

**Kearsarge Regional School District**  
**Joint School Board/Municipal Budget Committee Meeting**  
September 8, 2022 - 6:30 pm  
Kearsarge Professional Development Center  
165 Main Street, New London  
**Open to Public**

<b>I. Call to Order</b>	The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.
<b>II. Pledge of Allegiance</b>	Mr. Anderson led the Pledge of Allegiance.
<b>III. Roll Call</b>	<p>Present for the School Board: Ken Bartholomew, Emma Bates, Arthur Bobruff, Bebe Hammond Casey, Ben Cushing, Eric Gregoire, Kyle Lombard, Alison Mastin, Kristen Schultz.</p> <p>Present for the Municipal Budget Committee: Richard Anderson, David Bates, James Bibbo, Robert DeFelice (via Zoom), Luke Gorman, Lyndsay Lund Harkins, Robert Hemenway, Michelle Kendrick, Tom Schamberg.</p> <p>Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent; Larry LeBeouf, Business Administrator; Beth Perkins, KREA Representative.</p> <p>Absent: Winfried Feneberg, Superintendent; Maggie Ellison, Student Representative; Adara Boucher, Student Representative.</p>
<b>IV. Approval of Minutes</b>	<i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2022, School Board Meeting as written. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 5-0-4 (Mr. Bartholomew, Mr. Gregoire, Mr. Lombard, and Ms. Schultz abstained).</i>
<b>V. Public Comment</b>	<p><i>Mr. Bartholomew opened the meeting for public comment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No Public Comment</li> </ul> <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to close public comment. Ms. Casey seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<b>VI. New Business</b>	<p><b><i>Building Principal 2023-24 Budget Presentations</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr. Chouinard apprised the Board that there are four main budget lines that have increased across all four elementary school budgets. He stated that each principal will be discussing one.</li> <li>● Mr. Chouinard discussed the Instructional Scholar Supply Lines, noting that supplies have gone up in price across the Board. That line has increased by about 10%.</li> <li>● Ms. Collins discussed an increase in the ELA (English Language Arts) lines. These lines are increasing to allow more funds for teachers to add reading materials to their classrooms.</li> <li>● Mr. Stokes discussed an increase in the tech online lines. He noted that a number of different softwares that are used District-wide have been</li> </ul>

combined into these lines and are budgeted for each school individually. Mr. Bartholomew asked if the District is seeing a decrease in the cost of physical learning tools with the increased cost of online learning tools. Ms. Downing stated that the District is seeing a decrease, noting that the District is looking at every option to save money. An example of this would be pooling licenses and negotiating multi-year contracts for these programs. She also noted that a number of online curriculums have been phased out at the elementary level.

- Ms. Downing discussed increases in the math lines. The program previously used for math, Envision, is being phased out; however, the phase-out is being synced up with the licenses at the other schools. As a result, the license has been repurchased for 2-years. The program will phase out in the 2025-26 school year.

***KRES at Bradford - Andy Chouinard, Principal***

- Mr. Choinard presented the KRES at Bradford proposed budget to the Board. He discussed the increases in certain budget lines, such as the music line to purchase new choral music, the Social Studies Supply line, and the New Furniture line. In the New Furniture line, he discussed the recommendation from the Department of Education to purchase a fireproof filing cabinet to house Special Education documents.
- Mr. Bibbo asked whether other students' documents should be kept in a fireproof filing cabinet. Mr. Chouinard stated that those documents are kept in a separate filing cabinet, but is unsure as to whether it is fireproof.
- Mr. Bartholomew asked about an increase in the health supply line. Mr. Chouinard stated that those numbers came from the school nurse and are for supplies she needs.
- Ms. Mastin asked about an increase in the Playground line. Mr. Paré stated that this increase is for the playground for the Bradford PreK project.
- Mr. Bates asked how recruitment has gone from Bradford and for the other elementary schools. Mr. Choinard stated that recruitment at Bradford has been excellent and is almost at 100%. Ms. Collins stated that recruitment has been similar at New London Elementary, noting that a lot of faculty has returned. Mr. Bessette noted that there is one gap at New London in guidance counseling support. Mr. Stokes stated that Simonds had 100% of staff returned. Ms. Downing stated that staffing is down at Sutton. 6 people left following the last school year and 2 Title 1 positions are unfilled.
- Mr. Bartholomew asked Mr. Chouinard about his priorities in the budget, asking if there was extra money what he would do with it and if he had to cut something, what he would cut. He stated that he would ask that same question to all the principals. Mr. Chouinard stated that with extra money, he would want to prioritize enrichment; experiences outside the classroom. If deep budget cuts were needed, Mr. Chouinard noted that he would need to cut staff. Mr. Bartholomew explained that the reasoning behind his question is to determine what the priorities of each principal are and to allow the public to understand what could possibly be lost

should there be a need for deep budget cuts. Ms. Harkins asked if that was a fair question, noting that she didn't want to throw any of the Principals under the bus. Mr. Bartholomew stated that has asked this question every year and feels that it is a fair question.

- Mr. Bibbo asked what the average class size is. Mr. Bessette stated that the average class size is 15 to 20 students. Mr. Bibbo asked if it is still based on square footage. Mr. Bessette stated that the state does have a maximum class size based on square footage; however, the District's target class size is much smaller.
- Ms. Schultz stated that she would disagree with Mr. Chouinard about cutting staff if cuts were needed, noting that it should be a very last resort. Mr. Chouinard stated that he completely agreed. Mr. Bartholomew stated that it is a very difficult decision to determine what to cut, but noted that it is important that the public understand what could be at stake if there is a need for budget cuts.

***KRES at New London - Kelly Collins, Principal***

- Ms. Collins presented the proposed budget for KRES at New London. She addressed Mr. Bartholomew's question as to what she would cut if there had to be cuts and what she would prioritize if there were extra funds. She stated that she would have to cut staff, but ideally, that would be in the form of not filling a position of a retiring employee. If there were extra funds, she would increase school counseling at the school.
- Ms. Casey asked if there was a School Counseling position unfilled at New London. Ms. Collins stated that there is not. Mr. Gorman asked why there was no position opening if the counselor is needed. Mr. Bessette noted that this was a position that Ms. Collins had previously requested. Ms. Downing and Mr. Shepherd stated their support for an additional School Counseling position at New London.
- Mr. Anderson stated that an additional School Counselor at New London would be useful, but stated concerns that the proposed budget is at an 8.4% increase. He expressed his concern for the taxpayers in the District. Mr. Gorman stated that an additional School Counselor would be a very small increase per taxpayer.
- Mr. Bates noted that New London is the largest elementary school and with 6 grades at the school, the blanket is a little short. Mr. Bartholomew stated that this is an issue that the District faces. It is difficult to get an economy of scale when it comes to the elementary schools. Ms. Collins stated that she appreciates the conversation.
- Ms. Collins noted increases in the Assemblies line, Music Supply line, Special Education Supply line, and Furniture line. She also noted a decrease in the Replace Equipment line.
- Mr. Bates noted that New London is the only school that doesn't have a Title 1 Math or Reading specialist and asked if students are struggling with the repercussions of COVID. Ms. Collins stated that she doesn't feel that there has been a significant loss.
- Mr. Hemenway asked about the increase to the Capital Improvement line. Mr. Bartholomew noted that this was due to the mandated sprinkler

system replacement.

- Ms. Bessette responded to Mr. Bates' question regarding Title 1 positions. He noted that Title 1 positions are based on the free and reduced lunch service by each school.

***Simonds Elementary School - Tim Stokes, Principal***

- Mr. Stokes presented the proposed budget for Simonds Elementary School. He noted that the proposed budget would be an increase of 0.78%.
- One of the decreases is to the amount budgeted for wages with the removal of a second nurse position.<sup>1</sup>
- Mr. Stokes discussed increases in the English line, Math Supplies line, and Tech Online line. He also noted a decrease in the New Furniture line. Mr. Stokes explained the need for a new fire escape and sprinkler system at the school.
- Ms. Kendrick asked about how Simonds is doing in terms of substitute teachers and asked if the Substitutes line would cover what is needed for the year. Mr. Stokes noted that he believes they will likely be short. Mr. Bessette explained that the daily rate for a substitute teacher has been increased for the District to stay competitive in recruiting substitutes.
- Mr. Bates asked about previous efforts to move more toward project-based learning in the schools and asked where those efforts were at. Mr. Stokes noted that the process relating to that stopped when the Pandemic hit. Mr. Bates then asked about rules surrounding parent engagement. Mr. Stokes stated that everyone in the District has the goal of engaging parents. Mr. Bessette stated that the District's number one priority is curriculum transparency.
- Mr. Stokes answered Mr. Bartholomew's previous question stating that if he needed to make significant cuts, staff would most likely be what would need to be cut, and if there were extra funds he would prioritize maintenance upgrades.

***Sutton Central School - Christine Downing, Principal***

- Ms. Downing presented the Board with the proposed budget for Sutton Central School.
- Ms. Downing stated that Title 1 funding for Sutton Central has been cut, noting that prior to the pandemic she had 2 Title 1 positions, that have now been reduced to 0.5.
- Ms. Downing presented increases in the lines of health and dental for the new school nurse as well as increases for PE Supplies, Math, Music, and Social Studies.
- Mr. Bates asked about the physical space of the School. Ms. Downing stated that space is tight at the moment, noting that she has had to convert her last closet into an office counseling office. Supplies are now kept in sheds outside of the school.
- Mr. Gorman asked about the methodology used when creating the budget

<sup>1</sup> Corrected per Board vote October 6, 2022.

to try and predict increases/inflation. Mr. LeBoeuf stated that the Principals craft the budget for their school by looking at their needs. Mr. Bessette stated that there is some flexibility in the budget. Mr. Gorman asked if the District has attempted to discuss potential increases with vendors. Ms. Downing stated that the District has started doing this with vendors by requesting multi-year contracts.

- Mr. Bates asked Ms. Downing to answer Mr. Bartholomew's question in regard to her priorities for the school. Ms. Downing stated that if she really needed to she would make cuts to her salary, stating that there is a notion that Sutton doesn't need a full-time principal. She stated that there really isn't any other room in the budget for cuts.
- Mr. Bessette stated that there have been philosophical discussions about bending the budget cost curve through consolidating elementary schools. He noted that it costs a lot of time, energy, and efficiency to operate multiple elementary schools. Mr. Bartholomew stated that he had been thinking about this since the School Board Retreat. He stated that if the State continues going down the same path of continuing to fund education from local taxpayers the District can only cut a little here and a little there, there won't be any fundamental change. Ms. Harkins asked if it was in the Board's power to make such a change to the schools. Mr. Bartholomew noted that it is in the Board's authority, but we're not at that point yet.

***Kearsarge Regional High School - Charles Langille, Principal***

- Mr. Langille presented the Board with the proposed budget for the High School. He noted that the budget was built on a needs basis.
- Mr. Langille pointed out increases in the proposed budget to the Repairs Industrial Arts line, Instructional-Section & Print line, and Advisory Community line. He also noted decreases in the English Supplies line, Instruction Supply Art line, and Alt High School Supply line.
- Mr. Langille noted an increase in the Drama Supply line, stating the Kearsarge will be hosting a drama competition at the High School. He also noted increases in the budget to purchase new sheet music for the choral program and equipment for arts, specifically a pugmill.
- Mr. Langille discussed increases in the price of High School graduation, noting that the increase in the budget is due to an increase in price for the vendor used to put on graduation. He stated that the vendor used covers all the aspects of graduation, rather than individually sourcing each need.
- Mr. Bates asked if there is anything the District can do to help students who don't choose to go on to college. Mr. Langille stated that there are a number of hands-on courses that allow students to combine different subjects that allow them to learn different skills. For example, science classes that learn about the maple sugaring process, or art classes that incorporate geometry.
- Ms. Casey asked how the high school is on staffing. Mr. Langille noted that the high school is down two staff members.

***Kearsarge Regional Middle School - Steve Paterson, Principal***

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr. Paterson presented the proposed budget for the Middle School.</li> <li>● Mr. Paterson noted the need for funds for Nature's Classroom and the Washington D.C. trip. He also noted an increase in the Middle School Tech Online &amp; Software line, stating that the District is piloting an app that would allow parents and students to better monitor their work. He stated that there are certain increases that allow for curriculum to be purchased that line up with the curriculum of the High School.</li> <li>● Mr. Paterson stated that the Middle School is down 6 paraprofessionals and an Associate Director for Student Services.</li> <li>● In terms of what he would cut if he had to, Mr. Paterson stated that he would make cuts everywhere he could before positions started to be cut. He stated that those cuts should be kept as far away from students as possible. If there were extra funds, he stated that he would put it toward a math intervention specialist.</li> </ul> <p><i>The Municipal Budget Committee left the meeting at 10:03 p.m.</i></p>
<p><b>VII. Reports of Administration</b></p>	<p><i>Chair's Report - Mr. Bartholomew</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No Report.</li> </ul> <p><i>Assistant Superintendent's Report - Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr. Bessette stated that he received very positive feedback from the new schedule.</li> <li>● Mr. Bessette presented the Board with the hiring of Kaily Roukey for the Associate Director - Student Support Services position at the Middle School. He requested a motion to approve.</li> </ul> <p><i>Dr. Bobruff made a motion to approve the hiring of Kaily Roukey as the Associate Director of Student Support Services for the Middle School. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Business Administrator's Report - Larry, LeBoeuf, Business Administrator</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No Report.</li> </ul> <p><i>KREA Representative's Report - Beth Perkins</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New London and Sutton 5th graders will lead the Patriot Day Ceremony, which honors first responders, on Monday, September 12. The ceremony takes place at the New London Fire Station at 11:00 and the public is welcome. This year the students interviewed some members of their local police departments and wrote brief essays about how these first responders help their community. The police departments have a more active presence in the schools this year, helping out at drop-off and pick-up, and visiting with students during lunch and recess. It was nice to meet some of our officers, many of whom have children in the schools.</li> <li>● Middle School Spanish and French classes are doing a digital citizenship lesson about Google Translate and why it's NOT all that it's cracked up to be. The students are finding it interesting to learn the valuable lesson that</li> </ul>

	<p>you can't always rely on an app; you often have to do some fact-checking yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kearsarge Music Department held its inaugural "Band Camp" for six days in August. Upwards of 18 students in grades 7-12 gathered at the High School from 8 - 10 am to make music in small ensembles and the full group, culminating with a 45-minute concert in the evening for their families. It was a huge success, lots of fun, and a great way to begin the school year. The music educators plan to do this again next summer.</li> <li>• The Kearsarge Actors' Guild has started rehearsals for their Musical Production of "Mamma Mia" at the High School. They have a cast of 43 students which includes 14 members of the girls' varsity soccer team. They are so excited to have everyone dancing and laughing together. <b><u>Save the date:</u></b> They have three performances on Veteran's Day weekend. Nov. 10 - 12th.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VIII. School Board Sub-Committees</b></p>	<p><i>Communications Committee - Ms. Mastin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Mastin stated that the Committee continued to discuss the STEAM Wing project and how to present the project to the public.</li> </ul> <p><i>Facilities Committee - Mr. Cushing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Cushing stated that the pickup truck used by the District's electrician will not pass inspection. Mr. Paré recommends that the District purchase a replacement truck that could also use the plow from the previous truck.</li> <li>• Mr. LeBoeuf stated that the cost will likely be in the mid-\$40,000 to \$50,000 range and that the dealerships usually require a commitment day of. Board approval was requested.</li> <li>• Mr. Bartholomew asked that a formal purchase recommendation come back to the Board for a vote.</li> </ul> <p><i>Ms. Schultz made a motion to approve the purchase of a new pickup truck for the use of the District Electrician. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p><b>IX. Public Comment</b></p>	<p><i>Mr. Bartholomew opened the meeting for public comment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Public Comment.</li> </ul> <p><i>Ms. Schultz made a motion to close public comment. Ms. Casey seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p><b>X. Non-Public</b></p>	<p><i>Ms. Schultz made a motion for the Board to enter non-public. Ms. Casey seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>The Board returned to public session.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Bobruff made a motion to approve the tuitioning of a student into the</i></p>

	<i>District. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i>
<b>XI. Adjourn</b>	<i>Dr. Bobruff made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained). The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.</i>

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Hilton  
School Board Note Taker