

**Regional School Unit 78  
Special School Board Meeting Agenda  
February 28, 2017  
Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.  
RLRS – All Purpose Room**

Eric Burgess	6:04	Jennifer Farmer	XX
Joanne Chapman	XX	Nancy Hilliard	XX
Amber Haley	XX	Richard Walker	XX
Colleen Dutile Koob		Tom Rideout	XX
Beth Eastlack	6:03	Paul Reynolds	
vacant		Clare Webber	XX

Quorum:

1. Call to Order: 6:00pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Adjustments to the Agenda:
4. Budget Review Process – Rick Walker: Reviewed the process undertaken by the Finance Committee. Began looking at budget in Fall of 2016. Finance Committee gave Superintendent a goal of 2.5% increase. Board voted in November and voted to agree on the 2.5% and the superintendent worked with the staff to reach that goal. In January and February the Finance Committee met with the Superintendent to review proposed budget. Proposed budget given to board on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Tonight is the first full board look at the budget. R. Walker reviewed the time line of the budget process through board approval to town vote. Finance Committee supports the superintendent’s budget. Board should ask questions, comments, concerns. Budget is set by the finance committee. Rick thanked Dr. Richards and his staff, especially Sheila Raymond.
5. Superintendents Proposed Budget – Dr. Richards: Reviewed his process preparing a budget with a 2.5% increase. We do not have a solid figure on health insurance figures from BC/BS. Dr. Richards reviewed the various article lines and the percent increase/decrease of the budget. He highlighted programming changes.
6. Board Member Discussion – Rick Walker: Reviewed the structure of the budget books.  
Claire Webber asked with the debt services of the building project was included in the proposed budget. Rick Walker stated that it is still part of the operating budget and still needs to be voted on annually by the voters. The presentations can’t determine that the building costs are above and beyond. Rick reviewed that the past years increases were 6-7%. Dr. Richards responded that there is a payment to be made and it has to be part of the budget approved by the town. Claire Webber stated that keeping the payment in there and staying with the 2.5% really doesn’t leave much room. Rick reviewed the budget summary/4 year comparison.  
Dr. Richards reviewed the comparisons from current year to proposed

budget. He reviewed the various costs.

Beth Eastlack asked again about the debt service for construction in the 2.5%.

7. Public Comments – Rick Walker

Doris M.: Would you reconsider the 2.5% cap for next year?

Nancy Hillard: Can't answer it now, but will be part of the process.

Gene W.: I've never seen a building project consumed in the operating budget. It was always understood that there would be an increase. I'm not sure of the rationale. The services that you reduce to compensate for the building project are needed. The board approved the budget last year, the technology that our students have was a significant increase and impact on our students.

Holly A.: Been 10.5 years as the school social worker. My heart is here for the kids. At one point position was part-time. I know the kids, I can find them the services. When I was hired I was promised that this would be long term because of the relationships you have to gain with the families. We have many needs; suicide thoughts, poor clothing, nutrition programs. I know that this position has made a difference. If you ask around, you will find the benefit this position has to the community. I urge you to reconsider this position. We have a population here in Rangeley that is at risk; divorce, family issues, drug/alcohol abuse, etc. It is about the families of this community.

Donna B.: Appreciate what you do and listening to us. We all want the same thing. It does not feel right to be adding to this building and be losing people. Great alt. ed program that has helped kids...why are we letting it go? We are reacting and not looking far enough down the road. This community has never turned its back. I feel like we can help... suggested copiers? Where can we be more efficient? What about pay to play? When you cut stipends, for example my ESL, this board supported more endorsements, but you are proposing to cut the stipend. If you want people to become more versatile, you have to support this and not give something. It doesn't feel appreciated. ESL is a mandated position. Again, I appreciate your time.

Jeanette J.: Part of the position is RTI and who is picking up that system. There is an assumption that alt. ed students need same services of Alt. Ed, which is not true. Also, what about the students that need social work services or literacy services provided by the librarian. What is the plan? How does this budget advance our vision and mission? How does it move us forward? The cuts have the potential to stifle or reverse a lot of our work we have done.

Jan Welch: I knew when I voted for the building project that my taxes were going up, not that staff and positions would be cut. Reviewed a poll from a national survey. Top 2 included: social services and library/media.

Gene W.: We could find savings...we have more copiers than we need? I've been involved in small schools (RI), there are ways to meet the needs of students. Whenever you have a school with a small number of students, the cost structure is never going to reach that of a larger school.

Heidi D.: I've personally been asking why we approved a construction project but now we are cutting services. Students in crisis cannot learn. Our rural area is a high risk. The voters knew the impact of the building project above and beyond the operational budget. We need to serve the students first.

Johnny W.: We voted for the expansion and we knew what we voted for. To be cutting services is taking a step back. I wouldn't have voted for the expansion having known the proposed costs. Do you realize what our kids go through? The value of Ms. Haggan and the librarian is invaluable. There's got to be a better way. Look at other ways to save money. We need to reconsider.

Tony C: Why are you cutting maintenance position but adding a new building, how are you going to keep up the building cleanliness.

Michelle L: I agree that voting for the school project was not meaning to cut positions. In addition, our at-risk population is exploding. Holly and Janet have helped in those areas. We need to think about the emotional well being of our students.

Johnny W: You don't build a new building to cut people. We moved up here because of this school system.

Donna B: Is there room with the \$5 million project to help save?

Bill and Sheila: The money is allocated for the project.

Rick Walker: I appreciate everyone's comments. We are getting pressure from the community, tax payers to get things under control. Most of the budget is salaries and benefits. The bottom line is there needs to be significant cuts. The budget has grown 30-35% over the past 5-6 years.

Rebekah C.: Legally can't pull out of the bond project.

Nancy Hillard.: Primary purpose of the project is to become ADA compliant.

Gene W.: What did delaying the project by year, what was the costs?

Beth Eastlack.: How many students are currently in the alt. ed program?

Jeanette J: Currently there are 3 students, 2 are graduating. Population is very transient. This program is an opportunity for students that are more appropriate to their needs.

Beth Eastlack: What services are we cutting in the library? What is the impact?

Janet Waugaman: Explained her current schedule; weekly story time for K-4, students K-12 come in throughout the day, MS book talks, study hall supervision, HS book selection.

Beth Eastlack: Who would monitor the library for students that are in study hall?

Donna B.: What was the bottom line we needed to cut?

Doris: I foresee a benefit to the Alt. Ed program for students. What is the status of G/T? We need to address their needs.

Bill Richards: We are looking at how we address services of ESL and G/T?

Beth Eastlack: Why if we transition to PBE, how does that impact G/T?

Holly A: The rates of autism are rising? We have changed the culture and climate to eliminate the behaviors of the past; fist fights, vandalism, dangerous behaviors, etc. Educate the community about the increases in special ed.

Gene W.: School budgets are largely personnel costs.

8. Adjournment: 7:45pm

Next meeting March 14, 2017, 6pm