

HOLLIS/BROOKLINE COOP BUDGET COMMITTEE

September 15, 2008 Minutes

- Members Present: Steve Pucci, Doug Davidson, Lorin Rydstrom, Dan Peterson, Forrest Milkowski
- Members Absent: Greg McHale, Ray Valle, and Greg d'Arbonne
- Guests/Public Present: None.

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 Forrest@Market-Advantage.net
Lorin Rydstrom	Lorin.rydstrom@fctg.com
Ray Valle	delv@tds.net

1. Committee Chairman Steve Pucci called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.
2. Steve Pucci asked Forrest Milkowski take the minutes.

Directional Strategy: Steve Pucci handed out an updated version of his Budget Committee Summary. Forrest asked for an explanation and purpose of the Summary and specifically if the Summary was to be used as a template in setting the budget. Steve explained that the document was centered at defining the role and purpose of the Budget Committee and to set the direction and strategy for the Committee. Lorin asked if "Quality of Education" was under our "Purview" as a Budget Committee to be define. He stated that the role of the School Board is to define and oversee Quality of Education. Steve answered that it is our responsibility to judge the areas as to their value. Doug stated that the Budget Committee "Needs to watch/manage Budget Creep." As a Budget Committee we need to how items are evaluated and funded. Dan stated that in the "Guiding Principals" section that "D" (*Enable some flexibility in the budget for teachers/Admin to "trial" new ideas for quality improvement.*) was not related to the budget and should not be included in the Summary. Steve agreed. Forrest and Dan both stated that "E" (*Moving towards Performance or Merit-based rewards systems for determining employee pay increases will enable greater success in achieving our objectives.*) should be removed as well as this is something that the School Board negotiates and the Budget Committee is not currently a part of overseeing. The group agreed that even if this was not in the BudCom summary, it will come up in the contract negotiation discussions between the BudCom and SB.

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- a. **Motion:** Forrest made the motion that the document "Subparagraphs "D" and "E" under the paragraph "Guiding Principals" be removed. Dan Peterson seconded the motion.

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- b. **Vote:** 4 in favor of the motion, none against, 1 abstained. The motion passed.
- c. **Motion:** Doug? made the motion that the document now be approved as a summary for the BudCom committee. Steve seconded the motion.
- d. **Vote:** 4 in favor of the motion, none against, 1 abstained. The motion passed.

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3. **School Board Minutes** – Steve gave an overview of some comments made during the last School Board meeting regarding the “Volume of Data” that the Budget Committee is requesting of the Administration. Steve stated that he has 90% of what he asked for and that in his opinion the “Matter is closed.” Also, Steve stated that based on the published SB minutes from their last meeting, they suggest that the SAU office was using the BudCom data request as “justification” for hiring two additional people in the SAU office. All BudCom members agreed that no additional people should be hired, and that we would address data request issues brought up from the SAU office as they occur. Steve then discussed the methodology of data analysis should be consistent between the various committees, boards, and administration. He also stated that “We should develop target areas” prior to the Budget Workshops that the School Board will be conducting. Doug stated that we have “Ample time to position the school districts energy requirements for submission to coop energy brokers.” Steve asked that Dan keep the Budget Committee informed as to the Budget Workshop meeting schedule and that the Budget Committee can actively participate in the workshops. A discussion on the High School expansion then ensued as to whether the subject would be on the agenda for the next School Board meeting. It wasn’t specifically on the agenda that was circulated ; however, an agenda item called NEASC recommendations was shown.

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4. **Target Areas** – Various target areas were identified of which individual BudCom members have interest in understanding current spend, and/or discussing possible options with SB/ADMIN/SAU. These included: Contract, SPED, Energy, Transportation, Facility Services, Supplies, Books, and Foreign Language. Per data requested by Ray, Steve mentioned that the Foreign Languages program has a budget of approximately \$700,000 as provided by the SAU office. Ray is evaluating various cost/benefit options for the district to continue or enhance the foreign language program.

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At 7:15 Dan Peterson had to leave the meeting to attend an SAU Board Meeting. There was not a quorum of the Budget Committee and the Meeting was adjourned. Members of the Committee remained to discuss issues.

Steve stated that as a part of the BudCom process, there would also be discussion on any budget line item that increases by 10% or \$1000 above previous year as described on the BudCom budget strategy process summary, item E. Forrest stated that in Steve’s Budget Strategy Summary that under the Section “The Process” subparagraph “E” (*We have no intent to “micro-manage” the School Board and Administration; however, if any proposed budget line item is greater than 10% or \$1000 above previous year, the BudCom will request an explanation/rationale for the increase, a description of the measurable quality education benefit, and what options have been evaluated to maintain this line item.*) was not reasonable. He further asked if this was something that Steve expected the Administration to identify or if the Budget Committee was going to determine these areas. Forrest also stated that the Budget Committee could very well on its own find these areas and not burden the Administration with this task. Every year the Budget Committee is presented with the entire previous year’s and budget year’s budget. In the information is a complete analysis by line

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item as to the budgeted and actual along with the percent increase/decrease as well as a comparison to the forecasted budget. Forrest stated “The Budget Committee can easily find this information on its own.” Multiple conversations ensued which basically concluded with (a) Dan already stated in a previous BudCom meeting that the SB already received a “line item budget status” report each quarter that shows approved, actual, and delta. The BudCom would simply like a copy of this same report each quarter. (b) Receiving a “3 inch binder” of hardcopy data is unrealistic for analysis. It would take an enormous effort to type in the data from this publication. We believe the budget is being generated in an excel soft copy format before the published book is created, and we would simply request the Administration to provide a soft copy of the budget that shows last year’s budget line items, and this year’s proposed budget. This would enable simple data analysis.

Steve told Dan that he would like the Budget Committee to have input on the contract negotiations. He stated that he would like to have the negotiation team attend a Budget Committee meeting possibly in October. He then asked the Committee members to email their ideas and questions to him.

Steve asked that the Budget Committee meet with the Administrators; Tim Kelley, Pat Goyette, and Bob Kelly. Forrest stated that the administrators usually present their budgets to the School Board in October and that it would be best if we met with them before they presented their budgets. Steve agreed and assigned the following:

Tim Kelley – Doug to contact and set up a meeting

Pay Goyette – Steve to contact and set up a meeting

Bob Kelly – Forrest to contact and set up a meeting

Dawna Duhamel – Steve to contact and discuss energy & transportation and other areas where Dawna is directly involved in determining the budget amounts.

5. **Next Meeting** – Steve will try to schedule the Negotiators to attend. Forrest will try to get Bob Kelly to attend.

Date: October 20, 2008

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Hollis Brookline Coop Middle School, Teacher’s Lounge

Respectfully submitted,

Forrest Milkowski
Acting Secretary