

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on February 1, 2017 in the council chambers at 3 Primrose Street.

K. Alexander, Chair	J. Erardi
M. Ku, Vice Chair	J. Davila
D. Leidlein, Secretary (absent)	R. Bienkowski
J. Vouros	4 Staff
R. Harriman-Stites	20 Public
A. Clure	1 Press
D. Cruson	

Mr. Alexander called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Public Hearing on the 2017-2018 Budget

Lynn Edwards, 3 Sand Hill Road, thanked the Board for their dedication to the students. She requested that they approve the Superintendent's budget without any further reductions. Proper funding is needed to achieve our goals. Prioritize education and not how low the budget can go to pass.

Karyn Holden, 68 Berkshire Road, thanked the Board for volunteering their hours and the administrative staff for their concerns over the budget. The reduction of the social worker at Reed and the middle school would be detrimental to the students. Many students visit the health center in middle school with many regarding mental health issues. They are still critical for our students. There are no plans in place if they are not there next year. We should not take this risk.

Curt Symes, 36 Lake Road, is Chair of the Commission on Aging. He thanked the Board for reaching out to the senior community to have a discussion with them. We have wealth as well as poverty in town with many concerned about finances.

Sue Vogelmann, 26 Rock Ridge Road, went to school in Newtown and music at the high school was a big part of her education. The concern is that people think they can run a quality school system with no increase in the budget. She requested they support the budget as presented by the Superintendent. She trusts our administration and educators to provide what students need.

Julia Conlon, 1 Old Castle Drive, said that regarding new in-house special education programs she did not see any corresponding increase in staff or money to pay for these programs and was concerned if they were not being funded properly. She agreed that we need the social worker at Reed and the middle school. She noted that the part time psychologist position in the pre-school shifted to the middle school and was not sure how preschool program could function without having at least a part-time psychologist.

Prenar Rau, 26 Palestine Road, spoke about the communication denouncing Alex Jones. She feels it's important for the town to get behind this. We should have a voice to say this is not tolerated.

Jason Zetoff, 16 Lakeview Terrace, referred to the letter to Trump to denounce Alex Jones. He read a comment Mr. Jones made to a caller.

Joanna Rosen, 60 Sugar Lane, hoped to bring back mental health staff for Reed and the middle school. She is a private practitioner in town and many of them have no openings after school because of the number of students needing to see them. Many issues from 12/14 are among the highest risk students coming to Reed and the middle school. The support we have in place should not be pulled.

Robin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road, feels that because of challenges this year the Board should put everything back in the budget that was presented in the beginning. Should not cut the budget now because we know it will be cut later. Send it through or add money back for mental health. Make the tough decisions later.

Item 3 – Budget Discussion

Mr. Bienkowski presented the technical adjustments to the budget proposal which would bring a \$44,848 reduction to the budget for a 1.75% increase over last year.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked for the Director of Pupil Services to be at the next meeting to discuss bringing program in-house and salary adjustments in doing that. She also asked for the exact cost of each social worker position.

Mr. Clure asked if there were any grants for these positions.

Dr. Erardi said the Department of Education over the past three years funded multiple positions with less being funded this year and none next year. The reduction of social workers was not based on the funder but what we believed was the perceived need. Mrs. Petersen will share the rationale for the decision. There are a number of changing parts in shifting from pre-school to needs based at the middle school. Our preparation for the next meeting will be around mental health aspects of the budget. There will be a chronology of the last 10 years to show what has taken place with staffing and that despite the decline of 1,200 students, there has been an increase in special education students.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites requested the document with per pupil expenditure state wide.

Mrs. Ku asked for the cost benefit analysis for a purchasing agent to share with the town.

Dr. Erardi suggested to not include it at this time. We have other pressing issues that could supersede the need. There also needs to be conversations with other boards.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked for the difference between the academic dean and assistant principal positions.

Dr. Erardi said the assistant principal is full time and the academic dean usually part time for a teacher with a reduced teaching load. The assistant principal is involved in the daily operation of the school including discipline and observations. With a number of aspiring leaders in the middle school we were able to bring helping hands there with no cost.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites referred to the grant writer funded from the Newtown/Sandy Hook Foundation and asked if we should fold that into the budget.

Dr. Erardi said it is presently funded at \$25,000. The funder needs to see a return on their investment. The staff member we have is perfect for the position and he was confident that funding will be continued.

Mrs. Ku wondered about teacher evaluations and how much time was being spent by principals and assistant principals. Regarding facilities she asked about the extra costs for Sandy Hook School such as snow removal, the extra custodian and copiers and if that was common for a new building.

Mr. Bienkowski said that experience has shown that new schools cost more to operate and that Reed and Head O'Meadow fell into that category after they opened. For Sandy Hook School there are new State standards that had to be followed.

Mrs. Ku requested information for the next meeting regarding equipment repairs and contracted services as it looked like more money was being spent in one elementary school than the others. Also on page 210 regarding priority one technology requests she asked for clarification that these are new technology, if there is equity between the schools, how much is in each and how we prioritize which schools get priority requests. Mrs. Ku asked for an idea of the staff schedule regarding the social aspect of the school based health center at the middle school. Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked to see how the center social worker fits in with those in the school.

Mr. Vouros asked to hear from the middle school nurses to see how they fit in with the school based health center and if they are working together.

Anne Dalton, said the nurses are in communication on a regular basis as they are located across the hall. Students come to the middle school nurse first and then would be referred to the center. Their social workers are very busy and slower with medically based issues.

Mr. Alexander said his primary concern is having questions that can be answered tomorrow night. Regarding the social workers, he understands that this has been looked at by the administration with a functional point of view rather than purely a monetary view.

Mr. Vouros said regarding the mental health aspect of the budget the tragedy has a longlasting effects. He would never take away services from children unless certain they were no longer needed.

Item 4 – Communications Discussion

Mr. Alexander referred to the letter to the incoming administration. The Board of Selectman voted to send it but there may be further discussions. We could vote to signing a specific letter or what the Board of Selectman want to send.

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education authorize the Chair to sign for the Board of Education on a letter denouncing Sandy Hook hoaxers. Mrs. Ku seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites understands the sensitivity around the letter but feels we are being held by a bully and was in favor of the letter.

Mrs. Ku felt the same. It is not good to back down from a bully but we could investigate some type of backlash. She heard a report that the president might be inviting this person as part of the press. We should stand up to that.

Mr. Vouros said the Board of Education from Newtown should be making a statement because it's incredulous that people are saying that. He would feel better if something was sent.

Mr. Clure asked if we have to wait for their Board. We should send something and emphasize it with other boards. It happened to a school and the timing is important.

Mr. Alexander said the motion needs to adjust that we were doing it independently.
Mrs. Harriman-Stites agreed with Mr. Clure. We should sign on with their letter.

Mr. Cruson agrees to standing up to the bully but the way the letter is worded he feels we will not be the ones taking the brunt of what may happen and is concerned it will hurt the families. Additionally, the media will know about the letter and if there is no response from Trump it will feed the hoaxers and their campaign.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the letter is not meant to protect the 26 families. It's about the community as a whole. There will be possible backlash but if we know something is right we have to stand up to it.

Mr. Alexander agreed with Mrs. Harriman-Stites. The wording of the letter doesn't imply we are speaking about families but about the community and truth. He is concerned about any blow back also and asked if anyone wanted to adjust the motion. He is concerned that if we don't say this people may feel it isn't an important thing to say. He suggested amending the motion to state the Board of Education will sign the letter now in case the Board of Selectman chooses not to send it.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Board of Education will sign the letter to the current president asking to denounce Sandy Hook hoaxers. Mrs. Ku seconded.

Dr. Erardi felt there should be a specified date you are holding to hear back from the other boards.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites suggested the letter be signed by February 20. Mrs. Ku seconded.
The final motion: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education authorize the Chair to sign for the Board of Education on a letter to the current President denouncing Sandy Hook hoaxers by February 20, 2017. Mrs. Ku seconded.

Vote: 5 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Cruson) Motion passes.

Item 5 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Clure moved that the Board of Education adjourn. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Keith Alexander
Chair

Proposed Operational Plan for 2017-18

	<u>2016-17 Approved Budget</u>	Cumulative Adjustment	Percent of Decrease	Balance	Percent Change	Increase
2017-18 Superintendent's Request	73,665,065	1,331,691			1.81%	
<u>Recommended Adjustments to Superintendent's Plan 1/31/17</u>						
<i>Technical Adjustments</i>						
	0	0	0.00%	74,996,756	1.81%	
1 Energy - Electricity, Natural Gas, Oil, Diesel, Gasoline	(64,015)	(64,015)	-0.09%	74,932,741	1.72%	1,267,676
2 Grant reduction for Physiological & Behavioral assessments	51,571	(12,444)	-0.02%	74,984,312	1.79%	1,319,247
3 Building Contracted Services	(9,000)	(21,444)	-0.03%	74,975,312	1.78%	1,310,247
4 Magnet Transportation (Grant for two less students)	2,600	(18,844)	-0.03%	74,977,912	1.78%	1,312,847
5 Certified Salary Adjustments	(27,909)	(46,753)	-0.06%	74,950,003	1.74%	1,284,938
6 Non-Certified Salary Adjustments	3,505	(43,248)	-0.06%	74,953,508	1.75%	1,288,443
7 Memberships - Assistant Superintendent	(1,600)	(44,848)	-0.06%	74,951,908	1.75%	1,286,843
		(44,848)	-0.06%	74,951,908	1.75%	1,286,843

To: Newtown Board of Education Members
From: Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr. *12/23/16*
Date: December 23, 2016
Re: **Superintendent's Requested Operational Plan 2017-2018**

The Superintendent's Requested Operational Plan for 2017-2018 is \$74,996,756, which reflects a 1.81% (\$1,331,691) increase over the 2016-2017 school year spending plan. This proposed plan maintains the core of all existing programs and also includes initiatives that will continue to move the Newtown Public Schools toward a district that does only exceptional work for all students.

This funding proposal was influenced by the following:

1. Employee Benefits will increase by 2.97% resulting in a \$341,486 increase;
2. Building & Site Maintenance Projects will increase by \$130,500;
3. Contractual/operational salary obligations *without* adjustments have increased by \$1,518,996; however, the following salary adjustments have been made:
 - a. Net reduction in staff -\$397,699
 - b. Salary adjustment (turnover) -\$300,000Net salary increase of: \$821,297

Collectively, these three factors result in an increase of \$1,293,268 which equates to 97.11% of the proposed increase of \$1,331,691

The 2017-2018 plan will include the following enhanced opportunities for K-12 learners:

- An additional .5 FTE to support the acquisition of World Language at the second grade level – \$27,451
- An additional 1.0 FTE custodial staff to be located at Sandy Hook Elementary School – \$49,899
- Three additional coaching positions added, two at the Middle School and one at the High School – \$8,544
- An additional 0.2 FTE to complete the K-8 Instructional Council (Math / Social Studies) – \$19,000; and,
- Pupil Personnel Support staff, an additional .68 FTE Job Coach – \$15,984

Federal funding (School Emergency Response to Violence Grant) will no longer be available, resulting in a reduction in services by 3 FTE positions, or \$186,165. However, the operational plan will be supplemented by the Sandy Hook Foundation Grant, Medicaid and IDEA funds resulting in the continuance of 4 FTE positions, or \$321,672.

The *Sandy Hook School Foundation* funding stream was a new grant opportunity for this year and the 2017-2018 school year offsetting \$500,000 of expenses. The requested 2017-18 plan includes \$200,000 of continued staffing through this partnership grant.

Reduction of Workforce Proposed for the 2017-2018 Operational Plan

A detailed analysis of all programming and staffing was completed by administration, and the following reductions are proposed within the new school year spending plan:

- The elimination of 8.0 FTE certified staff members at a savings of \$455,932
 - 2 FTE Sandy Hook
 - 1 FTE Head O'Meadow
 - 2 FTE Reed Intermediate
 - 2 FTE Middle School
 - 1 FTE High School

The historical budget request over the past 10 years.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Approved Board of Ed Budget</u>	<u>Budget Increase</u>
2006-2007	\$60,387,154	6.06%
2007-2008	\$62,885,158	4.14%
2008-2009	\$66,031,044	5.00%
2009-2010	\$66,314,928	0.43%
2010-2011	\$67,194,734	1.33%
2011-2012	\$67,971,427	1.16%
2012-2013	\$68,555,794	0.57%
2013-2014	\$71,045,304	3.63%
2014-2015	\$71,345,304	0.42%
2015-2016	\$71,587,946	0.34%
2016-2017	\$73,665,065	2.90%
2017-2018	\$74,996,756	1.81%

It is also important to understand that the starting point for my office was a requested \$76,245,670, which represented a 3.5% increase over current spending. After meeting with all stakeholders, \$1,248,914 net of requests were reduced; thus, the superintendent's plan moving forward for your review.

District administrators, Cabinet members, and, in particular, Mr. Ron Bienkowski and his staff worked diligently to prepare this plan. Mr. Bienkowski, Director of Business, along with my office, would be happy to answer any and all questions that you may have during the budget review examination period.

Finally, it is my belief that this proposed budget represents the program priorities and the long term vision set forth by this Board of Education and also represents a plan that continues to maintain and enhance the needed resources for all children.

Newtown Board of Education
Budget Meeting – February 1, 2017
Questions and Answers

Page 62 compared to 52, 71 and 82, Elementary School Budgets

Q1. Why is SHS costing an additional \$10-13K more in equipment repair/rental and contracted services? (copier? And?)

A. Cost centers received an allocation from the Central Office based on projected population for next year. Each administrator then determines the distribution of those funds to program needs. These lists indicate how the schools have allocated their needs. There is no requirement that they be uniform.

Repair Services:

Schools	Req. Amt	Program	Description
Hawley	\$500	Admin	Laminator maintenance contract
	\$150	Music	Piano Tuning/repairs
	\$400	Library	Repairs for electronics (audio systems, mics, antenaes, receivers) and other audiovisual equipment (DVD, and CD Players)
	\$1050		
Sandy Hook	\$730	Music	Piano Tuning, Instrument repair
	\$800	Classroom	Misc. building expenses, laminator, Ellison machine, smartboard bulbs
	\$1530		
Middle Gate	\$150	Admin	Service Laminator
	\$300	Music	Piano Tuning, 2 times a year
	\$100	Library	Repair & cleaning typewriter
	\$150	Classroom	Repair-classroom
	\$700		
HOM	\$350	Music	Piano tuning
	\$500	Classroom	Necessary misc. repair work needed in classrooms/building
	\$850		

Contracted Services:

Schools	Req. Amt	Program	Description
Hawley	\$250	Library	Enchanted Learning; Teacher website for differentiated materials and activities
	\$149	Library	Follett-Lexille Provides lexile ad measurements for books and collections to assist in appropriate book selection
	\$115	Library	Storyboard That: website for graphics and comic strip collection
	\$1,600	Library	1 Yr Subscription – Discovery Streaming (digital content, interactive lessons, virtual experiences, assessments, and professional development materials)
	\$850	Library	Follett-Online hosting library manager including Alliance Plus, OneSearch
	\$265	Library	Ebsco: Novelist K-8 online database to search for books
	\$250	Library	Follett-WebPath Express: safe online searches (website filtration for appropriateness)
	\$250	Library	Encyclopedia Britannica: License (online research)
	\$150	Library	Follett-Title Peek: shows book titles, covers and reviews to assist with

Newtown Board of Education
Budget Meeting – February 1, 2017
Questions and Answers

			book selection
	\$145	Library	Fountas & Pinnell: sections by reading levels and optimal reading zones
	\$3000	Classroom	Managed Print Services
	\$7024		
Sandy Hook	\$1,330	Music	Pianist for 2 concerts and rehearsals
	\$8,033	Library	Discovery Education, Bookflix, Follett, Junior Library Guild, Truflix, EBSCO Magazine, Tumblebooks.com, Britannica & Image Quest, Enchanted Learning, Teaching Books
	\$4,900	Classroom	Manged Print Services \$250 per month, Follett for LAS, Read Naturally, digital content
	\$14,263		
Middle Gate	\$4,280	Library	Discovery Streaming, Automation Support-Follett, Britannica on line, AIMSweb contracted services, Enchanted Learning
	\$4,690	Classroom	Managed Print Services
	\$8,970		
HOM	\$600	Music	Accompanist for concert programs
	\$3,725	Library	Library services: Discovery Streaming, EBSCO, Grolier Online etc
	\$3,000	Classroom	Managed Print Services
	\$7,910		

The copier rental is detailed as follows:

Location	New Model	Internal Expense	Internal Charge	Annual Cost
HAW – Office	IR Advanced 6555	\$990.05		
HAW- Work Rm	IR Advanced 6575	\$1,485.54	\$2,475.59	\$9,902.36
SH – Office Rm 101C	IR Advanced 6575	\$1,485.54		
SH – Faculty Work Rm 215	IR Advanced 6575	\$1,485.54		
SH – Library Rm 108B	IR Advanced 6555	\$990.05	\$3,961.13	\$15,844.52
MG – Office	IR Advanced 6575	\$1,485.54		
MG – Work Rm	IR Advanced 6575	\$1,485.54	\$2,971.08	\$11,884.32
HOM – Work Rm	IR Advanced 6575	\$1,485.54		
HOM – Office	IR Advanced 6555	\$990.05	\$2,475.59	\$9,903.36

Sandy Hook has three leased MFP (Multi-Function Printer) devices and the other elementary schools have two each. SHS because it has two levels and is more spread out. The machine configuration is based on their historic experience. Middle Gate has two of the same machines.

Page. 210, Priority One Technology requests and supplemental student device counts by building

Q2. What is the rationale for adding the same amount of iPads/Chromebooks to each elementary school when MGS has a much higher student to device ratio (1.2) and SHS has a much lower ratio (0.8)? Can we even out the distribution?

Newtown Board of Education
Budget Meeting – February 1, 2017
Questions and Answers

- A. The dollar amount that had been included in last year's budget, and is again included this year, for building administration priorities is \$80,000. In order to encourage each building to grow in their use of technology and meet educational needs recognized within the building, a portion of these dollars is appropriated to each building.

The best effort is put forward to purchase all technology equipment at the best cost possible. Any savings realized through purchases to meet building administration priorities and obsolete equipment is then used to add equipment with a focus on equity.

This year we were able to add an additional cart of Chromebooks at Hawley, HOM and MGS with these funds.

Q2a. Similarly, what is the rationale for adding Chromebooks to Reed (1.04 ratio) and not the Middle School (1.52 ratio)?

- A. Budget planning continues to prioritize the replacement of obsolete devices. For the 2016-17 budget year, the equipment at RIS was due for replacement.

Prior to purchasing for a given building, we

- look at the current inventory of devices and compare it to the educational program needs; and
- consider the devices available in the current market that most closely match those needs.

This year Chromebooks were selected as the technology most aligned with instructional needs. This choice allowed us to deploy more devices and improve the student to device ratio.

During the 2017-17 school year, NMS is slated for refresh, and the same process will be repeated. Early conversations with building administration indicate the Chromebook as an ideal selection. Therefore, it is believed that next year we will be able to improve their student to device ratio, as well.

Q3. Page 228, what, more specifically are the contracted services for HVAC at SHS?

- A. For the first year the equipment warranty was on the installation contractor. Now we need to provide this service which includes investigative services such as; checking motor compressors, bearings, controls and system operations as well as preventative maintenance replacing filter, belts, lubrication etc.

Page 237, Staffing, Plant Operation and Maintenance

Newtown Board of Education
Budget Meeting – February 1, 2017
Questions and Answers

- Q4. I know this was mentioned already but could we have more information about why SHS requires 1 to 1.5 additional custodians (as compared to other elementary buildings)?
- A. Page 229 – SHS is 87,000 sq. ft. 27,000 sq. ft larger than our average elementary along with extensive ground needs.