

Final Approved
HOLLIS/BROOKLINE COOP BUDGET COMMITTEE
September 21, 2009 Minutes

- Members Present: Steve Pucci, Ray Valle, Forrest Milkowski, Dan Peterson, Doug Davidson.
- Members Absent: Lorin Rydstrom, Greg d’Arbonne, Greg McHale.
- Guests/Public Present: Anne Dumas, Kathy Kirby, Marie Degulis, Jill Russell

COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION:

MEMBERSHIP	E-MAIL/MAIL
Steve Pucci, Chairman	sdpucci@earthlink.net
Greg McHale, Vice Chairman	H: greg.mchale@gmail.com
Greg d’Arbonne, Secretary	H: Gdarbo6844@aol.com W: Gdarbonn@systems.textron.com
Dan Peterson, School Board Representative	DanJPeterson@usa.net
Doug Davidson	rangerfund@charter.net
Forrest Milkowski	ForrestMilkowski@earthlink.net
Lorin Rydstrom	Lorin.rydstrom@fctg.com
Ray Valle	delv@tds.net

1. Committee Chairman Steve Pucci called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM.
2. Chairman Steve Pucci opened discussion about the various emails that had been passed around by Budcom (BC) members during the week just previous as they related to the School Board (SB) Professional & Support Staff contract negotiations. The general consensus appeared to be that the BC wants to have formative discussions within the BC so it can provide guidance/input to the SB in regards to the impact of the Contract Negotiations on the Coop budget. As it relates to tonight’s agenda, Chair Pucci and the BC informal verbal consensus was that it best to forgo these planned non-public discussions as three members of the BC were absent and until we had the chance discuss when these non–public items could best be rescheduled.
3. Chair Pucci opened up the Public Input part of the meeting by both welcoming and complimenting members of the public in attendance and mentioning that he thought this was both unprecedented and hopefully a good trend for the future.
4. Anne Dumas (Brookline) requested that the BC meetings be taped/televised to better facilitate communication with the Coop public.
5. Marie Degulis (Brookline, Co-Pres of the Coop PTSA) also requested that a viable alternative to taping/TV was to at least record the audio of the meetings for basically the same reason and also so this information could be better reported to the PTSA.
6. Kathy Kirby (Hollis) expressed her concern that the recent budget audit for 2008/09 revealed that the budget had a surplus of ~ ½ Million dollars. Ms. Kirby thought it important to understand which line items were not expended and how would these excesses of funds be used. In response, Chair Pucci stated that these unspent funds are considered an “Unreserved Fund Balance” and that this surplus “goes back to the taxpayers of the Coop” as the

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beginnings of the 2009/10 Coop Budget Funds. Ray Valle added that the job on the BC is oversight and not the particulars of how budget funds are spent. Ms. Kirby further expressed her desire for a “best practices” approach in regards the future management of over funded/unspent line items and how these items might be further budgeted and cause unnecessary budget creep. Chair Pucci added this topic would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

7. Jill Russell (Co-Pres of the Coop PTSA) stated that in the future “We anticipate coming to the” BC meetings and that we are looking forward to asking questions to facilitate communication of information.
8. Chair Pucci asked if there were any further remarks from the public attendees and seeing none, formally closed the Public Input at 7:59p while reminding those in attendance that further remarks/questions were welcome.
9. The next discussions centered on how the BC can best craft a framework and provide guidance to the SB for the Contract Negotiations and 2010/11 budget. Chair Pucci brought BC attention to the several budget documents that he had forwarded the previous week via Email. These data points that were part of the overall budget of \$18,875,795 for 2008/09. It was noted that the increased Warrant for the Support Staff proposed by the SB increased the 08/09 budget \$43,833 thus totaling \$18,919,628 which was passed at the March 2009 Coop District Meeting. Following, discussion focused on: the other key budget areas of Energy, Transportation, Expendable Supplies and the finalized budget numbers with the closing of the 08/09 budget on June 30, 2009. Dan Peterson mentioned that the SB had taken back the \$25,000 originally given to ‘Project Progress’ before the books were closed for 08/09. No explanation was provided for this turn of events.
10. In highlight, the 08/09 Coop Budget closing progressed as follows:
 - \$777,959 = 08/09 Funds remaining at ~ school academic year end
 - \$147,000 = Encumbered funds to be spent through June 30, 2009
 - \$630,959 = budget surplus, aka “Unreserved Fund Balance” (UFB)
 - \$ 25,000 = “Project Progress Funds” the SB took back, returned to UFB

\$655,959* = Total Unreserved Balance at 08/09 books closing, June 30.

* 3.467% unspent Vs. the \$18,919,639.00 total budget, including Warrants.
11. Forrest Milkowski noted that the Unreserved Balance of \$655,959 would affect the tax impact for the budget year 2010/11, along with any other revenue, grants or aid that might come in.
12. The BC discussion then focused on separating non-reoccurring budget items from previous budgets as we look forward to 2010/11. As an example, Chair Pucci stated that based on his earlier discussions with Dawna Duhamel, Dawna stated that the professional salary needs for 08/09 were over budgeted and that this delta part should be adjusted and looked at as non-reoccurring for 2010/11 planning purposes. This illustrated that the BC should be sure to ID any unexpended and non-reoccurring expenses, noting the above as well as key areas of commodity expendables (Elec, fuel, etc.). Dan Peterson relayed the concerns of the SB in

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regards to the non-reoccurring budget items as they relate to employee benefits (Dan stated that the SB noted that these benefits were mis-modeled and in excess of \$307K overall) but also that there was an historically unusual excess of unpaid leave on 08/09 so we should be cautious as we look to ID these deltas and be prudent as we craft a new budget.

13. The next topic of discussion was the progress of the BC “Champions” collecting needed data for BC analysis, most notably from SPED Director Bob Kelly. BC SPED Champion Forrest Milkowski stated that his requests to Mr. Bob Kelly on behalf of the BC remain unheeded and that he had not gotten the necessary information delivered to him from Mr. Kelly in prep for tonight’s meeting. Doug Davidson mentioned that this has been a chronic and unacceptable problem for years in regards to the SPED Department lack or delayed response or the incompleteness of data Mr. Kelley delivered (e.g., never totaling his columns of numbers, which would better illustrate costing specifics for SPED). The result is the BC cannot perform its analysis in as timely a manner as needs dictate. This on-going problem results in unnecessary delays and is keeping the BC from important discussion in regards to planning, SPED budget impact and recommendations. Doug D. recommended that Mr. Kelly reread the minutes of the Spring 2009 SB/BC joint meeting where Attorney Drescher made clear comments on the law stating 7 days is the limit on the delivery of information requested by the BC. Chair Pucci said that he would assert our needs with the Administration regarding SPED and Mr. Kelly.
14. Further general discussion related to SB contract negotiations and how to provide guidance to the SB, came to the floor; general comments/topics of discussion that the BC noted included the following:
 - Given the state of the national economy, that amongst others, the Brookline Teachers, the State of NH Employees, Teamsters and the UAW have made serious concessions in their most recent rounds of contract negotiations. These concessions provided for the likes of: reductions in salary, healthcare and retirement contributions of the employer as well as significant reductions in headcount.
 - Considering the discussions thus far and noting that three BC members were absent, Chair Pucci asked for a preliminary and informal straw poll of BC members in attendance in regards to: “The BC recommends a Zero % increase or less, for the Budget Year 2010/11.”
 - The informal tally was either 4-1 or 5-0 with Forrest Milkowski expressing some concerns at going into the “less” realm, but felt that the discussion should be entertained.
15. Chair Pucci noted the following requiring follow up and future action for our next meeting:
 - The need for a Medical Plan Update
 - Securing the SPED data from Mr. Kelly
 - Moving forward, how to best publish the BC minutes, noting Ray Valle will be setting up the Yahoo site as part of the BC minutes publishing
16. Steve Pucci again thanked the members of the public for their input and then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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17. Forrest Milkowski so moved, Ray Valle 2nded. Vote 5-0 to adjourn at 9:35p.

Respectfully submitted, Doug Davidson. Sub- Secretary