



Lamoine Budget Committee

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Minutes – April 22, 2024

Chair Tiffany McMullen called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Present were: Budget Committee members Tiffany McMullen, Greg Hiltz, Gregg Tehennepe, Mark Harris, Merle Bragdon (arrived 7:00 PM); Superintendent of Schools Rob Liebow, Special Education Director Adam Rabasca, School Committee Members Robert Pulver, Gordon Donaldson, Brett Jones; School Business Manager Daniel Higgins, and Adm. Asst. Stu Marckoon (arrived 6:52 PM).

Minutes – December 11, 2023 – Mark moved to approve the minutes. Gregg T. 2nd.
Vote in favor was 4-0.

School Budget 2024/25 – Those in attendance introduced themselves. Superintendent Rob Liebow reviewed the proposed school budget, beginning with an overall comparison of the proposed budget to the previous budget which is a 3.99% budget increase, and an assessment increase of 3.77%. He said the school tax increase on a median priced home would be \$104.33.

Mr. Liebow reviewed the revenues. He said the State EPS increase is over \$28,000, and the balance forward is \$350,000 which is the same as the previous year and still leaves some in the school balance forward.

Mr. Liebow said the expenditure increases include special education of more than \$75,000 for one child to attend a program at the Hancock School. He said there may be another child that needs to be placed elsewhere, and a large portion of that (\$50,000) is added to the budget. He said there is a reserve that could be tapped if that placement is needed. He said there is an increase in speech services. Adam Rabasca explained the need for that, and they're using an on-line contractor provider. He said that item was not included in the FY 23 budget. Mr. Liebow said there is an increase in Occupational Therapy services of \$22,000. He said there is a social worker that has been added through federal stimulus money which has run out, so there is a local increase of \$54,000 to keep the social worker/guidance counselor. He said it's money well spent. He said a school nurse has also been hired. Brett Jones said there had not been much of a nursing presence in the school. Mr. Liebow said there has been an increase of children needs that are potentially life threatening. He said the salary and health benefits cost \$85,000. He said there will also be a full time, shared superintendent next year which increases the budget \$18,000.

Mr. Liebow said there are reductions in high school tuition, fewer course work requests for staff, capital outlay, and food service. He said the reductions totally nearly \$160,000. He said the "unknowns" are now known, including health insurance and dental insurance.

Mr. Liebow reviewed the reserve addition proposals which includes \$50,000 more for the special education reserve which would bring the balance to \$250,000. He

recommended that keep happening until it reaches \$500,000. He said that would increase the impact on the property tax assessment. He said that's a separate article, and the impact on a typical home would be an increase of \$152.00 total (including the school operating budget). Mr. Jones noted that the specific account must use the money in that account for the purpose specified. There were a couple of anecdotes about special Ed situations. (Stu Marckoon joined the meeting at this point).

Mr. Liebow then reviewed each warrant item and explained each expenditure and revenue article. (Merle Bragdon joined the meeting at 7PM)

Merle asked about the food service budget. Mr. Liebow explained that there is enough balance in the revolving fund that they can reduce the expenditure by \$36,000 and still have money in the fund. A brief discussion followed. There was also a brief discussion regarding the school nurse and social worker hires.

Mr. Liebow said the enrollment at the school is stable at 130-students. He said the newest portable classroom (which he referred to as "The Money Pit") will open for the first day tomorrow for the library and music education rooms.

Mr. Higgins explained the food service revolving loan balance in more detail, saying the plan is to use that balance over multiple years.

Mr. Liebow said the goal was to keep the budget increase under 4-percent. There were brief discussions about the new portable classroom and building plans in general.

Mark moved to recommend approval of the school budget as submitted by the Lamoine School Committee. Greg Hiltz 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

Stu explained that article # 2 on the proposed warrant would allocate funds from the sale of the former John Smith property with \$15,000 returning to the Community Center Fund and the remainder to be used to make a principal reduction payment on the outstanding loan.

Mr. Liebow read the various fund balances in the school accounts.

Merle moved to recommend approval of the land sale proceeds article as proposed. Mark 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stu Marckoon, Secretary