

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM. Present: School Board Members Joseph Saulnier, John Harmon, Tony Clements, Ada Vadeboncoeur, and Dawn Leamer; Interim Superintendent of Schools David DeRuosi; Business Administrator John Harmon; Director of Student Services Michael Hatfield; Iber Holmes Gove Middle School Principal Bob Bickford; Lamprey River Elementary School Principal Laura Yacek; Raymond High School Principal Steve Woodward; Technology Director Brittany L'Heureux; Nutrition Services Director Judith DiNatale (remote); Youth Program Director Patrick Arsenault (remote).

Proof of Posting: It was noted that the meeting was properly posted.

Pledge of Allegiance: All those in attendance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2022-2023 Budget: Mr. Saulnier opened the floor for discussion among the Board members. Mr. Harmon asked if Dr. DeRuosi wanted to talk some more about the budget. Dr. DeRuosi said that the administration is looking for some direction as to what the final number is. SchoolCare numbers and revenue numbers are not yet known, so it would be beneficial to know the Board's ideas and direction. Mr. Saulnier opened up discussion for suggested reductions or other amendments to the proposed budget.

Mr. Harmon suggested decreasing the IHGMS Band line

Mr. Harmon suggested IHGMS Assemblies going from \$6,000 proposed to \$5,000.

Mr. Harmon proposed removing the District-Wide Student Services Coordinator and would instead look to have assistant principals pick up some of those responsibilities. He suggested eliminating that position for \$115,25 and keep \$35,000 to compensate the individuals who would pick up those responsibilities and provide some training. Mr. Hatfield stated that the district-wide coordinator is a certified position. Ms. Leamer stated concern for putting more on admin when we're already noncompliant. Mr. Saulnier asked, as it's a new position, why would we cut? Mr. Harmon asked why there have been no administrative cuts when enrollment is going down. Mr. Clements asked if special education enrollment was declining. Ms. Leamer stated no, it's increasing.

Mr. Harmon noted that there are three positions in the wage pool which are vacant or in process of a search, and he suggested reducing the wage pool by the 3% that we would have for those individuals: \$3,900 for the superintendent, \$2,580 for the CIA Director, and \$1,224 for the I.T. Technician.

Mr. Harmon suggested decreasing the employee replacement salaries by \$200,000. He stated that every year we consistently have a positive variance.

Mr. Harmon suggested reducing LRES Technology Replacement by \$11,760 - reducing laptops from 5 to 2, projectors from 3 to 2, and Promethean boards from 4 to 2. He suggested similar reductions at IHGMS, reducing that line by \$11,800, and the same reduction at RHS. Mr. Saulnier asked if ESSER funds could cover those. Mrs. Whitmore stated she could try to write it into the grant.

Mr. Harmon proposed an increase to the wage pool merit salary from 3% to 3.5%.

Ms. Vadeboncoeur asked which certification is required for the Student Services Coordinator. Mr. Hatfield replied that special education certification is required.

Mr. Saulnier proposed removing the position of the Curriculum Coordinator, rather than the Student Services Coordinator, for \$85,996 plus benefits, and suggested adding \$35,000 back to give to assistant principals to do curriculum. Mr. Harmon stated he was looking at both but the reason he chose the special education position is that it's a lower salary, but that was the only reason. Dr. DeRuosi said if they had to choose, it would be an easier ramp up for the assistant principals to become curriculum coordinators in the buildings. He would not want to dismantle the special education organization. Dr. DeRuosi suggested that building more professional development days into the calendar will allow assistant principals to do more planning and training to spread the work. Ms. Leamer stated that we already outsource students, and that if we continue to eliminate special education then we will keep spending. Mr. Clements stated he wouldn't support cuts to special education. Ms. Vadeboncoeur stated that she struggles with the level of training required for a special education position, and that LEA'ing is difficult to do well if one is not trained in special education.

Mr. Saulnier suggested doing away with a merit-based increase for the wage pool. Mr. Harmon stated he believes the person who is doing better work should receive a higher increase.

During discussion about the after school program, Mr. Arsenault stated that he received a call from the State and that it's looking like Raymond could reapply for the grant; that free and reduced may not necessarily be a factor any longer to exclude Raymond from applying. Mrs. Whitmore will include the funding in the budget in case we don't get the grant.

Mr. Saulnier suggested putting other initiatives down as separate warrant articles instead of adding to the budget.

Mr. Saulnier asked if the Board would like to either propose the full time language teacher as a separate warrant article or add that position into the budget. Dr. DeRuosi suggested that the cost for that could be absorbed within the budget.

Mr. Saulnier reviewed the para-educator and humanities teacher initiatives. Mr. Harmon stated that of all the initiatives, the building para at RHS is the only that he will support. Ms. Vadeboncoeur stated that she would be in favor of initiatives in support of personnel resources. She thinks that there's more that needs to be done within the school day rather than focusing on extracurricular. She would choose to put it in the budget. Mr. Saulnier stated that by putting it in the budget there will be a greater difference between the proposed budget and the default budget. That is also why he won't support the \$200,000 decrease in salaries. Mr. Harmon asked if that has changed and thought that reducing salaries by \$200,000 doesn't affect the default budget. Mrs. Whitmore will check into that. Mr. Clements stated he supports extracurricular activities, as does Ms. Leamer and Mr. Saulnier. Upon a straw poll, the Board voted to add \$28,157 into the budget to absorb the proposed extracurricular initiatives: RHS wrestling, IHGMS volleyball, and IHGMS track. (Mr. Saulnier, Mr. Clements, and Ms. Leamer in favor, Mr. Harmon and Ms. Vadeboncoeur opposed.)

Regarding the RHS building para-educator initiative, upon a straw poll, the Board voted to add \$43,017 into the budget. (Mr. Harmon, Ms. Leamer, and Ms. Vadeboncoeur voted to include it in the budget, Mr. Saulnier voted to add a separate warrant article, and Mr. Clements voted to do neither.)

Regarding the RHS Humanities teacher initiative, upon a straw poll vote, the Board voted to put this item to the voters as a separate warrant article. (Mr. Saulnier, Ms. Vadeboncoeur, and Mr. Clements voted for a warrant article, Ms. Leamer voted to include it in the budget, and Mr. Harmon voted to do neither.)

Regarding the 4th and 5th grade band \$3,484 6th period stipend, upon a straw poll the Board voted to decrease this line. (Ms. Vadeboncoeur, Mr. Harmon, and Mr. Clements voted to decrease the line.) The updated number for this line, with FICA etc., is \$4,483.

Regarding the IHGMS assemblies, upon a straw poll the Board voted to keep this line as is. (Mr. Harmon voted to decrease, Ms. Saulnier, Ms. Vadeboncoeur, and Mr. Clements voted to keep the line unchanged.)

It was noted that it was already determined that the Curriculum Director position, not the Special Education Coordinator position, would be removed from the budget for the amount of \$128,299, and then \$35,000 would be put back in the budget to fund curriculum work and training.

Regarding reducing the wage pool by the merit increase amount for the positions Superintendent, I.T. Technician, and Curriculum Director, upon a straw poll the Board voted to remove all three from the wage pool merit increase calculation. (Ms. Vadeboncoeur, Ms. Leamer, Mr. Harmon, and Mr. Clements voted to remove the positions from the calculation.)

Mr. Saulnier suggested waiting until the Board received advice from legal counsel before deciding on the proposed \$200,000 reduction to salaries.

Regarding increasing the percentage for wage pool merit increases from 3% to 3.5%, upon a straw poll the Board voted in favor of the increase.

Mrs. Whitmore stated that with all changes discussed this evening, the final budget number as it stands now is \$27,159,735, a decrease of \$57,104.

Mr. Harmon asked if there is anything budgetary that the Board needs to consider regarding Unified Classroom. Dr. DeRuosi stated that he believes PowerSchool will come up with their own fix for that.

Adjournment: MOTION: John Harmon moved, seconded by Dawn Leamer, to adjourn the meeting. Voted unanimously in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Heywood,  
Raymond School Board Clerk