

Amherst Ways & Means Committee Meeting

Tuesday, October 26, 2021, 6:00pm at the Brick School

In attendance: Christine Grayson (W&M), Kelly Schmidt (W&M), Marilyn Gibson (W&M) via Zoom, Samantha Linton (W&M) via Zoom, Jeff Candito (W&M), Greg Fritz (W&M), Beth Kuzsma (ASB)

The SAU Budget subcommittee meeting was discussed to get clarity on who was attending and what their roles were. It is tomorrow October 27 at 5pm. Jeff will be attending as the Amherst W&M representative. Marilyn will be attending as a general community member appointed by the SAU board. As such she represents all three (Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan) entities.

A reminder was given that the leads on each sub-committee meeting should write summaries to be provided to all.

In the Special Services and Curriculum sub-committee meetings, Marilyn felt there was no room for debate about line items presented. Specifically for special services she is concerned that money is just being transferred around for creating new programs that have large spends. Her questions were not answered specifically as to where things had been switched or changed within line items.

There was a question about what MTSS stood for- multi-tiered system of support.

Greg stated his concern about lack of oversight with relation to grants specifically the 3 ESSR funds. He wanted to know if during and after school happenings were in compliance of CDC policy and wanted to make sure tax amounts were not impacted.

It was agreed that RSAs needed to be better understood.

Chair Kelly explained that Ways and Means is part of the process for giving feed back to the board so that they can request adjustments to the superintendents proposed budget and adopt it as their own for presentation as warrant articles for tax payers to vote upon. They have upcoming budget workshops which W&M members are encouraged to attend, but are not a requirement. These meetings are the time for board members to share their sub-committee findings and we can chime in, but it is their meeting.

Christine brought up that information on annual revenue amounts and sources is not readily available. It would be helpful to have in order to make a true determination of taxpayer impact in relation to the budget.

A discussion occurred upon how the unassigned fund balance works and can be used. If "given" back, the amount needed to be raised by taxes the next year is reduced.

Marilyn complained that the whole SAU is top heavy with not enough results to prove their worth. Committee members asked her to clarify what she meant by results and she cited results recorded by the NH DOE. Greg would like to see efficiency metrics.

Marilyn thinks curriculum line items are too high.

Jeff wondered what extra value we get compared to other towns for the higher budgets that we have.

There was discussion about postponing the 11/3 meeting.

Submitted by Kelly Schmidt