

Pownal Budget Committee

Meeting Date: April 20, 2011

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM

APPROVED

Members Present: Bill DeWitt, John Green, Carlene Harvey, Mary Ann Hodsdon, Scott Kaplan, Andy Wyatt

Members Excused: Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest,

Selectmen Present: Tim Giddinge

Guest: Kelly Wentworth

The meeting opened at 7:02. Six of the seven members were present and a quorum was established.

Secretary's minutes: There were some clarification changes to the minutes. On page two, the following changes were made:

Under Debt services – “The interest stays the same was removed”.

“Income from” was added to the sentence Excise taxes are down and more revenue will come out of taxes. In the third sentence the word payments was changed to “expenses”.

The wording “Tax Incremental Financing” was added to provide the name for the initials TIF.

Public Comment: None

Selectmen's Input: None at this time

Kelly Wentworth presented an overview and answered questions on the RSU5 estimated budget for 2011/2011/2.

Additional costs that could affect the budget for 2011/2012:

- * Cuts to Medicaid in the federal budget; The 2010/2011 budget corrected those Medicaid allocated one time use funds in the RSU5 budget.

- * The 2.6 million dollar bond to build ball fields at the high school – If the bond passes, and Pownal continues to be part of RSU5 Pownal's share will be 12.6 percent for 15 years. Kelly is checking to see if Pownal will continue to be responsible for 12.6% of the bond for 15 years if Pownal withdraws from RSU5.

- * Changes in state funding Pownal will be affected by what the state funds for state aid.

- * Changes in teacher contract negotiations.

- * Teaching positions: Appropriate class size is decided by age and ability. Currently there are no plans to add additional teachers. The average teacher pay is \$65,000.

Questions raised by budget committee members:

- * Would Pownal school costs be less if Pownal had not joined the RSU? There are no figures available from the state that will answer that question. The bill providing penalty payments for schools that have not joined an RSU, is still in legislation.

- * Is Freeport considering building a new high school? No There is a group of parents who would like to see some changes in the appearance of the high school: better outside lighting, changes in the school bus circle, repairs made to the sidewalks and painting and additional blinds. The student population is crowded at this time, but the general population is declining. The school administration hopes to change some traffic patterns within the school which would assist with movement through the school during the day.

* Is the RSU board considering changes in the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) agreement? The RPC agreement was set up for three years. Pownal's share of the budget is 12.6%. Two thirds of the board of directors would have to vote to make any changes in the agreement. After five years the plan has to be reviewed. Changes in the formula could occur if pressure was put on the RSU5 board to re-visit the agreement.

* Is there a plan to close the school in Pownal? No If the school in Pownal closes, what happens to the building? The deed to the building and land reads that if the school is not used for educational purposes, the school reverts to the town. RSU5 would not be eligible for a new high school for at least ten years and the state is currently not considering funding the building of new schools.

* School bussing; Currently the busses are either owned by the RSU or leased. As more children leave their home towns to attend school in one of the RSU5 schools, bussing will have to be adjusted. The costs of fuels will be a budget consideration.

Changes planned for the year 2011/2012:

* Early release days and late start days will be dropped.

* Two additional professional days will be added. The board is considering adding a third professional day.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Hodsdon