

Town of Raymond
401 Webbs Mills Road
Raymond, Maine 04071

BUDGET/FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING

MINUTES
Monday, March 13, 2006

*Amended March 20, 2006

Attendance: Rolf Olsen, Chairman Budget Committee; Suzanne Brockelbank; Tucker Cole; Dennis Cole; Ralph Bartholomew; Louise Murray; Jean Carter; Budget/Finance Committee; Sandra Caldwell, Superintendent; Lisa Friedlander, School Committee Chairman; and Teresa Sadak; Roger Ginn, School Committee.

Staff: Dot Mowatt, School Business Manager;

1. Call to order. Rolf Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm at the Town Office.
2. To approve the minutes of:
 - a. March 2, 2006

MOTION: Jean Carter asked for a change on page 7 the fourth paragraph saying that she had asked for a zero budget not an LD1 budget for next year.

Suzie Brockelbank motioned to approve the minutes as corrected. Seconded by Tucker Cole.

VOTE: Unanimous.

3. Review proposed School Budget requests.

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Caldwell said that she would relate to the public forum PowerPoint presentation given previously. She said their initial goal was to set a budget increase which the town could live with. Their target was under 5% which was ambitious because so many contracts and prices had increased more than that. They tried to be sensitive to all the taxpayers. She said in the Sebago Alliance group Raymond had the lowest increase for this year. They tried to keep the student/teacher ratio low. Teachers will be moved from class to class as needed so that the teacher population wouldn't be increased. Enrollment is declining this year by 40 students. One teacher will be eliminated this is reflected in lines 24 and 139 Professional Salaries. This budget supports math, literacy and the social studies curriculum. The K to 8 math program is included in lines 34 and 149. Technology was not supported last year so this year a critical need is to maintain the laptops which is found in lines 325 through 337. The Guidance Department now has one person for two days and will be covered with existing staff. They are working on a comprehensive guidance

plan which has not been done which is in lines 60 and 159. We are above the state average for social services and have gone to a .4 position with one Special Ed teacher. We're adding a .4 which will be added to the social worker position. Operations and maintenance (line 126) has an increase of \$8,500 for Raymond Elementary School (RES) roof repair. The Facilities Committee has determined what is critical and what can wait. The roof must be done. Line 226 has \$15,000 for locks at Jordan-Small Middle School (JSMS) for security purposes for the inside and outside doors. Because of the current assortment of locks and keys updating needs to be accomplished. Line 230 has \$3,500 for shades in the school which will be done section by section. JSMS carpets are line 226 for \$10,000 which will be set aside for the library. She said that they wanted to be sure that something they would be doing with One Raymond would not have to be undone if they remodel. Two buses have been approved by the state. They will retire two buses because they can't be repaired and the state subsidy is coming to an end. They will be reallocating some Ed Techs and other staff. The Power School will be provided for Level 2 training for two teachers who will become teachers of teachers which is in line 330.

One Raymond initiatives that impact this budget. She thanked Mark Gendron for his work on this committee which is now showing the way for change. All interfunding and billing has been eliminated. They will be working with Mr. Gendron and outside consultants about the interfund - interschool and town billing so that they won't hurt themselves in the end for state funding. School and town contracts are being studied and those that are ending will merged to maximize the bidding process. They are looking at equipment sharing and school infrastructure in the town's CIP process. They are looking to combine resources as much as possible next year and are first looking at the Finance Departments. Those departments have met and talked about the two bodies work and resources. They are looking into outsourcing payroll and whether that would be a cost saving. They are also looking at sharing space in JSMS for the finance department next year.

Sebago Alliance has proven to be a good investment because the first endeavor realized a \$885,000 grant which has given 35 teachers chosen within all the participating towns to go to Bowdoin College for classes during this summer. They are looking at a two-year plan for a day treatment program which will keep our students at home and still be able to get what they need for mental health services.

Mrs. Caldwell reported the school increase is 3.94% with the towns' share being 4.2%.

Mr. Bartholomew asked about the separate transportation contingency on Line 390 which has \$7,500. Mrs. Sadak said this was for repairs i.e. a school bus engine replacement. He asked why they don't have one contingency instead of specific contingency items. She said that legal fees were budgeted at \$20,000 because all legal questions to date have been resolved. Mrs. Caldwell said that total was reduced even more which will cover our usual need. Mr. Bartholomew asked if there was an employee cost share for family coverage. Mrs. Mowatt said salaries were bi-weekly

which is about \$15,000. The teachers and support staff are different. The teachers get 85% of family, single coverage pay 100%. Mr. Ginn said that this is about \$500+ per month. Mr. Olsen indicated about \$86/week per family to the teacher. Mrs. Mowatt noted that insurance only went up 5% this year. Mr. Cole asked if they have a health savings account. Mrs. Mowatt replied that was not negotiated as yet. Mr. Olsen asked whether the roof isn't under warranty. Mrs. Sadak said that it was the flashing which was leaking. Mr. Bartholomew was pleased that the Special Education budget was lower. Mrs. Caldwell said they were rethinking how they did things and would try to achieve more savings.

Mr. Olsen noted that K through 2 was a targeted area, which was held alone, and under EPS it got different funding. Mrs. Mowatt said it was separate this year. Mrs. Brockelbank asked why the RES library is in for \$6,200. Mrs. Caldwell replied it was an effort to keep a high quality library, and they were trying to balance the 5-8 grades. Mrs. Friedlander said that last year they were focusing on online references and purchasing more copies of books for classroom libraries. Mrs. Caldwell added that they're doing science and social studies online.

Mrs. Brockelbank asked about the restructuring for JSMS with Mrs. Crockett going back to RES so there will be two teachers less at JSMS. She asked how the two big classes would be handled. It was noted there would be 22 kids per classroom. Mr. Bartholomew asked if the higher classes could be larger than the lower classes. Mrs. Brockelbank said the current 6th grade class had 62 students. Mrs. Caldwell replied that they were confident that this would work. Teaching teams will be consolidated and working together. The students will be going from class to class but may not stay with their classmates for every class.

Mrs. Brockelbank asked about the high school population going from 67 to 58. Mrs. Friedlander reported that the 10th grade has 67 and next year there will be 58 in the 11th grade. Mrs. Mowatt said that 5 kids have moved from the district. She added that these numbers were put together in January. Mrs. Friedlander said that there could be students who come to Raymond in the interim.

Mr. Bartholomew noted that we're still not sending 50% of our kids to Windham. Mrs. Caldwell said that next year it would be 55%. She said that Raymond and Windham have had an aggressive recruiting program for our students. He asked about the private schools and about the tuition amounts being the highest. Mrs. Caldwell replied yes but the number of students going to private schools is declining. She felt it was because the cost of private schools is getting prohibitive even with the town subsidy. Mrs. Friedlander noted that Windham is getting a very good reputation. Mr. Olsen questioned \$7,450 for tuition. Mrs. Mowatt replied that this year the tuition limit was \$7,205. There was discussion about the per pupil cost which won't be known until Windham's budget is finalized. Mr. Olsen thought they would be using the state rate but our budget number is less than the state rate. Mrs. Mowatt said they were locked in by the state. Mr. Olsen didn't agree. He felt that we still have a contract with Westbrook which means that the Raymond School District

should be negotiating. Mrs. Friedlander reported that the High School Focus Group was talking about tuition with other schools and negotiating contracts. We're locked in until 2013 with Windham, but she felt they would be willing to negotiate. *Mr. Olsen felt that if Windham was a good school, they shouldn't have any problem getting 50% of Raymond's students. Mr. Olsen also felt that the private school tuition should be based on the contract school price. Mrs. Caldwell said she would check on that and be sure that their negotiations are compatible with state law. She thought that we had to pay the state tuition rate and not our Windham/Westbrook contract rate. Mrs. Mowatt read the statute which says that the town has to pay the state rate for that school private or public. There was discussion about the question of allowing "choice". Mrs. Friedlander said that should be a question decided by the town and not just the School Committee.

Mr. Olsen asked, if we get two new buses, what's the age of the fleet. Mrs. Caldwell replied that the buses we're replacing are a 1991 with 232,000 miles and a 1993 with 182,000 miles. Mrs. Mowatt thought that the School Department had 7 buses. She said that with the contingency the buses would be purchased for less than the price would be before the new school year. Mr. Olsen asked about preventative maintenance which could make them last longer. He felt that since they're all diesel they should last longer. Mrs. Brockelbank asked if they use all 7 buses. Mrs. Mowatt said the state has asked for a transportation survey because they're studying this subject for the state.

Mrs. Carter asked about the travel expenditure for conferences. Mrs. Caldwell said that it is for the teachers' education. Mrs. Carter asked if it was Line 383. Mrs. Mowatt said they didn't know how many will be going and had to assume a certain amount. Mrs. Carter had a problem with so many contingency funds under different sections. Mrs. Caldwell said that they have to do it that way for their report to the state. Mrs. Mowatt added that each department contingency was subsidized at a different rate. Mr. Olsen said that transportation was 100% and others 85%. Mr. Olsen asked if they know of any "whammies" coming this year. Mrs. Caldwell said there wasn't anything they know of. Mrs. Friedlander explained that summer salaries were covered. Mrs. Sadak informed them that the voucher court cases have not been decided which could influence the budget. Mr. Olsen felt that in that case there would be redress to the state because we're following state statutes.

There was discussion about the extra warrant article for overage of the EPS limit. Mrs. Caldwell said the tuition cost was beyond what the EPS amount is. Mrs. Carter felt that the article had to be specific. Mr. Olsen said that it had to be written with an explanation as to what it will pay. She felt that if the overage article(s) are compulsory items then the voters aren't getting a choice. Mrs. Carter felt it should be travel or contingency etc so that the overage could be defeated without not being able to pay tuition. Mrs. Friedlander said that if it doesn't pass then they would have to take the tuition fees from other accounts. Mrs. Caldwell said that they are still getting information on how these will be written. There was a question whether one of these articles can be reduced at Town Meeting. Mrs. Carter felt that if these questions can't

be considered with positive and negative voting possible, it isn't worth the effort and doesn't meet the intent of the LD1 statute.

NOTE: Mrs. Mowatt gave me the amount of the overage warrant article(s) on March 14, 2006 at \$941,462.00 but couldn't say exactly how the warrant article would be written with their Statement of Reason.

4. Old Business -none
5. New Business - none
6. Next meeting next Monday, March 20, 2006, 7:00 pm at the Town Office when the warrant articles will be provided.
7. Adjourn. Rolf Olsen adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.

Louise H. Lester
Town Clerk