

Tamworth School Board

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Tamworth School Board was held at the Kenneth A. Brett School on Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at 5:31PM. The meeting was called to order by Chair Laura Pike. Present were board members Laura Pike, Dan Rowe, Brenda Robinson, and Dana Littlefield, Superintendent Jay McIntire, Principal Noel DeSousa, Special Ed. Director Pat Kehoe, and Secretary Kathi Brown.

2. Approval of Agenda Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve the agenda. Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

3. Approval of Minutes

January 25, 2010 On page 2, the paragraph that starts Jenn Mashiak, the last sentence. Change Jay McIntire to read Dan Rowe (stated that this statement, regarding a raise and a bonus is absolutely not true). Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed.

January 13, 2010 On page 6, the fourth paragraph regarding the generator. After He recommends option 3 and the board agrees, add, Option 3 is where the Town assumes the total cost for the emergency shelter generator. Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed.

4. Director of Special Services Update

Pat Kehoe stated that we are up by six new students this month. Two are in the high school and four are in the elementary school. There are now 52 students being served by Special Education in all grade levels. She gave the board figures for a full time para professional to be added to next year's budget, using the mid range, and it would be \$35,781.00.

5. Visitor's Comments

David Little - He handed out copies of the Capital Improvement Program Report to the board members. The board will review the report and bring it back next month for discussion. The report is also available on the town website.

Bill Arnold - He provided information on the Alternative Education program. If this program is eliminated then specialists would be absorbing the responsibilities of the program which include Math, Social Studies, Language Lab, English, and Science. There would also be his Advisory class along with other various duties that would need to be absorbed. The STP Exploratory class could not be absorbed in other classes, due to

the use of various tools. The vocational component of this class is good for students going into vocational classes at Kennett. You are risking disrupting the regular programs for monetary sake only. Many teachers and students are concerned about this programs elimination. Current enrollment fluctuates, 15 is the average, currently there are 11 students, but it can increase within the future depending on the needs. The goal of this program is to return students into the regular classroom. It could pose a possible conflict for IEP students if the program is eliminated. Pat Kehoe does not think so at this time, as it is considered as a regular education program, and not included as a special education service in the IEP's.

Heather Booska - Provided an article in The Conway Daily Sun to board members.

Heidi King - None of the schools looked at by the task force had full day Kindergarten. She gave the board two handouts on research she had done. Of 47 schools she looked into, only 6 have full day Kindergarten programs.

Reb Pugh - She is proud of the board and the special education department as to how they handle out of district placement, in trying to keep students here. Bill Arnolds Alternative Education program goes a long way to aid with this, and is wondering about the trade off of taking the chance of deleting this program.

Gail Marrone - People who are now 30 to 40 years old were considered inferior when going to Kennett if they were coming from Tamworth. Today the Tamworth kids shine and feel like part of the Kennett community. She believes it is because of the strong foundation provided by this school. We should be proud of this foundation they have gotten here. The board needs to think hard about any program cuts you are thinking of making.

Marie Labrie - She appreciates the administrations opinions, but you should not reduce the programs that have been suggested. She has only heard positive feedback about the Alternative Education program. You should not eliminate this program if it is helping students to succeed. You should also leave Kindergarten the way it is. Why are you going to entertain moving the 6th graders into the junior high if the current teachers disagree with this proposal?

Laura Pike - Last month Noel DeSousa gave a detailed presentation, which will be presented again tonight. This presentation was the force behind these cuts and changes, which were driven by the declining enrollment in the building.

Noel DeSousa - The proposed cuts are a measured reduction in programming. These types of cuts will have to continue over the next several years. He spoke about the two budgets that had been presented to the board. Most middle schools in the country are grades 6, 7, and 8 or grades 5 through 8 models.

Marie Labrie - We invest in our teachers, their opinions should be listened to, how were they including in the process involving the current changes.

Noel DeSousa - Based on the expectations laid on him, teachers were to come up with options. These options, presented tonight, are administrative recommendations. The staff was made aware of possible changes and he received very little feedback from them.

Laura Pike - She spoke about the work of the task force, which solicited input from the teachers.

Juno Lamb - When you look at the effect of money on the tax rate, on roughly \$50,000.00, in or out, it would be .14 cents per thousand in tax rate. Tiny classes, there has been no talk of multi age classes and still retaining programs.

Jay McIntire - Multi age has been discussed with staff members.

Noel DeSousa - He asked for feedback from the teachers, and when contemplating a down size no one is going to come forward to give suggestions, knowing that their colleagues may lose their positions. Cutting back on classroom teachers was not a good idea, but he does see it coming in the future. The number of 20 students per grade seems to be the threshold people address, from going from two classes per grade to one class per grade. Multi grade classes have been done here in the past. We eliminated it, as staff did not think it was a good idea. There are grade level expectations in Reading, Math, & Science, we need to be sure that certain topics are being taught at each grade level. This is difficult to do in multi grade situations.

Laura Pike - .14 cents per thousand. Taxes will change to keep these programs, the board has not used this formula in formulating the budget. The board needs to reach out to the town office and work to get the actual calculation. Our board is not going to do these calculations without accurate information.

Dan Rowe - The tax rate trivializes it. The issue is broader, our school has the highest cost in NH, per student, for schools of like size. 19 students per class is the state standard. The budget needs to be done in a balanced way. We will not compromise the standards of this school, we want the best education that the town can afford.

Laura Pike - She wants the lines of communication to be open. They will not give inaccurate information to the community. Jay McIntire will contact the town office for the correct tax rate to use.

Sally Vittum - The Board did an excellent job. She agrees with the classroom consolidation statement. All students are gifted and have assets, they should be eligible for anything available to them. Could aides be hired so there is one aide per teacher, per grade, so the quality of education stays the same, then address keeping some of the proposed program cuts, like Art, Gifted, etc. The teachers said no to opening negotiations in order to reduce the salaries paid to them.

Ron Goodwin - He is for the full day Kindergarten program. He would like to know the reasons why they are looking at the TAG program being cut, reducing the Physical Education program, and creating less time for students in the program. Childhood obesity is an issue, and he would hate to lose these positions and staff if we need to hire quality teachers in the future. In the TAG program, are the students truly gifted, or what is the criteria for this program.

Noel DeSousa - The TAG selection criteria will be addressed by Marcia McKenna. The back page of the handout shows one possible model for change in contact time for students. He explained the time offered for various grades.

Marcia McKenna - The TAG criteria is based on testing primarily, usually the top 25%, which justifies the program. We service both ends of the 25%. It challenges kids and they achieve higher levels. Some students are placed based on parental request, it is on a rotating basis for some kids. We currently serve about 34-35 children. We cover basically Reading and Language Arts programs. Skills that they learn translate across all curriculums. Pacing in this class is a little bit faster, about 30-40 % faster. We need to modify the program to reach the top kids. To attract families to town we need unique programs to offer, in all areas.

Karen Santuccio - For teachers who do not pay taxes, it is not trivial amounts. A rough estimate of taxes is a more realistic approach for the taxpayers to understand. The dollar amount is important. If some programs are not offered, it prevents us from being in a different place.

Dan Rowe - Regarding the TAG program, see table 2a that shows the staffing structure with other schools. This table is based on comparable sized schools, which influenced the board.

6. Review of Proposed 2010/2011 Budget

Dan Rowe - John Cleveland sent the board an email. Basically he supports eliminating the TAG program, the Alternative Education program, and the part-time Occupational Therapy Assistant position, reducing the Librarian to 0.6 FTE, restoring the Art position to full time and delaying the introduction of full day Kindergarten for one year.

Jay McIntire – Responded to the email. He presented a hand out on the cost of bringing back some programs at different percentages. Scheduling issues will arise if only one or two specials go back to full time.

Noel DeSousa - Specials need to be scheduled for the same amount of time, or assign staff different duties from teaching.

Dan Rowe - Refers to the structure of the five comparable schools, they have no full time Art, no TAG, and no Alternative education. He supports what was originally proposed.

Brenda Robinson - You don't always agree personally, but you make the best decision you can. She agrees to put off all day Kindergarten for one year. You need to do more research for next year.

Dan Rowe - As far as all day Kindergarten, he agrees with Brenda Robinson. You need to educate the townspeople and do not force it on them. You need to educate the board also. He would like to defer Kindergarten for one year.

Dana Littlefield - Supports full day Kindergarten. Give it a try and see what happens. If it does not work, you can go back to the way it was. A change needs to be made sometime, so why not now.

Brenda Robinson - The school has tried different approaches with programs before, and if they did not work, we changed them to make it work. We have not educated the board or the community enough on this change in Kindergarten, we need to get input from the community. She would like to defer the implementation for one year.

Laura Pike - At the Public forum, parents wanted to have an option of full or ½ day Kindergarten. Noel DeSousa and Susan Wald have made a model for what this would look like. Yes it can be done, the objective in a full day program is structural and programmatic for a more successful educational basis for all the way through school. Laura Pike feels that it would be more difficult to manage if both options were offered, there would be a break in the continuity of the program. It would interfere with the core objective of all day Kindergarten. It would be in our best interest to hold off on implementation for a year, until the community embraces and supports it. There is a lack of understanding on the program. There needs to be more informational sessions and handouts.

Jay McIntire - It would be worth hearing about the findings of what ½ day and full day mixed Kindergarten programs look like. There are a total of four alternatives to look at for the structure of Kindergarten.

Susan Wald - She has a sample schedule for what full day Kindergarten would look like. She has spoken with the teachers at Bartlett, who currently have full day Kindergarten. Bartlett has had this program for over 25 years. Children get rushed in the ½ day program. Susan Wald does the best she can with ½ day, but research has convinced her that all day is the way to go. It makes for a better paced day for students. They would have play based developmental activities to help them learn. After a few weeks the students adjust fine to an all day program. Full day helps with early intervention and not retention in the upper grades. A full day is a slower day and more in depth, students can explore more areas and be outside. There would be more hands on activities.

Dan Rowe - What impact would an option of ½ day or full day Kindergarten have?
Susan Wald does not know anywhere that gives parents an option, it is one way or

another. When there is a choice given, the students feel it when others stay all day and they do not.

Laura Pike - She asked Susan Wald what voice did you hear at the public forum. Susan Wald felt it was lack of information regarding the program. Most parents want to know their child is happy, enjoying school and feel good about themselves. This school is good at that. A two hour workshop with parents would answer questions for the parents and community, or go online to do research. Current parents that she has spoken with say that the majority are in favor of all day Kindergarten.

Laura Pike - Spoke about the various eliminations & changes being proposed. TAG letters from outside sources are in their packets. Bill Arnold was thanked for speaking on the Alternative Education program and the handout given to the board. No decisions are easy; we use information and data on programs in other NH schools, and look to the recommendations from the principal and superintendent.

Laura Pike - Kindergarten, full day, is a good idea but the community is not fully in support of it because they do not understand the program.

Brenda Robinson - We should wait on all day Kindergarten to educate everyone first. Dana Littlefield wants to have all day Kindergarten now. Dan Rowe wants to have all day Kindergarten now. John Cleveland wants to wait. Jay McIntire feels that research shows that full day Kindergarten is in the students best interest.

7. Visitor's Comments

Gail Marrone – Some board members have not even seen the TAG or Alternative Education programs, but yet you are willing to get rid of them, without even seeing how effective the programs are.

Sally Vittum - Asked about all day Kindergarten and if there is definitive proof that it betters the child by increasing test scores.

Jay McIntire – Yes there has been lots of research done on the subject. WestEd did an analysis. Data showed higher scores on measures. Regarding student performance within two years, not a lot is out there, but those that are, say yes.

Lori Palmer - Thanks to the school board for all your work. All we have heard about are programs being cut from the budget. No board member stood up to say that keeping the programs is a good idea. Multiple people did make the call to the town office on the tax rate and on a \$150,000. home it would save about \$50.00 per year per family based on the proposed cuts.

Peg DeLong - Last year all the parents did not want cuts made, but at the town meeting it was an overwhelming vote to cut the budget. We pay the highest amount per student in NH.

Belle Stafford - Proposed cuts are proposed for two main reasons. One is to take the whole town into consideration, those who can't afford the tax rate in town. Declining enrollment is another reason we have to keep making cuts, you can do it now or later. If not now then we are in denial about something. Timing is important for adding a program when you are cutting others. You need to look at what the climate of the town is right now, with the cuts that were made last year. You should not make so many cuts this year. The board should fight for these programs, and the town will listen to this if it is explained to them.

Kelly Rines - The SAU building and lease was discussed last year. What has happened about moving them into our building.

Laura Pike - It has been talked about and research has begun as to looking into other options.

Jay McIntire - We started in July, looking into other options as we pay too much money. He has gone to select boards looking for less expensive rents. The current lease expires in October 2011 and if anyone has any ideas for places available, please let him know. Administrative costs are about 4%, which is not a lot of money to impact the overall budget

Laura Pike - She talked about various shared services between the schools to reduce costs also.

Diane Bowles - She read a letter her son wrote about the TAG program. Regarding the Alternative Education program, she spoke about students who had gone through the program and fully appreciate it. These students may not be in school today if it was not for this program. Research shows that specials programs are needed.

Laura Pike - The recommendations and budget that are being brought to the annual meeting are the best judgment of the administration and the school board. If the community feels different then it will be in their hands at the annual meeting. We will vote on the board supported budget tonight, which is in our best judgment. It ultimately comes back to the hands of the community.

The Tamworth Draft 2010-2011 Budget handout was changed to add \$35,781.00 to the Special Education line for the addition of a full time para professional position.

8. Adoption of 2010/2011 Budget and Warrant Articles

Jay McIntire handed out the proposed warrant articles. As far as the Technology position is concerned, the board is still considering this. Currently this position is funded in the budget, but the board is looking into the cost of contracted services, more research is needed on this. It is a bottom line budget, but the board has no authority to create lines. A contracted service line has been created.

Go through each warrant article.

Article I: This is on the renovations and emergency repairs Capital Reserve Fund. The school will need over \$100,000 over 3 years to make the recommended repairs. The Article should not have read (The School Board recommends this appropriation.) as Dan Rowe pointed out that the board was not informed about the fund and it had not been discussed. There is currently \$70,280.00 in the fund. Dan Rowe asked if the SAU moving costs would be shared with the other districts. Jay McIntire said it would need to be discussed at a joint board meeting. Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve Article I. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed. Dan Rowe voted no.

Article II: This is on the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the TESP. Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve Article II. Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Article III: This is for the support of schools amount. The amount has been changed to \$5,440,788.00 due to the addition of one para professional. Dana Littlefield made a motion to approve Article III. Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Article IV: This is to adopt the SAU budget. Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve Article IV. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed. Dan Rowe refused from the vote.

Article V: This is for the generator replacement. The amount needs to be changed to read \$31,542.00. Dan Rowe Made a motion to approve Article V. Brenda Robinson seconded the motion. Several board members felt that this article should be on the Towns Warrants and not the schools as it is providing for an emergency facility for the town. Dana Littlefield stated that an emergency grant will pay for half of the cost and if we do not approve it, it will not get done as you can not raise money from the floor at the Town meeting. Motion passed. Dan Rowe voted no. Dana Littlefield abstained.

Article VI: This is regarding the “Evergreen Clause”. This was approved at a prior board meeting.

Article VII: This is regarding RSA 198:20-b. This was approved at a prior board meeting.

Article VIII: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

9. Old Business

- a. Audio and Video Surveillance on School Buses Policy (ECAAF) - 1st reading**
Tabled

10. New Business

- a. Tamworth Exchange**

Tabled

11. Superintendent's Report

a. Principal Search

Tabled. Jay McIntire has posted the position.

b. Student Letter Summary

The summary of these letters was handed out to board members.

c. NECAP Results

Tabled

12. Principal's Report

Tabled

12. Board Comments

Tabled

13. Communications

a. Letters from parents & students

Copies of letters were in the board packets for review.

b. Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Report Form - (JBAA-R)

Tabled

14. Non-Public Session - RSA 91-A:3 II a, b, c, d, e

None

15. Action as a Result of Non-Public

None

16. Personnel

None

17. Adjournment

Brenda Robinson made a motion to adjourn at 8:15PM. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathi S. Brown, Secretary
Draft Pending Board Approval

February 2010

**Tamworth School District
Public Budget Hearing
February 3, 2010**

At 8:23pm Laura Pike call the meeting to order. She stated that the objective was to share information with the public about the proposed budget along with the line items.

Noel DeSousa gave a presentation on Re-Organizing for Instruction 2010-2011 and beyond.

An employee's seniority and certification listing will determine which staff are let go.

Laura Pike spoke about the work that the task force did along with possibilities for the future.

Laura Pike and Dan Rowe went through the budget comparison document and went over the significant changes.

Dan Rowe wants to know where we will be at year end. Jay McIntire thinks around \$200,000 in the black. Dan Rowe thinks you should change the 09-10 bottom line figures to reflect this.

John Wheeler - Regarding the Gifted & Talented program. What would happen if the town reinstates this program, would it need to be added back in? He would recommend keeping \$1.00 in the account.

Laura Pike - The board is still looking into contracted services for the Computer Technology position. Consider eliminating the position in the future in exchange for contracted services. Would we need a budget line for contracted services?

Jay McIntire - You would not be able to reinstate the program during the year if it is cut out. If the budget shows zero, do you have the budget authority to move it in there. No, you can not if there is no money in it, he would have to get a legal opinion.

Dan Rowe - You could fund it out of regular education if you wanted to.

Laura Pike - If a motion is made from the floor to put back in positions, it would then be increased as such.

Reb Pugh - She asked for an explanation of the other school board expenses line.

Dan Rowe - Spoke on the contingency fund line with dollars earmarked for the boards control in the event of an emergency. Places where the board wants to have funds available if needed.

Laura Pike - If we need more money for a new principal, the board can negotiate that with these funds.

Reb Pugh - If a budget line is out of whack why not increase that line.

Dan Rowe - The budget lines are not out of whack, they are current values.

Laura Pike - Wants to note a clarification, there is disagreement between board members on all day Kindergarten. She challenges the administration to put together a parent/community education session, in the building, to ask specific questions so they can make an informed decision. This needs to happen before the annual district meeting, to educate parents & community members on the program proposed.

Peg Delong - She felt that Susan Wald's comments were helpful tonight, since she deals with it daily.

Brenda Robinson made a motion to adjourn at 9:08PM. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathi S. Brown, Secretary
Draft Pending Board Approval