

Dunbarton Elementary School

School Bells Newsletter

February 2015

From the Dunbarton School Board

Introduction

For many years the School Board teamed with the teachers and students at Dunbarton Elementary School to produce "School Bells," a newsletter that was mailed to every household in town. "School Bells" featured students' stories, poems and art work as well as a description of the budget that would be considered at the School District Meeting. The Board saw it as an opportunity to showcase students' work while providing information that could prove useful as voters considered the district's budget for the upcoming year.

Producing School Bells was a major undertaking. For this year we have decided to give the school staff who worked on producing the newsletter a break. On the other hand, we still felt it important to provide a preview of coming up at School District Meeting to the town's voters. The result is this shortened newsletter that will address only those issues to be decided on the School District Warrant this year.

Overview of Budget

Over the past four years the Dunbarton School Board focused on keeping the increases in the budget from year to year very low. In fact the school portion of the budget for that 4-year period raised only \$0.43 (per thousand) or about ten cents per year. Keeping increases low meant putting off improvements in the school's instructional abilities

and relying heavily on our technology hardware not needing repair.

This year the budget will address large increases in special education spending as well as adding resources to deal with our aging computers, mainframe and smart boards to keep them in good working order and also expanding the school's resources in math instruction. We will also be dealing with some reductions in our revenues including an anticipated large reduction from last year's unreserved fund balance.

We will also be asking the town to consider renovations to the toilet rooms in the 1972 portion of the building in a separate warrant article. Those rooms showed signs of their age this year as we dealt with leaking pipes, ceramic tiles separating from the floor and other problems.

More details about the budget and that warrant article appear below. Even more information about all of this will be available at the School District meeting on March 7. We invite you to come, listen and participate.

If you wish to vote on these or any other school district warrant articles, you must be registered to vote prior to the meeting and attend the annual **School District Meeting on Saturday, March 7, 2015 beginning at 4:00 pm in the Noyes Community Center at Dunbarton Elementary School.** Please contact the Dunbarton Town Clerk's office for information on voter registration.

Warrant Article 3 Operating Budget

To raise and appropriate \$5,929,597 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for School District officials, and agents, and for the payment of statutory contractual obligations of the District.

Budget for Regular Education

The Dunbarton School Board uses several sources to determine the budget. We look at input from the administration and staff, as well as any tuition obligations, contractual obligations, and any additional items that need to be addressed at the elementary school.

Pupil Support, which covers services to students, such as guidance, health, psychological, speech, occupational therapy, audiology, and physical therapy services, was up 7.1% or \$22,477. This increase is mostly due to higher special education need of these services, especially in the occupational therapy, psychological and physical therapy services, of which the last two are contracted services.

Instructional Support covers items such as testing, paraprofessional development, media services and technology. This section is down this year in the proposed budget by 3.02% or \$4,430. This is primarily due to funding professional development with grants and a change in the direction of technology. We are moving towards a Windows based system and initial investment in this technology is less than the Apple systems budgeted for replacement computers. Some technology purchases proposed by the Administration, including extra money for replacement of promethean (smart boards) and classroom sound systems, were removed to reduce the 2015-16 budget.

General Administration covers school board services, district/election services, legal services, and SAU services. The section is up by \$8,885 or 5.51% with \$8,720 being from SAU services. It has been an interesting year for SAU 67 as they had to develop the 2015-16 budget during the first year as a multi-district SAU. Some of the changes in the SAU budget include a reduction in the contingency line, estimated salary and benefits for the soon to be hired Special Education Director, and some changes in staff salaries due to additional SAU responsibilities. There is an increase in the ADM-A (Average Daily Membership in Attendance) and the Equalized Valuation percentages that are used in the assessment calculations. Dunbarton's share went from 16.12% to 17.23%.

School Administration covers the principal salary, benefits, printing, postage, professional development and other administration expenses. This section had a net reduction of \$2,963 or 1.45%.

Food service expenditures are up slightly due to a 2 1/2% increase in support staff wages.

Debt Service: We have two more years left on our 10 year bond for heating and ventilating system renovations. Next year, our principal payment will increase \$15,000 and interest payment decrease \$3,586 for a net increase of \$11,414. We recently discovered that the bond repayment scheduled used for many years to set our budget was incorrect. The amount budgeted for next year is the correct amount.

Budget for Special Education (SPED)

Special education costs represent approximately 13% of the total school budget for 2015-16. For the upcoming year, the District will experience an overall increase in this portion of the budget by slightly more than 15%, or \$106,000. The increases derive primarily from additional costs for our elementary and high school special education services. Specifically, the District added a special education assistant at the elementary level and two assistants at the high school level totaling approximately \$84,000. In addition, tuition costs for the high school increased by over \$40,000 to account for out of district placement costs. The District will experience decreases in the costs for middle school special education costs based on the reduction in the number of contracted assistants from two to one for a savings of approximately \$30,000.

Budget for Middle and High School Tuition

Tuition costs for our 7-12TH grade represent 36% of the total school budget for 2015-16. The total tuition for the middle school went up and the high school went down as more students attend Bow schools.

Middle School

Although the number of students projected for Grades 7 and 8 next year has decreased from 66 to 62, the per student budgeted tuition rate at Bow Memorial School has increased from \$9,952 to \$10,914. This results in an increase in total middle school tuition budget of \$49,692 over the current year. Bow's rate continues to be well below Goffstown's middle school rate of \$12,231 budgeted for next year. In our current school year we have three 8th grade students attending Goffstown's Mountain View Middle School. Next year all middle school students will go to Bow.

High School

2015-16 will be the first time that our current 8th graders will all be attending Bow High School. Enrollment is expected to be 56 students (up from 33 this year) at a tuition rate of \$11,944 per student. The total tuition budget for these 56 students is \$668,864. Tuition cost to Bow High School will increase by \$279,101 from the current year primarily due to an increase in the number of students enrolled.

We also will have 62 students continuing to attend Goffstown High School (down from 89 this year) at a tuition rate of \$13,148 per student. The total budget for the 62 students will be \$815,176 or a decrease of \$371,992 for high school tuition.

The combined budget for middle and high school tuition decreased by \$92,891 for a total budget for Dunbarton of \$2,160,708 in the 2015-16 school year.

Budget for Facilities at DES

There were positive and negative changes to a variety of line items resulting in a total increase of \$6,445. Primary changes include the following:

- A 2 1/2% increase in custodial wages consistent with other support staff.
- A change in the status of the head custodian from hourly wage to salary, with an increase in compensation, to reflect the supervisory nature of the position and the occasional need for irregular hours.
- A \$6,000 increase in Building Repairs for new furniture and new flooring in two classrooms. The goal is to refurbish a few classrooms each year.
- A \$5,000 decrease in heating oil due to an anticipated price reduction.
- A \$1,000 decrease in telephone due to a recent change in long distance service provider.

Budget for Transportation

Regular education transportation decreased \$2,165 due to an anticipated reduction in fuel costs. We are currently in the final year of our 5 year bus contract and will be seeking bids this spring for a new multi-year contract to start next fall. Special education transportation decreased \$10,290 due to efficiencies in combining students on routes.

Revenue and Tax Impact Estimate

Each year revenues for the Dunbarton School District come from a variety of sources. The following table lists anticipated revenues for 2015-16.

	<u>2015-16</u> <u>Proposed</u>
State Adequacy Grant	680,737
Statewide Education Property Tax	664,872
Estimated Fund Balance to reduce taxes	277,000
Food Service	35,500
School Building Aid	16,673
Catastrophic Aid	37,778
Federal Child Nutrition Programs	5,400
Federal Medicaid Reimbursement	10,000
State Child Nutrition	500
Health Trust Return of Surplus	20,000
Transfer from Capital Reserve	30,000
	\$1,778,460

The remainder of our budget \$4,244,137 will be raised by the Local and State School Taxes. The resulting estimated Total School Tax Rate will be \$15.92. This represents an increase of \$1.28 or 8.75% over our current rate for 2014-15.

Historic Local School plus State School Tax Rate from 2010 to 2014

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
14.21	15.11	14.85	14.73	14.64

Warrant Article 4 Kitchen Fund

To raise and appropriate \$1,000 for deposit into the existing Dunbarton Kitchen Equipment Fund and to authorize the use of that amount from the June 30, 2014 Unreserved Fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2014. This is in addition to the Operating Budget article. (Majority vote required)

This fund was set up a few years ago to allow the Dunbarton School District and the Town of Dunbarton to share the cost of replacing kitchen equipment in the Community Center kitchen. The Community Center kitchen is used heavily for both school and town activities. Equipment wears down over time and has to be replaced. This fund was set up a vehicle for the \$1,000 deposited each year from the Town of Dunbarton with a limit in the fund not to exceed \$5,000. Because part of our lunch program is Federally subsidized, the school cannot place money in the Fund but rather include a line item in the budget for paying our share.

This Warrant Article allows the District to deposit the money from the Selectman into the fund.

Warrant Article 5

To raise and appropriate \$92,000 for renovations to the boys and girls restrooms located just inside the main entrance to Dunbarton Elementary School and withdraw the sum of \$30,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund.

Last fall the Dunbarton School Board committed to completing a long range capital improvement plan by the end of this school year. The Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) was tasked to assist the School Board with this effort. One of the 14 potential capital projects identified to date consists of renovations to the 1972 Boys and Girls Toilet Rooms and adjacent Janitor Closet. Recently, damage to an area of wall tile and drywall in the boys room was discovered and behind the damaged wall covering the wood framing was damp and moldy. Although the damaged wall covering was temporarily patched, this discovery prompted the School Board to address toilet room renovations sooner rather than later.

CIC assisted by soliciting fee proposals from experienced architects, and working with administration and the selected design team to establish an appropriate scope of renovation work. Primary goals were to enhance durability and energy conservation while reducing maintenance. The project includes:

- Removing all flooring, drywall, suspended ceilings, toilet partitions, and fixtures.
- Inspection and repair of plumbing concealed within stud walls.
- Inspection and replacement of any damaged wall framing.
- New ceiling framing where required to support new fiberglass insulation.
- New air barrier and drywall protection at ceiling framing to insure insulation remains intact.
- New low-flow toilet fixtures and reinstallation of sinks and urinals to meet current building and accessibility codes.
- Motion sensor controlled faucets and fixtures to save water and energy.
- New finishes to include high density drywall with fiberglass panels in wet zones, epoxy resin flooring, fiberglass toilet partitions, new suspended ceilings, and new energy efficient light fixtures.

CIC assisted the School Board by soliciting and reviewing construction bids from qualified general contractors. The School Board selected Project Resource Group of Francetown with a low bid of \$84,697. Adding \$7,303 for possible contingencies brings the total amount to be raised in Warrant Article #5 to \$92,000. The Article proposes withdrawing up to \$30,000 from the Dunbarton School Capital Reserve Fund and raising the remaining \$62,000 through taxation. The projected 2015 tax rate impact of this Article is \$0.20 per \$1,000 of property valuation

**Noyes Community Center at Dunbarton Elementary School
Robert Rogers Road:**

**Annual District Meeting: Saturday, March 7th
@ 4:00pm**

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SCHOOL BELLS NEWSLETTER