

Town of Farmington  
Budget Committee Public Hearing  
School Budget & Warrant Articles  
Wednesday, January 13, 2021

**Committee Members Present:**

Jodi Connolly, Chairman  
Elizabeth Johnson, Vice Chairman  
Neil Johnson, Selectmen's Rep.  
Tim Brown, School Board Rep.  
Sylvia Arcouette, Secretary  
Joe Pitre  
Bob Morgan  
Chad York  
Samantha Place  
Blanche Tanner

**Committee Members Absent:**

Jeremy Squires, excused

**Others Present:**

Ruth Ellen Vaughn, Superintendent  
Brian Cisneros, Business Administrator  
Charlie King, School Board Chairman  
Mary Barron

**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). Public Hearing to Discuss the 2021-2022 School Budget and Warrant Articles:**

Chairman Connolly opened the Public Hearing at 6:02 p.m.

SAU 61 Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn said she gave the committee copies of the budget lines that compose the \$1 million freeze that the School Board has discussed, the Collective Bargaining Agreement that was ratified by the School Board and the Paraprofessionals Assoc. and the draft warrant that will include the names of the candidates for elected office, the operating budget and the remaining articles with the Bud Com's and School Board's votes to recommend/not recommend each article. She said the default budget was included in the committee's packets for next week and shows how they arrived at the number on the warrant. Mr. Johnson said Mrs. Vaughn said \$1 million and that he thought it was a \$1.25 million freeze. Mrs. Vaughn said at the Jan. 7 School Board meeting the board reduced it to \$1 million. School Board Chair Charlie King said the board initially thought they could comfortably reserve \$1.25 million and upon going through the details it looked like that would be cutting it too close and they revised their estimate based upon the staff's initial look at trying to get to the \$1.25 million. We reduced that number to \$1 million and gave some additional guidance to what we

thought we could cut or freeze to get to that \$1 million he said.

Mr. Johnson said when the Bud Com was told \$1.25 million it was a little premature when they were promised that that was what was going to happen.

Mr. King said some members, including him, think that it is still attainable but at this point they did not feel they could commit to that. He said upon deeper analysis there is too much stuff that is in flux to really lock that down.

Mr. Brown said the \$1.25 million presented at the previous hearing was based on a vote of the School Board.

Mr. Johnson said the statements made at that meeting were that it was being committed to and apparently that commitment only lasted 2 weeks.

Mr. Brown said the appropriation for this fiscal year is \$15,111,641 and the proposed budget before the committee includes uncontrollable costs which are \$248,874 in retirement increases, \$96,707 in medical increases and taxpayer authorized increases that include \$165,573 for the teachers' contract and \$12,484 for the custodians' contract.

He said with these increases included their requested monies is an additional \$44,404 in spending and the biggest deviation in what they are seeing in the tax impact is the loss of revenue. He said while Article #3 has a tax impact of \$3.14 with the School Board freezing \$1 million in this year's budget that will reduce it by approx. \$1.79 and have a true impact of \$1.34.

Mr. Brown said the legislature has not made a decision on the \$800,000 in Adequacy Aid that the district received last year and if we do receive it that will bring the tax impact down to below zero. He said if we don't receive it the board will continue to be fiscally responsible to mitigate the impact similar to what they saw last year when there was an impact of 85 cents per \$1,000 valuation and came in at considerably less.

He said the board's goal and direction on the freeze was clear and their goal moving forward is if they are going to take a loss based on revenue they would rather take the loss this year and suffer for 6 months and move forward to hopefully improve education in the next fiscal year. We'll leave it at what the Bud Com thinks is in the best interest of the taxpayers he said.

Ms. Tanner said in the list of frozen amounts they received tonight in Line 3, Salaries, Regular Ed. –Teacher VVCS it says the amount frozen is \$159,000 and asked how they were saving that amount and if it comes from positions that weren't filled.

Mr. Cisneros said some of it comes from positions not filled and some comes from when a senior person leaves and new person comes in there is a big savings in salaries and benefits.

Mrs. Place said Article #3 as written says \$3.14 per \$1,000 is the tax impact but the board froze \$1 million so the impact is really \$1.34.

Mrs. Vaughn said potentially yes.

Mr. Johnson said there is also a danger in that they are basing next year's savings on this year's budget and you are not making the changes in next year's budget to accommodate it. You're

actually crediting what wasn't spent this year so going in two years from now you're already up \$3 unless there are additional changes he said.

Mrs. Place said the big issue is the lack of revenue and they are just trying to stay ahead of the lack of revenue. It's not like they are "willy-nilly" spending and we're trying to hide it with leftovers it's just that we don't have revenue she said.

**Draft SY '22 Summary (under Budget Section in binders -12/01/20):**

**Page 1, Line #13 Salaries Regular Ed-Subs: Teacher-** Mr. Johnson said this line shows approx. \$6,000 was expended from 2019-2020 realizing this does not account for the remainder of the year. He said they are budgeting \$30,000 for next year and asked if they would actually spend \$30,000 this year.

Mrs. Vaughn said last year they had a very difficult time getting subs and this year one of the changes in the teachers' CBA is if a teacher gives up a prep period and covers for another teacher there is compensation at the sub rate for that time. She said she hoped not to have to spend that much but she also has to look at the amount of time teachers have for professional development contractually and for sick days and has to have a sufficient amount there in case this is one of those years where that happens. So the answer is yes and that is why she said.

**Page 5, Lines 122-126- Salaries, Para's Spec. Ed-** Mr. Johnson said Line 123, Spec. Ed for the high school is going up \$16,000.

Mrs. Vaughn said they had changes in some of the positions and if they hire someone with more experience the amount for that position goes up. We've also had additional students where we had to change because of how many we are required to be covering for and moved people from building to building she said.

**Page 6, Line 136, Health Insurance Spec. Ed, HWMS** – Mr. Johnson said this line increased by \$57,000.

Mr. Cisneros said this is caused by people being moved and by people changing their situation (get married, have kids, etc.).

Mr. Johnson said going from \$127,000 to \$185,000 is a significant increase.

Mrs. Vaughn said part of that is there were people in the wrong line and they were moved.

Mr. Cisneros said if he went up one line he would see that they also cut approx. \$68,000 and it was more of moving people to the right spot where they were supposed to go.

**Page 8, Line 222, Contracted Services –BEH SE** – Mr. Johnson said they took a bunch of lines and moved them to contracted services because the permanent employee is no longer there. Mrs. Vaughn said this happened this current year as well and the expenditures for those lines will show that. She said for HWMS and FHS they were anticipating hiring people for behavioral services and they were not able to do that. We have filled those positions through a contracted service and are looking to continue that into the next year because we have been able to build a program that is working. So the 1240 lines for salary and benefits for behavioral services for HWMS and FHS will cover those contracted services lines. When you look at the zero in one line

it was expensed in the other line as they cover one another she said.

**Lines 211(Behavioral Services Health ins.-FHS), 214 (Dental Behavioral Services HWMS) and 217 (FICA Behavioral Services HWMS)** - Mr. Johnson said these lines are not zeroed.

Mrs. Vaughn said the high school line (Line 211) shows a negative because that's no longer being budgeted and the \$416 in Line 214 and the \$3,800 in Line 217 need to be moved.

Mr. Johnson said Line 211 for \$8,200 should be zero and also needs to be moved.

Mrs. Connolly asked if this changes the bottom line for this section.

Mr. Johnson said the issue is they wrote it down and counted it twice and didn't delete it from the previous lines. He said it would change the bottom line for this section by about \$12,000.

**Page 14, Account Number 2140, Psychological Services** – Mr. Johnson asked for the function of the psychologist.

Mrs. Vaughn said the school psychologist does psychological and threat assessments, Spec. Ed, academic and behavioral evaluations for writing the Individualized Education Plans. She said she evaluates students district wide and all of the Spec. Ed students have to be reevaluated every 3 years and anything else that comes up throughout the school year as well. Contracting out those services is a great deal more expensive she said.

Mrs. Arcouette asked if any of the psychologist's work is covered by Medicare.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Medicare billing has shifted a lot in the last year or 2 because of the changes to the way in which they are allowed to bill. She said in order to bill to Medicare they have to registration and dual certification and not all of that can be claimed for Medicare and not all students qualify.

Mrs. Arcouette said she was talking about the students that do qualify and asked if they get any money at all back from Medicare.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are receiving some but it's very limited. She said at one point they were getting about \$150,000 and they might get \$40,000-\$50,000 back this year due to changes in the billing.

**Page 15, Line 397, Health insurance Occupational Therapist** – Mr. Johnson said this line has gone up \$10,000.

Mrs. Vaughn said this is either a different person or someone who has had a life event and is now picking up insurance they were entitled to in the past but wasn't using.

**Line 403, Contracted Services Physic** – Mr. Johnson asked if this line was for physical therapy.

Mrs. Vaughn said they contract through Strafford Learning Center for a physical therapist so we don't pay the benefits for the position and SLC does that.

Mr. Johnson asked if it is an hourly or fixed contract.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is mostly fixed and if they go over that amount it becomes hourly.

**Line 426, Course Reimbursement, Dist**- Mr. Johnson said this line has gone up \$4,700 this year and only \$2,200 was expended through November.

Mrs. Vaughn said that a lot of the teachers said with the way things went sideways this year

they weren't going to sign up for classes. She said she has had several course registrations in the last few weeks where they're planning to take classes in the second semester but she didn't know if they will get to that amount. I put out a survey asking teachers to let me know what classes they're planning to take by a certain deadline so I know how to budget and then people change their minds she said.

**Page 23, Line 667 System Maint Fire VVCS; Line 668 System Maint Fire HWS and Line 669**

**System Maint Fire FHS** – Mr. Johnson said collectively this has gone up significantly over what has been spent so far.

Mrs. Vaughn said part of that is due to a contract to maintain the fire suppression systems at all 3 schools and there was also some additional work done in the past few years and they are anticipating more work on the piping at VVCS and they are not sure if it will be a repair or replacement work.

Mr. Johnson asked if they are still having issues with the boilers at HWMS.

Mrs. Vaughn said they aren't looking at replacing them now and at 2 public hearings putting in electronic control panels were approved so the Facilities Director will have eyes on where things are with the system and that should help with the efficiency of the system.

Mr. King asked if the Fire Maintenance line was for the company contracted to do some additional work with the kitchen equipment.

Mrs. Vaughn said she thought they would be doing vent cleaning there to make sure that everything was good through the full system.

Mr. King said they had some additional expenses for cleaning and maintenance for fire safety on the duct work and asked if that was in this line or in another line.

Mrs. Vaughn said part of that was done this year and the next piece would come out of the maintenance and repairs line for the duct system.

Mr. King said the heating system upgrades were made because some additional control on when it cycled was needed as the system is old and runs all the time. Those repairs are coming out of a Capital Reserve Fund and depending on what the next government funding is we may be able to do some the system upgrades out of that money.

He said next year we will be looking for quotes for replacement or upgrades to the boiler system. We had a proposal from Siemens for a two fuel system and we didn't think that was the best idea and we are revisiting it as far as upgrading and keeping the system in good repair and any changes will be through a competitive bid process he said.

**Page 24, Custodial Supplies-** Mr. Johnson said there were a number of increases due to COVID cleaning and asked if they were being reimbursed as revenue.

Mrs. Vaughn said they may be but when this was written they were not sure they would be getting second or third rounds of funding. We received additional funds that had to be expended by Dec. 31 and the CARES Act will go through Sept. and we're not 100% sure what we're getting next year she said.

She said they received additional guidance today that with the next round of funding they will have broad latitude and these items could very likely be reimbursed. We're also being told we have to keep our spending within our general fund spending she said.

Mr. Johnson clarified that they couldn't use the federal funds to offset 100% of the expenses.

Mrs. Vaughn said they have to show that they spent as much as they have in the last 3 years and that this is over and above that.

**Page 25 Line 744 Salaries Bus Drivers** – Mr. Johnson said this line shows a \$110,000 increase over last year's budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said that the other lines for transportation show deficits and they budgeted it all under transportation instead of breaking it out under each of the different headings. She noted the budget for field trips and Spec. Ed. bus drivers are down.

Mr. Johnson said that category is down \$76,000 but that still leaves a \$35,000 increase.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are down 2 bus drivers and have not been able to fill the positions. She said they have no substitutes and right now the majority of in-person students are being driven by their parents. I have 4 big buses I can run because that's all the CDL drivers I have and those buses aren't nearly as socially distanced as we need so I'm going to have bring drivers in to do those additional runs she said.

Mr. Johnson asked if was that additional runs were needed or because the buses can't be run at full capacity.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is a little bit of both and they were doing runs all over the place and the out of district runs run at the same time as the in district runs so they need additional people to do those runs. She said there are 6 students being evaluated for Spec. Ed and potentially 4 more are moving into the district next week and that will increase the Spec. Ed lines again and a chunk of that is for transportation. We have some additional pieces coming down the line but I can't tell you exactly where it land she said.

Mr. Johnson asked for the reason they are combining Spec. Ed transportation with regular education transportation for bus drivers and salaries.

Mrs. Vaughn said they will still split it out as part of the costs for Spec. Ed.

Mr. Cisneros said they were doing it by function code and when he does the payroll he puts the total amount on the spreadsheet.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are still keeping track of it because she needs to track the Spec. Ed costs.

Mr. Cisneros said they would see that on the monthly updates as well.

**Page 28, Line 843 Non-Negotiated Increases** – Mr. Johnson asked if this \$60,000 is a new item.

Mr. King said the School Board has adopted an approach similar one the Selectmen have used to pay staff that are not in bargaining units. He said they earmarked a percentage of money based upon the employee receiving up to that percentage depending upon their evaluations for those people who don't fall within a collective bargaining group.

He recalled that it was up to 3% or 4% giving the board some latitude with people who have

made significant increases in their performance or taken on additional roles. He said they don't expect to fully expend the \$60,000 but won't know until they get through the evaluation period and looking at making sure we are competitive with some of the higher demand roles.

Mr. Johnson said there is a 2% increase already built into the salary lines throughout the budget and asked if this is money in addition to the 2% increase that is already planned.

Mrs. Vaughn said there is a 2% increase built into the salary lines and this would be a merit increase above the 2% and there is no guarantee for the additional increase.

Mr. Johnson said this is a little different than what the Selectmen have done because they are also building the 2% increase into the salary lines and this is over and above that and he wanted clarification to make sure that it wasn't being double counted.

Mrs. Connolly said in warrant article 3 it says the budget total is \$16,501,122 (\$15,671,683 general fund plus \$829,539 in grant revenues) and that she thought anything covered by a grant had to be in this budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said this is the general fund and the grants live in Fund 20 and as part of the monthly sheets they get a Fund 10 Report and a Special Revenues Grants Report and those all start with a 20 instead of a 10. She said they broke it out this year to show the number that matches the bottom line of the budget but we have to show the additional grants amount in order to raise and appropriate that amount. The grants are not raised through taxation and are revenues from the grant but I can't spend it unless the voters allow us to do that she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked if we are guaranteed \$829,539 in grant revenues.

Mrs. Vaughn said it means she would have the authority to expend up to that much and if she doesn't have it she can't spend it. She said if a grant doesn't come in but is replaced by another grant she still has the authority to spend up to that amount. But if it's unanticipated new revenue never seen before they have to have a Public Hearing to accept the funds and tell the public how they intend to spend the money she said.

Mrs. Connolly said the social worker in article 6 is not in the budget and asked if it was in the lines from last year.

Mrs. Vaughn said the position was formerly part of a grant and was grant funded as stated in the article.

Ms. Tanner asked for clarification on the estimated tax rate increase.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is \$3.14 per \$1,000 and that is shown on the bottom line of warrant article 3. She said if they are able to return \$1 million that is a difference of \$1.79 and when you subtract that from \$3.14 you get \$1.34.

Ms. Tanner asked if any of the members that have e-mail have received any questions from the public about the School District budget.

Mrs. Place said rarely.

Mrs. Connolly said last year she got a few but this year she hasn't received any questions.

Mr. Brown said they are receiving \$1.5 million in aid and they just received a brief summary of



what they may be able to spend it on and they hope to have concrete information by the Deliberative Session. He said as they are going through the warrant articles from the floor they may see motions bringing that appropriation down to zero if they can lawfully fund it out of the federal money.

Chairman Connolly asked for questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Pitre said he attended a seminar last night with the House Education Committee Chair and Vice Chair, the Commissioner of Education and other House members and they are aware of what is going on. He said they will get another briefing on Jan. 26 from the House Finance Committee about where the state is at and hopefully they will have money to spend. If we don't open up this economy we're all going to be in the poor house he said.

Mrs. Vaughn clarified that to date they have received about \$521,000 from the CARES Act and SPSRF. She said they've been told the next round of funding is likely to be 3-4 times something they have already gotten but they don't know which number that will be.

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Place) regarding the operating budget that lines 211, 214 and 217 be zeroed out for a reduction of \$12,452 passed 10-0.

Mrs. Vaughn said that the \$15,671,683 operating budget would now become \$15,659,231.

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Pitre) to move forward the \$15,659,231 to the Deliberative Session as the Budget Committee recommended school budget passed 10-0.

**SY2022 Draft Warrant – Article #3 Operating Budget** – to raise and appropriate \$16,501,122 (\$15,671,683 plus 829,539) and if the article fails the default budget shall be \$16,975,119.

Mrs. Place said if they have to go to the default budget they have to play by the default rules and they can't move funds.

Mrs. Vaughn said she would still have bottom line authority but there are some restrictions.

Mrs. Connolly said the \$15,659,231 number can be changed at the Deliberative Session.

She asked those members in favor of recommending this article as written to raise their hands. Nine members raised their hands and one member (Mrs. Connolly) was opposed.

**Article #4 Paraprofessionals Contract** – to raise and appropriate \$41,780 for the current fiscal year; \$41,780 for 2022; \$36,445 in 2023 and \$26,063 in 2024 in salaries and benefits. Estimated tax impact for 2022 is 7 cents per \$1,000 valuation.

**Motion:** (Arcouette, second Place) to recommend Article #4 as written;

**Discussion:** Mr. Johnson asked why Fast Day (4<sup>th</sup> Monday in April) is a paid holiday when the holiday doesn't exist (Colonial holiday abolished when MLK Day was created).

Mrs. Vaughn said it MA refers to it as Patriots Day and it is also known as Easter Monday and is the first day of April vacation. She said it's been in the books for years and in the other contracts which specifically said they got the days recognized as holidays by the district.

Mr. Johnson said he looked at the teachers' contract and didn't see it there.

Mrs. Vaughn said it's in the custodial contract and the teachers are salaried so they don't get paid holidays. She said it is in the handbook or the CBA of other hourly employees and the



Para's are hourly.

**Vote:** The motion passed 6-4 (Brown, Morgan, Arcouette, York, Place, Tanner- yes; Pitre, E. Johnson, N. Johnson, Connolly-no).

**Article #5 Conduct Special Meeting** – if Article #4 is defeated to authorize the governing body to call one special meeting to address the cost items only in Article #4.

Mrs. Connolly said there is no money involved with this article.

Mrs. Vaughn said the Bud Com only has to vote on the ones that involve money but in the past there has been a recommendation for all of the articles. She said the School Board made a recommendation on each of the articles and the Bud Com can choose whether or not to make a recommendation on the articles not involving money.

Mr. Johnson said the Supreme Court ruled last year that the School Board/Selectmen get to recommend/not recommend every warrant article whether its money or non-money, petitioned or not and the Bud Com can only make recommendations on money articles.

Mr. Pitre said RSA 197:6 conflicts with that and asked if there are any other money articles.

Mrs. Vaughn said there were no petitioned warrant articles and this is it for their warrant.

**Article #6 Social Worker** – to raise and appropriate up to \$68,500 to fund a contracted Social Worker which was previously a grant funded position; Tax impact is 12 cents per\$1,000

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second E. Johnson) to recommend Article #6;

**Discussion:** Mr. Brown said this was a grant funded position where the grant ran out and rather than put it in Fund 10 the board wanted to make it a taxpayer decision and do it as a warrant article. He said if they get further guidance these are some of the warrant articles they will be looking at to see if they fit in that category so they may see a decrease from the floor at Deliberative Session.

Mrs. Connolly asked if he was saying it was possible we may get the grant money for this position and then just zero out this article.

Mrs. Place asked if the article failed at Deliberative Session if they could grant fund it.

Mrs. Vaughn said “no means no” and they could not grant fund it. She said it would still have to go on the ballot if it's zeroed out before the session.

Mr. Brown said if they reduced it they would reduce it to \$1 and then they could fund the line.

Mr. King said they were giving the taxpayers the option to say if they want to continue with this position for this year and in subsequent years if the position is still needed it would be put in Fund 10. He said it would not be a warrant article every year it's just whether or not the taxpayers feel there's a need and the spending is justified.

Mrs. Arcouette asked Mrs. Vaughn to explain for the new members what this grant is all about.

Mrs. Vaughn said this position was in the Student Assistance Program grant that was supposed to be a 3 year grant and the district was fortunate to receive it for 4 years. She said they are entering year 5 and there is no promise of funding on the horizon so they are looking at doing it another way. This position works with students and their families who are facing a crisis or

transition to try to provide services they need within the community so the students can be successful she said.

She said this person has been instrumental with doing outreach and home visits to make sure the kids are still engaged and has helped with a number of things that have come up for families that don't fall under traditional guidance services. She has been the difference in getting the help those students need so they can maintain their education with us and get things settled so they can stay here instead of going to an out of district placement and it is a very needed position she said.

Mrs. Arcouette asked for the number of families this person has serviced.

Mrs. Vaughn said on an on-going basis she is working with 15-20 at any one time. She said they have had this service for 3 years and she has impacted about 70-80 families over that time.

Mrs. Connolly asked how many of these families are within the social services through the state as well so they have social workers that are from the state and now we have a social worker from the school dealings with the families too.

Mrs. Vaughn said the social worker helps to connect those pieces together and serves as a liaison between the school and the state aid. She doesn't take the place of something like Community Partners but would work with them to be the bridge back into school if needed. She said she didn't have the number for how many were accessing outside services.

Ms. Tanner asked if this is not approved at the Deliberative Session and there's no placeholder with \$1 in this budget it would not be funded if they got the grant.

Mrs. Vaughn said if this article were zeroed out at the Deliberative Session they would not be able to fund it even through grant funding.

Ms. Tanner said currently there is no \$1 in a line for this position in the budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said there is no money for this position in the budget that was put forward and it lives solely in Article 6.

Ms. Tanner asked if that could be done at the Deliberative Session.

Mrs. Vaughn said the budget in Article 3 could be raised by this amount.

Ms. Tanner said this type of position is extremely important and families have a lot of difficulties for a lot of reasons. I think as much help that we can give students and their families is extremely important and if I have to put another 12 cents on my taxes I'm willing to do that for this type of position. We need to support the families in this town and their children with all the help we can give them and I hope people will vote this through she said.

Mrs. Vaughn said the state system is so overwhelmed the waiting time for students to receive services if there is a referral is lengthy. I've seen it take from 8 to 14 weeks to get an intake and that's just the first meeting. If we have someone in-house who can help us start that process it makes a tremendous difference between success and failure for some of our kids she said.

Mrs. Arcouette asked why this wasn't put in the budget if they all think it is so important and really needed.

Mrs. Vaughn said it was because the School Board felt strongly there were several past positions where people have said you got a grant funded position, the grant runs out and then you just throw it in the budget. She said they were trying to make sure the people have the opportunity to say they value this position and make a separate choice apart from just including it in the budget.

Mr. King said it is a requirement of the board to justify this warrant article to the general public and they're going to Deliberative Session to make the case for why it's needed and to provide an opportunity for people to ask questions, to become better informed on it and feel comfortable enough to vote on it.

Ms. Tanner asked if the board members would speak to this at the Deliberative Session.

Mr. King said someone from the board or the staff would speak to it at that meeting.

**Vote:** The motion to recommend failed due to 5-5 tie vote (Brown, Morgan, York, Place, Tanner-in favor; Pitre, E. Johnson, N. Johnson, Arcouette, Connolly-opposed). The Bud Com does not recommend this appropriation 5-5.

**Article 7 – FSD Robotics ETF-** to establish a FSD Robotics Expendable Trust Fund and to raise and appropriate \$13,316 to be placed in the fund with funds to come from the 6/30/21 fund balance and to name the School Board as agents to expend from the fund. No tax impact.

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Arcouette) to recommend Article 7;

**Discussion:** Mr. Brown said he brought this motion forward because the robotics program has always been grant funded and it looks like they may lose the grant funding this year. He said it was a benefit to our educational system by providing a different mechanical or scientific course to the curriculum and they're asking if the taxpayers want to continue the program.

Mrs. Connolly said this is not in the budget.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct and this has been a grant program and this is establishing an expendable trust. She said the program is not running, they are not participating in competitions and the grant funding is non-existent this year. We don't know what will happen in subsequent years as some of the momentum has waned and we're looking to put this aside so we can run the program and can access these funds to make that happen she said.

She said it has been an incredibly important and robust program and the first year our students went to the competition the team got Rookie of the Year and in the second year they made it to the semi-finals at UNH. It's something I don't want to lose but right now it's in limbo she said.

Mrs. Connolly asked how many students the program serves.

Mrs. Vaughn said it serves approx.40 students with 15 students at the high school and about 25 students at the elementary (VVCS –grades 3-5) and middle school levels (HWMS-grades 6-8).

**Vote:** The motion passed 10-0.

**Article 8- FSD Building and Grounds CRF** – to raise and appropriate up to \$30,000 to be added to the previously established CRF with the funds to come from the 6/30/21 fund balance. No tax impact.

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second E. Johnson) to recommend Article 8;

**Discussion:** Mrs. Connolly asked what this Capital Reserve Fund covers.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is for the whole district and anything related to the buildings or the grounds. She said the CRF has a very open description and if they needed something for a ball field or repairs or additions to the buildings they could use these funds but couldn't use them to put a social worker in one of the buildings.

Mr. York asked if it was not for maintenance uses.

Mrs. Vaughn said it could be as it doesn't say it can't be maintenance but typically it is used for additional pieces or for something that had a catastrophic failure.

Mrs. Connolly asked for the agents to expend from this fund.

Mrs. Vaughn said the School Board is the agent to expend these funds.

Mrs. Connolly asked for the current balance in this fund.

Mr. Johnson said balance in the fund is approx. \$26,700.

Mr. Brown said the School Board held a public hearing and withdrew \$30,000 from this account to pay for the heating controls discussed earlier and the board's intention is to replace the \$30,000 they spent after the public hearing.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is not an over expenditure because it was also included in the amount for the roof warrant article and they didn't withdraw everything from that that they could have so it didn't go down as much as it looked like it would in that warrant article.

**Vote:** The motion passed 10-0.

**Article 9- FSD Bus CRF** – to raise and appropriate up to \$50,000 to be added to this previously established CRF with the funds from the 6/30/21 fund balance. No amount from taxation.

**Motion:** (Arcouette, second N. Johnson) to recommend Article 9;

**Discussion:** Mrs. Connolly asked for the current total in this CRF.

Mr. Johnson said there is \$112,800 in this account.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are due to purchase a bus potentially next year. She said the plan is to replace a bus at a cost of about \$80,000 and the 15 passenger van would cost about \$35,000. She said they have enough to do that now but they will need another bus in the next few years and they are looking to continue to build for that purchase rather than paying for leases on a rotating basis.

Mrs. Connolly asked what happens if they don't have \$50,000 in the fund balance.

Mrs. Vaughn said the articles are funded in the order they appeared on the warrant and if there isn't enough nothing would be put into the account.

Mr. Brown said there will be plenty of money there because they just froze \$1 million and they are hoping to have more than \$1 million at the end of the year. So they will be funded he said.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the School Board is the agent to expend funds from this CRF.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is correct.

Mr. Pitre said they should have a breakdown of the vehicle ages and the replacement schedule.

Mrs. Vaughn said they are scheduled to replace one bus now and in the budget transportation lines it gives you the years for each of the vehicles.

Mr. Pitre asked if they looked into the cost to lease purchase the vehicles.

Mrs. Vaughn said they have been spending an additional 5%-7% for the interest on lease purchases and the discussion a few years ago was to put this aside and have this for an outright purchase we would save that interest.

Mr. Johnson said this is a relatively new fund and was only established about 3 or 4 years ago to do away with the lease purchases because of the additional costs.

Mrs. Place said that was done with the Bud Com's recommendation.

**Vote:** The motion passed 10-0.

**Article 10 – Safety and Security ETF** – to raise and appropriate up to \$50,000 to be added to the previously established Expendable Trust with the funds to come from the 6/30/21 fund balance. No amount from taxation.

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second E. Johnson) to recommend Article 10;

**Discussion:** Mr. Johnson said this ETF was created last year so the first deposit would come from last July's fund balance and asked if that was accomplished.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is in the works.

Mr. Johnson asked if there is \$50,000 in this fund right now.

Mrs. Vaughn said the check has been cut and she will deliver it to the Trustees next week.

Mr. Johnson asked what the plan is for this fund.

Mr. Brown said the School Board was approached by the Oyster River School District who offered to sell their generator that would meet the needs at the high school for \$12,000. He said they received a donation of free transportation of the generator from Oyster River to Farmington and a commitment that any disruption of the pavement during the installation will be repaired free and the additional money over the cost of the generator is for the installation of the wiring into the building to code.

Mrs. Connolly asked if we currently don't have a generator for the high school.

Mr. Brown said the Town has one that is portable that they transport and connect to the building as needed but the school district does not own one.

Mr. King said the high school is a designated emergency shelter and there were past issues with getting the generator connected correctly. He said they don't have a firm quote on the installation cost and the estimate by the electrician who put it in at Oyster River seemed high and they plan to put the work out to bid. He estimated it could be \$15,000-\$20,000 or more.

Mr. Cisneros said the original estimate was \$30,000 but that is mostly because they would also have to build a pad to put the generator on in addition to the wiring.

Mr. King then that would be a permanent installation and they would be better prepared to be an emergency shelter if the power goes out. He estimated the cost to do this with a new generator would be \$110,000 to \$150,000 and the original installation of this generator at

Oyster River was \$117,000 and the costs have gone up.

Mr. Johnson said the cost for the generator at the Public Safety Building was \$90,000 as part of the original construction of the building and no retrofitting was required. He said his original question was what the fund is for.

Mr. Brown said that last year there was a proposal by the prior board to build an emergency roadway between the high school and Valley View in some undefined area where the road would go. He said that discussion went from a safety roadway to a safety and security fund that was established at the last Deliberative Session. He said the purpose is for anything to enhance the safety and security of the buildings and that could be an access road.

Mrs. Vaughn said she would like to see additional cameras installed and some additional security measures she didn't want to list publically.

Mr. Johnson recalled when the fund was established it was for safety and security and he didn't know if a generator falls under the category the fund was created under.

**Vote:** The motion passed 10-0.

**Article 11 – Lighting Upgrades-** to enter into a multi-year contract to upgrade the lighting in all 3 schools with the expenditures to be offset by energy savings

Mr. Johnson said this is not a financial question. He then asked what happened with the “little red schoolhouse”.

Mr. King said after some discussion at their previous meeting the board decided not to go forward with a warrant article asking taxpayers if they wanted the board to pursue restoration of that building to be done the following year.

Mr. Brown the board gave direction that the tally sheet for the frozen money in the fund balance is to go to the Bud Com every month.

Mary Barron thanked the board, the Bud Com and the community for coming together and working together. She said for many years she has seen contention and discontent and tonight she saw a great bunch of people that took the time out of their evening to come here and find a way to make this happen not only for themselves or one dept. but for the whole town. The fact that it only changed by \$12,000 shows there's a strong amount of trust between the boards and that's going to make it happen and I hope that this continues she said.

**Next Meeting:** Wed., Jan. 20 at 6 p.m. – monthly meeting and presentation of the Town budget

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Arcouette) to adjourn the meeting passed 10-0 at 7:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

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Jodi Connolly, Chairman