

Kearsarge Regional School District
Joint School Board/Municipal Budget Committee Meeting
 September 14, 2023 - 6:30 pm
 Kearsarge Professional Development Center
 165 Main Street, New London
Open to Public

I. Call to Order	The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
II. Pledge of Allegiance	Ms. Turner led the Pledge of Allegiance.
III. Roll Call	<p>Present for the School Board: Ken Bartholomew, Emma Bates, Arthur Bobruff, Ben Cushing, Eric Gregoire, David Keith, Kyle Lombard, Alison Mastin, Kristen Schultz.</p> <p>Present for the Municipal Budget Committee: James Bibbo, Luke Gorman, Patrick McGowan, Robert DeFelice (via Zoom), Robert Hemenway (via Zoom), Michelle Kendrick, Richard Anderson.</p> <p>Winfried Feneberg, Superintendent; Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator; Beth Perkins, KREA Representative.</p> <p>Absent for the Municipal Budget Committee: Tom Schamberg, Lyndsay Harkins,</p> <p>Absent: Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent; Owen Blood, Student Representative; Adara Boucher, Student Representative.</p>
IV. Approval of Minutes	<p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2023 Joint School Board Meeting as written. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 7-0-2 (Mr. Bartholomew and Ms. Schultz abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Gorman made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2023 Joint Municipal Budget Committee Meeting as written. Ms. Kendrick seconded. The Motion carried 7-0-0.</i></p>
V. Reports of Administration	<p><i>Superintendent's Report – Winfried Feneberg, Superintendent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Superintendent apprised the Boards that he gave a presentation before the State Board of Education about the opening of the new Bradford Preschool. He noted that the Prager U financial literacy course was again on the agenda and that the Board approved it as an approved “Learn Everywhere” opportunity. Supt. Feneberg noted that given that the State Board has now approved the course, the District has to accept the course as an ELO should a student choose to request credit. <p><i>KREA Representative – Beth Perkins, KREA Representative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Perkins stated that she didn't have much to report, but noted that the 5th graders did a great job at the September 11th Patriot Day Services at the High School.

	<p><i>Student Representatives Report – Mr. Bartholomew on behalf of Owen Blood and Adara Boucher, Student Representatives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bartholomew stated that Mr. Blood and Ms. Boucher had athletic conflicts and were unable to attend the meeting. He read the below report sent from Mr. Blood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Boys’ soccer away match against Berlin. ○ Girls’ soccer home match against Berlin. ○ Cross Country away meet against Belmont. ○ Field Hockey home match against Steven’s. ○ Clubs are starting up including Sustainability and Robotics. ○ ELO's including Leaders in Advocacy and Tissue Regeneration have had their first meeting this week. ○ Student Council has adapted a new meeting style incorporating Robert's Rules of Order.
<p>VI. Public Comment</p>	<p><i>Mr. Bartholomew opened the meeting for public comment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public comment. <p><i>Mr. Gregoire made a motion to close public comment. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>VII. New Business</p>	<p><u>2024-25 Proposed Budget Presentations</u> <i>Facilities – Brett Paré, Director of Facilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Paré thanked the Board for their support over the year stating that the Facilities Department was able to accomplish a lot. Mr. Paré discussed increases in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the contracted services line due to the outsourcing for certain janitorial services, ○ the maintenance water and sewer line for the increase in septic pumping costs, ○ the maintenance snow removal line for the shoveling of roofs, ○ the equipment repair line to account for the equipment being used for snow removal, ○ the Kearsarge Learning Campus boiler maintenance line to begin the process of replacing the current oil boiler with a propane boiler and the removing of the underground oil storage tanks to replace with propane tanks, and ○ the capital improvement lines for engineering and architectural fees to determine what work needs to be done to the buildings in the District, to complete structural improvements at Simonds, and to improve safety at Sutton. • Mr. Bartholomew asked about the Capital Improvement Engineering and Architecture line. Supt. Feneberg stated that the Facilities committee will

be meeting next week to work on determining a path forward for the District's facilities. He discussed with the Board a more comprehensive, District-wide approach, for capital improvement projects, rather than the previous concept of getting a bond for only the renovating of the High School.

- Mr. Bartholomew asked about the boiler project for the Kearsarge Learning Campus, noting that though the estimated total cost is \$1.2 million, the budget only contains \$245,000.00. Mr. Paré stated that the project will be a phased approach, beginning this year by completing prep work for the propane fields and upgrading the electrical system to accommodate the new boilers.
- Mr. Paré discussed the paving and sealing lines that will be used to add pavement in Bradford to accommodate the increase in parking need due to the new Preschool and to pave at Simonds following the installation of the new sprinkler system that will require a portion of the pavement to be dug up.
- Mr. Bartholomew asked about the future facility needs of the District, asking Mr. Paré what else is needed that isn't in this budget. Mr. Paré noted that the replacement of the roofs throughout the District, the full boiler project at the KLC, fixes to aesthetics, and window replacement are not in the budget. He stated that what's in the budget is what is absolutely needed to ensure there is no interruption to school. Mr. Bartholomew requested a copy of the capital improvement plan for the next meeting.
- Mr. Lombard said that he saw a lot of shell-shocked faces noting a proposed increase of 48% to the facilities budget, a 90% increase over the last three years. Mr. Bartholomew noted that a large portion of that increase over the last year was for High School repairs that would have been a part of the High School Renovation project had the bond been passed. The Superintendent noted that the District is having to ask more and more whether certain things are still fixable. A number of parts are not available for the current equipment and at times, if it is available, it takes 90 days or more to receive the part.
- Mr. Anderson expressed his concerns that projects completed in the past that were said to increase efficiency have not yielded a decrease in costs. He stated that a 48% increase year-after-year is not sustainable.
- Mr. Anderson asked whether playgrounds are regularly inspected. Mr. Paré stated that the playgrounds are inspected by the site leader at each building on a monthly basis. He also explained that back in 2017 Primex came out and inspected the playgrounds and are scheduled to do the same this year. Supt. Feneberg noted that the New London playground was marked as deteriorating in the 2017 inspection. Mr. Anderson asked

about the possibility of taking the damaged bridge down. Mr. Paré stated that he wouldn't be comfortable with the Facilities Department dismantling playground equipment. He expressed that he would rather be something there than risk a student falling from the hole where the bridge was.

- Mr. Anderson expressed concern that the District needs to be more creative in ways costs can be cut. Mr. Paré stated that there are only so many ways the District can be creative in replacing things like boilers and roofs. Mr. Anderson stated that he didn't see any decreases reflected in the budget from the District upgrading to LED lighting. The Superintendent discussed the electric lines, noting that the electric lines in the budget have stayed stable rather than seeing the steep increase as a result of increasing electricity costs. He stated the LED project has continued to save the District money.
- Mr. Bibbo asked if any of these projects could be spread out over a few years. Mr. Gorman asked whether the costs would inflate over time expressing concerns about the rapid increase in construction costs.
- Mr. Bartholomew expressed concerns that 80% of the cost of the boiler project for the KLC is not included in this budget, noting that once progress on this project begins, the District is committed. He discussed rolling the costs into a bond. Mr. Paré explained that every boiler room in the District has passed its useful life. Mr. Bartholomew discussed the need to role as many of these costs into the comprehensive maintenance plan as possible for a bond.
- Mr. Bibbo discussed the septic systems at the schools, stating that regardless of the age of these systems, if they are in working order there's no reason to replace them right away.
- Ms. Schultz expressed that she would like to see the Facilities budget prioritized, stating that every item in the budget can't be a priority. Mr. Paré expressed that he felt anything that's related to systems that allow the District to have school is a priority. Mr. Paré stated that very little in this budget is a "want."
- Mr. Anderson asked about the estimated cost of the New London playground. Mr. Paré stated that it is estimated to be around \$500,000.00. Supt. Feneberg stated that he has been discussing the project with other Superintendents in the area who have replaced playgrounds in their Districts. Mr. Anderson stated that though some elements of the playground are end-of-life, there are other elements that are still in reasonably good shape. Ms. Bates noted that one thing that needs to be considered when replacing a playground is whether every piece of equipment is insurable.
- Mr. Gorman discussed the fundraising for the playground, stating that he

doesn't think the \$150,000.00 in the budget for the playground is enough skin in the game to attract donors. Ms. Collins discussed how the \$150,000.00 figure came about and the research that went into determining that number.

- Supt. Feneberg stated that he thinks what everyone has heard is that they'll go back to the drawing board on the playground and come back with a more concrete plan.
- The Superintendent explained these budgets are not padded with lower priorities that can just be cut, expressing that he doesn't believe that is productive or fair. He stated that these budgets are the District's best attempt to tell the Boards what is needed. He explained that there are other Districts that prioritize their budgets on a 1 to 3 scale and by the time the budget process is concluded, all the 3s have been cut. Ms. Schultz expressed that she doesn't view prioritization as a means to just have a section to cut.
- Mr. Gregoire reminded the Boards that the overall increase listed for the budget in its entirety is 6.99%. Mr. Bibbo stated that last year the increase was 8% and that was the first year that it was over 3-4%.

Technology – Barbra Turner, Director of Technology

- Ms. Turner presented the Boards with the proposed Technology budget, discussing increases in the contracted services line as software costs have increased and the replacement computers line for the replacement of projectors with interactive flat panels.
- Mr. Anderson asked how the flat screens are different from what the District currently has. Ms. Turner explained that the panels allow students to interact with the screen physically unlike the current projectors.
- Mr. Schutlz asked if all the projectors will be replaced in this budget. Ms. Turner noted that this budget contains funds for 50 panels for the Middle School and High School. She stated that the following year she would want to replace the remaining projectors at the Middle School and High School as well as the elementary schools.

Special Education – Larry Elliott, Director of Student Support Services

- Mr. Elliott discussed the student population noting that the population has decreased by about 41 students from last year; however, the total number of special needs students increased by 26.
- Mr. Elliott presented the Boards with the Special Education budget, noting that the budget is an overall increase of 5%, discussing increases in:
 - the wages line due to step increases for staff and the added

positions for the new preschool and

- the out-of-District placement line.
- Mr. Elliott also noted that the operating portion of the Special Education budget decreased by 19%.
- Mr. Lombard asked about the number of students who are homeschooled within the District, noting that document presented lists 16 seniors being homeschooled. Supt. Feneberg noted that the District doesn't know that the homeschooling numbers are completely accurate as families only need to notify the District once that a student is being homeschooled and doesn't need to advise the District when they move out of District or move to a private school.
- Ms. Kendrick expressed concerns about the increase in special education students despite the decrease in overall student population. Mr. Elliott stated that the District is now right around the state average for special education students; however, has been below the state average in past years. Ms. Kendrick asked in the numbers are increasing because the District has been able to identify needs of students better. Mr. Elliott stated that was correct and the district has been able to intervene earlier for students who need intervention. Ms. Mastin noted that there are some people who move in District just because of the special education program at Kearsarge.
- Mr. Anderson asked if there is anything the District needs for special education that it doesn't currently have. Mr. Elliott noted that a few years ago he asked for a social worker which led to the District having 3 full-time social workers. He stated that he would ask for another social worker as the District cannot provide services for all Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs. Mr. Elliott explained that the social workers do a significant amount of work outside school hours helping families within the District.

Food Service – Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator

- Mr. LeBoeuf presented the Board with the proposed Food Service budget noting that 98% of the budget is funded by federal dollars. He explained that the District uses Fresh Picks as a third-party vendor for food services.

SAU Budget – Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator

- Mr. LeBoeuf presented the Board with the proposed SAU budget. He noted that there is one new budget line that was inserted to improve school safety by providing classroom safety kits for each classroom. Additionally, he noted an increase in the cost of criminal background checks.

Federal/State Budget – Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator

- Mr. LeBoeuf presented the Board with the proposed Federal/State budget. He noted that this budget includes Title 1 and Title 2A projects and funds.

Purchase Recommendations – Brett Paré, Director of Facilities***The Lawson Group – Mold Remediation KRHS***

- Mr. Paré presented the Board with a purchase recommendation for mold consulting/remediation plan for the High School from The Lawson Group in the amount of \$13,331.31.

Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the purchase recommendation for mold consulting/remediation plan for the High School from The Lawson Group in the amount of \$13,331.31. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

Cintas District Wide Laundry Services

- Mr. Paré presented the Board with a purchase recommendation for District wide laundry services from Cintas in the amount of \$44,656.56. He noted that the District does not have adequate washers and dryers for laundering rags used by the Facilities department for cleaning.
- Ms. Perkins asked if this would also be used for the nurses who sometimes have medical laundry associated with students. Mr. Paré stated that this would not include any laundry from the nurses' offices in the District. He noted that, with the exception of Sutton, the schools have other washers and dryers that are used by the nurses.

Ms. Schultz made a motion to approve the purchase recommendation for District wide laundry services from Cintas in the amount of \$44,656.56. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

ARC Mechanical – Bradford Preschool Plumbing

- Mr. Paré presented the Board with a purchase recommendation for plumbing at the Bradford Preschool from ARC Mechanical Contractors in the amount of \$20,004.91 and a budget transfer in the amount of \$20,005.00. Mr. Paré noted that the work has been completed; however, the vendor wasn't able to provide a quote prior to the work being completed.

Ms. Schultz made a motion to approve the purchase recommendation for plumbing at the Bradford Preschool from ARC Mechanical Contractors in the

	<p><i>amount of \$20,004.91. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Masin made a motion to approve the budget transfer in the amount of \$20,005.00. Mr. Keith seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Merrimack County Customs – Bradford Preschool Stairs and Ramps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Paré presented the Board with a purchase recommendation for stairs and ramps for the Bradford Preschool from Merrimack County Customs in the amount of \$18,450.00 and a budget transfer in the same amount. He noted this purchase recommendation is a result of the recent State Fire Marshall review of the new preschool. <p><i>Ms. Bates made a motion to approve the purchase recommendation for stairs and ramps for the Bradford Preschool from Merrimack County Customs in the amount of \$18,450.00. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 7-0-2 (Mr. Bartholomew and Mr. Keith abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the budget transfer in the amount of \$18,450.00. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Bottinger Scholarship Deposit – Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. LeBoeuf presented the Board with a deposit in the amount of \$11,061.15 for the Bottinger Scholarship. <p><i>Dr. Bobruff made a motion to approve the deposit of \$11,061.15 into the Bottinger Scholarship. Ms. Schultz seconded. The motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>VIII. Public Comment</p>	<p><i>Mr. Bartholomew opened the meeting for public comment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public comment. <p><i>Ms. Bates made a motion to close public comment. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>IX. Old Business</p>	<p><i>Superintendent Search Update – Ms. Mastin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Mastin stated that the Selection Committee for the Superintendent has been finalized. She discussed the challenges in creating the Committee to ensure fair and equitable representation from all 7 towns. The Board went into non-public session to discuss the Committee.

	<p><i>Ms. Mastin made a motion for the Board to enter non-public session. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 9-0-0 by roll call vote.</i></p> <p><i>The Board returned to public session.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Bartholomew made a motion to approve the lists of names for the Selection Committee as presented in non-public session. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 9-0-0.</i></p>
<p>X. Adjourn</p>	<p><i>Mr. Schultz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained). The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.</i></p>

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Hilton
School Board Note Taker