

ASD Ways and Means
January 31, 2023

Names of Members:

Dwayne Purvis (Chair) - Present
Jeff Candito - Present
Greg Fritz - Present
Mike Akillian - Present
Mozammel Husainy - Present
Steve Frades - Remote
Rick Barnes - Present
Marilyn Gibson (Alternate) - Present

Person(s) appearing before the Committee

Amy Facey - Present
Steve Chamberlin - Present
Kelly Mullin - Present

Summary of topics discussed

We discussed the previous minutes and it was noted that the ASSA vote was recorded incorrectly. The correct vote on Warrant Article 16 is 7-0 in favor.

Public Comment:

Kelly Mullin mentioned how confusing it is with all the figures being mentioned on the Facilities Warrant. Kelly asked for clarity on what things will actually cost.

It was mentioned that W&M would provide an estimator of costs as well as a reasonable range in the view of the W&M members. The reason for various numbers being mentioned is that the ASB and SAU39 have been operating under the assumption of financing the project at level principal for 30 years at 6% interest which would have been a total cost of \$118M but now have updated their assumptions to be 25 year debt at 5.75% interest which would be a total cost of \$103M.

Some on W&M said that the actual total is likely to be lower than the ASD estimate. Steve Chamberlin mentioned that the ASD is conservative.

Kelly Mullin also noted that the the estimates assume that we do not receive state aid and if we did, that would drive down the total cost.

It was agreed by all W&M members that the Facilities report should be sent to ASB and SAU39 for their review.

The SAU report was discussed. There were several issues with the report at the onset including the job descriptions for the Business Administrator, and the Director of Curriculum as well as how we include the tuition agreement with Mont Vernon. These will be corrected in the next revision.

We heard a summary of the SAU finances from FY2008 to present. We heard about the changes in the student population from the same time period and how the SAU budget has been affected by these changes.

We heard a comparison and contrasting statements between SAU39 and SAU41. SAU41 has voter approval on their SAU budget unlike SAU39. SAU41 is reported to be spending less per student and has higher test data. The SAU41 website is a model for us. Both SAUs have a similar population, demographics, and budget committee structure.

We discussed a \$800k difference in the SAU budgets between SAU39 and SAU41 with SAU41 being lower but it is not clear that all the positions are included in each of these budgets so we looked into the cost of the entire district and there is a \$5M difference in the overall budgets with SAU41 being lower. This was puzzling and we determined it must be driven by salaries but it was not obvious where that is coming from. More discussion will be had after Amy has a chance to speak with the BA at SAU41.

W&M agreed to send this SAU report to ASB and SAU39 for their review.

The Tax Estimator was discussed and explained. We provided a series of recommendations for improvement including (1) project costs 5 years out (2) add a description of the 3% increase assuming all warrant articles pass (3) add the State Ed Assessment along with the taxes for Town and County if possible (4) mention that we assume that there is no State Aid for the Facilities program (5) include costs reflecting the life of the bond.

We discussed our communications plan including an article in the Amherst Citizen as well as how we respond to Facebook posts. It was agreed that we do not need to respond to every post but we want to capture the questions and concerns in a FAQ style response.

We discussed our role at Deliberative Session. We agreed that we would just read our summary opinions as opposed to selling any point of view. We agreed to have an opening statement that would provide the big picture role of W&M and mention our reports. Individual members would be able to add color to comments as they see fit.

Meeting ends.