

Newport City School Board Meeting Minutes March 30, 2016

Present

Board Members:

Vicky Lantagne – Chair
Wendy McGillivray
Mary Ellen Prairie
Chris Royer

Press:

Ed Barber, Newport Daily
Robin Smith, Record
**Partial Attendees

Administration and Staff:

Kathy Nolan, Curriculum Director
Melinda Mascolino, Ass't Principal
Nancy Frenette, Interim Principal
Glenn Hankinson, Finance Director
Nancy Griffith, Recording Secretary
John Castle, Superintendent
Sharon Pare, Teacher
John Ward**, Taxpayer
Cathy Lowell, Teacher
Lesley Larsen, Parent
Mary Ellen Maclure, Teacher
Tammy Wiggett**, Teacher
Carrie Ann Roberge, Parent
Jaime Royer, Parent

- I. LANTAGNE called meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

- II. LANTAGNE asked HANKINSON to come up and explain how tax rates are calculated. A handout was distributed. He discussed how Education Spending, Equalized Pupils, Education Spending per Equalized Pupils, and Property Dollar Equivalent Yield were used to calculate the Homestead Tax Rate. With their initial FY17 proposed budget NCES was still in the bottom 25% of spending per pupil in the State of Vermont. RUSSELL asked how the handout could be given to the taxpayer to show that realistically the initial proposed NCES budget, combined with the JHS and SHS would represent a tax increase of ½ a penny in the Homestead tax rate. Discussion was had about posting the handout on the school website, Facebook, etc. ROBERGE asked where the 15% figure that showed on the ballot was explained in this handout. HANKINSON explained that figure was calculated based on old legislation that included threshold penalties. Final Legislation occurred after warnings were published throughout the State. That figure would be around 9% this time if the same budget is brought forward. It still shows as a significant percentage increase due to the reduction in the equalized pupil count for NCES for the upcoming year, even though the overall initial budget is not up that much.

LARSEN asked what the Board's thoughts were around the next budget they wanted to bring forward to voters. MCGILLIVRAY indicated that the Board wanted input from the community before making any final decision, thus the reason for tonight's meeting. LARSEN and RUSSELL both feel the initial proposed budget is reasonable and that they feel educating the public would be the best approach. SMITH indicated that the city council had specific criticism around the proposed budget, and she inquired as to how the Board wanted to approach those specific concerns. CASTLE indicated that he could address the council's concerns around high

administrator salaries. He mentioned that a new principal was hired at a slightly lower salary for FY17, and as the current assistant principal had accepted another position for next year, the board revisited that position and reduced it from a 260 day contract to 210 days, with a lower salary range proposed. Frustration was expressed around why city council members did not attend meetings or observe the operations of the school if they had such criticism.

LARSEN inquired if the Board was still going to move forward with an informational handout that they discussed at the last meeting. They indicated that yes, but wanted to wait until after this forum to see what the consensus of the community was. WARD indicated that the tax rate is basically level after he reviewed the handout, and that would definitely be something he would highlight in the information distributed to the community. CASTLE indicated for any reduction in tax rate to be felt the budget would have to be reduced by at least \$52,000. MCGILLIVRAY indicated that they were open to that as long as it does not affect the education of students, which she is fearful would occur. ROYER discussed how they have to still present the budget in the same format on the next warrant due to legislation, so we really need to come up with a good strategy to present this information in a clear and concise way. ROBERGE agreed that the warrant figure needs to be clearly explained.

LANTAGNE mentioned that the next board meeting will be April 4th to finalize the budget, so she has asked that administration bring recommendations at that time. She also reminded the audience that there would be an informational budget meeting on April 25th, and the actual vote on the budget was to be held April 26th.

III. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Griffith

<u>Meetings:</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	April 21	5:30 p.m.	NCSU A219
NCSU Executive Committee	Thursday	April 21	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
NCES Board	Monday	April 4	6:00 p.m.	NCES