copied onto blue paper for each of the Board members. Most increases and decreases in the individual budget items were discussed. These budgets are being reviewed with the School Board prior to them being reviewed with the Budget Committee. The School Board gave Mrs. LaFrance some suggestions on preparing for the presentation these budgets to the Budget Committee.

The Elementary School budget reflects the needs to support 918 students and 1 additional teacher. When the Math Supply budget was presented, Mrs. LaFrance mentioned that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade students were using the Math Investigation Program. This is a new program for this year. In grades 3 through 5, some teachers are using the traditional program some are using the Investigations Program. Mrs. Kyzer stated that the School Board had not discussed whether the elementary school should expand this math program in their classrooms. Mrs. Kyzer would like to see a comparison rate of how school children are doing on the Math Investigations Program compared to using the traditional math program.

The Math Text Books budget had a considerable increase of \$11,263. This is to replace damaged and lost books for grades 4 and 5, and also for the Math Investigations Program. The Board gave sample questions to the Principal on what the Budget Committee may ask, to help prepare for their review of her budgets.

A budget for calculators was added this year. The NECAP testing for grades 3, 4, and 5 allow the use of calculators. This is part of the “No Child Left Behind” program. It would be a one-year expense and the calculators would be kept at the school.

Science text books had a budget increase of \$6,144 for the next school year.

Social Studies text books had a budget increase of \$6,121 – noting that nothing has been budgeted for this in the past 3 years. They need 80 text books called “From Sea to Shining Sea”.

Mr. Conrad told Mrs. LaFrance that it might be better to show the budget in a 5-Year Plan. The Budget Committee feels more comfortable seeing the figures in this format.

Warrant Articles were presented for additional school staff. A document was passed out to each Board member presenting the elementary grades, the Number of Students in each, a Class Size Average and information on the current class room size conditions. For instance, there are currently four special education case managers with a case size average of 30 students. The elementary school is requesting the following increase in staff:

- 1 classroom teacher for Readiness or Grade One
- 1 Special Education Case Manager to reduce case size and address grade level needs
- 1 Physical Education teacher to reduce class size and replace the PMS P.E. teacher servicing 5<sup>th</sup> graders
- 1 General Assistant to help with recovery from the default budget cut in support staff and address increase in student enrollment
- 1 Assistant Principal to support the increase in enrollment and staff

The Pelham Elementary Principal and Assistant Principal adjourned at 7:26 pm

### **3. Pelham Memorial School Budget Presentation**

Presenters of the Memorial School Budget: Mrs. Pinsonneault – Principal and Mrs. McAloon – Assistant Principal

Mrs. Pinsonneault went through the Memorial School’s proposed 2006-2007 budget needs with the School Board. The Memorial School’s budget was copied onto yellow paper for each of the Board members. As with the Elementary school budget, most of the increases and decreases in the individual budget items were discussed. These budgets are being reviewed with the School Board prior to them being reviewed with the Budget Committee. The School Board gave Mrs. Pinsonneault some ideas and suggestions about how to prepare to present these budgets to the Budget Committee.

Presently there are 535 students in the Memorial school and growing weekly. The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade currently has 181 students, the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade currently has 176 students, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade currently has 178 students. It is estimated that there will be approximately 600 students next year.

Some of the requests by the Principal are:

- Dictionaries and Thesauruses, which were cut out of last year’s budget
- Need for 2 instruments in the Music class. This includes a refurbished French horn costing approximately \$1,500. It would be \$3,000 if bought new.
- Headphones in the Computer Supplies category
- Replacement of damaged and lost books in various classes
- Replacement of consumable and activity sheets
- Text books for Health Education, which never had books before

- Sports department needs a budget for officials, tournaments and games.
  - Mrs. Mahoney requested a list of items that needed to be replaced. Mrs. Pinsonneault agreed to send a list.
- Curriculum materials for 3 Special Education teachers. These are rarely on the budget and the teachers are in need.

Issues M65 – M76 will be reviewed at a later time.

The Warrant Article for the Memorial school lists the need for 1 Special Education Case Manager.

The Memorial School Principal and Assistant Principal adjourned at 8:22 pm.

#### **4. CIP Presentation**

Mr. Bill Scanzani, Chair, CIP Committee and the Chair, Planning Committee, gave a presentation on the Master Plan that he says the town should follow to fund projects needed to meet community development goals. He handed out his Power Point presentation to each Board member.

Mr. Scanzani is very adamant that the town of Pelham needs this important planning tool. He says “no city or town in Massachusetts and New Hampshire have not funded a CIP for a town in need. Pelham will not be the first to do this.”

The CIP plan projects future capital expenditures necessary to ensure that services will remain available as the town grows. When followed, the CIP plan allows for projects to be budgeted and funded in a manner that will prevent large increases and erratic swings in Pelham’s tax rate. Not following the CIP plan is guaranteed to cause large future increases in the tax rate as projects delayed and not funded in a timely manner, will cost far more than those that are funded when identified and needed.

For the last several years, the CIP Committee has provided the Town with a plan and critical recommendations which have not had the full support and endorsement of our elected officials. Previously scheduled projects, which have not been worked on continue to increase in cost at an exponential rate. A list of the Major Projects Scheduled in 2005 and 2006 CIP Plans was brought to the attention of the Board. This only included the building costs. A July CSA survey of all the major retailers doing new commercial construction found that 89% reported construction cost increases this year to date averaged a 9.4% increase over 2004. Projections for next year are for increases of at least another 8%, but could go higher. Keep in mind that this relates to the building of a new high school. Oil prices are affecting the costs of almost all materials needed for construction projects and oil prices are already up over 50% this year.

Mr. Scanzani recommends that all the known “necessary” projects as well as important “desirable” projects can be funded quickly and inexpensively if done next year with one long-term 20 year all-inclusive bond. The taxpayer cost of the long term bond the CIP proposes to fund Town projects next year is far less than the projected increase in the total cost of the projects next year. Current taxpayers will get the full benefit of these funded projects immediately for a modest short term tax increase. Future taxpayers will help fund the bond in the future reducing the tax burden on current residents.

Once the Town funds the long term projects that are known, the tax portion of all town CIP projects starts to decrease annually. This clears the way for the School District which has several critical projects that need funding.

The CIP Committee had some more suggestions and concerns given at the presentation. The CIP Committee did not have the necessary cost and supporting documentation for critical school building projects that will

be necessary with the 7-year timeframe covered by this CIP plan. Feasibility studies for new school buildings need to be done sooner and not later. The CIP Committee would like a list of all the school district assets over \$20,000 in value along with their useful life and current condition so they could better determine the proper amount of funds to place in the Building Capital Reserve.

The CIP expects the Pelham School District to use Pelham's "full build-out" analysis data summarized in the Pelham CIP report as well as in the NRPC regional "full build-out" report for any future school building projects based on the high cost of these projects. Mr. Scanzani said that there is really no such thing as a "full build-out". If a town reaches capacity, then they change the zoning in areas to accommodate more building again. There are a lot of factors included in estimating a "full build-out". How the lots are zoned is one of them. Single family lots create higher population. 55 and older lots create lower population. A good number to plan on would be 3600 children at "full build-out".

The CIP Committee presented the idea of the \$20 million bond to the Selectmen and they supported the idea. It may go on the ballot for the public to approve.

Mrs. Mahoney and Mr. Tello interjected and said that a new high school for Pelham is the most important issue the School Board has. The School Board needs to focus on this first before the \$20 million dollar bond to cover the Town's needs. Mr. Tello suggested that the Board needs to speak with the Selectmen about both of our needs. If the School Board supports the Selectmen's needs and concerns, then hopefully the Selectmen will support the School's needs, particularly the high school.

Mr. Gallagher said the \$20 million debt is a fixed amount of debt with multiple various expenses all rolled into one payment. Mrs. Kyzer said that the \$20 million debt does not include any School Board's needs. Therefore it would be hard to support the \$20 million debt.

Mr. Scanzani adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Notes:

A municipal debt is a loan where there is a fixed principal on the bond each year.

A mortgage debt is a loan where the interest is paid first.

## **5. Approval of the Minutes**

Non-public September 21, 2005 Minutes:

Mr. Conrad moved to accept the Minutes.

Motion by Mrs. Kyzer, seconded by Mrs. Mahoney

Approved 5-0

Public September 7, 2005 Minutes:

Mr. Conrad moved to accept the Minutes.

Motion to adopt the Minutes was made by Mrs. Kyzer and seconded by Mrs. Mahoney.

Approved 5-0

Public September 21, 2005 Minutes:

Mr. Conrad moved to accept the Minutes.

Motion to adopt the Minutes was made by Mr. Tello and seconded by Mrs. Kyzer.

Approved 5-0

## **6. Building Use by Girl Scouts**

The School Board refused to support the waiver that the Girl Scouts presented to the board on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, the Girl Scouts will need to pay for the use of the school for their after-school meetings.

A vote was taken with a consensus of the Board to uphold the policy in place, i.e. to pay for the use of the school for their after-school meetings

**7. Homework**

The School Board members will review the High School's Budget pink sheets.

Motion to adjourn by Dr Tello, seconded by Cindy Kyzer at 9:50 p.m.

Motioned carried. 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Menard

The Pelham School Board has not approved these draft minutes.