

**Town of Auburn
Budget Committee
April 21, 2014**

Members Present: Peter Miles, Don Delande, Bert Ouellette, Mary Beth Lufkin, Alan Villeneuve and Jim Headd.

Members Absent: Paula Marzloff and David Wesche

Others Present: Auburn School Board Members Anita Gildea, Keith LeClair and Mark Comeau, and Town Administrator Bill Herman

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

Approval of Minutes

Bert Ouellette moved to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2014 meeting with the correction of the following sentence on Page 1: Mr. Villeneuve indicated this will be the first time ever in his experience the School District~~has~~ been this stressed and won't have money to turn back at year's end." ***Seconded by Mary Beth Lufkin. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.***

Auburn School District Budget

Alan Villeneuve reported since the Budget Committee's April 14th meeting, the School Administration had further focused on the financial position projection for the Auburn School District, and reported the shortfall as of April 17th was \$85,174, which is a more manageable number than the approximate \$155,000 they were looking at a week ago. He further indicated that between the balance of \$77,000 in the Special Education Trust Fund and the unanticipated revenues totaling \$28,053, the School Board was going to have enough money to cover the \$85,000 shortfall. However, the School Board still needed to request authority to exceed the approved budget for the School District in order to achieve that result.

Mr. Villeneuve provided the Committee with a draft letter to NH Education Commissioner Virginia Barry ([click here to view attached copy](#)) that outlines the financial issues the Auburn School District has faced, steps that were taken to address some of the shortfall within budget constraints, and the final request to be able to exceed the approved budget of the School District by no more than \$28,000. The letter is to be signed jointly by the Superintendent of Schools, the Chairman of the Auburn School Board and the Chairman of the Auburn Budget Committee.

Mr. Villeneuve noted the School Board had already off-set nearly \$500,000 in expenses throughout the year by implementing various budget adjustments. But there is simply not enough funds within the budget to make up for all of the issues the School Board had to address. He expected a motion to potentially utilize all of the remaining balance of the Special Education Trust Fund will be approved at the School Board's April 22nd meeting. But, in order to exceed the bottom line of the approved budget of the school district, the School Board needs to seek support of the Budget Committee and approval from the Department of Education Commissioner.

Mary Beth Lufkin asked what assurances the Budget Committee has that mechanisms will be in place to prevent this type of situation – a lack of timely communication or notice – from happening again in the future. Mr. Villeneuve indicated the School Board is having that discussion with the administration, but also noted warnings were expressed early in the school year and during the most recent budgeting process.

Bert Ouellette felt the school district's only recourse lies in the annual review of the Superintendent of School when the joint SAU Board from Candia, Hooksett and Auburn meets. Mr. Villeneuve emphasized that the problem was not caused by the Superintendent.

Mrs. Lufkin asked what would happen if the Budget Committee did not approve this request to exceed the budget. Mr. Villeneuve felt it would cause problems for those we are trying not to harm. The School Board would not have a lot of areas within the budget to cut without having a direct impact on the students between now and the end of the school year. He felt things like custodial staff hours, office staff hours, extracurricular activities and the like would need to be looked at, and no one is looking to do that sort of thing. He indicated he felt the School Board has conquered a very significant overage, but needs help to make it to the final goal. He did agree with the members of the Budget Committee that overall, the relaying of the information on this topic has not been handled well or as timely as all parties would want.

Mrs. Lufkin noted while she was driving with four boys to a baseball game recently, they were talking about the budget shortfall and actually had some pretty good ideas about how to make up some of the shortfall. She suggested the School Board may want to tap some of their student body for ideas moving forward.

Mr. Villeneuve moved the Auburn Budget Committee support the request of the Auburn School District to the NH Commissioner of Education to make an emergency over expenditure of its fiscal year 2014 budget by an amount not to exceed \$28,000. Seconded by Mrs. Lufkin. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Budget Committee Chairman Peter Miles signed the letter to Education Commissioner Barry to certify the vote of the Budget Committee.

Adjourn

Don Delande moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 PM. Seconded by Mary Beth Lufkin. A vote was taken; all were in agreement, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.