

Town of Farmington
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
School Budget Workshop & Regular Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

Jason Lauze

Others Present:

Ruth Ellen Vaughn, Superintendent
Janna Mellon, Business Administrator
Diana DeNitto, Student Services
Residents Bruce Bridges, Tim Brown
Blanche Tanner

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). School Budget Workshop:

Chairman Connolly said that public comment would not be allowed until the regular monthly meeting begins. She asked if the members had questions or comments.

General Operating Fund 10 - Final Administration Budget 11-18-19:

Page 1, 1100 Regular Education Programs, Line 9, Salary Paraprofessional – Mr. Johnson said the notes state this was formerly a grant funded position moved to the regular budget due to declining Title I funding and asked for the reason for the reduction in the funds.

Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn said fewer students were serviced there and they had difficulty filling the Para position so the position was reduced and the Title I funds are being used for other student services instead of just funding the Para position.

Mr. Johnson asked if there has been a matching reduction in the Title I funding.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Title I funds have dropped quite a bit and are shown on the revenue sheet and on the projected revenues page that was part of the budget presentation.

She read that the SY 2019 projection was \$463,000, the SY 2020 projection was \$440,000, the SY 2020 actual amount received was \$432,000 and there was a roll over from the previous year (\$480,000 including the rollover) because they were unable to staff all of the positions needed for the program. She said they are projecting a further decrease to \$404,000 for SY 2021 which

is about a \$60,000 drop over 2 years.

Mr. Johnson asked if they were expecting any rollover from the current year to next year.

Mrs. Vaughn said they can only rollover the funds for so many years and they can't rollover large amounts each time. I'm not anticipating there will be much if any rollover there she said.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if the reduction is mainly due to the declining program enrollment.

Mrs. Vaughn said the declining enrollment is part of it and part of it is that federal funds across the board are dropping.

Mrs. Connolly asked what the Title I funds are used for.

Mrs. Vaughn said the district is a Title I school-wide district which means that for the Valley View (VVCS) and Henry Wilson (HWMS) the funds can be spent across the programs targeted by Title I (primarily reading and math) for instruction, tutoring, instructional materials and some professional development.

Mr. Henry asked if this grant is only supplemental and can't replace local funds.

Mrs. Vaughn said any grant funding is considered supplemental to local funding.

Mrs. Arcouette asked if the robotics grant was awarded on Dec. 6 as stated on the projected revenues sheet.

Mrs. Vaughn said they received 2 grants, \$2,872 for HWMS and \$12,500 for FHS. The School Board accepted the HWMS grant as it was under \$5,000 and a public hearing will be held in January to accept the FHS grant. There is a possibility that it can be renewed next year but it is not guaranteed so I'm not including it as anticipated revenue for next year she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked for an itemized list of where the \$400,000 in Title I funds is used including the budget lines where the money is applied.

Mrs. Vaughn said that the grant has its own budget because these funds can't be co-mingled with the general operating budget funds. She said that the entire amount is not budgeted up front because the money is held by the Dept. of Education (DOE) and they have to apply for the activities as they become available through the year and if the application for the activity is approved the money is released.

Mrs. Connolly asked if this money comes in and has not been budgeted to be used anywhere.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is included in the amount of the overall appropriations as part of Warrant Article #3 for the general operating budget. She said the \$15,882,376 bottom line on the warrant is higher because they must raise and appropriate the full amount of what they anticipate spending including the food service and grant funds which are considered a wash because of the revenues that come in.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the \$400,000 grant pays any part of a teacher's salary.

Mrs. Vaughn said there are teachers and Para's budgeted in the grant that are not in the general operating budget.

Mr. Henry noted the \$12,000 robotics grant was \$2,000 more than the previous grants. He said the robotics program is going on now and asked how it is currently being paid for.

Mr. Vaughn said some fundraising was done for stipends and to run the current program.

Mr. Henry asked if the grant covers the stipends for the program.

Mrs. Vaughn said the grant provides a supplement to the stipends and the stipends line doesn't begin to cover the amount of time these people put in. During competition season they are there 2-3 hours most nights and sometimes 5-6 hours a night and all weekend she said.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for the total student enrollment for last year.

Mrs. Connolly said there were 860 students enrolled in 2018-19, 888 in 2017-18 and 924 in 2016-17 (includes Middleton students enrolled in grades 7-12).

Mr. Whitehouse asked if they are keeping the same level of Para's with the lower enrollment.

Mrs. Vaughn said the number of Para's has increased because there are more students who need one-on-one assistance with deeper needs and while the enrollment has declined those needs haven't gone away. We don't have Para's who are just helpers in regular education classrooms she said.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if there are more Para's in Behavioral Services or in Spec. Ed.

Mrs. Vaughn said there are more Para's paid under the Spec. Ed line. Most of our Spec. Ed.

Para's deal with some behaviors but they may not be assigned to Behavioral Services she said.

Student Services Director Diana DeNitto said if there is a student who is autistic they address the behavior but the behavior is the result of an inability to communicate because the child is non-verbal or has significant sensory issues then there will be a behavior that erupts as a result of the fact that the child can't communicate his needs effectively.

Mrs. Connolly asked if that child would be considered a Spec. Ed. student.

Mrs. DeNitto said the child would be considered a Spec. Ed. student and they are addressing a behavior as an immediate issue for a child who is a Spec. Ed. student.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if they could service the students' needs without this position.

Mrs. DeNitto said no.

Mr. Henry asked if Para's are assigned to kindergarten classes regardless of the Spec. Ed. needs.

Mrs. Vaughn said the population is such that they have assigned a Para to every kindergarten class as there is a need for one in each class based on the Spec. Ed. class load. They are not necessarily one-on-one Para's but they are covering Spec. Ed. needs in each class she said.

Mr. Henry noted the current enrollment is 826 students down from 860.

Mrs. Vaughn said the enrollments fluctuate and estimated that the enrollment would be down another 20-25 students next year based on the projected pre-school enrollment.

Mr. Henry asked if the enrollment was expected to go down enough to eliminate a classroom.

Mrs. Vaughn said it hasn't at this point but they could look at it if it could be done without cutting into the students' needs. She said they try to meet those needs in district and avoid out of district placements unless it is the best interest in meeting the needs of the child.

Mrs. Connolly said there are classrooms with as few as 14 students in them in the lower grades plus they have Para's in the room so there are 2 teachers in the room.

Mrs. Vaughn said there would be 2 adults in the room as both are not certified teachers.

Mrs. Connolly said that our population continues to decline but the budget keeps increasing. It seems to be going more to “behavioral” things where perhaps we should call Social Services instead of being a social service agency in the schools she said.

Mrs. DeNitto said that they do work a lot with Social Services because some families are struggling and the fabric of families is becoming stretched thin and it’s hard to address that. We have had some great progress but it doesn’t get fixed in a year and it has taken some kids 5-6 years to get to where they are now she said.

Mrs. Connolly said they are not a social service agency they are a school and the service provided should be education.

Mrs. Place said they are required by law to service these children.

Mrs. DeNitto said the schools have to take it on because the goal is to educate a child and part of that is to address the disruption that is part of living in a family struggling with addiction, death or homelessness. We do everything we can to get people beyond us involved because it is always better to have more people involved and we are not doing it alone she said.

Mrs. Arcouette said she was asked why the district’s Social Worker was doing home and wrap-around services and why this wasn’t being done by Social Services.

Mrs. DeNitto said if there is a concern about a student they would monitor that concern, meet with the family and give it time to see if the supports put in place help the family to rectify the issue. If that doesn’t work they report the issues to the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and if they decide to just put a note into the file they are saying that it doesn’t rise to the level where DCYF would become involved and they must continue to document what happens with the family. At that point we still have a child and a family in need so we ask our Social Worker and Counselors to begin wrap-around services like helping the family make the connection to community services and figure out their next steps she said.

Mr. Henry said the 1st-3rd grade class sizes are smaller than typically seen in an elementary school but if they eliminate one classroom it would go to 20 kids per class which is a large size for those grades. We have too many kids to cut a classroom but not enough to have 17-18 kids in each classroom which is the typical size he said.

Mrs. Vaughn said it depends on where the decrease in enrollment happens and it doesn’t happen in a way that it is easy to do that but doesn’t mean that it couldn’t happen.

Mr. Henry said we are told that smaller class sizes lead to better results and we have small class sizes now and asked if they have seen a dramatic change in the results.

Mrs. Vaughn said the results weren’t dramatic yet and the next step is to increase the teachers’ professional development time because research shows it has more effect on student achievement.

Mr. Henry asked if the Student Assistance Counselor is contracted with Community Partners.

Mrs. DeNitto said the counselors from the Community Partners program come from a separate

grant. She said the Social Worker is a contracted position through the Strafford Learning Center and funded by the Student Assistance grant.

Mr. Henry asked for the position that is not contracted.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Student Assistance Counselor works for the district and is grant funded. She said both positions were grant funded but there is no guarantee the district will be awarded the grant again and they are crucial to continue doing what has been done so far.

Mr. Henry asked if it is possible they could get the grant again.

Mrs. DeNitto said they are in the 3rd year of the grant she only expected to get for 1 year and nothing is assured.

Mr. Henry said the Student Assistance Counselor serves about 80 students and asked if that counselor could take on the role of a general Guidance Counselor for that case load.

Mrs. Connolly asked for the number of Guidance Counselors in each school.

Mrs. Vaughn said there are 2 counselors at FHS, 2 at HWMS and 1 at VVCS.

Mrs. DeNitto said the counselors are very busy all day and float to different schools so the students feel more comfortable with them as there is a greater degree of anonymity with them.

Mrs. Vaughn said the training is very different between the Student Assistance Counselor, Guidance Counselors and the Social Worker and there is no academic counseling through the Student Assistance program.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for the differences in the skill sets for each of those positions.

Mrs. Denitto said the Student Assistance Counselor has a background in community prevention, addictive prevention, mental health counseling and motivational intervention. Guidance Counselors do this also but in an academic way with a lot of peer mediation she said.

Page 3, Line 56, Supplies, Bus. Educ. - Gen. Ed. FHS (Entrepreneurship and Personal Finance)

Mrs. Arcouette asked for an explanation of this line.

Mrs. Vaughn said Entrepreneurship is about building a business and Personal Finance is required by the state and teaches students how to handle a checkbook, read a contract, etc.

Mrs. Connolly asked if all students are required to take this class.

Mrs. Vaughn said this component must be offered and there are a few upper classmen that are not required to take the class but the under classmen are required to take it. There is 1 teacher and 2 units offered per day per semester and it repeats in the second semester she said.

Page 5, Line 85, Text Books Gen. Ed. VV (\$2,242 proposed) – Mr. Johnson asked if he misunderstood that the Choose Love Enrichment Program would be at no cost to the district.

Mrs. Vaughn said the general curriculum has no cost but there are enrichment books that support the values of this program in a topic of the month format.

Mr. Johnson asked if there are any other costs associated with this program.

Mrs. Vaughn said potential costs not in this budget would be if they held assemblies and brought in a speaker which would be paid from a different line.

Mr. Henry noted this line is for all text books at Valley View.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct and this is included as a newer piece of this expenditure.

Mrs. Arcouette asked what text books needed to be purchased.

Mrs. Vaughn said text books are purchased every year because some are worn out or because a new curriculum has been adopted. She said the textbooks for the Choose Love Program are the reason for the \$1,200 increase in this line.

Mr. Henry asked if the consumable books are under a different line in the budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said consumables are under Lines 89-91 on page 6.

Mrs. Place asked if the VVCS Principal said these books are reading books and not text books.

Mrs. Vaughn said the reading books are in the classroom libraries and are part of the reading program.

Page 6, Line 88, Text Books, Gen. Ed. FHS – Mrs. Connolly asked if the entire amount in this line (\$2,020) is to purchase the Personal Finance books mentioned in the note.

Mrs. Vaughn said that amount is for those books.

Mrs. Connolly said that 20 copies of the books would be purchased and asked if they are sharing the books.

Mrs. Vaughn said they already have some of these books and this would be to purchase another set of the books. They are go-home books but are not to keep once the class is over she said.

Page 9, Lines 132-134, Insurance Buy Backs, Spec. Ed. – Mr. Johnson said the insurance buyback lines in the budget have been increasing but there has been no corresponding reduction in the health insurance costs.

Mrs. Vaughn said the School Board passed a policy that defined buybacks for employee categories not previously defined and that the insurance costs have increased and different employees are taking or not taking insurance each year.

Mr. Johnson asked what categories were added to the buyback program.

Mrs. Vaughn said the practice is covered in the **Collective Bargaining Agreement** for teachers, custodians and Para's and those employees who are not in a CBA are covered by a set number in the policy she said.

She said there has been an increase in the premiums and the buybacks are tied to a percentage of the insurance costs so there will be an increase there as well.

Page 17, Line 265, Health Ins., Athletic Director (\$14,202, prior year \$0) – Mr. Johnson asked if this is a new employee who elected to take insurance where the previous Directors did not.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the Athletic Director is a full time position.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is a half time position where this person is also half time Dean of Students at the high school and his health insurance is a 50/50 split on two different budget lines.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if splitting this benefit was a decision made by the School Board.

Mrs. Vaughn said that administrators receive health insurance benefits and the previous person

did not elect to receive health insurance benefits.

Page 19, Lines 300-304, Salaries, Summer School – Mr. Johnson asked about these lines that were formerly funded by Title I.

Mrs. Vaughn said they were able to fund summer school for this past year with a rollover of Title I funds but they were not anticipating having that rollover to fund the coming year. She said that Title I is for regular education summer school for students with a skills gap and we are looking to get them back on track. It is not part of the Extended School Year that is done through Spec. Ed. but there have been times when we have combined some of the programs so that students are meeting together but the teachers are paid from a different pot she said.

Mrs. DeNitto said the extended school year at VVCS will have a Spec. Ed. teacher that is connected to 1 or 2 classrooms that serve typical education students under Title I. The Spec. Ed. teacher would provide Spec. Ed. services to those students in that room and Title I provides the typical programming that you would expect to see in a regular day she said.

She said at Henry Wilson, the Spec. Ed. teacher is in charge for the entire 4 hours because there are fewer students that come for Title I services at HWMS so the program is more Spec. Ed. oriented there. The younger kids are working on classroom behavior and participation in addition to the academics so it makes sense to make them part of that larger classroom where in the 4th – 8th grades they understand this and are working on their IEP goals she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked how many weeks the programs last and if it is the same for both programs.

Mrs. DeNitto said both programs run for 15 days in July for 4 hours each day.

Mr. Henry asked if bus transportation was available for these programs and if so if it is only for Spec. Ed students or for all students.

Mrs. DeNitto said they are required to transport Spec. Ed. students but they have included all of the students for both programs.

Page 20, Lines 321-327, Social Worker & Student Assistance Counselor – Mr. Johnson said these 2 positions were previously grant funded and that loss of funding is anticipated resulting in a proposed \$161,000 increase to Social Services budget for salaries and benefits.

Mrs. Vaughn said they anticipate the loss of those funds and are looking at expanding the Social Worker position from 4 days a week to a full time position.

Mrs. Connolly asked if one of these positions is a contracted position.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Social Worker is currently a contracted position.

Mrs. Connolly asked why they are paying benefits for a contracted position.

Mrs. Vaughn said the benefits would be paid next year and are not being paid this year for the contracted person.

Mrs. Connolly asked why they wouldn't keep the Social Worker as a contracted position.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is becoming harder to contract for these positions because the need and the demand is great. She said if they are going to take on the position it makes sense to hire a full time person as opposed to piecing the services together to meet the needs of the district.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the salaries for the Social Worker and the Student Assistance Counselor were for 1 full time person in each position and if the benefits listed below the salary lines were for both positions.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct and it is listed this way because of the object codes required to be put into the budget.

Mrs. Connolly asked for the current salary for the contracted Social Worker.

Mrs. DeNitto said she believes it is \$56,000 for 4 days a week.

Mr. Henry asked why 1 extra day a week cost so much (\$68,500 salary proposed for full time).

Mrs. Vaughn said that they have looked into hiring someone and that is the going rate.

Mr. Henry said that is a lot of money for 1 (additional) day a week versus the status quo.

Mrs. DeNitto said the hours vary depending on the student and there is no a set number of hours in the current contract. If she were to come on full time there would be an expectation of flexible hours including some evening hours she said.

Mr. Henry said the contracted person is flexible like that 4 days a week now.

Mrs. DeNitto said if they renewed her contract for next year she could guarantee the salary would increase by 2%-4%.

Mr. Henry said 4% still doesn't come close to the salary proposed for 1 day a week.

Mr. Johnson said the projected revenue sheet shows the grant for the Student Assistance Counselor was \$100,000 a year for the last 3 years. He said with the grant going away and the district taking over the positions we're talking \$61,000 in benefits and additional pay for 1 day.

Mr. Henry said they were able to run the program for 4 days a week for \$100,000.

Mrs. DeNitto said the grant was \$100,000 each year for 3 years but it cost the district approx. \$142,000 and they were able to carry money over from the previous 2 years. This is the first year we had a Social Worker in the grant she said.

Mr. Henry asked if the Student Assistance Counselor is included in the teachers' CBA.

Mrs. DeNitto said the position is not in the CBA now and she did not anticipate putting it there.

Mr. Henry asked if the other Guidance Counselors are in the teachers' CBA.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are in the CBA and have teacher licensure that these people don't have.

Page 32, Executive Administration Services, Lines 532-537 - Mr. Johnson said at the School District budget presentation Mrs. Vaughn said the non-CBA administrators' salary increases would be 2% but the items listed on these lines range from 3% to 13%.

Mrs. Vaughn said some positions in the SAU office have changed and some of them have a different person in the position that came in with more experience and at a higher salary. The person holding the position in the prior year is no longer there and the person who came in had a higher salary and this is 2% increase on top of that. This also includes one-time payments negotiated by the board and the longevity for the Superintendent's Administrative Assistant where my previous Secretary didn't have longevity so it looks like a much higher jump she said.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for an explanation of the one-time payments.

Mrs. Vaughn said during her absence 2 administrators took on a tremendous amount of work and the board rewarded them with an increase higher than 2% and a one-time payment. She said she would get the specific amounts for the committee.

Page 48, Line 882, Salaries, Technology Director & Line 884, Salaries, Videographer – Mr. Johnson said these are existing positions that will get 5% and 4% increases and there was no replacement of personnel.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Technology Director is an existing position and last year after the budget was passed the board voted to increase her salary by 1% and this is a 2% increase over the increase she was granted last year. She said the 4% increase for the Videographer includes longevity which is included in the salaries of the non-exempt employees.

Mr. Henry asked if this will be the year that triggers the longevity for the Videographer.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Videographer has had longevity for a while and this is the first year for the change to where it is included in the salary line and not on a separate line for longevity.

Mr. Johnson asked if the longevity in the teachers' CBA is based on a percentage or a fixed fee.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is a set amount based on the number of years they have with the district.

Page 33, Line 540, Non-negotiated Increases, SAU (\$15,000) – Ms. Mitchell asked for the purpose of this line.

Mrs. Vaughn said this is for the one-time payments to the 2 administrators discussed earlier.

Ms. Mitchell said the note says the payment is for administrative services for May through August 2019-2020.

Mrs. Vaughn said the services were provided from May 2019 to August 2019 and covered parts of 2 different school years (school year ends on June 30).

Ms. Mitchell asked if this means they have already received the money.

Mrs. Vaughn said it will be done in the new school year (07/01/2020- 06/30/2021).

Mr. Henry said then this will be retroactive compensation.

Ms. Mitchell asked what would happen if it doesn't get done.

Mrs. Vaughn said the services have been rendered and that would be up to the School Board.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if the total to be paid was \$15,000 for 2 people.

Mrs. Vaughn clarified that is the total combined and they are not each receiving \$15,000.

Mr. Whitehouse said that is an additional \$7,500 each for 4 months work.

Mrs. Arcouette asked if that included any additional benefits.

Mrs. Vaughn this is a one-time payment and doesn't include benefits. She said it is subject to taxes and retirement deductions and becomes part of their wages.

Line 546, Retirement-BA, Curriculum Dir. SPED – Ms. Mitchell asked if this is a new line.

Mrs. Vaughn said under labor law the **B**usiness **A**dministrator, Curriculum Director and Special Ed Director are classified as teachers for the NH Retirement system and it had not been budgeted this way before. She said pieces of this were budgeted elsewhere and it wasn't at the full teacher amount as the previous BA was not a certified BA. We now have a certified BA who

qualifies under the teacher retirement system she said.

Line 537, Salary, SAU Bookkeepers – Mr. Whitehouse asked how many bookkeepers there are. Mrs. Vaughn said this includes bookkeeping for payroll, federal grants and accounts payable.

Page 34, Line 557, Salaries, Principal, HWMS – Mr. Squires asked about the 7.4% salary increase for this position.

Mrs. Vaughn said this is a new person in this position

Lines 569 - 571, Health Insurance, Principal's Office (7.5% increase) – Mr. Squires asked how many people are in each of the Principal's offices.

Mrs. Vaughn said this covers the Principals, Asst. Principals and Secretaries in each office and there are at least 4 people in each office.

Mr. Johnson said this line goes back to the previous discussion where you can see that the insurance buy backs have dropped but the insurance cost has increased.

Mrs. Vaughn said she will check into it.

Ms. Mitchell asked if the new HWMS Principal has more experience and was hired with a larger salary or if he is getting a 7.5% raise.

Mrs. Vaughn said when the 2% increase is added to the amount in his contract it is 7.4% more than the previous Principal was making last year.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for a breakdown of the new employees that received more than a 2% wage increase.

Mrs. Vaughn said they aren't receiving more than a 2% increase-the position is now paid at a different rate with a 2% raise on top of that. She asked if Mr. Whitehouse was asking for who is making what among the administrators.

Mr. Whitehouse said he would like it to include everything in the general operating budget that is more than a 2% salary increase.

Mrs. Connolly said in Line 557 the proposed salary is \$87,000 and that in the current year the person is paid \$81,000. She said this person is a new hire but the budget was based on the employee in this position last year. The new person came in at a rate higher than the \$81,000 and the number shown for next year is a 2% raise on this person's current salary she said. She said they chose 2% as a ballpark figure for budgeting purposes and it is for all non-CBA employees and includes anyone who is not a teacher, custodian or paraprofessional. That doesn't mean that everyone is guaranteed a 2% raise as some may receive more and some may get less depending on their performance she said.

Mr. Henry asked if the food service people are district employees.

Mrs. Vaughn said food service is a contracted service and they are not district employees.

Page 51, Line 912, Vacation Pay Severance – Mr. Johnson said this is a new line with a proposed amount of \$30,000.

Mrs. Vaughn said per the Dept. of Labor if someone leaves the district and has unused vacation days we have to pay them to the employee. She said this had not been budgeted so this line is

in case of that event.

Mr. Johnson said the Town has a line item in the budget for employee obligations and the Town Employee Obligations Capital Reserve Fund that is for long term employees that are grandfathered in under the original employee benefits plan which had unlimited vacation carryover as opposed to the current benefits plan that limits the hours that can be rolled over.

Ms. Mitchell asked if this money was being set aside in anticipation of someone leaving.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct and that it would come back to the town if it is unspent.

Mr. Henry asked for the amount historically spent for that purpose.

Mrs. Vaughn said she would have to get an answer for Mr. Henry. She said in the past there have been years where a number of administrators have left at once which tends to increase that amount because they are paid at per diem rates.

Mr. Henry asked if there is a limit to how much vacation time an administrator can accumulate.

Mrs. Vaughn said in most administrators' contracts its 20 days vacation and 10 days can rollover so they wouldn't be carrying more than 30 days on the books.

Mr. Henry said he would like to know how much was spent for this over the last 2 years and if a fund would be a better way to cover this where it may not be consistent from year to year.

Mrs. Vaughn said that 5 administrators left this year.

Mrs. Place said then the money would be tied up.

Mr. Henry said the money in a fund could only be spent for one thing and the \$30,000 in the budget could be spent on anything and it doesn't need to be raised every year if the money is still there.

Mrs. Place said Mr. Henry looked at it as if you give them the money they will spend it and that she looked at it as if it doesn't get spent it comes back to the taxpayers. This is a different thought process that isn't going to be resolved by this conversation she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked if administrators work year round.

Mrs. Vaughn said Asst. Principals work 240 days and the other administrators work 260 days.

Page 50, Line 904, Software Licensing - Mr. Whitehouse said that even though it is only \$10 each the Go Daddy and the Domain Hosting listed as expenses for this line are the same thing.

Mrs. Vaughn said she believes there is more than 1 domain and that she will check into it.

Mr. Henry said the \$10 is most likely to register the domain.

Public Hearing Date- Chairman Connolly said a Public Hearing on the School District budget is scheduled for Wed., Jan. 15, 2020 at 6 p.m. with a snow date of Friday, Jan. 17, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Resident Tim Brown asked if the warrant articles will be available for the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Vaughn said they should have them by then and if the Chair allows it questions could be asked about the articles but the committee would have already voted to recommend or not recommend them by then.

Mrs. Arcouette asked when the warrant articles would be available to the Bud Com.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are still working on the final numbers for the CBA's and the operating

budget which will need approval from the School Board at their Jan. 6 meeting and she will try to get them to the Bud Com by Jan. 15th .

4). Public Comment:

Mr. Brown said that they are asking to maintain the Social Worker and the Student Assistance Counselor positions within the budget because of a decline in revenue from the grant. He said in the past we talked about not rolling in grant funded positions into the general budget and a better way would be to put it in a warrant article and allow the taxpayers to define what they want in their education system and to decide if the program should continue.

He said he was not speaking on the merits of the program but about how the money is appropriated and if it should be in the general operating budget where most taxpayers won't see it or in a warrant article where they could discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the program and let the taxpayers decide if they want to continue it.

Mr. Johnson said the Bud Com can't draw up warrant articles.

Mr. Brown agreed but they can vote to zero out the line or send a consensus to the School Board saying we are not going to fund this as part of the general operating budget but we will consider our approval (recommend) or disapproval (not recommend) of a warrant article.

He said they are losing \$350,000 to \$400,000 in revenue every year and the taxpayers are picking up that money and when that money comes back they want to build a "yellow brick road" versus taking care of the taxpayer. The fair way is to let the taxpayers decide he said.

Mr. Johnson said this should be addressed at a School Board meeting because the budget was presented to the committee so now it's the Bud Com's budget and there is nothing they can do.

Mr. Brown then recommended and requested that the Bud Com zero out this line.

He said that the E-Rate program provides a rebate to make internet services more affordable for school districts and every year the E-Rate line is funded at 100% and when that money comes back it is suddenly unanticipated revenue. He suggested they review the unanticipated revenues section and if there is no line for E-Rate revenues to reduce it by \$50,000.

Mr. Brown said with what we expended last year we were able to fund \$250,000 in warrant articles and approx. \$900,000 was returned to the taxpayers. When you compare this year's adequacy aid to what we got last year including the \$900,000 we received in additional monies there was an increase of \$759,000 in adequacy aid over last year he said.

He said when the school district presented their proposed budget there wasn't much comparison of what was spent last year versus what was spent this year. He asked the committee to look at what was expended last year along with the recommended budget for next year and ask if they provided a decent service to our students last year at this cost.

Mr. Brown said that in regard to the grants and revenues RSA 32 requires that all money expended or proposed has to be discussed at the Public Hearing. Even if you make an appropriation if its purpose is not discussed you can't spend it he said.

Mr. Johnson said he believes the RSA says "discussed and/or disclosed" and as long as it is

disclosed on the paperwork available to the public they don't have to discuss it and that covers the disclosure part of it.

Mr. Brown said he would recheck the wording of the RSA. He said the Title I budget should come before the Bud Com so they know what they are voting for and to avoid a future legal challenge which will cost us more money than if it was done the right way the first time.

Mrs. Place said we're spending a ton of money in our schools and it's not to provide a decent education. I'm not saying we need to spend a ton more money but I don't think the appropriate response is to just keep it there and we should try to do better each year she said.

Mr. Brown said he had no problems with spending an extra \$4 million next year if we are going to be in the top 10 schools in the state but he didn't see the next step to getting better in this budget. I'm not against spending but I would like to see results he said.

Mr. Henry asked if they wanted to talk about suggesting a warrant article to the School Board for the proposed new positions taken from the grant while there is still time to do so given that after the Public Hearing the Bud Com may decide to reduce the budget by that amount.

Mrs. Connolly said that Ms. McElhinney could bring the discussion back to the School Board and tell them this is what we heard at the Bud Com and this is an idea for them to consider.

Mrs. Place said the School Board knows that those lines could be cut and if it is that important to them they could easily put in a warrant article and if it fails it fails.

Mr. Henry said the dollar amount in the article could be changed to make it ineffective.

Business Administrator Janna Mellon said the danger with a warrant article is "no means no" and if the voters vote it down we can't hire a Social Worker out of the budget.

Mr. Henry asked if the money stays in the budget as it leaves the Bud Com but there is still a warrant article on the warrant at Deliberative Session and if that's voted down the money that stayed in the general operating budget could not be used.

Ms. Mellon said her understanding is if they put a warrant article on for a particular purpose and the legislative body votes it down we have to wait 1 year before we could hire a Social Worker or a Counselor and can't take money from the budget for that purpose.

Mr. Johnson said they could not hire a Social Worker or Counselor out of the operating budget even if there is a line item for it in the budget.

Mr. Henry asked if that was so even if the voters approved the operating budget with that line item in it.

Mr. Johnson said that is correct. If the Bud Com voted to not fund those 2 lines the School Board has the authority to still hire for those positions as long as they find the money for them somewhere else in the budget as it is a bottom line budget he said.

5). Review of Minutes:

November 20, 2019 – Public Meeting Minutes- No errors or omissions

Motion: (E. Johnson, second Arcouette) to approve the minutes as written;

Discussion: Mrs. Connolly said the invoices were added to the minutes as requested by Mr.

Whitehouse at the previous meeting. She asked what the acronym "MRI" stands for. Mrs. Vaughn said it stands for Municipal Resources, Inc. and they provide various consulting services such as human resources, business office support and the investigation this summer. Mr. Johnson described them as a catch-all organization and the Town has used them in the past for Town Administrator support and bookkeeping. Mrs. Place said they are similar to a municipal temporary employee agency. Mrs. Vaughn agreed and that they are skilled professionals and a number of them are retired professionals that are now looking to work on a part time basis and will work with 1 school district or 1 town in a certain capacity for a certain amount of time. Mrs. Connolly asked if these people get paid mileage for traveling to Farmington. Mrs. Vaughn said it is part of the deal package.

Vote: The motion passed 10-0.

Mrs. Place asked if the default budget was available.

Mrs. Vaughn said she would e-mail a copy of the default budget to Chairman Connolly for distribution to committee.

6).Review School Reports:

All Funds Revenue Report – Page 1, Line 15, E-Rate Reimbursement - Mrs. Place said the E-Rate funds are always shown as unanticipated funds and asked if nothing is budgeted for this line. Mrs. Vaughn said they haven't budgeted anything because each year they're told it's gone away and they're not getting anything and then a small amount comes in at the end of the year so there is no way of knowing what they are going to get.

Mrs. Place asked if these funds only get paid out once a year.

Mrs. Vaughn said the payments are not made consistently and is not sure when it will come in.

Mrs. Connolly asked what these funds are spent on.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are put back into the general fund and used to supplement the internet, phones lines or other technology projects needed for the infrastructure.

Page 5, Line 85, E-Rate – Restricted – Ms. McElhinney asked for the purpose of this line.

Mrs. Vaughn said she would have to check on the difference between these 2 lines but she believes this line is for specific projects.

Expenditure Report – Page 3, Line 84, Supplies, Computer Software – Mrs. Arcouette said \$7,000 was budgeted for this line and that \$7,000 remains in the line.

Mrs. Vaughn said the software lines have been budgeted for licensing fees that don't all come due at the same time and some of this line was hit at the beginning of this month for the fee.

Mrs. Arcouette asked if this expense should be included in the technology budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said these lines deal specifically with the software for specific classes in the general education budget. She said there are others that come under the technology line that are for the district such as for the financial software and the switches for the server.

Page 5, Lines 117 down, Insurance -Mrs. Connolly said that the amounts in the Amount

Remaining column for some of the insurance lines show they are already overspent by about \$20,000-\$29,000.

Mrs. Vaughn said some of the lines were under budgeted and others were over budgeted and there will be line transfers to take care of that. She said they left it in the lines as they are to show that it wasn't budgeted where it needs to be and the transfers will be shared with the board to show where the funds were transferred to and from.

YTD Expenditure Report – Grants Special Revenue Funds – Mrs. Vaughn said there was a suggestion that they should be able to see the budget for revenue funds particularly for Title I funds and this is where the Title I budget lives. She said on page 2 it shows the Title I grant from 2017-18 and the existing budget lines for that grant. This grant is a shorter grant that doesn't run for 1 year and it overlaps from one school year to the next so that is why you see Title I listed more than once and the dates shown are the dates of the original application she said. Mrs. Connolly asked which line she would look at for the Title I budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said the '18-'19 Title I grant begins on page 8 Line 170 through page 10.

Mrs. Connolly asked about the way the money comes in for this grant.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are given an amount in a portal by the Dept. of Education, they write down their planned activities and costs and that goes to the state. The DOE checks our figures and if the activity is allowed under this grant they approve it or send it back for corrections. Once they receive approval they spend the money, report it to state, they reimburse us and it shows as revenue in this report she said.

She said if they don't spend the entire grant they would not see the full amount here. For example, the allocation might be \$20,000 but if we've only expended \$12,000 you are only going to see \$12,000 as the revenue here because we don't get it until we've spent it she said.

Mrs. Connolly said in accounting there are debits and credits and the revenue report is the credits and asked where the debits would be.

Mrs. Vaughn said the debit initially comes out of the general fund because they have to pay it up front and that generally it's done by purchase orders that shows the state they have obligated these funds and when the activity has been completed the state will pay us.

Ms. McElhinney said that is why they get this report every month as this is where it is tracked.

Mrs. Connolly said it is tracked here as an incoming amount and the expenditure report shows where it was expended.

Mrs. Vaughn said they can also tell the state that a portion of an activity didn't happen and rewrite the activity and use the unexpended money to fund the new activity if it is approved by the state. These grants tend to be fluid throughout the year and some of them are 7 month grants so to tell you in August how I'm going to expend it in 2 years is not possible she said.

Mrs. Connolly said she thought Title I grants were to help children bring up their reading and math scores.

Mrs. Vaughn said there are a lot of things that are allowable under Title I such as hiring teachers

or tutors, summer school, purchase materials to supplement instruction, provide training to teachers and Para's for supplemental instruction and transportation to summer school. She said there are 4 teachers who are hired through the grant that are not in the general operating budget and 1 teacher who is split between the grant and the operating budget and there is 1 Para each at VVCS and HWMS who are paid through the Title I program.

Mr. Johnson said that on page 8, Lines 173 and 175 it shows the salaries for 3 teachers at VVCS and 1 at HWMS under Title I.

Mr. Henry asked if they were awarded a \$20,000 grant where they would see that \$20,000 and what is remaining so they would know what is available to spend down.

Mrs. Vaughn said those go into the revenue sheet that shows their original allocations and she would provide a copy of it to the committee. She said that she can go into the state's grant portal anytime to see their allocations and see several years at once.

Mr. Henry asked what would happen if after an activity has occurred, they pay for it, submit for the reimbursement and the state finds a reason not to pay it.

Mrs. Vaughn said if they have already approved it they will pay it and if we didn't give them the right information on it we "eat" it. She said that the administrators handle the various grants but everything goes through her to be submitted to the state.

7). Town Reports:

Motion: (N. Johnson, second Whitehouse) to table the Town reports since they failed to provide the Actual and Budgeted Expense Report passed unanimously.

8). Old Business:

Ambulance Revenue – Mr. Whitehouse requested where the money was received from and where it went.

Mr. Johnson said they received all of the revenue sources for ambulance services from Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance and private citizen payments.

Mr. Whitehouse said he was looking for the revenues received for Mutual Aid calls.

Mr. Johnson said Farmington does not get paid for mutual aid to other towns.

Mr. Brown said if they transport a patient the patient pays for the transport.

Mr. Johnson said the other towns do not reimburse Farmington and the payment for the transport would be paid by Medicare, Medicaid or the patient's insurance and would be included in those revenue lines. If they do not get transported there is no charge and that is the problem the Selectmen were having with the excessive reliance on mutual aid by some towns instead of staffing their own depts. he said.

Mrs. Connolly asked if there was anything they could do about that.

Mr. Johnson said they were informed if they didn't mend their ways that we would start charging them for the calls and they have.

9). New Business: None

10). Any Other Business before the Committee: None

11). Next Meeting:

Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 6 p.m. - Public Hearing on the School District budget

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 6 p.m. – Presentation of the Town budget followed by the regular monthly meeting

Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 6 p.m. – School District budget workshop

12). Adjournment:

Motion: (Arcouette, second Mitchell) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 8:15 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Jodi Connolly, Chairman