

1 Mont Vernon School Board

2 Public Hearing

3 Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023

4 Meeting Minutes- Approved 02 08 2023

5 Attendees:

6 Administration: Interim Superintendent- Steven Chamberlin, Assistant Superintendent- Christine  
7 Landwehrle, SAU #39 Business Administrator- Amy Facey and Tom Lecklider- MVVS  
8 Principal.

9 Mont Vernon Village School Board: Chair- Sarah Lawrence, Jessica Hinckley-Vice Chair,  
10 George Torres, and Kristen Clark.

11 Meeting Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

12 Public: Eileen Naber, 14 Beech Hill Road, Mont Vernon, and Anne Dodd, 26 Mason Road, Mont  
13 Vernon and Community Members.

14 Meeting Summary:

- 15 • Chair of the Mont Vernon School Board, Ms. Sarah Lawrence, presented the Warrant
- 16 Articles for the FY 24 Budget. Highlights include the following:
- 17 • Executive Summary:

18 Budget Comparison*	\$ Change	% Change
19 FY23 Operating Budget -> FY24 Proposed	\$476,200	8.1%
20 FY23 Operating Budget -> FY24 Default	\$393,054	6.7%
21 FY24 Default -> FY24 Proposed	\$83,146	1.4%

22 Appropriation Comparison:

23	FY23	FY24	Difference
24 Operating Budget	\$5,873,250	\$6,349,450	\$476,200
25 Property Maintenance Fund*	\$50,000	\$35,000	(\$15,000)
26 MVVS Renovation/Addition*	N/A	\$60,000	\$60,000
27 Students w/Disabilities Fund*	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000
28 Health and Dental Insurance Fund N/A		\$15,000	\$15,000
29 <u>Total</u>	<u>\$5,923,250</u>	<u>\$6,479,450</u>	<u>\$556,200</u>

- 30 • The board motioned to send the warrant articles to the Deliberative Session as presented.

31

32 I. Call to Order

33 **Chair of the Mont Vernon School Board, Ms. Saran Lawrence, opened the Public Hearing**  
 34 **at 6:07PM.**

35 Interim Superintendent, Mr. Steven Chamberlin, commented that it is an honor and privilege to  
 36 serve as Interim Superintendent. it is a joy to come over here and work with MVVS Principal,  
 37 Mr. Tom Lecklider, and the wonderful staff. Tonight, we are on the circuit of public hearing for  
 38 the FY 24 Budget. The purpose of tonight is to give feedback and talk about where the board is  
 39 at. This is a budget process that was started in October. He believes that the current structure and  
 40 approach to public education is working extremely well. You are going to hear tonight from  
 41 SAU #39 Business Administrator, Ms. Amy Facey, about challenges that they are facing. They  
 42 are looking forward to hearing feed.

43 He introduced Ms. Facey and Assistant Superintendent.

44 II. The Story- FY 24 Budget

45 Ms. Lawrence noted the major stories for the FY 24 Budget.

46 Increase in Student Services Costs Primary Drivers:

- 47 • Transportation
- 48 • Student Need

49 Increase in AMS Tuition:

- 50 • Based on # Students
- 51 • Average Cost per Pupil

52 Competitive Wage Adjustment for Non-Union Employees:

- 53 • Food Service
- 54 • Facilities
- 55 • Office Staff

56 Inflation:

- 57 • Gas Prices
- 58 • Utilities
- 59 • Facilities Service Contracts

60 Risk Management-Investment in Capital Reserves:

- 61 • Facilities
- 62 • Special Education
- 63 • Health and Dental Insurance

64 Ms. Lawrence read Article #2- Operating Budget

65 **Article 2. Shall the Mont Vernon School District raise and appropriate as an operating**  
 66 **budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations**  
 67 **voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as**  
 68 **amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling six million,**  
 69 **three hundred forty nine thousand, four hundred fifty dollars (\$6,349,450)? Should this**  
 70 **article be defeated, the default budget shall be six million two hundred sixty six thousand,**  
 71 **three hundred four dollars (\$6,266,304), which is the same as last year, with certain**  
 72 **adjustments required by previous action of the Mont Vernon School District or by law; or**  
 73 **the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and**  
 74 **XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only?**

75 **Majority vote required.**

76 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the Executive Summary.

77 <u>Budget Comparison*</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
78 FY23 Operating Budget -> FY24 Proposed	\$476,200	8.1%
79 FY23 Operating Budget -> FY24 Default	\$393,054	6.7%
80 FY24 Default -> FY24 Proposed	\$83,146	1.4%

81 She reviewed the Salaries and Benefits:

82 Salaries and Benefits:

- 83 • MVEA Contract in 3rd Year, expires 6/30/2025
- 84 • 5% Market Adjustment for Non-Union Employees

85 \* Health and Dental Insurance Employer Contribution Rate

- 86 • 4.1% Increase for Health Insurance
- 87 • 1.5% Increase for Dental Insurance

88 \*\* NH Retirement Employer Contribution Rate FY24-FY25

- 89 • 1.38% Decrease from 21.02% to 19.64% for Teachers
- 90 • 0.53% Decrease from 14.06% to 13.53% for Non-Teachers

91 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the enrollment projections from the NESDEC report. They are early in  
 92 the process with NEDEC, and it will continue to be refined as time goes on.

93 She noted that there will be no change with the staffing.

94 Ms. Facey added that this was updated as well.

95 Ms. Eileen Naber, 14 Beech Hill, Mont Vernon, asked if they could get copies of the slide  
 96 presentation.

97 Ms. Lawrence replied yes.

98 Ms. Lawrence noted that they do not have any change with the certified staffing. There is a  
99 negligible change (0.2) with the custodian.

100 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the budget by category.

101	<u>Category</u>	<u>FY23 Voted</u>	<u>FY24 Proposed</u>	<u>\$Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
102	Transportation	\$213,164	\$283,711	\$70,547	33%
103	Student Services	\$1,012,899	\$1,167,000	\$154,101	15%
104	Facilities	\$323,704	\$359,780	\$36,076	11%
105	Administration	\$767,450	\$827,278	\$59,828	8%
106	Curriculum	\$3,359,310	\$3,526,634	\$167,324	5%
107	Food Service	\$107,330	\$108,447	\$1,117	1%
108	Technology	\$89,393	\$76,600	(\$12,793)	(14%)
109	<u>Total</u>	<u>\$5,873,250</u>	<u>\$6,349,450</u>	<u>\$476,200</u>	<u>8.1%</u>

110 Ms. Naber asked about the bus contract.

111 Ms. Facey replied that the special education contract is expiring this year regular ed we are in  
112 year 2.

113 Ms. Lawrence noted that the bulk of this is special education.

114 Ms. Anne Dodd, 26 Mason Road, Mont Vernon, asked how it could be up 30%.

115 Ms. Facey responded that it is special education and a different bus company.

116 Mr. Chamberlin explained that the numbers that are included are based on the numbers that we  
117 did receive for a formal bus contract.

118 Mr. Chamberlin added that the are in negotiations right now.

119 Ms. Lawrence noted that the administrative line has increased by 8%,

120 Ms. Naber asked for the number of students that they are tuitioning into AMS.

121 Ms. Lawrence replied that their percentage can fluctuate. She noted that the food service line is  
122 relatively flat.

123 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the default calculation. They start with the FY 23 Adopted Budget,  
124 remove the one-time warrant article, add in student services (\$210,923), add in tuition  
125 (\$102,582), add in salaries, and benefits contractual ( \$50,966), add in the SAU #39  
126 apportionment (\$29,903) and subtract miscellaneous (\$1,320). The FY 24 Default calculation is  
127 \$6,266,304.

128 Ms. Lawrence noted that if the budget does not pass it is still a 6.7% increase no matter what.  
129 Contractual obligations have put them up to that percentage.

130 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the budget composition pie chart.

131 She discussed the projected revenue.

132	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>Difference</u>
133	Food Service	\$107,329	\$108,446	\$1,117
134	Grants	\$87,015	\$87,015	\$0
135	Other Federal/State/Local	\$114,457	\$115,000	\$543
136	Prior Year Fund Balance	\$347,481	\$150,000	(\$197,481)
137	<u>Subtotal Revenues</u>	<u>\$656,282</u>	<u>\$460,461</u>	<u>(\$195,821)</u>

138 Ms. Dodd asked if there were students that were coming from Amherst that were tuitioned in.

139 Ms. Lawrence replied yes, they still do.

140 Ms. Facey confirmed that it is about \$74k in offset revenue.

141 Ms. Naber inquired about the amount that they will receive in Title I.

142 Ms. Facey replied \$6,500.

143 Ms. Lawrence commented that one tool that the district could look at is a Tax Rate Stabilization  
144 Fund. They do not have one established, it is something they should consider. Towns can do it  
145 and school districts can also do that. They would have to have a warrant article to establish the  
146 fund and then another one to fund it.

147 Ms. Naber added that they have a Tuition Contingency Fund that was established in 2017, that  
148 has not been touched or added to. So why don't you use that this year? Also, only the school  
149 board are the agents to expend. They could vote to offset the current balance, it is only \$30k.

150 Ms. Lawrence added that they will get to that and get to the rationale.

151 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the projected tax rate impact- budget

152 Ms. Dodd noted her displeasure with the tax impact.

153 Ms. Lawrence replied that it is a hard one this year and there are contractual obligations.

154 Ms. Dodd noted that they have been so successful in avoiding a default budget.

155 Ms. Lawrence remarked that she understands, and the difference is in pennies. They have done a  
156 good job in maintaining the school.

157 Ms. Dodd mentioned that they need to communicate the challenges and the work of the  
158 administration.

- 159 Ms. Lawrence added that they are always looking for ways to communicate with the public.  
160 They are locked into so much of this.
- 161 Ms. Dodd replied that when someone gets an extra \$5k in their tax bill as a surprise they will be  
162 upset. She is afraid of what will happen for the taxpayers.
- 163 Ms. Lawrence noted that they can do something with the minutes, and they will do their best to  
164 summarize. It is hard for one single board member to respond.
- 165 Mr. Chamberlin remarked that they want to get the community informed with a community  
166 FAQ.
- 167 Ms. Clark noted that they can utilize the Transfer Station.
- 168 Ms. Naber mentioned that the MVVS is operating beautifully with this number of teachers and  
169 staff. Are you sure that all of them are absolutely needed?
- 170 Ms. Lawrence replied that they did a comprehensive review of the staff, and they actually need  
171 more hours not less. It is miraculous that they are doing what they have with the time they have.
- 172 Ms. Naber responded that it is like your house, you can be satisfied with less.
- 173 Mr. Chamberlin added that this school is working and is the right size for this community. If you  
174 reorganize it will affect the students.
- 175 Ms. Naber remarked that she is dumbfounded that they need additional specialists to come into  
176 the classroom when you have a class enrollment of 12. She is a teacher by trade.
- 177 Ms. Lawrence added that even one student can change their budget by \$100k.
- 178 Mr. Chamberlin mentioned that this school cares about and this and this is the configuration that  
179 is working.
- 180 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the Capital Reserve Funds.
- 181 Property Maintenance Fund
- 182 • Balance: \$116,000
  - 183 • Recommended Contribution Request: \$35,000 (\$0.11 tax impact\*)
  - 184 • Funding Source: Unassigned Fund Balance
  - 185 • Contribution maintains Adopted Facility Plan
- 186 Students' w/Disabilities Fund
- 187 • Balance: \$32,000
  - 188 • Recommended Contribution Request: \$20,000 (\$0.06 tax impact\*)
  - 189 • Funding Source: Unassigned Fund balance
  - 190 • Reduces Risk: Provides Support for Unanticipated Need
- 191 Health and Dental Insurance Fund (New)

- 192 • Recommended Contribution Request: \$15,000 (\$0.05 tax impact\*)
- 193 • Funding Source: Unassigned Fund balance
- 194 • Reduces Risk: Provides Support for Unanticipated Plan Changes

195 Tuition Contingency Fund

- 196 • Balance: \$33,000
- 197 • Recommended Contribution Request: \$0

198 Ms. Naber commented on the Students with Disabilities Fund.

199 Ms. Lawrence replied that even one student can change their budget by over \$100k. If we can  
200 add to this fund and get it to \$50,000. They are seeing a change in students with greater needs.  
201 This is one way they can do that with less impact to the community overall.

202 Ms. Naber added that this is the same speech they heard 6 years ago.

203 Mr. Chamberlin noted that there was a combination of entrances and exits. It is the best fiduciary  
204 responsibility.

205 Ms. Dodd remarked that she understands that the order of priority in the warrant articles.

206 Ms. Lawrence replied yes.

207 Mr. Torres added that the Students with Disabilities Fund is not discretionary and is prudent.

208 Ms. Lawrence added that the Health and Dental Fund, is risk management.

209 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the Health and Dental Insurance Fund (New)

210 Ms. Dodd asked about the EFA account.

211 Ms. Landwehrle replied that if they were Educational Freedom Account, they would be aware of  
212 that.

213 Ms. Dodd asked where that fund comes from.

214 Ms. Landwehrle replied the taxpayers.

215 Mr. Chamberlin responded that comes from the State and they would have to change the law.

216 Ms. Dodd asked if they would get a surprise if there were 5 students that would decide to do that.

217 Mr. Chamberlin replied that they will get reduced Adequacy Aid.

218 Ms. Clark replied that they would take that away and that hit already happened.

219 Ms. Naber asked why they are not considering spending the Tuition Contingency Fund.

220 Ms. Lawrence responded that they decided that it was better to hold those funds. They did  
221 discuss it.

222 A community member noted that this is a rainy day fund and exactly how rainy is it.

223 Mr. Chamberlin replied that if 4 students were to move into MV and be tuitioned to Amherst  
224 they would be in trouble.

225 Ms. Lawrence read Warrant Article #3- Contribution to Property Maintenance Fund

226 **Article #3- Contribution to Property Maintenance Fund**

227 **Shall the Mont Vernon School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to thirty five**  
228 **thousand dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the School Property Maintenance Expendable**  
229 **Trust Fund previously established in March 2007? This sum to come from the June 30,**  
230 **2023 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No amount**  
231 **to be raised from new taxation.**

232 **Majority vote required.**

233 She reviewed the Long Term Facilities Plan

234 She explained the HVAC Duct Replacement Project that is in process.

235 She covered the Long Term Facilities Funding Plan.

236 Ms. Lawrence reviewed Warrant Article #4- Mont Vernon Village School Renovation/Addition  
237 Study.

238 **Article #4- Mont Vernon Village School Renovation/Addition Study.**

239 **Shall the Mont Vernon School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to sixty**  
240 **thousand dollars (\$60,000) for the purpose of developing an Architectural and Engineering**  
241 **Study including a conceptual design, program study, cost estimate, and site review for a**  
242 **renovation/addition to the Mont Vernon Village School? This sum to come from the June**  
243 **30, 2023 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No**  
244 **amount to be raised from new taxation. This special article is a special warrant article per**  
245 **RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 V.**

246 **Majority vote required.**

247 Ms. Clark explained that this is to gauge community interest.

- 248 • Continue work of the Middle School Study Committee
- 249 • Develop plan to address expected increased enrollment
- 250 • Investigate programmatic changes that may increase cost efficiency

251 Recommended Contribution Request: \$60,000 (\$0.18 tax impact\*)

252 Funding Source: Unassigned Fund Balance

253 Ms. Dodd asked about the warrant for the middle school.

254 Mr. Chamberlin replied that they voted to send a plan to renovate through the CNA.

255 Ms. Clark added that it has to happen in the same time frame.



256 Ms. Lawrence explained that their hands are tied if they do not fund this and there is no other  
257 way to say it better.

258 Ms. Dodd noted that they were sending their students to Milford, and they wanted them to pay  
259 for the facility without owning the facility. Now, Amherst is doing that to us as well. When we  
260 renegotiate that contract, we need to remove that clause.

261 Ms. Lawrence remarked that everything was discussed.

262 Ms. Naber asked when the contract expired.

263 Ms. Lawrence added that they are in year 2 of 5. It was 5 years with the option to extend.

264 Ms. Clark noted that they are looking at significant increases.

265 Ms. Lawrence noted that their enrollment is going up, although not next year.

266 Mr. Chamberlin noted that they contract out their preschool services. This is a wonderful  
267 approach and planning is very important. This is a tool to help them plan long term.

268 Ms. Naber inquired what are the 3 options for Public Presentation.

269 Ms. Lawrence replied that they do not know what these options are at this time.

270 Ms. Lawrence read Warrant Article #5

271 **Article 5–Students with Disabilities Fund**

272 **Shall the Mont Vernon School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to twenty**  
273 **thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the Mont Vernon School District Students with**  
274 **Disabilities Capital Reserve Fund established in March 2016? This sum to come from the**  
275 **June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No**  
276 **amount to be raised from new taxation.**

277 **Majority vote required.**

278 She read Warrant Article #6

279 **Article 6–Health and Dental Insurance Fund**

280 **Shall the Mont Vernon School District establish a Health and Dental Insurance Capital**  
281 **Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for unanticipated health and dental**  
282 **insurance payments and to raise and appropriate the sum of up to fifteen thousand dollars**  
283 **(\$15,000) to be placed in this fund? Further, to name the Mont Vernon School Board as**  
284 **agents to expend from said fund. This sum to come from the June 30, 2023 unassigned fund**  
285 **balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from new**  
286 **taxation.**

287 **Majority Vote Required.**

288 She noted the Appropriation Comparison.

	FY23	FY24	Difference	
289				
290	Operating Budget	\$5,873,250	\$6,349,450	\$476,200
291	Property Maintenance Fund*	\$50,000	\$35,000	(\$15,000)
292	MVVS Renovation/Addition*	N/A	\$60,000	\$60,000
293	Students w/Disabilities Fund*	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000
294	Health and Dental Insurance Fund	N/A	\$15,000	\$15,000
295	<u>Total</u>	<u>\$5,923,250</u>	<u>\$6,479,450</u>	<u>\$556,200</u>

296 Ms. Lawrence replied that they are hoping for \$280k UFB, better with \$350k.

297 Ms. Dodd noted that it is important to say what the tax impact is.

298 Ms. Naber noted that you have enough saved for the \$280k.

299 Ms. Lawrence added that it could be a need with need with student services or a change in health  
300 and dental for a staff member.

301 Mr. Torres remarked that these are real costs.

302 Ms. Lawrence added that they are trying to be really transparent.

303 Ms. Dodd asked if they did not vote for this the money will come back to the town?

304 Ms. Lawrence replied yes.

305 Ms. Lawrence reviewed the next steps:

- 306 • February 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 Deliberative Session 6:00PM
- 307 • March 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 District Voting

308 Ms. Dodd inquired about the Tax Cap Warrant Article.

309 Mr. Chamberlin responded that there is an Amherst community member that introduced a Tax  
310 Cap Warrant Article of 2%.

311 Ms. Dodd asked if there were 25 signatures.

312 Mr. Chamberlin noted that they will provide an opportunity to come and talk about it on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>  
313 and it will get on the ballot. They are working with the Moderator; it will have to follow the State  
314 Statute.

315 Ms. Facey remarked that it has to be a certain number of days before the vote.

316 III. Public Comment II of II

317 Ms. Naber noted that one of the things she has a problem with is in the dialogue explaining the  
318 budget and warrant articles. It has been presented confusingly to the voters.

319 Ms. Facey commented that “no amount to be raised from new taxation” is the language on the  
320 warrant.

321 Ms. Naber noted that she does not know if that is still true that they cannot expand on the land.

322 Mr. Chamberlin added that it is a process, and they will look into it.

323 **Ms. Hinckley motioned to approve the warrant articles as presented and send them to the**  
324 **Deliberative Session. Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion**  
325 **passed.**

326 The board thanked Ms. Naber and Ms. Dodd for their questions and comments.

327 IV. Meeting Adjourned

328 **Ms. Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 7:36PM.**

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