

# CONWAY MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Professional Development Center  
Kennett Middle School, Conway, NH

Jim LeFebvre called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The following Budget Committee members were present: Chair Jim LeFebvre, Vice-Chair Peter Donohoe, Dave Jensen, Michael Fougere, Frank Jost, William Marvel, Erik Corbett, Bob Drinkhall, Terry McCarthy (left at 8:20 PM), Caitlin Hickey, John Colbath, Randy Davison, and John Edgerton.

Excused: Ellin Leonard

Unexcused: Stacy Sand

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mr. Colbath.

3. Approval of Outstanding Minutes (6/16/2021)

**Mr. Edgerton moved, seconded by Mr. Donohoe to approve the June 16, 2021 minutes as written. Motion Carries (9-0-4 [Mr. Marvel, Ms. McCarthy, Mr. Davison, and Mr. Fougere]).**

4. Discussion of need for Public Comments addition to CMBC procedures.

**Chair LeFebvre** stated based upon the increase of public comment at the School Board and no mention of public comments in the procedure manual the committee should come up with a liberal procedure. Further suggesting the following “We encourage people to attend the meeting and anticipate they will want to ask questions and make comments. We ask it is done with a civil tone while being respectful to the committee members and the audience. To allow everyone an opportunity to speak the first round of comments are limited to 5-minutes per person”.

Discussion:

- **Mr. Edgerton** noted the statute says it is the moderator’s decision.
- **Mr. Marvel** stated he didn’t feel the committee needed a public comment policy.
- **Mr. Corbett** noted the chair also can state when the meeting will end.
- **Mr. Davison** stated people have a right to come forward and speak and the committee needs to hear what they have to say.
- **Mr. Colbath** stated in accordance with NH Municipal Association Roberts Rules allow the chairman authority to manage public comments. NH R.S.A. 32 indicates the committee does not have to allow public comment except for the public hearing. Further suggesting the meeting start on a positive note and to have public comment at the beginning of the meeting. Upon reviewing the School Board’s proposed public comment policy, it is suggested to add the guidelines pertaining to how a speaker is expected to conduct themselves.
- **Mr. Donohoe** suggesting having a basic public comment policy in place, however, leave it to the Chairman’s discretion.

**Chair LeFebvre** revised the suggested language for public comments being, “we encourage the public to come to the meeting and public comments and/or questions are allowed and taken under advisement with a response provided at the next meeting”.

5. Final Approval of School Questions

- **Mr. Davison** noted although enrollment fluctuates, the enrollment as of October 1<sup>st</sup> is provided to the DRA for determination of per pupil reimbursement.

- 50 • After discussion, the request for SY 2023 Student and Staff Census information will be stricken.
- 51 • **Mr. Donohoe** was tasked with rewriting “G” to include the materials to be used and how it will be
- 52 installed.
- 53 • **Mr. Marvel** upon inquiry was tasked with adding wording to “B” regarding possible consolidation
- 54 within the schools.
- 55 • **Ms. Hickey** asked for information relating to how success is measured outside “COVID”. Chair
- 56 LeFebvre stated this would be part of “Student Success” and he will broaden the question.
- 57 • **Chair LeFebvre** explained the ESSER “COVID” money has allowed the School District flexibility
- 58 in hiring short-term staff and chrome books.
- 59 • The sending town agreement inquiry will be deleted.
- 60

61 6. Final Approval of Town Questions.

62 **Mr. Jost** stated many of the questions go beyond the current year and ask why things are “always” done  
63 that way and encourage rethinking opportunities. **Mr. Jensen** added the questions were generated as an  
64 opportunity to look at how the town can increase revenue or be more cost efficient. **Mr. Davison** stated  
65 there are many duplicative services within Conway, however, the town is happy with it and continues to  
66 fund the duplicative services. A discussion ensued around the six fire departments within the Conway  
67 district.

- 68 1. After discussion, the question remains with emphasis on forward thinking. Further, questions 1-3  
69 will be consolidated into one question.
- 70 4. **Mr. Jost** explained the intent of the question was to encourage comparison of the different  
71 approaches as one receives higher taxpayer support.
- 72 5. What is the competitive environment like compared to the previous negotiation period, will be  
73 added.
- 74 6. **Mr. Marvel** inquired why it is the towns responsibility to provide affordable housing and if it is  
75 within the committee’s purview. **Mr. Jensen** clarified the question relates to the town get out of  
76 the way of housing happening on its own. **Mr. Corbett** stated the housing affects the revenue  
77 side of the budget. Additionally, noting the Planning Board has been discussing this subject. **Mr.**  
78 **Davison** stated the “transient” population affects the school budget. Ms. Hickey noted the  
79 question is not asking the town to come up with a solution but inquiring if it has been explored.  
80 After discussion, the first part of the question will read will be eliminated
- 81 7. **Chair LeFebvre** stated Senator Jeb Bradley advised him 30% of the rooms and meals tax is  
82 returned to the town and 70% goes to the state. **Mr. Donohoe** stated the question relates more to  
83 how often revenue opportunities are reviewed by the Selectmen.  
84 After discussion the second part of the question will be eliminated.
- 85 8. After discussion this question will be tabled.
- 86 11. This question serves more as a reminder of what was previously presented and being looked for.
- 87 12. After discussion this question will be tabled.
- 88 13. This question will be modified to focus on the cost associated with contract services.
- 89 14. After discussion the first part of the question is being eliminated and capital reserve funds is  
90 being added to part two.
- 91 15. After discussion part two will be eliminated.
- 92 16. **Mr. Marvel** inquired why it is the towns responsibility. **Mr. Jost** stated this is a problem and it  
93 is going to cost money, therefore, it falls under the committee’s purview.
- 94 17. **Mr. Colbath** noted there is a broadband initiative utilizing arbor money.
- 95 **Mr. Jensen** noted another question is “What opportunities will be presented to the town due to the  
96 fact the population is in a different category?”
- 97 **Mr. Drinkhall** asked to add if the teller stations were to be included at the new town hall, is there  
98 reimbursement sought for the expense to remodel the area. Second question will there be increased  
99 expenses/revenue with the new properties owned by the town. Third question will the town incur

100 future expenses related to the new rec path as well as the potential skate park?  
101

102 **Mr. Corbett** stated the current town's budget is not on the website and was last updated in 2014.  
103 Similarly, the Budget Committee page has not been updated.  
104

105 **Chair LeFebvre** advised he would be finalizing the school questions and asked the subcommittee for  
106 the town questions to do the same. The plan is to present the questions to the respective entities by  
107 October 28, 2021.  
108

109 7. School Board Update, Mr. Davison

- 110 ◆ A summary of the focus and concerns related to the MWV Cooperative District Planning  
111 Committee were presented. Committee members were encouraged to attend the October 20, 2021.
- 112 ◆ The school was able to utilize the ESSER funds to cover the cost associated with the window  
113 replacement at KHS. Additionally, the ESSER funds plan to be utilized to replace windows at CES  
114 and JFS.
- 115 ◆ Over \$3.6 million will be returned to offset taxes because of utilization of COVID monies as well  
116 as the decreased operation cost because of closures due to COVID.
- 117 ◆ The lunch program although being worked on had a deficit of \$95,000.
- 118 ◆ The School Board approved returning \$228,000 to the town to offset taxes.
- 119 ◆ The biggest concern is the decrease in enrollment.
- 120 ◆ There is a lack of substitute teachers in the Valley and the board voted to increase the rate of pay to  
121 \$125/day. Unlike the increase in the bus driver salary, the increase in substitute pay has not been  
122 budgeted for.  
123

124 8. Selectmen Update, Mr. Colbath

- 125 ○ Still on summer schedule meeting every other week until December 1<sup>st</sup> when meetings will be  
126 every week.
- 127 ○ Reviewing the parking program.
- 128 ○ Dealing with lack of professionals to accept positions.
- 129 ○ In the process of recruiting a new town manager and hope to have someone in place 2-3 months  
130 prior to Mr. Holmes retirement.
- 131 ○ Working on maximizing the use of the Town Hall Annex.  
132

133 9. Public and Media Questions/Comments: None  
134

135 **Chair LeFebvre** encouraged members to attend the School Board and Select Board meetings to be in the  
136 know and make their presence known.

137 **Chair LeFebvre** stated Mr. Hounsell as the Chair of the cooperative committee, has asked to speak to the  
138 committee and provide an overview of the purpose of the cooperative committee and he could make that  
139 happen soon.  
140

141 10. Adjourn

142 **Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Fougere to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM.**  
143

144 Respectfully Submitted,

145 *Lisa E. Towle*

146 Recording Secretary