



**TOWN COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 29, 2011**

Mark Lunt, Chair District 1 2012
Lori Pomelow, Vice Chair At Large 2012
Roger Cote, At Large 2011
Michael Bowie, District 2 2012
Roger Bickford, District 2 2013
Fern Laroche, Jr., At Large 2013
Gina Mason, District 1 2013

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE TO THE FLAG. The Chairman, Mark Lunt, called the meeting to order and waived the pledge of allegiance to the flag at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL. Members present were Councilors Lunt, Pomelow, Laroche, Mason, Bowie, and Bickford. Councilor Cote were excused. Also present were Stephen Eldridge, Town Manager; Lisa Ward, Councilor elect; Richard Green, Superintendent of Schools; School Committee Members Traci Austin, Kathi Yergin, Pete Reed, Marcey Crosskill, and George Caron; and no other citizens in the audience.

OTHER BUSINESS

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Mr. Green indicated he and Mr. Eldridge had met several times. Mr. Green said our enrollment as of November 14th is 1,318, which is down from October 1st at 1,338. Our undesignated funds amount is the same as last year at \$244,855, which is what we use to offset the budget. We received over the summer we received some unanticipated additional revenue from Maine Care and other reimbursements from the state and other agencies so we were able to raise our undesignated amount and then we had an additional \$39,676 to put in a capital reserve fund for facilities maintenance to build that up so we will not have to bond other projects. Some schools receive 10% or less in Maine Care funds, but its volatile so we don't use that in the budgeting formula so this year it brought our undesignated back up to what it was last year.

Mr. Green said for salaries and benefits, if we leave things as is, there is generally right around a \$250,000 increase from the get go if insurance stays at a 6% increase. We have a little over \$157,000 in job stimulus money, which we had to use to save positions that's outside of our budget and not budgeted for so that goes away at the end of this year. We will have to make decisions on whether or not we are going to put those particular positions back in the budget. We are looking at \$407,000; however, the general purpose aid has increased around \$253,000 for next year. We are beginning this budget year with about a \$247,000 increase; however, this is very early and we have not talked to the administrators and have not worked through negotiations yet. He mentioned the buses, telephones, and taking on the LEAD program.

Mr. Green said the new capital reserve fund can only be used for maintenance or minor remodeling and not for additions or new construction. Before any expenditure is made, it has to be approved by the Town Council.

Mr. Green said the budget priorities are as follows:

- Maintain All Existing Programs, Including Reducing Class Sizes If Possible.
- Maintain Existing 5-Year Facilities & Grounds Plan/Focus On High & Sugg Middle School.
- Consider Program Improvements Including Any Linked To MEASC Recommendations.
- Maintain Professional Development And Time For Staff.
- Consider Technology Improvements.
- Pursue Cost Saving Measures/ Collaborative Efforts w/Town And Area Districts.

Mr. Green highlighted the following potential administrative recommendations:

- Moving The Scoreboard
- Purchase New Uniforms – Going To Two Colors
- Purchase A Data Analysis Program
- Purchase Supplement Math Materials
- Need To Find Storage Space
- New Maintenance Garage
- Purchase Updated Telephone System For Intercom Systems Needs
- Purchase A New Compressor At High School
- Purchase Two Hot Water Boosters At High & Middle School
- Personnel Positions Needed:
 - Behavior Consultant
 - Ed-Tech in Kindergarten
 - Guidance
 - Social Studies
 - Social Worker
 - Support Staff
 - Technology
- Purchase 4 Buses (1 for Special Ed) and sell the 4 old buses
- Replace Tractor
- Have four 5th Graders moving to Sugg from LES in Autism Program
- Reinstate Senior Exhibitions
- Special Education Out of District Costs Last Year \$200,000

Mr. Green said the general purpose aid could be cut this year, but no one is talking about it right now.

Councilor Mason asked if the uniforms had to be done all in one year. Mr. Green said we have been told this for the past 5-years. Mrs. Austin said each sport has a different timeline so they did not expect everyone to be switched overnight. She said Lisbon's traditional colors are black and white, plus you have to have a black one for away games and a white one for home games. Councilor Mason said what's the cost? Mr. Green said it could be pretty expensive, but I am taking care of that this year out of this year's money and with the help from the Boosters we should be all set. Mr. Green said the Maine Principle's Association told us that they have been telling the Athletic Directors to comply for the past five years. Councilor Mason said our Athletic Directors don't form the budgets so these groups need to be called to task on this sort of thing. She said this group is just too controlling. Mr. Reed said this is the first time I've heard about this, it's an unfunded mandate, I'm not in favor of it, and I would like to say "the heck with it."

Councilor Pomelow mentioned in the scope of everything we deal with, it seems a little ridiculous to have to put out, whatever the amount of money is, to go to two or three colors or whatever.

Councilor Larochelle said he would like the School Department to keep the Gartley Street Program in place next year. He said it's kind of important, this \$8,000 or \$9,000 investment per year benefits the students and community in so many different ways. Mr. Green said he didn't want to end the program half way through the year; there is one student graduating in this program this year. It will be voted on next month, but I can not guarantee anything right now. This program is for students who have already dropped out of school who are already in the corrections system and they are trying to get back into our system to get a GED. This money is for the coordinator who works with them by driving them around, getting them to their interviews, and getting them to their jobs. There are quite a few students being helped. Councilor Bowie said they graduated 19 last year. Mr. Reed

said it's a great program, it was done through the Police Department through a grant, but that funding is gone and if we want to keep it we have to fund it.

The group talked about sharing Human Resources, payroll, mowing, and cleaning services. Mr. Green said the HR will cost more on the school side than on the town side. Mrs. Austin said sharing Public Works personnel works out well, saving money even if personnel is paid overtime versus paying contractors for these services. She indicated this was a very valuable resource for them.

Mr. Green said the Performing Arts Center and Community Gymnasium project has been talked about a lot. Architectural drawings will be in soon for everyone to look at. He indicated that when the current bond expires in 8-years Lisbon should be able to pay for half of this and bond the balance. Mrs. Austin said we wanted to be sure this could be accomplished in phases so that's how the engineers will give it to us. It will benefit the school and community. It's taking a lot of hard work. Mr. Green said he felt the numbers should come back less than anticipated and may be doable sooner even.

Councilor Larochelle said he was wondering how the School Committee felt about the non-binding question on the local budget and before we go and do it we wanted to know how that was working out for you. It would almost be a nightmare for you to think about having your budget voted upon in pieces, wouldn't it? He said we have been talking about breaking it down to vote on it by department, but my concern is that I don't think you can do that practically; it would have to be as a whole number. Mrs. Austin said because otherwise you would always be working on a budget, because if one piece passes and the other piece doesn't, you will need that other piece so you are always going to be chasing your tail; there will never be an end to a budget season.

Mr. Green suggested the school budget validation referendum question be voter earlier than June, because of the non-renew process. If we offer them a contract after March or May or something like that, then they have to be paid a per-diem amount for every day after that. The problem is that we have a lot of new teachers (13 people) and I would hate to lose any of them. If it could be earlier, in years past it had been done in May, so if we could it would make a huge difference. Staff assignments are not made before they are out, which is what they are not happy about. He said I can not tell people where they are going until we have money and we have had to let all these people go so I am afraid we are going to start losing them the longer they have to wait. We spend a year or more training someone. They want to know if they have a job and it's been up in the air. He said I have to give them 90 days for a continuing contract and for probationary it's a date like May 26. I have had to non-renew all these people and it's not a good letter; I have to lay them off. If I didn't then we would have to pay them a per diem per day for every day thereafter. Mr. Reed said we stand potentially to lose these people and I know I would look for another job if I got a legal lay off notice.

Mr. Eldridge said we would have to run two elections. Mrs. Yergin said it is very stressful for the kids because the teachers are just going off the wall and it's bad. Councilor Larochelle said we have to look at that. Mrs. Yergin said we have some really good teachers now and we need to protect that investment.

Mr. Eldridge said we will figure out some costs. Mr. Green said as long as you approve our budget we can be ready by the first of May.

Mrs. Austin said sometimes we get frustration by a low voter turnout, but I recommend if you do add your budget question to our ballot that you stipulate a certain percentage of the votes must vote to keep the same procedure for the following year, because this is your local budget and it irritates me that you can't get enough people out to vote and you never get any real feedback on it. She said I think the state should adopt a certain percentage too who must turnout to vote on whether or not to continue it. Mr. Reed said I'm against this percentage business; it should be by a majority vote

and that's it. Councilor Larochelle said we just have to do it in the proper process. Councilor Mason said without guidelines we will be going back five times to vote and we don't want to waste the taxpayer's money either.

Discussion followed on collaborative efforts for a Performing Arts Center, Jobs for Maine Grads (JMG) Program, Interact Program, and the Student Councilor representative. Mr. Eldridge said we need to finalize guidelines for that and we are looking for your response to what role this person should play.

Councilor Mason said she appreciated the list Mr. Green passed out earlier in the meeting and mentioned how helpful this will be to refer to items on the list when talking to taxpayers in the community.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Twila D. Lycette, Council Secretary
Town Clerk Lifetime CCM/MMC

Date Approved: _____