

**REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #16 SCHOOL BOARD
Mechanic Falls – Minot – Poland**

**The 2nd Special Meeting of the RSU #16 School Board
for 2011 – 2012 was held
Thursday, April 28, 2011 at 6:30 P.M.
in the Poland Regional High School Cafe**

Present: Annette Annance, Terri Arsenault, Carl Beckett, Sue Callahan, Norm Davis, Melissa Hodgkin,
Steve Holbrook, Mary Ella Jones, Yvette Murray, Scott Sawyer, Martha Stone, Jack Wiseman
Absent: Dave Griffiths, Jeanne Manley

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Mary Ella Jones, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the
Pledge of Allegiance.

ACTION ITEMS:

2.0 NEW BUSINESS: Discussion/Approval Proposed 2011–2012 RSU #16 School Budget

Motion: by Terri Arsenault to accept the proposed FY 2012 budget with a reduction of \$11,500

Seconded: by Yvette Murray

Vote: 8–3 (Steve Holbrook, Annette Annance, Norm Davis opposed) (Mary Ella Jones abstained) (See tally sheet #4)

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to cut 3.5% of budgeted health insurance out of the budget

Seconded: by Annette Annance

Vote: 3–9 (Steve Holbrook, Carl Beckett, Norm Davis in favor) (see tally sheet #1)

- Dennis explained we budgeted for a 10% increase in health insurance and the actual cost is coming in at a 6.5% increase, which is a savings of approximately \$70,000. When you budget for benefits, it is a moving target because you never really know who might come on and what they will take for benefits. Norm said he thinks the \$70,000 should come out.
- Terri supports leaving it in there, we may need to change someone from Single to Family Plans and we won't have the money if we don't have the cushion.
- Jack – We may see more retirements than expected and we may see more family plans for incoming employees, leave it in as a buffer.
- Steve – We will know by July 1st if someone is going to retire.
- Annette asked what about cutting 1.5% to 2% instead of 3.5%.

- Sue – Has received emails from a couple of people who want to know what planet she lives on if she approves this budget. She is hearing from both sides. She is for quality education and she doesn't know where the fat is in this budget.
- Bonnie Payette – You need to budget for worse case scenario and budget for all family plans. This gives you some wiggle room. Comment about Raymond bussing; the cost is ridiculous for a bus to go to Raymond for just a couple of students. The State average cost per student is \$8747 vs. our costs, which are over \$10,000. We charge Raymond \$8,747 per student, that is an \$1,880 per student cost to us. Dennis said the fuel cost for Raymond transportation is \$5,000. Norm – that doesn't cover the extra expenses, wear and tear, etc. We have 16 Raymond students at PRHS this year.
- Carl asked for clarification on voting on the entire budget or individual warrant articles. Dennis explained that any changes made tonight would delay the warrant articles because they will have to be changed. We need to approve the total budget or not approve it, not individual warrant articles. Jack agreed; once we approve the budget tonight, these numbers will go into the warrant articles. Mary Ella read the categories of the warrant articles.
- Carl asked about the grade five class at PCS that was overcrowded and what we might do about that.
- Terri – Believes that if Margaret felt it was needed, she would let us know. I believe she is addressing this classroom situation. You can make an amendment if you want, but it is going to take a long time if we nickel and dime this budget.
- Steve – You did a great job, but these numbers changed after you presented the budget to us. If you want to take 3.5% off then give it back to Dennis and Rick and have them do it.
- Rick – It is an amount of money that you are asking for. I would leave it in the health insurance line. That is the most volatile line in the budget. I would take the \$70,000 from other lines.
- Lori Callahan – You still have fuel costs and you don't want a special town meeting to approve extra fuel costs because we cut this \$70,000 out of the budget.
- Mary Ella – We need to trust the administrators who put this budget together.
- Tammy English – When you approve a budget, can they spend that money as they see fit? Can they shuffle that money around? She still feels strongly that the 5th grade class size is too big. You want teacher equity but she is not seeing equity for her child or the teachers who have to teach these large class sizes. Regarding the athletic fees, why aren't we raising them? Terri responded that if we raise the fees, it needs to be on every activity equally.
- Margaret Pitts – Her husband, along with many employees, provides her insurance. Those husbands could lose their jobs, forcing the employees to come to the RSU and say I need a family plan now.
- Mary Ella – This budget is bare bones. All we have done up to this year is cut. This budget is less than it was three years ago.
- There was some discussion about the survey results in so far.

Motion: by Norm Davis to reduce 3.5% from the entire budget

Seconded: by Carl Beckett

Vote: 1-11 (Norm Davis in favor) (See tally sheet #2)

- Terri – That’s about \$635,000. What would the impact be?
- Dennis explained that there is only so much money you can cut from the supply line. We have zero \$ budgeted for oil for next year. The tank is full. Most of the cuts would have to come from staffing. The more we charge for co-curricular, the students are the ones most affected. There are kids who don’t have the money. We have let 74 staff members go in this district in the last three years. We do not charge the town recreation departments to use our facilities. That money would come out of the same pockets in these three towns. We plow our own lots because the towns stopped plowing our lots. Poland’s cost alone was \$46,000. We bought a truck and it paid for itself the first year.

You see how cutting this budget causes the ripple effect on our kids. The PreK program brings in revenue and that money goes into the budget. If you cut the program, we lose the money and the benefits to those kids. We are a forward-thinking district. We have a solid educational program. These things make a difference in what we do for our students. It does cost money to start the PreK program, but a year from now it is revenue-generating.

- Annette supports the PreK program 100%, but this may not be the year to add another program in Minot.
- Bonnie Payette – She is also forward thinking, she is an advocate for education. We have to do more with less. We could be looking at a million dollar increase for the 2012-2013 budget.
- Mary Ella – Has lived here for 20 years and has been on the school board for five years. The administration has been very frugal and has made many changes for the better in staffing and programming. We don’t jump on bandwagons, we do what we think is right for the kids. We have to trust our staff, administrators and board that they are continuing to make the right decisions.
- Tammy English – Every dollar you invest in PreK you will save down the line if you keep that program.
- Darren Littlefield asked who is on the budget committee. Carl, Sue, Yvette, Terri, Mary Ella and

Jeanne Manley. He commented that a member of the budget committee seconded the proposal to take the 3.5% out. Carl said he would like to see some money come out of the budget for teacher salary increases. There is \$250,000 for salary increases for the district.

- Hope Becker asked how much it costs to have a referendum vote. Rick thought about \$700 to \$1,000 per town.
- Sue Callahan – Has been asked a lot of questions about teacher salaries. We asked all staff members last year to take four furlough days. That was a cut in their paychecks. She doesn’t think we can ask staff members to take another cut in pay again this year.
- Yvette – Town offices are going four days a week, which is a big cut.
- Mary Ella – We can’t make that choice for education.
- Sue Littlefield – K teacher at ESS – Both her and her spouse teach in the district. For those families, there were eight furlough days because there are two of them. They only have one vehicle because she can walk to school. Decisions she makes are what’s best for her children. Head Start has been around for 44 years and it has stood the

test of time. We owe this to those children. She worries about those kids who come to school hungry and she has to take care of their basic needs. Mary Ella added that we no longer have a Head Start program in our district and the PreK program helps to fill that need.

- Mary Ella – Regarding fuel, we came up with fuel prices of \$3.38 but we do not have the bids back yet. One of the plusses is we have a \$765,000 fund balance in this year’s budget. We need to keep building our fund balance, when we have a fund balance we carry it over. We also have to build our capital improvement. We have cut everything so close for the last few years.
- Norm – CIP funding is very critical for our schools. The state says you have to take care of your buildings in order to get funding for repairs.

Motion: by Scott Sawyer that we reduce school board stipends by 50% bringing the total to \$11,500

Seconded: by Annette Annance

Vote: 7-4 (Steve Holbrook, Melissa Hodgkin, Yvette Murray and Martha Stone opposed) (Mary Ella Jones abstained) (See tally sheet #3)

- Steve Holbrook – People put a lot of work and dedicated time into being a school board member. Our stipend is a fraction of what sports stipends are. His stipend is used to pay his taxes.
- Yvette – Each person can decide whether to take the stipend or not, you can give it back if you want to.
- Tammy English – My husband volunteers lots of hours and gets nothing.
- Norm – Would be happy if all the school board stipends were \$700.
- Melissa – Since consolidation, we have put in a lot more hours. The Poland school board members said they are putting in a lot less.
- Bonnie Payette – \$500,000 is a lot to increase in the budget. All the towns are trying to hold the line. You’re going to hear a lot of complaining if this passes.

Discussion/Approval Proposed 2011–2012 RSU #16 Adult Education Budget

- Proposed Adult Ed budget is \$92, 341, \$4749 is the local share

Motion: by Terri Arsenault to approve the proposed Adult Ed budget

Seconded: by Norm Davis

Vote: 11-1 (Steve Holbrook opposed)

Sign the 2011 – 2012 Budget Warrant Articles

Sign the 2011 – 2012 Budget Referendum Warrant

Warrant for Regional School Unit Sixteen (16) District Budget Meeting

Articles 14 and 15

Motion: by Terri Arsenault to approve Articles 14 and 15

Seconded: by Carl Beckett

Vote: Unanimous

Articles 16 and 17

Motion: by Carl Beckett to approve Articles 16 and 17

Seconded: by Annette Annance

Vote: Unanimous

Article 18

Motion: by Carl Beckett to approve Article 18

Seconded: by Annette Annance

Vote: Unanimous

Article 19

Motion: by Carl Beckett to approve Article 19

Seconded: by Annette Annance

Vote: Unanimous

3.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

4.0 REMINDER:

5.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: by Terri Arsenault to adjourn at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis J. Duquette