

**KEENE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes**

**DATE:** January 9, 2010

**LOCATION:** Large Group Instruction Area, Keene High School, 43 Arch Street, Keene, NH

**CALLED TO ORDER:** 8:15 a.m.

**TIME ADJOURNED:** 9:35 a.m.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Mr. Neil Donegan, Chair
- Mrs. Carol Brown
- Mr. Chris Coates
- Mr. Carl Panza

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Mrs. Kristin Blais
- Mrs. Amy Speas
- Mr. Carter Chamberlin
- Mr. Donald Parker
- Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

- Mr. William Gurney, Co-Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. John Harper, Business Administrator
- Mr. Paul Cooper, Director of Human Resources
- Ms. Catherine Reeves, Director of Special Education
- Mrs. Meredith Cargill, Director of Curriculum
- Mr. Tom Remillard, Director of Buildings, Facilities and Ancillary Services
- Mr. Alan Chmiel, Keene High School Principal
- Mr. James Logan, Director of Cheshire Career Center
- Ms. Patricia Yoerger, Jonathan Daniels School Principal
- Mrs. Dorothy Frazier, Middle School Principal
- Mr. William Harris, Benjamin Franklin School
- Mr. Richard Cate, Symonds School Principal
- Mr. Paul Huggins, Fuller School Principal
- Mrs. Gwen Mitchell, Wheelock School Principal

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

- Attorney John Wrigley
- Ms. Sarah Palermo, Keene Sentinel Reporter
- Mrs. Chris Weeks, Public Information Coordinator
- Mrs. Dru Fox, Stenographer
- Members of the Public (12 plus or minus at given times)

**Mr. Neil Donegan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.**

**1. Finance Committee Action Related to the Proposed Budget**

Mr. Neil Donegan provided a brief history of the budget process to this point and called upon Mr. William Gurney to introduce the recent reductions in the proposed budget.

Mr. Gurney thanked the cost center managers for all their hard work and spoke to the

issue of being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Keene. He described two meetings this week in which budget cuts were discussed and the seriousness with which they were completed. Mr. Gurney passed out "Revised Information for FY 2010-2011 January 9, 2010" and began by pointing out the reductions to the Franklin School cost center totalling \$22,084. He talked about some of the specific line items affected and the rationale behind the reduction in their amounts.

Mr. Gurney next addressed the General Elementary section and explained about taking a year to back away from the foreign language program, purchasing playground equipment, purchasing music and PE equipment and lastly introduced the \$91,000 budget cut by the elimination of an elementary school principal. Total Elementary Level revisions being \$243,639.

Mr. Gurney continued his presentation by explaining \$75,389 in Keene Middle School budget cuts coming primarily from the reduction of a secretary or para position, Keene High School cuts of \$9,371 coming from the area of stipends, Buildings Maintenance cuts of \$44,000 from capitol improvemetns and the lawn care and snow plowing dollars that were going to be contractred out this year. Mr. Gurney further described the \$20,000 reduction in School Board Services as being some of the district attorney's fees, \$5,000 from scanning the schools publications, the addition to the General District budget of \$2,900, the Staff/Curriculum reduction of \$29,927, Technology reduction in the amount of \$29,000 which was an error on the original budget, General Special Education reduction of \$62,000 and Preschool reduction of \$19,280 for a total net reduction in the amount of \$543,985.

Mr. Neil Donegan inquired if there was consensus among the administrators with these cuts and Mr. Gurney replied that although no one is happy with the budet cuts there was a lot of compromising and working together to reach a level everyone can live with. Discussion ensued.

*Mrs. Carl Brown made a motion to accept the revisions to the Keene School District proposed budget in the amount of \$543,985 as presented. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

Mrs. Carol Brown appreciated all the work and sacrifices and spoke in favor of placing money back into the budget for teacher recognition. Mr. Chris Coates spoke in favor of developing a teacher recognition program.

*Mrs. Carol Brown made a motion that the Finance Committee increase the school board portion of the proposed budget by \$5,000 for the purpose of recognizing teacher excellence and to form a committee to determine how the funds will be distributed. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

Mr. John Harper then requested a motion pertaining to the bond payment. He passed out a sheet entitled "Revised Guidelines Information for FY 2010-2011 Budget – January 9, 2010" and explained that this report pulls all of the information together with the exception of Mrs. Brown's motion to add \$5,000. He explained that it reflects all of the budget cuts proposed by Mr. Gurney this morning and went over the particulars of the report. In summary he stated that the revised budget with proposed cuts in the amount of \$58,860,388 plus the bond payment equals a total revised budget appropriation of \$60,379,266. He further explained that the \$60,379,266 plus the \$5,000 addition by Mrs. Brown equals a new total revised budget appropriation amount of \$60,384,266. Discussion ensued around total gross appropriation, tax impact, state aid payments and 2009-2010 left over revenues.

*Mrs. Carol Brown made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend the Keene School Board of Education raise and appropriate a 2010-2011 operating budget in the amount of \$60,384,266. Mr. Carl Panza seconded.*

Mr. John Harper further explained and discussion ensued around Capital Appreciation

Bond (CAB) and Build America Bond (BAB) financing methods and their impact on the 2010/11 Budget. He clarified that the payment currently included in the Budget was based on the CAB method, which reflected lower net payments in the earlier years of the bond (due to accelerated state building aid) but higher total interest costs over the life of the bond payments. This information had been outlined in a memo Mr. Harper distributed to the Finance Committee on January 2 titled "Bond Information". After discussion, the consensus was to proceed with the CAB method with no change in the proposed budget required.

*Vote taken, motion unanimously passes by a vote of 4-0.*

Mr. John Harper then circulated information entitled "Keene School District 2010/2011 Recommended Budget Official Ballot Budget Comparison" regarding the default budget and spoke to the issue by explaining that the default budget is the budget that will occur if the board's recommended budget fails in March. He described in detail each of the additions and deletions beginning with Adjustments for Contractual and Legal Obligations to arrive at the default budget in the amount of \$60,323,627, which is an increase of \$919,254 over the original budget proposed by the administration on January 2. The default budget will increase to \$61,842,505 with the addition of the bond payment made earlier in this meeting.

Ms. Cathy Reeves provided detail on, and discussion ensued around, special education and out of district placement costs, declining north campus enrollments and court placements.

Mr. Paul Cooper spoke to staffing information required from the state, full time employees, full time equivalent and turn over ratio.

## **2. Other**

Mr. Adam Castor of Swanzey, NH and coach of the Keene Gladiator Youth Wrestling Program presented information on, and requested, a waiver of rental fees for the remainder of this year so the program can continue, regroup and better prepare for next year. Discussion ensued.

*Mrs. Carol Brown made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend the Keene School Board of Education approve the rental fee waiver request of the Keene Gladiator Youth Wrestling Program as discussed between Mr. Adam Castor and Mr. Tom Remillard. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.*

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dru Fox  
Stenographer