

1                   **CONWAY MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE**

2                                   Wednesday, January 13, 2021

3                                   Professional Development Center

4                                   Kennett Middle School, Conway, NH

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6 Chairman Jim LeFebvre called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The following Budget Committee  
7 members were present: Vice Chair, Peter Donohoe; Mike Fougere, Mike Laracy, John Colbath,  
8 Erik Dziedzic, John Edgerton, Bob Drinkall, Eric Corbett, Diane Ryan, Bill Aughton, Dave Jensen,  
9 Ellin Leonard, and Frank Jost. Also present, Lisa Towle, Recording Secretary.

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11 Excused: Sarah Frechette

12 **Mr. Fougere** led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

13 APPROVAL OF OUTSTANDING MINUTES: None

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15 CHAIR LEFEBVRE’S OPENING REMARKS:

- 16 • Reminder to go through the chair when speaking.  
17 • Only one meeting next week on January 21, 2021, which is the last meeting with the school  
18 covering warrant articles and further questions.  
19 • The default budget group will be meeting tomorrow, January 14, 2021 at 5:30 PM at the new  
20 town hall.  
21 • January 25, 2021 is a joint meeting in the Marshall Gymnasium with the select board for  
22 review of nonprofit proposals.  
23 • February 1, 2021 is the last meeting with the town and will be held at the Marshall  
24 Gymnasium.  
25 • February 10, 2021 is the public hearing and voting on the various budgets.

26  
27 SCHOOL BUDGET OVERVIEW:

28 **Mr. Richard, Superintendent:**

- 29 • Staff present remotely and available for questions; Jim Hill, Director of Administrative  
30 Services; Kadie Wilson, Assistant Superintendent; Lilli Gilligan, Finance Director; Jessica  
31 DellaValla, Project Succeed; Virginia Shrader, Director of MWVCTC; Dale Anderson,  
32 Director of Technology; and Pam Stimpson, Director of Student Services.  
33 • A sidebar agreement was ratified with the CESP for members to move to the higher  
34 deductible health plan that resulted in a \$373,733 savings.  
35 • The total budget presented tonight that reflects that cost savings is \$\$38,653,496.  
36 • This is a \$89,749 increase over the 2019-20 SY budget. The 2020-21 budget had a significant  
37 decrease due to the CEA switching to the higher deductible health plan.  
38 • The default budget has been provided to the committee this evening and can be discussed  
39 later.  
40 • The architect firm provided specs to the Conway School Board on January 11, 2021.

41 **Mr. Hill:**

- 42 • The school board voted to bid out the window project and hired an architect to develop the  
43 specs. The architect has had several meetings with the facility committee, measured every

44 opening and counted the number of windows. Monday, January 11, 2021 the architect  
45 proposed the estimated cost of \$1.3 million to replace the windows. Staying with the  
46 Strategic Plan the school board voted to bond the project over 5 years starting this summer.  
47 All bids will be received and reviewed by the architect with letter of recommendation being  
48 presented to the school board along with a final number that will be ready for the March 3,  
49 2021 budget hearing.

50 Questions:

- 51 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired if the vote was unanimous. **Mr. Hill** advised Joe Mosca voted no  
52 and Jessica Whitelaw abstained. **Chair LeFebvre** inquired of the reasoning for Mr. Mosca  
53 and Ms. Whitelaws votes. **Mr. Hill** noted Mr. Mosca has wanted to stick with an original  
54 proposal that was floated, and Ms. Whitelaw wanted firm numbers before voting.  
55 ➤ **Mr. Jensen** inquired of the interest rate on the bond. **Mr. Hill** advised based on his recent  
56 contact with the bond bank he was quoted 1.25% interest which was noted to be  
57 conservative. **Chair LeFebvre** inquired of the total interest cost over 5 years. **Mr. Hill**  
58 advised it will be approximately \$75,000.  
59

60 UNIT 8 – TECHNOLOGY:

61 **Mr. Richard, Superintendent and Mr. Anderson, Director of Technology**

- 62 • Technology has been a critical part of education during the pandemic. Conway is in a good  
63 place and has been keeping up with the needs. Changes to the budget are related to adoption  
64 and sequencing and increased bandwidth.

65 **Mr. Anderson:**

- 66 • There is an increase for plugins needed for PowerSchool the student data base program.  
67 • There is a \$170,000 increase to the budget for the purchase of 700 Chromebooks. This is year  
68 two of the catch up on the obsolescence of the Chromebooks. Several Chromebooks were  
69 purchased years ago and unfortunately that means they all expire at the same time. Meaning  
70 once the Google license expires the Chromebooks the software can no longer be upgraded.  
71 After this year there will be a 3–4-year rotation.  
72 • The other large increase is the \$10,000 annual cost for filtering subscriptions for the  
73 Chromebooks, which keeps the computers safe on and off campus.

74 Questions:

- 75 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** clarified the total Chromebooks being replaced is 1,700. **Mr. Anderson**  
76 noted this year district wide 700 Chromebooks will be replaced. The total number of  
77 Chromebooks available district wide will be provided later.  
78 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired of the benefit of the Chromebooks to young children. **Mr.**  
79 **Richard** explained the Chromebooks are a tool like a calculator, they are an assistive device,  
80 and an equalizer for the economically disadvantaged. Although, you cannot replace the face-  
81 to-face classroom, these Chromebooks are necessary. **Mr. Fougere** commented on his  
82 experience of his grandson’s knowledge and ability to use the Chromebook.  
83 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired of the cost for each Chromebook. **Mr. Anderson** advised the cost  
84 for 15” Chromebooks is \$282 per unit including the licensing. An additional feature is the  
85 ability to remotely manage devices, which is a savings in time.  
86 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired how the time before the system becomes obsolete. **Mr. Anderson**  
87 advised it is believed to be 4-years as the devices out living the licenses. **Chair LeFebvre**  
88 asked for a confirmation on that. **Mr. Anderson** will get back to him with an accurate  
89 answer.

- 90 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired if the devices have a value when they are obsolete. **Mr.**  
91 **Anderson** noted the district utilizes E Waste for compliance with proper disposal. There is  
92 no interest in the Chromebooks that are over 3 years old and even then, they are only worth  
93 \$5- \$15 each.
- 94 ➤ **Mr. Fougere** inquired if workshops will be provided for parents to gain an understanding of  
95 how to use the Chromebooks. **Mr. Anderson** noted his department does not have anything  
96 planned, however, it is in the strategic plan and the district will be implementing that.
- 97 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired if starting with the KHS computer repair line and going down 16  
98 lines if these are place holders. **Ms. Gilligan** advised the line items to have been consistent  
99 over the last 2-3 years and is exactly what is expected to be truly spent.
- 100 ➤ **Mr. Fougere** asked for future reports to have line numbers.
- 101 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired of the 37% or \$39,219 increase for the Office of Principal  
102 services. **Ms. Gilligan** advised that entire budget is the PowerSchool as previously discussed  
103 by **Mr. Anderson**.

104  
105 **UNIT 9 - MWVCTC:**

106 **Mr. Richard, Superintendent and Ms. Schrader, Director of MWVCTC**

107 **Mr. Richard:**

- 108 • MWVCTC is the first in the nation to be certified for the aviation program.  
109 • CTC is based upon individual programming with one teacher per program. The budget also  
110 includes supplies and equipment needed for each program. Additionally, there is a 60%  
111 guidance counselor.

112 **Ms. Schrader:**

- 113 • Contracted services for LNA, EMT, and STEM Aviation programs has increased by \$11,000.  
114 • Computer Science increased by \$4,700 for supplies, books, and software. This is a very  
115 popular program and is being expanded to include four additional programs.  
116 • New equipment and supplies are needed for construction trades to be compliant with State  
117 requirements.  
118 • Teacher education increased by \$1,200 for supplies and materials to build an outside  
119 classroom for the preschool.  
120 • There is an increase of \$3,400 for the National Technical Honor Society for students' fees  
121 and dues and an induction ceremony.

122 **Questions:**

- 123 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** asked for clarification on the \$9,425 and \$14,255 increases in salaries.  
124 ➤ **Mr. Richard** advised the numbers reflect a 2-year increase in salaries because of the CBA.  
125 The budget will stay the same until the CBA is approved.
- 126 ➤ **Ms. Gilligan** clarified the individual line items for health, dental, life, and workers  
127 compensation insurance have been zeroed out and rolled into a new budget line that  
128 represents the total cost of health (\$152,744 for teachers), dental, life, and workers  
129 compensation insurance.
- 130 ➤ **Mr. Colbath** inquired who certifies the aviation program. **Ms. Schrader** advised it is the  
131 Aircraft Owners Pilot Association that writes the curriculum and teacher training program  
132 which is vetted by the NH DOE.
- 133 ➤ **Mr. Colbath** inquired how many students are in the program. **Ms. Schrader** advised there  
134 the program is at capacity with 12 this semester and 13 next.

- 135 ➤ **Mr. Colbath** noted the program works with the airport in Fryeburg. **Ms. Schrader**  
136 confirmed there is a partnership with Eastern Slope Aviation Academy a 501:3c advisory  
137 committee. This academy was developed to provide opportunities to students interested in  
138 the aviation industry. **Mr. Fougere** noted this program is evidence of the \$10,000 given to  
139 Eastern Slope Airport is fruitful and provides students with the opportunity for a successful  
140 future. **Mr. Edgerton** noted the simulator is FAA certified and students can receive credit  
141 for flying a plane using it. The academy has one plane available for the students and is  
142 looking for another one, which is paid for through the academy. There are 3-4 people in the  
143 valley who own airplanes and are allowing students to use them. **Ms. Schrader** noted the  
144 program is looking to get a kit that will allow students to build an aircraft from scratch.
- 145 ➤ **Mr. Colbath** inquired if there were Running Start courses. **Ms. Schrader** explained the  
146 Running Start courses are dual enrollment programs where students can earn college credit  
147 while taking the course in high school. It is a national program, and the credits are accepted  
148 at many colleges and universities. Students are not required to do the dual enrollment and if  
149 the chose to it is a \$150 fee (cheaper than a college course). A Running Start teacher has a  
150 defined curriculum they must follow.

151  
152 **UNIT -10 – DISTRICT WIDE :**

153 **Mr. Richard, Superintendent:**

- 154 • Project SUCCEED is zeroed out as it is grant funded and through the article on the warrant.  
155 • Reviewed the departments and related expenses covered under this unit.  
156 • Mentoring has an increase as there are some staff that need a second year of mentoring.  
157 • Student loan is zeroed out as it was a previous incentive to get teachers here. When salaries  
158 were low the district would pay \$1,000 / year towards student loans, however, salaries have  
159 increased so this incentive is no longer offered.

160 **Questions:**

- 161 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** asked for information on how the mentorship program works. **Ms. Wilson**  
162 explained the mentor program is supplementally funded through grants and is a program  
163 where a new hire is paired with a trained mentor who is also a veteran educator. Throughout  
164 the year the mentor must have 20 hours of contact with the new hire which is individualized.  
165 Research shows an effective mentor program provides staff retention and quality educators,  
166 which his also part of the strategic plan. **Chair LeFebvre** asked if teachers self-identify the  
167 need for help. **Ms. Wilson** explained the situation can be self-identified or through the  
168 building principals and is handled on a case-by-case situation.
- 169 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired what the \$12,203 insurance liability property line under the school  
170 board covers. **Mr. Hill** advised it is the Conway School Districts share of the premiums  
171 through Primex. **Mr. Colbath** inquired if the premium increase is based on prior years or  
172 market value. **Mr. Hill** advised it is a combination of the claims across the state have  
173 increased and the specific district.
- 174 ➤ **Mr. Donohoe** inquired what the rental facility-moth ball space represents. **Mr. Richard**  
175 advised it is where the Rec Center is now. Any expenses would come out of the Town of  
176 Conway taxpayers' pockets whether it is through the town or school budget. The lease  
177 agreement notes any increases to the utilities and maintenance cost would be covered by the  
178 town.
- 179 ➤ **Mr. Donohoe** inquired when the last comparison of pupil and privatized transportation was  
180 done. **Mr. Hill** noted the study was done 7-8 years ago. Based on the geographics there is

181 no competition within 50 miles of Conway, and it is not cost efficient to switch. Mr.  
182 Donohoe inquired if the situation would be reevaluated. **Mr. Hill** advised the position of the  
183 consultant has not changed as there is still no transportation providers within a 50-mile  
184 radius. Further, the operations are looked at every year and this year is a perfect example.  
185 With only 27 students allowed per bus Ms. Shaw and the drivers worked diligently to redo all  
186 the bus routes to make sure there weren't more than 27 students per bus. **Mr. Colbath**  
187 commented on a media article indicating transportation would not be provided for high  
188 school students. **Mr. Richard** advised due to the geographics that would create a disservice  
189 to economically disadvantaged students.

190 ➤ **Chair LeFebvre** inquired if there is an opportunity to consolidate start times for CES and  
191 KMS. **Mr. Richard** advised this situation has been studied on many occasions, however,  
192 due to the geographics they would need to purchase additional buses and drivers. Mr.  
193 Colbath inquired of the status of bus drivers. **Mr. Hill** advised on Monday the school board  
194 hired a new bus driver for a position that had been vacant since September. The school board  
195 had previously approved a 2-phase sign on incentive. Additionally, there are 3 viable  
196 candidates enrolled in the latest class.

197 ➤ **Mr. Colbath** inquired who put the default budget together. **Mr. Richard** advised Ms.  
198 Gilligan prepared the default budget while removing the one-time expenses.

199

200 OLD BUSINESS: None

201

202 NEW BUSINESS: None

203

204 PUBLIC /MEDIA QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: None

205

206 ADJOURN:

207 **Mr. Fougere moved, seconded by Mr. Jensen to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 PM.**

208

209 Respectfully Submitted,

210 *Lisa E. Towle,*

211 Recording Secretary