

TOWN OF JAFFREY
Jaffrey, New Hampshire
Select Board Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2022

Chairman: Franklin W. Sterling, Jr.

Selectmen: John E. Belletete, Kevin Chamberlain

Town Manager: Jon Frederick

Staff: Administrative Assistant Zola

JRDS Members: Superintendent Ruben Duncan, John McCarthy, Marcea Belletete, Charlie Eicher

A. Call to Order - 10:55am

B. Discussion - JRSD Budget Request

The Jaffrey BOS requested a meeting with School Board Members to discuss the current budget request from the school district.

The concerns of the BOS are:

1. There is an increase in staff, despite the reduction of 130 less Rindge students
2. The tax impact of this budget and warrant articles on the Jaffrey tax rate is huge

Last year's budget was \$26,768,736

This year's budget is \$27,530,232

Default budget is: \$26,988,493

The BOS would like to see a budget similar to last years amount with the warrant articles being decreased. Many Jaffrey residents will not be able to pay the increased school tax rate as it's a huge increase in one year. If there was any way to revert to the previous year's budget or remove/reduce some of the warrant articles that may be easier to gain approval. Chamberlain would like to make the motion to amend the budget at the deliberative session as a private resident of Jaffrey, not on behalf of the BOS.

Duncan explained that if the default budget passes, there would be staff cuts, bussing cuts, Building Trades would be cut, Athletics may have to resort to Pay-to-play and extracurricular activities would be decreased or cancelled.

Eicher explained that they did review all line items and the proposed budget is the lowest rate that the district can provide quality education to Jaffrey-Rindge students. They would like to present the current budget to voters and let them decide on the proposed or default budget. The pandemic is causing an increase in costs for staffing for the elementary schools due to student behaviors, cleaning and sanitizing, air filtering devices & masks. In addition, there are no surplus funds to draw from this year. The apportionment is still a valid formula. The exodus of 130 Rindge students is increasing Jaffrey's share.

They were able to save costs on the Bussing contract, and health insurance. The Teachers contract was discussed due to its impact as a warrant article. The district has the lowest starting salaries in the area and cannot compete with surrounding towns and with a teacher shortage, they will be unable to attract new teachers without the proposed contract.

There are a lot of infrastructure items that came up this past year that needed to be addressed and future projects that need to be done due to the age of the buildings. They would like to keep the warrant articles in place. Sterling suggested talking with the DOE to see if there are and reallocation of grants funds that may help to pay for the HVAC units that need to be replaced in order to keep the mold issues under control and to purify the air for the student's safety. Marcea Belletete stressed the importance of trying to keep the students learning in the schools to decrease the impact of the mental/social/emotional issues due to remote learning. The district has done a great job with the pandemic model trying to maintain in person schooling and supporting students remote learning.

The District members discussed the maintenance budget and other warrant articles explaining how some items did come in lower, but other exceeded the budget. But all in the proposed budget items are necessary.

Duplicating services was also discussed regarding sports activities and the Recreation Department and Library. Cost can be decreased by not duplicating services. Eicher wanted the BOS to know that the School District has been frugal in all their requests and has decreased their tax rate for 3-years now

The School Board would like to work with the Select Board and appreciates their input regarding the budget.

C. Adjournment

On a motion by Belletete, seconded by Chamberlain, the meeting was adjourned at 12:24pm.

Submitted:

Attest:

Judith A. Zola
Administrative Assistant

Franklin W. Sterling, Jr.
Chairman

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