

Town of Farmington  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 4, 2019

**Committee Members Present:**

Jodi Connolly, Chairman  
Stephen Henry, Vice Chairman  
Sylvia Arcouette, Secretary  
Neil Johnson, Selectmen's Rep.  
Linda McElhinney, School Board Rep.  
Elizabeth Johnson  
Heidi Mitchell  
Samantha Place  
Joshua Whitehouse

**Committee Members Absent:**

Jason Lauze, excused  
Jeremy Squires, excused

**Others Present:**

Ruth Ellen Vaughn, SAU Superintendent  
Barbara Gardner, FHS Principal  
Matthew Castonguay, HWMS Principal  
Paul Roberts, VVCS Principal  
Diana DeNitto, Student Services  
Janna Mellon, Business Administrator  
Blanche Tanner  
Jennifer Lowton, Director of Technology  
Eric Larcomb, FHS Athletic Director  
Misty McBrierty, Curriculum &  
Instruction Director

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Presentation of the School Budget to the Budget Committee:**

SAU 61 Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn said on Nov. 20 she gave the committee binders containing the budget for the 2020-2021 school year. She then gave the following presentation:

**District Goal** - Mrs. Vaughn said the district team set a goal to develop a safe and systemic culture where stakeholders will be invested in the social, emotional, behavioral and academic success of all members of the school community. She said this is their goal as they are looking at what they are asking for in the budget and what they are asking the staff and students to do.

**Taking Care of the Bottom Line** – Mrs. Vaughn said despite the increases in health (7.5%) and dental (3.9%) insurance and adding positions they anticipate losing due to reductions in grant funding the overall increase to the budget is less than 1% (.49%).

**District Budget Overview** – This slide was a graphic representation of the overall budget featuring a color coded pie chart depicting the largest “pieces of the pie” in both regular and special education programming.

**School Year 2021** – Mrs. Vaughn said this slide was an enlarged version of the previous slide that makes it easier to see some of the smaller wedges of the pie. She said this presentation will be posted on the SAU website so the public can view those portions not easily seen on TV.

**Projected Revenues for SY 2021 with History (as of 11-04-19)** – Mrs. Vaughn said the revenues were better than anticipated but that not all of it can be spent directly. The district received \$620,702 in revenue from the state that was returned to the town as tax relief she said.

She said next year there will be a one-time \$950,000 grant in addition to the annual state appropriations and there will be warrant articles seeking voter approval to spend the funds for a second access road to the schools and to repair sections of the schools' roofs. She said she hoped to have the finalized warrant articles to committee for their workshop on Dec. 18.

Mrs. Place asked if the warrant articles fail what would happen to that money.

Mrs. Vaughn said it would be returned to the town as tax relief.

**Taking Care of Students – Social/Emotional Wellness and Safety** – Mrs. Vaughn said they have a Social Worker and a Student Assistance Counselor that are grant funded with no assurance the grants will remain so they put both of the positions into the budget for this year.

She said they are in the third year of the grant for the School Resource Officer (SRO) which means they must pay 75% of funding for the position. In SY 2022 we must pay the full cost for the position and if we fail to do that we will have to return the previous 3 years of the grant funding she said.

Mrs. Vaughn said that Project Aware gives them increased resources for school safety and Choose Love is a social/emotional learning curriculum that is a pilot program at Valley View Community School. MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports which includes behavior management, response to intervention, academic support and we are looking at Relationships, Relevance and Rigor she said.

Mr. Henry asked what the role of the Student Assistance Counselor is and if this position replaced one of the Guidance Counselors.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are in the third year of the grant that funds this full time position which is in addition to the Guidance Counselors and that the bulk of her time is spent dealing with a student's/family member's substance abuse and student transition issues.

Mr. Henry then asked about the Social Worker position.

Director of Student Services Diana DeNitto said the Social Worker is a contracted service and she is at the schools 4 days a week at this time.

Mrs. Place asked what the difference is in the roles of a Student Assistance Counselor and a Guidance Counselor.

Ms. DeNitto said a Student Assistance Counselor primarily deals with substance abuse and addiction and how it impacts the student on a daily basis. She also provides referrals for attendance issues because they find that students struggling with attendance often have other issues at home. She said a Guidance Counselor deals with other issues such as 504's (disabled students), peer relationships, etc.

Ms. DeNitto said one delineation is that the Social Worker will go into the student's home and work with his/her family while the Guidance Counselor is working with the student. The

Student Assistance Counselor is providing services to 80 students and the Social Worker is working with 10 families she said.

Mr. Johnson asked if all of the items on this slide are separate new line items or if they are built into existing lines.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are built into existing lines.

Mr. Johnson asked Mrs. Vaughn to provide the committee with those line item numbers.

Mrs. Vaughn said this portion of the presentation is an overview and the committee will be provided with that information later in the budget presentation.

**Taking Care of Staff** – Mrs. Vaughn said they are looking at long and short disability insurance for the future and optional increased dental insurance for all staff.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the disability insurance would be staff paid or paid by the school district.

Mrs. Vaughn said it will not be offered next year and they intend to offer it as district paid.

**Taking Care of Community** – Mrs. Vaughn said they are looking at ways to increase communication with a new website and an increased presence on Face book. She said they are beginning the strategic design process to get stakeholders involved in helping to set policies that will drive where they are going moving forward.

She said they plan additional community engagement opportunities through Principal's Coffees, Parent Information Sessions, Title I Family Engagement Nights, Curriculum Fairs, Art Shows, drama (theater) and concerts.

**Taking Care of Buildings and Finances** – **Performance Contract** - Mrs. Vaughn said a no cost engineering study is underway as part of the long term Performance Contract that will allow the district to pay for improvements to heating, lighting, doors and windows through energy savings from those improvements. Once the studies are complete they will determine which items should be addressed first and we will be able to conduct the work in phases she said.

**Roof Projects** - She said they are also looking to complete the roof projects at **Henry Wilson Memorial School** and **VVCS** over the next 5 years as **VVCS** will be 20 years old then. We've had no issues so far and we want to make sure that remains the case she said.

**Finances**- Mrs. Vaughn said the present finance software tracks the budget, payroll, attendance and is close to end of its life and needs to be replaced. We are still able to ask some questions and get some support but that is going away relatively soon she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked when they planned to replace the finance software.

Mrs. Vaughn said they plan to purchase it within the next budget cycle but it will take approx. 18 months to get it installed and set up as they can't just do a data dump. We need to clean up some things and update some accounts and make sure that it gets done correctly so we will be running parallel systems while we get that done she said.

**District Wide/SAU 61 Budget** – **SRO** – Mrs. Vaughn said there will be an increase due to funding year 3 of the grant but there is a decrease in the line due to a personnel shift.

**Social Worker and Student Assistance Counselor**- (discussed earlier)

ADS Profund Conversion – Mrs. Vaughn said the finance software conversion will cost \$63,000 plus the annual maintenance. This is a hosted solution so our servers won't be an issue she said. Salary Increase – 2% is budgeted for all staff not under a contract agreement which is subject to School Board adjustment and approval.

Reduction in Retirement (\$11,654) – This cost is now put in 2 lines in the budget and is due to different rates for different positions.

Ms. McElhinney asked if questions from the audience would be allowed.

Chairman Connolly said this is the budget presentation and the public can ask questions at the Public Hearing.

Mr. Henry asked if we would own the software, if the \$63,000 would be a one-time payment and the cost for the annual maintenance.

Mrs. Vaughn said we would own the software.

Director of Technology Jennifer Lowton said there will be hosting and training fees and maintenance costs that run about \$18,000 a year.

Mr. Henry asked if the software can be self-hosted.

Mrs. Vaughn said she did not know if that is allowed with the new software and they went to a hosted system so they wouldn't have deal with issues such as a power outage in town.

Ms. Mitchell asked if they would have to pay the \$18,000 in fees during the first year on top of the \$63,000 purchase price.

Mrs. Vaughn said they would be charged for the additional fees for the first year.

**SY20 Budget to SY21 Budget** - School Board – no change; SAU Office- 10% reduction in Workers' Comp to \$80,709; 33% reduction in unemployment to \$19,757; facilities- overall decrease of 3.63 %; the half-time position will continue through SY20/21; 15% increase in electric rates; heating oil is up 6%; transportation – overall decrease of 19%; the billing for drivers has changed as there are 3 full time drivers who cover the majority of the daytime trips during their contracted hours; the number of repairs have been reduced with new buses and maintenance cycles and an anticipated purchase of a new bus and a 15 passenger van in 2022 so there will be a warrant article asking for more funds for the Capital Reserve Fund.

**FHS School Budget SY2021** – Principal Barbara Gardner said the first slide includes enrollment, students' post secondary plans and the credits required for a general diploma and a diploma with distinction. She said the current total enrollment is 249 students and that for the class of 2019 30% are attending a 4 year college, 21% are attending a 2 year college, 30% entered the work force, 3% enlisted in the military and 16% other (undecided or did not say).

Mrs. Vaughn said more enrollment figures can be found in the school district budget binder.

**Goals** – repeat of the District goal; FHS Initiatives – New England Assoc. of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation, schedule modifications, restorative justice practices; Student Success – college, citizenship, career, life; Adult Success- Professionally, Personally.

**3 Year High School Budget** – Ms. Gardner highlighted 2 of the lines that increased- Equipment

Repair (\$1,000) and Lakes Region Tech. Center Tuition (\$12,000) and 7 lines that decreased (HiSET Testing-\$1,500, Supplies P.E. -\$1,229, Supplies Science- \$900, Equipment New - \$3,999, Equipment Music-\$2,819, Equipment Repair- \$4,664 and Furn/Fixture- \$6,223). She said they decreased the overall 2020/2021 budget by \$29,700.

Mrs. Place asked if the increase in tuition at LRTC was due to an increased enrollment or an increase in their rates.

Ms. Gardner said the increase is due to an increased enrollment and the rates haven't changed.

Mrs. Place asked if first option for enrollment goes to the upper classmen.

Ms. Gardner said juniors and seniors get first option and if there any openings left they will accept sophomores. Last year some sophomores were accepted but this year there was a waiting list because we decreased the budget for SY 2019/2020 she said.

Mr. Henry asked how many seats will be added by the \$12,000 increase, the total number of seats filled by Farmington students and how many students are on the waiting list.

Ms. Vaughn said that will add 3-4 seats depending on how much is kicked in by the state.

Ms. Gardner said 21 students are enrolled at LRTC and there are 4 students on the waiting list.

Mrs. Place asked if this is the only tech center used by the district.

Ms. Gardner said that is correct.

**NEASC Estimated Expenses 2019-2022** – Ms. Gardner said this slide shows the costs for the high school accreditation process (\$11,415). She said she wanted the Bud Com and the town to see what is coming up as they are putting a lot of effort into this and it is very important that they have the support and the resources to do it.

Mrs. Place asked if the goal is to have the accreditation by 2022.

Ms. Gardner said that is the goal for the final accreditation. She said the self reflection is due on March 1, 2020 and the committee will make the first of 3 visits in April to identify the 5 priority areas to work on between now and 2022. The plan is that the class of 2022 will be graduating from an accredited high school she said.

Mrs. Vaughn said the school would be receiving regional accreditation from NEASC and they have never been “unrecognized” by the state. She emphasized that the district dropped NEASC for financial reasons and that NEASC did not drop the district. The choice that year was between a \$40,000 NEASC site visit and a teacher so we dropped NEASC – not because we lost accreditation she said.

Mr. Henry said he didn't see any costs listed for 2021.

Mrs. Vaughn said once the focus areas are identified the work takes place in the district in 2021 and it is not a cost that goes out of district to someone else.

Mr. Henry said there are other expenses that are not shown on this list.

Mrs. Vaughn said those expenses are in the yearly budget and these are additional expenses beyond what they have been seeing yearly.

**Henry Wilson Memorial School Year 2020-2021** – Principal Matt Castonguay highlighted some

of the budget adjustments coming up for SY 2020-2021 as follows:

**HWMS Objectives** – Mr. Castonguay said this slide starts off with the district goal and the objectives for HWMS which include: promote practices that improve academic, social and emotional outcomes for all students; promote strong social/emotional learning habits, build a positive school culture with the help of teachers, staff, students and parents; implement innovative research based tiered instruction and data driven programs to promote rigor, engagement, cooperation and problem solving to stimulate learning and growth for students and staff.

**Instruction – Line 28 -Textbooks** – Mr. Gastonguay said this line increased by \$5,501.84 to purchase Scholastic Guided Level Short Reads Program for Grades 4-6 (\$4,141.84) and Trade Books for Content-Area Literacy for grades 7-8 (\$1,360). He said some of the texts are out dated and when the texts are engaging that is when the students will learn and comprehend.

Mrs. Place asked if he was talking about hard copy books or online text books.

Mr. Castonguay said they would be guided reading trade books and paperbacks.

**Line 30- Magazine Subscriptions** – He said the PTA will no longer fund these subscriptions so a portion of the cost of the Scholastic Literacy and Content Area magazines (\$2,577.83) will be added to this line and the total increase to the line is \$777.83. All other lines related to instruction will have no major increases he said.

Mrs. Vaughn said that the subscriptions should be part of the operating budget and not be paid by some outside group.

**Instructional Equipment – Line 32- New Equipment** – Mr. Castonguay said they plan to put in a new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math) lab at HWMS and the items needed to support the lab include a Smart TV with a sound bar (\$1,101 w/wall mounts), 2 document cameras (\$380) and other additions for this line include musical instruments (\$721). Total for the line is \$2,521 which is an increase of \$1,781 he said.

Ms. Mitchell asked if there is a STEAM lab at HWMS that needs to be updated or if they are creating a new lab.

Mr. Castonguay said they will be creating a new lab at HWMS.

Mr. Henry said HWMS received quite a few Smart boards as part of a grant a few years ago and asked why they need a Smart TV instead of the Smart boards.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are going to Smart projectors instead of the Smart boards because they are more cost effective and more flexible in usage as it will turn even a wall into an interactive surface with one piece of equipment. If we want to move a Smart board from one classroom to another we have to pay the company to un-install it and then reinstall it (\$1,500) at the new location or it will void the warranty. We will still use the Smart boards that we have as they are still a large part of what is happening in the classrooms she said.

Mr. Henry asked why they were planning to buy a TV instead of the Smart projector.

Mr. Castonguay said they chose the Smart TV to be able to share student work and to show

video clips and the TV has better clarity than a projector or a board. It is also much easier for the teacher to connect student iPads or Chromebook laptops he said.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for difference in the cost between the Smart TV and the Smart projector.

Mr. Castonguay said the TV is about \$1,000 cheaper when you add the projector and the mounting equipment.

Mr. Henry asked if the STEAM lab would be a dedicated classroom.

Mr. Castonguay said there will be a room dedicated to the STEAM lab.

**Line 33 – Computer Hardware** – Mr. Castonguay said they need to purchase an additional set of 20 Chromebooks with a 3 year license (\$5,400) because they need to keep putting devices in the students' hands. He said that this set is additional to the 2 sets to be purchased as part of the Technology budget for HWMS.

Mrs. Vaughn said this was done in a collective discussion about what would be funded where.

Mr. Henry asked why they couldn't attach the technology costs to each school or put all of the technology costs in the IT budget instead of having to go hunting for them.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is clearly delineated in the budget.

Mr. Henry asked about the need for licenses for Chromebooks.

Ms. Lowton said that it is really an extended warranty for the laptops.

Mr. Castonguay said there are 2 interactive projector mounting kits (to replace aging Smart boards with interactive projectors) included in the Technology budget for HWMS (\$2,200).

Mr. Henry asked how old the "aging" Smart boards are.

Mr. Castonguay said some of the boards are 10 years old.

Mr. Johnson asked for clarification on the cost of the Chromebooks and if the price included the laptop, the license and the maintenance fees so that the total cost is \$90 per laptop per year.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct and that there is no additional cost outside of the purchase.

Mr. Castonguay said the total increase for this line is \$7,600.

**Social Emotional Learning Line 78 – Student Assemblies** – Mr. Castonguay said they are working with the non-profit group Castle as one of the main resources to educate the staff on SEL. He said that a major part of this work is to bring in outside speakers to honor the work that is being done there so he would like to increase the current budget (\$2,500) by \$1,500 to continue to bring in motivational speakers to send a positive message to students.

**Valley View Budget 2020-2021** – Principal Paul Roberts presented an overview of the elementary school budget starting with some of the savings.

**Savings in the Budget – Line 14** (-25.64%) - Mr. Roberts said for the last 2 years the teachers have been searching for materials to meet the Common Core standards and there was a lot of printing going on which was laminated so they can hang on to it.

**Line 19** (-95.65%) – Mr. Roberts said that last year they received science kits from Foss which were good science kits but if you buy from Foss you pay the Foss price. There are things we can



buy that don't have to come from Foss so we have been searching for other ways to buy those supplies and we will go to Foss if there is no other supplier for what we need he said.

**Line 67** (-82.20%) – The savings in this line represent moving stipends into the Curriculum & Instruction portion of the budget.

**Increases in the Budget - Line 16** – This increase is due to replacement of physical education supplies in poor condition (foam soccer balls, hoops and mitts).

**Line 18** – This line is for musical instruments (castanets, sand blocks and tambourines) and sheet music.

**Line 24** (+623.39%) – Mr. Roberts said these funds would be used to purchase the mounting brackets for the Smart projectors that will replace the 4 oldest overhead projectors at VVCS. Mr. Henry asked if they were buying mounts without the projectors.

Mrs. Vaughn said the projectors are in the equipment line.

Mr. Henry pointed out that this is what he was saying before about the technology lines.

Mrs. Arcouette said she agreed with Mr. Henry and that putting a little here and a little there does not make sense to her. I think it would be better and easier if it was put together in one place with a note under it saying where it is going and what it is for she said.

**Line 20** (+113.42%) – Mr. Roberts said the increase in this line reflects the purchase of textbooks to support SEL in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. This will expand into the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade during the next budget cycle he said.

He said the proposed budget will have an overall increase of 1.6% over last year's budget.

Ms. Mitchell asked for the numerical amount of the increased budget.

Mrs. Arcouette said it would be easier if the increases and decreases were presented in a dollar and cents form instead of with percentages.

Mrs. Vaughn said the VVCS budget is broken out separately in the school budget binder and the bottom line increase is \$67,749. If you are looking at the line codes, "11" is VVCS, "12" is HWMS and "30" is FHS if you are trying to figure out where an individual line might be she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked if they were looking to increase the number of teachers at VVCS.

Mrs. Vaughn said the staffing changes are not the result of added positions but are because different staff has come in. More kids came in who needed one-on-one assistance she said.

Mr. Roberts said there have been additional Paraprofessionals this year.

Mr. Henry asked if the increase was made since last year's budget preparation and if there are added positions in place now that were not budgeted for.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct and the additional Para's were required by the student's IEP.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the number given for the enrollment is the current enrollment.

Mrs. Vaughn said that number is as of late Oct. - early Nov.

**Why Social Emotional Learning?** – Mr. Roberts said that Gov. Sununu said this is one way that schools can help themselves become more prepared for any sort of an emergency. The idea is to try to improve attitudes and decrease bad behavior- those disruptive behaviors that take



away from everyone's education- non-compliance, aggression, etc. He said the goal of the program is to help the students deal with these issues and become better citizens.

**What is Choose Love?** – Mr. Roberts this program is a free program that focuses on the core values of courage, forgiveness, gratitude and compassion in action and can be a K-12 program. He said they have also been looking at the values of the Farmington School District – the TIGERS (Trust, Integrity, Genuineness, Empathy and Respect) and if they do those 5 things they will equal success. Our goal is to try to pull those Tiger values into the program so it becomes that much more compatible with the district's goals he said.

Mr. Henry said SEL was mentioned in 2 of the 3 school's presentations and Choose Love was only mentioned for VVCS.

Mr. Roberts said VVCS is piloting the program.

Mrs. Vaughn said they will look at the pilot program to determine if it will be the best fit for the district and continue it in grades K-12. The goal is to prepare students to be productive citizens, to give them the tools they need to be able to interact with one another and become lifelong learners she said.

Mr. Henry asked if the program is set up for K-12.

Mrs. Vaughn said it can be adopted by K-12 but there has been no decision to adopt it across the board yet.

Mr. Henry said that even though the curriculum may not have a cost there is an investment in time, energy and training if you are going to do it right and he didn't want them to invest in something that only went to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Athletic Budget – Points of Emphasis** - FHS Athletic Director and Dean of Students Eric Larcomb said he researched the purchase of uniforms and put a 5 year replacement plan in place and that his budget for the next year has targeted this area. He said budget requests were sent to the FHS and HWMS coaches for their program needs and then were prioritized.

Mr. Larcomb said the Referee pay will remain the same for the next 2 years.

He said this year was the first year to use the Athletic Trainer service (through Access Sports) which provides a trainer on staff at home games and there have been a lot great responses from the sportsmanship surveys about the service. Having access to a trained professional for our teams and our opponents allows us to deal with any injuries that happen "in the moment" so we will continue the service at the same cost for next year he said.

**Significant Additions** – **Volley Ball Upright Poles System** (\$3,460) He said the referees measure the volley ball poles system at FHS before every event and they barely pass inspection because the poles and the pulley system don't quite meet the regulations and need to be replaced.

**Three Porta Potties**- 3 month rental (\$1,050) – Mr. Larcomb said this is an increase to the athletic budget because it was moved from the Facilities account and is not a new expense. He said they rent 3 potties and put them in the corner of the senior's parking lot which provides restroom facilities to spectators at the games rather than having them hike to the HWMS or

FHS buildings to use the bathrooms.

Eight Additional Boys' Volleyball Games – Mr. Larcomb said he added the cost for referees (\$1,408) for 8 more games for the spring session of the program.

Mr. Henry said this was a new offering last year and asked if there was enough student interest to continue the program.

Mr. Larcomb said there is a good level of student interest in the program and there are approx. 13 players on the team at this time.

Mr. Henry asked why there is a contract for uniforms purchases and what the benefit is of having a long term contract. He asked if a 5 year replacement cycle make sense for all of the uniforms as the football uniforms probably wear out sooner than the golf uniforms.

Mr. Larcomb said the 5 year plan was for budgeting purposes and helping to set priorities for the things that are needed for each program.

Mrs. Vaughn said the replacement cycle helps to make sure that there aren't teams that fall off the radar. She said if there is a set of uniforms that have become shredded or few uniforms in a particular sport that need replacement they will be replaced first but they were trying to avoid a situation where the football jerseys were frequently replaced while the basketball team is wearing 18 year old uniforms.

Mr. Henry asked what the advantage is to locking into a contract.

Mr. Larcomb said the contract gives them a reduced rate for the uniforms, locks in the price for 5 years and gives them access to promotions and funding for the programs. He said the contract is up in 2021 and there will be a conversation about what they will do in the future.

**Curriculum & Instruction Budget** – Director Misty McBrierty said the curriculum and instruction lines are found under function 2210 in the budget and that some of the lines are set by the terms of the collective bargaining agreements and they have some control over the other lines.

New Lines - salaries-professional stipends were moved from the co-curricular lines to this section as they are stipends for school business and work. Continued Lines – mentors for teachers and Para's, retirement & FICA for the salary lines, accreditation, staff development, contracted services, training/workshops/travel for staff development, testing and software.

**Changes from the 2019-20 Budget in the 2020-21 Budget** – Ms. McBrierty said they kept most of the lines the same going into next year but that some of the pieces had to be changed.

New Lines for Salaries Professional Stipends – She said these lines are for stipends for committee work within each building and was formerly listed under the co-curricular lines.

Mrs. Vaughn said the difference will be that the co-curricular lines will be for student activities and clubs as opposed to the Safety Committee, the Leadership Team, etc. which are professional activities and will be listed in 2210.

Increase in Contracted Services Curriculum (from \$2,000 to \$5,000) – this line is for bringing in consultants/trainers to work with the faculty.

Increase in Training/Workshops, Staff Development (from \$400 to \$3,000) – this line is for

training/workshops determined by the district, school based goals, vision and evaluation data. Ms. McBrierty said the above 2 lines are meant to support the professionals in their learning and is outside of the collective bargaining agreement which is on a separate line in the budget. She said these 2 lines were increased slightly and that the number one achievement factor for students is how effective their teachers are. The first line is for consultants such as coaching for responses to interventions and the second line is for training that is workshop oriented and is to send people out to workshops instead of bringing people into the district she said.

Increase in the Software, Curriculum Line (from \$18,000 to \$21,000) – this line is for the STAR diagnostic assessment and online tools that require licensing.

Ms. McBrierty said some things such as the STAR diagnostic program are staying the same but they will no longer be using the Atlas Curriculum Mapping software which has been removed. She said there are 6 year licenses coming up for renewal and once the purchases are made they won't have to budget for them for another 6 years. Not all of them are due at the same time so only those licenses coming due this summer going into next year were included she said.

**Professional Learning Needs** – Ms. McBrierty said there are 4 major areas that go into curriculum instruction planning: leadership development, understanding curriculum design, evidence based instructional strategies and whole child habits of mind instruction. She said social/emotional learning piece can be found in the thinking skills and habits of the mind content. There's very specific curriculum and learning outcomes that need to be developed that needs to be driven by the community. We still have to think about what we want the learning outcomes to be and that will be our shopping list for the resources that we will ask financial support for she said.

Ms. McElhinney noted that the bottom of this slide says the faculty will "power vote" on how they would like to grow professionally and asked Ms. McBrierty for an explanation.

Ms. McBrierty said they didn't want to "top down" the staff so they will ask for community input, think about what the community wants and then go back and ask the staff what they think is in their best interest moving forward and have them vote on it because they are the ones who have to do the work. To have a shared leadership model we need to make sure we allow them to vote on what their destiny looks like beyond what is the law she said.

Mrs. Vaughn said that doesn't mean that there won't be pieces where they will have to say you are going to do this but we want to make sure there is buy-in and a focus on self-identifying on where they need to grow.

**Student Services Budget** – Staffing – Mrs. DeNitto said there will be a reduction of one Special Education teacher district wide (the building location has not yet been determined) due to the decrease in the number of students from 2017 (191 students) to the present (175 students). She said that there has been an increase of 25 students over that same time period that required Extended School Year (ESY) services and in order for those children to have a free and appropriate public education they need to have summer programming. Although our numbers

are smaller our level of needs is pretty significant and we are seeing a mix of academic and behavioral issues that need to be addressed she said.

Mrs. DeNitto said the hiring of new staff (with fewer years of experience) during the 2019-20 school year has resulted in a savings of \$73,558 in the staffing lines.

She said there was an increase in the expenditure for Para's due to the uptick in students requiring one-on-one support and an increase in the number of working days from 195 to 196 per the new collective bargaining agreement.

**Salaries for Tutors (\$9,040)** – Mrs. DeNitto said this line is to support students who have been out of school for 10 days due to suspensions or a medical intervention where they are unable to attend school.

Mrs. Vaughn said the funds are put into one line that is district wide and then will be transferred and tracked at the individual building level lines as they are expended.

Mr. Henry asked with the result of the increase to 196 days for Para's if his wife has been playing hooky or if the teachers were only contracted for 185 days.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Para's are paid hourly and in the past have had a 195 day contract with 10 paid holidays. She said the teachers are salaried with a 185 day contract with no paid vacation or holidays (because they are salaried) and must be in district for 185 days.

She said that this year the School Board granted the Para's request for an 11<sup>th</sup> holiday to be in line with the other groups that are also hourly and receiving 11 paid holidays for the same time that they were working.

Mr. Henry asked about students who are suspended from school.

Mrs. DeNitto said a Spec. Ed. student can be suspended from school for 10 days and on the 11<sup>th</sup> day they must provide tutoring.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is collective and so if its 2 days here and 3 days there at the point that it hits the 11<sup>th</sup> day the law requires them to provide academic support.

Mr. Henry asked what types of things would trigger a suspension.

Mrs. DeNitto said things like verbal or physical aggression toward the staff, acting out or leaving school grounds could be reasons why a student might receive a suspension from school. We do everything we possibly can to not get to that point and typically interventions happen prior to that point she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked if this is for any student or just for Spec. Ed. students.

Mrs. DeNitto said it is for Spec. Ed. and 504 students.

Mr. Johnson asked for an estimate on the number of times this has occurred over the past few years.

Mrs. DeNitto recalled that 5 students had met the criteria last year but their issues also included medical problems and a family tragedy and that so far this year no students have been suspended.

Mrs. Place asked if this applies to students who have been expelled from school.

Mrs. DeNitto said when a Spec. Ed. or 504 student meets the 10<sup>th</sup> day out it is required that a Manifestation Determination meeting be held where the team makes a determination of whether or not the behavior that resulted in the suspension was a result of the student's disability. If it was a result of the student's disability the student is entitled to return to school and that a Functional Behavioral Assessment will be conducted to determine the cause and triggers for the behavior. The team then discusses the results of the evaluation and then must put a plan in place for how that is not going to happen again she said.

**Contracted Services** – Mrs. DeNitto said the increase in this line is mostly the result of the need for specialized assessments that can't be done by the school district staff such as mental health diagnoses and specialized risk assessments.

Mr. Henry asked for an explanation of specialized risk assessment.

Mrs. DeNitto said the assessment occurs when a student has made a specific threat and there is concern about whether or not the student might be a risk to themselves or to others. It involves conversations with the student, the student's family, teachers and other individuals to get to the bottom of whether this is a credible threat and if there was a suspicion that the student would follow through on their threat. Up to now we've not had any that were confirmed that were a threat to the school district or to his or herself she said.

Mrs. DeNitto said the contracted services line for HWMS is down from \$4,000 to \$2,000 because there is only one Spec. Ed. student with special needs who is attending a charter school which is a public school and the Farmington School District must pay for those services.

**Out of District Tuition** – Mrs. DeNitto said the \$85,000 increase to this line involves one student who moved into the district who was already placed in an out of district school and they decided to continue that placement because it was in the best interest of that student.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if the entire amount is for that student.

Mrs. DeNitto said that almost the entire amount of the increase is for that student.

Mr. Henry asked about the 3 students placed by the courts shown on the slide and if currently there were no students placed out of the district due to the "fault" of the district.

Mrs. DeNitto said that is correct and that 13 students have been placed out of district due to their need for specialized programming and 3 of them were placed by the Rochester courts.

Mrs. Arcouette asked about the one student who was already in placement and moved here.

Mrs. Vaughn said the student was already placed in specialized program out of this district and then the family moved here so this district became responsible for the education of that child.

**Supplies, Texts, Consumable Books & Software** – Mrs. DeNitto said the budgeted amount for this line for the 2019-20 SY was \$5,787 and the budgeted amount for 2020-21 is \$5,990. She said the \$203 increase will allow them to compile complete sets of specific intervention programs that have been working well at the schools.

Mr. Whitehouse asked how much of this amount is for software.

Mrs. DeNitto said it is only about \$400 for software at this time.

**Related Services** – Mrs. DeNitto said there is a \$790 reduction in the psychological supplies and materials as they will complete a purchasing cycle for assessment, rating forms and scoring subscriptions during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

She said the budgeted amount for speech testing and supplies will be level funded.

Mrs. DeNitto said the contracted services for a Physical Therapist reflects a 2% anticipated rate increase and is the change seen in that line.

She said ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) services have been reduced to \$15,000 because some students have tested out and they anticipate that one more student will test out of the program so they felt safe in reducing it by \$15,000.

Mr. Henry asked for the full time equivalent for the Physical Therapist.

Mrs. DeNitto said it is less than .5.

**Behavioral Services** – Mrs. DeNitto said that part of the reason that their Spec. Ed. numbers might be beginning to show a decrease is because there are behavioral services available in each of the school buildings to work with those students that are at a higher risk so that they can begin to work on improving their emotional regulation.

She said the decrease in salaries and benefits for the FHS Para's is due to having one instead of two Para's attached to this service.

Mrs. DeNitto said the staff connected with this service respond to student emergencies, provide direct instruction on social skills, develop and assist in the implementation of behavioral intervention plans.

**Technology Budget** – HB 1612 & the NH Minimum Standards of Staff and Student Data Privacy require the district to continue moving with updates and changes to support student and staff data safety and security.

Ms. Lowton said that overall the technology budget has not changed very much from last year. She said some of the things that have greatly improved over the last year include that the majority of devices have been upgraded from Windows 7 to Windows 10 and the majority of the servers are now upgraded to 2012 and 2016.

**Impact on the Budget for 2020-21** – Ms. Lowton returned to Mr. Johnson's earlier question about the cost of the Chromebook sets and clarified that it is one cost per device of \$270 that includes the lifetime management for the device. She said the district would pay upfront and there is a 3 year extended warranty and it is not a lease or payment across 3 years.

She said the physical needs of each building are very different and at HWMS the wall mounts are already there with the exception of 2 spaces. At the elementary school there are only 2 spaces that have wall mounts and at the high school the needs are minimal to the amount of mounting hardware. At HWMS the mounts are already there and I would be purchasing the interactive projector and replacing the existing one because they happen to be similar models and will work with the hardware already in place she said.

**Impact on the Budget for 2020-21** – Purchase 4 sets of Chromebooks and teacher laptop

refresh at VVCS – VVCS - Ms. Lowton said they plan to replace the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade oldest laptops with a set of new Chromebooks and to replace all general education staff laptops as they are beyond their warranty. She said a lot of them are reaching the age where they turn on but have difficulty processing the programs with higher requirements. There will be a lot of cost savings with the Chromebooks because they don't require virus licenses and less man hours are required for upkeep and maintenance of the devices. She added that it is important that the devices meet the needs and objectives of how they will be utilized.

HWMS – replace the 5<sup>th</sup> grade laptop cart with a Chromebook set and provide 1 to the UA's (Unified Arts-art, music, languages, health, Phys. Ed.) that do not currently have a shareable set. Ms. Lowton said the 5<sup>th</sup> grade is the only one that does not have a set of Chromebooks and they have some of the older laptops as well. The UA's do not have a full classroom set so they have to see if they can share from the team which is not always feasible.

FHS – replace the social studies laptops with a cart of Chromebooks. She said the social studies dept. is the only dept. in need of replacements at this time.

Mr. Henry said when students go to music it's one teacher's class going to music and asked if that teacher has a cart full of computers that can follow the kids.

Mrs. Vaughn said currently there is a cart that is shared between grade levels so having a cart that can be shared with the UA's would give them more flexibility.

Chairman Connolly asked for the total number of Chromebooks that will be purchased out of the technology budget.

Ms. Lowton said they are looking at purchasing 4 sets or 80 Chromebooks.

Mrs. Connolly said there are 1 set in the HWMS budget and 4 sets in the technology budget for a total of 5 sets of Chromebooks to be purchased.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the staff laptops would be replaced with regular laptops and how many will be replaced.

Ms. Lowton said 20 teachers laptops will be replaced with regular laptops at approx. \$800 each.

Mr. Johnson said the line item for new equipment technology shows them purchasing 72 Chromebooks not 80.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is because there are 18 not 20 Chromebooks in a set.

Ms. Lowton apologized for the error and said they will be purchasing 4 sets of 18 Chromebooks plus one set of 20 for the middle school. She said 72 of the Chromebooks will come from the technology budget for programs that are already in place and 20 from the HWMS budget.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for the average classroom size and noted that they are buying 18 Chromebooks for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at VVCS and the largest classroom enrollment is 15 students.

Mrs. Vaughn said in the event that one of the Chromebooks goes down they want to make sure that they can complete the testing so they do need a few spares.

Ms. Lowton said there are also changes in the enrollment numbers each year.

Purchase Interactive Projectors across the District instead of interactive boards- VVCS – replace



all kindergarten failing projectors (4) and add interactivity to current spaces. Ms. Lowton said only 2 kindergarten classes have any kind of interactivity and the existing equipment is constantly in need of service and need to be replaced.

HWMS – replace 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies projector and add interactivity to current spaces. Ms. Lowton said the 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies room does not have any interactivity and this would be the way to give the teacher that interactivity with one piece of technology and without losing the existing white board space.

FHS – replace STEAM and art classes aging projectors and add interactivity to current spaces which would not work with a traditional ceiling mount or Smart board install. Ms. Lowton said there is no interactivity in the STEAM room and the room has a high vaulted ceiling as it used to be the shop classroom. The current projector is located at a high level and is subject to shaking and any interactive use would result in the need to recalibrate the equipment daily. The projector is failing so they plan to replace it with a wall mounted projector she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked for the total number of projectors they are planning to buy and their cost. Ms. Lowton said they plan to buy 4 interactive projectors for VVCS, 1 for HWMS and 1 at FHS for a total of 6 projectors at \$1,650 each.

Mr. Henry asked if there any of these interactive projectors currently in use in the district.

Ms. Lowton said the models in use now are a couple of models below the new version and were purchased without the interactive piece but can use the same mountings.

She said the overall increase to her budget is not much and that she tried to build a budget that was level as possible and to work within the program that she put together.

Mrs. Place agreed that the numbers show the budget is level funded but that last year they gave her an extra \$200,000 to do the things she needed to do. She said she thought the committee was having trouble swallowing that this is a level funded budget after they fought about giving her \$200,000 last year to get to where they need to be. I understand that all these things would be amazing but I don't know that level funding an increased budget would be the responsible thing here she said.

Ms. Lowton said some of the things they added included additional staff members and they have been a huge benefit to each of the buildings by providing a lot more support to the teachers in the classrooms, repair of the network infrastructure and upgrades to the servers, some voice over IP and firewalls to begin to become compliant with HB 1612.

Mr. Henry said he recently visited 4 classes where computers are used as part of a tour of his 7<sup>th</sup> grade daughter's day at HWMS. He said in the first class the Windows computer took 5 minutes of processing time before they could see what the other parents were already seeing on the Chromebooks and that by the end of the 15 minute class 2 other students were still not logged onto the Windows computers.

He expressed concern about being too price conscious and buying smaller devices with small screens/keyboards causing students to hunch over to use them especially since they are trying

to teach kids to type at younger ages. He asked how much more it would cost to buy a device with a 15" screen.

Ms. Lowton said that it is more the staff who appreciates the bigger screens because the students come from a world of smaller devices. She said the price increases greatly for the larger touch screens for the younger students but there is not much change in price for Chromebooks with larger screens and full size keyboards at the middle/high school level and that she could purchase the larger devices within her proposed budget.

Mrs. Arcouette said they gave her lots and lots of money to do what she said needed to be done and asked if she got it done with that money.

Ms. Lowton said she got a lot of her plan done.

Mrs. Arcouette asked why she didn't get it all done.

Mrs. Vaughn said the year is not over yet.

Ms. Lowton said she hopes to have the majority of work done but that technology is always moving and she can't say that she will ever be completely done. She said she hoped to have the most important pieces done by the end of the year so they can move on to other goals and that those pieces were not included in next year's budget.

She said if those things had been done incrementally over the last few she wouldn't have had to come to the committee and ask for that large chunk of money. I'm not asking for a big increase this year because I did it in a way where I could do those projects and then we can move forward in an incremental manner she said.

Mrs. Place clarified that the taxpayers gave Ms. Lowton \$400,000 last year and that she is asking again for \$400,000. I agree you didn't increase it but I don't want it to be confusing for the viewers at home that you are not asking for the same huge chunk of money because you definitely are she said.

Mr. Whitehouse said he thought the concern is that it will become an annual \$422,000 budget instead of an annual \$285,000 budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said the \$285,000 had gotten them a good deal into the hole from where they needed to be because of projects deferred, maintenance not done and pieces not kept up.

Mrs. Place said that last year the budget request was presented in a way that this money was needed to get us up to compliance and then we are going to be good. There's more stuff to do but it definitely wasn't presented as this was going to be our new annual budget she said.

Ms. Lowton said she presented it as saying she wanted to get to more of a level budget and that she used those words because she knew that each year they are going to need certain items and have certain resources and she didn't want to say they would need them one time and have to come back to the committee again. I think if we went backwards we'd end up back here where I would have to do the same as last year and I don't want to do that she said.

Mrs. Place said she just wanted it to be clear because she felt the presentation Ms. Lowton was giving was a little misleading to the viewers at home because they don't have last year's or this

year's budget in front of them and she continually said it's level funded and it is level funded compared to last year but last year we did an increase that was astronomical she said.

Ms. Lowton reminded the members that the additional positions that were added last year were a large part of the increase and will be in the budget every year.

Mrs. Connolly said that last year the committee was told those positions were needed to get through what the state was mandating.

Mrs. Vaughn said those positions were never presented as one-time positions and were presented as being needed to be compliant and to remain compliant.

#### **4). Any Other Business to come before the Committee:**

**Ten Year Plan** - Mr. Henry said when Mrs. Vaughn was hired she was given the goal of making this district in the top 10% of schools in the state in 10 years and asked if that has been defined by the School Board.

Mrs. Vaughn said the School Board has not defined it yet.

Mr. Henry asked if the School Board has told her they no longer have that goal.

Mrs. Vaughn said not in so many words and that she believes there is shift in the way that may be may be defined once they go through the strategic design process.

Mr. Henry said they could not change a definition that doesn't exist.

Mrs. Vaughn said the goal of being in the top 10 may shift.

Mr. Henry asked if the School Board has stated that is no longer the goal.

Mrs. Vaughn said the board has not stated the goal has changed.

He then asked Mrs. Vaughn what year she was hired.

Mrs. Vaughn said she was hired in 2016.

Mr. Henry said they are 3 budgets in to a 10 year plan with no definition of the 10 year goal.

**Stipends** -Mr. Johnson asked for a list of the stipends that are paid, the line number, how much, for what and the number of recipients.

Mrs. Vaughn said the stipends are found in 3 places – co-curricular, athletics and professional staff stipends.

Mr. Henry said some of the stipends are in the collective bargaining agreement and asked if Mr. Johnson wanted those stipends delineated.

Mr. Johnson said he would like to have those stipends included as well.

**Para Impact** - Mr. Johnson then asked for the budget impact from the increase in the number Para work days from 195 to 196.

**Budget Line Items** – Mr. Johnson also asked for the line item numbers for the Social Worker, the Student Assistant Counselor, Project Aware, Choose Love, MTSS, SEL and the SRO.

Mrs. Vaughn said that all of the items are in Fund 10 and that Project Aware is grant funded, the Social Worker and Counselor are under Social Services (lines 321 and 322), the SRO is line 328 and Choose Love does not have a cost to it as the curriculum is free. She said MTSS is interwoven through the SEL and does not have an individual line item.

She said the SEL is an underlying piece of what they doing with the kids but there is not a particular line it appears on and the cost associated with it would be for the behavioral support staff which is under 1240 which has previously been included in the budget.

Mrs. Connolly said page 2 of the presentation (Taking Care of the Bottom Line) talks about adding positions and asked specifically what positions would be added.

Mrs. Vaughn said the positions that were added were the Social worker and the Student Assistance Counselor and those are both found on page 20 of the budget.

Ms. McElhinney said they were existing positions but were grant funded.

Mr. Henry said they didn't always exist and the Social Worker position is still fairly new.

Mrs. Vaughn said if 3 years is fairly new then both positions are fairly new.

Mrs. Connolly asked if they were adding any new teachers.

Mrs. Vaughn said they were reducing teachers in Spec. Ed.

Mr. Henry said the Student Assistance Counselor line shows an amount of \$36,442 and asked if there is some grant money going toward that or if that is the salary line.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is the salary line.

Mr. Henry said the Social Worker contracted position is \$68,500

Mrs. DeNitto said because it is a grant funded position they are only able to work with students in grades 7-12. The Social Worker is currently working with 10 families and the Student Assistance Counselor is working with 80 students she said.

Ms. McElhinney asked now that the positions are no longer grant funded if they expected the number of students they will be working with will increase.

Mrs. DeNitto said she didn't expect the students' needs to decrease.

Mr. Henry said Mrs. Vaughn spoke about long term and short term disability insurance and they were considering that for next year however this is the year they are in contract negotiations.

Mrs. Vaughn that is not something they are looking to negotiate in and it would be an added benefit offered by the district. It is not currently part of the negotiations she said.

Mr. Henry asked if they are planning to negotiate a compensation package and then after that will just pile on some extra.

Mrs. Vaughn said it was under review this year and was decided against and she did not know when it will come up again-possibly next year but not before then.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about the 13% salary increase for the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

Mrs. Vaughn said last year the position went from part time to full time and there is person in the position now who has more experience.

Mr. Henry said the 13% reflects the difference in experience and not going from part to full time.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct.

**5). Next Meeting:** Wednesday, December 18

Chairman Connolly said the agenda for the next meeting will include the school budget workshop starting at 6 p.m. followed by the regular monthly meeting.

Mrs. Vaughn said she will attend the workshop and asked if there was any additional information she could provide for that meeting.

Mr. Johnson suggested if the members thought of anything they could e-mail their requests to Chairman Connolly who would forward them to Mrs. Vaughn.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for a list of positions getting an increase over 5% and the reasons why.

Mrs. Vaughn said a number of those increases involved a different person in the position who came in at a different rate and who are receiving a 2% increase over what was paid last year.

Business Administrator Janna Mellon said there have been some changes in the budget as to how they account for things based on the NH Dept. of Labor guidelines. She said for example lawn care and overtime were separate lines under the Custodial lines that have been moved to the salary line with notes explaining what is reflected in that line.

She advised when you see a big increase in the salary lines it is because some lines that were elsewhere previously have been rolled into that line. She suggested if the members had further questions on a particular salary that they forward them to the SAU for more information.

**6). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Place) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 8:25 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

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Jodi Connolly, Chairman