

HOLLIS BUDGET COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 8, 2022
MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Hollis Budget Committee was conducted on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 6:32 p.m. at the Hollis Town Hall Community Room.

Tom Gehan, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Committee Present: Mike Harris, Vice Chairman
Mike Leavitt, Secretary
Christopher Hyde
Darlene Mann
Lorin Rydstrom
Mark Le Doux, Selectmen’s Representative
Carryl Roy, School Board Representative
Amy Kellner, Alt. School Board Representative

Members of the Committee Absent:

Also Participating: Tammy Fareed, Chairman, Hollis School Board
Brooke Arthur, Secretary, Hollis School Board (arrived at 7:00 p.m.)
Robert Mann, Hollis School Board
Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

PRESENTATION

- **Budget Process**

Chairman Gehan provided a presentation (can be viewed [here](#)). Noted were the dates of upcoming meetings: Tuesday, March 8th is Town elections, Wednesday, March 9th the Hollis School District Annual Meeting, Saturday, March 12th Town Meeting, and Tuesday, March 15th the COOP Annual District Meeting.

The Hollis School District is a Budget Committee entity under [RSA 32](#). The Budget Committee provides guidance and advice for the Town and Hollis Schools. There is a separate budget committee for the COOP School District. The Budget Committee provides guidance and will take positions on all of the articles.

The budget process begins in the fall. A slide was shown identifying the assumptions and biases. The main assumption that has changed is the economic outlook and an expectation that inflation is increasing.

The goal is to manage debt. A theme that will recur throughout the discussion is all of the taxing entities; school district, Town, and COOP are proposing long-term debt.

At the time guidance was provided to the School Board, the year-over-year inflation rate was 4.3%. That was used for guidance on the budget. The number is adjusted due to collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). A

1 large part of the budget is compensation for employees that are covered by CBAs, and those increases are
2 exempt from guidance, which results in the 2.1% guidance. The proposed operating budget is \$14,297,406,
3 which came in \$366 under guidance (\$14,297,772).

4
5 A slide was shown depicting the increase in population, median household income (2019), increases (2020-
6 2021) in town property valuation, average single-family home value, and the decrease (2020-2021) in average
7 single-family home tax bill.

8
9 A chart was shown depicting the average tax bill for single-family residences from 2011-2021. Chairman
10 Gehan commented when looking at financial data over time you want to consider inflation. Also depicted was
11 the inflation adjustment.

12
13 Displayed was a chart showing the total debt burden for all long-term debt and capital leases across the three
14 entities. Included is proposed debt; \$4 million Town, \$2.9 million COOP School District (Hollis share shown),
15 and \$3.1 million Hollis School District. There is a relatively small tax impact next year because of the
16 amortization schedule. From 2021 to 2023 the increase in the tax rate as a result of increased debt will be
17 \$0.61/\$1,000 (home valuation). A chart was shown representing the total debt burden as a percent of the tax
18 bill (over time).

19
20 Enrollment has been relatively steady for the past 10-15 years. Since October, with students returning from
21 home schooling and move-ins, enrollment has increased from 625 to 642.

22
23 Total number of employees in the district is 124 full-time and 16 part-time. Staff vs. student population is
24 impacted largely by special education, which is driven by student needs.

25
26 The Cost Per Pupil (CPP) in comparison to the State average for elementary education tracks pretty closely.
27 FY21 is approx. \$50 over the State average. The data was in nominal terms over time and needs to be looked at
28 in inflation adjusted terms. Another chart was shown comparing the CPP to 120 comparable districts.

29
30 - **Overview of Warrant Articles**

- 31
32 Article 1: Bond - Renovations/Improvements (77,900)
33 Article 2: Support Staff Contract Year 1 of 3 (\$87,661)
34 Article 3: Teacher Three Year Contract (\$191,599)
35 Article 4: SAU Budget Allocation (\$625,021)
36 Article 5: SAU Building Maintenance Trust (\$23,970)
37 Article 6: School Building Maintenance Trust (\$150,000)I
38 Article 7: Special Education Trust Fund (\$25,000)
39 Article 8: Contingency Fund (\$95,000)
40 Article 9: Operating Budget (\$14,297,406)
41 Article 10: Any Other Legal Business

42
43 There are elements of the budget that are unknown until after the Town and School District meetings, which
44 makes it difficult to forecast a tax rate, e.g., what State aid and other revenue sources will be, what spending
45 will be approved at the three meetings conducted by the other entities.

46
47 The presentation assumes a 1% increase in the tax base. The Department of Revenue Administration sets the
48 tax rates in the October/November timeframe.

1 Spending is only part of the tax rate. The tax rate will go up even when spending goes down if revenue and
2 State aid go down by a greater amount.

3
4 Unlike the Town, the school districts have limited ability to accumulate unexpended funds. It largely rolls back
5 to the taxpayers. At the close of FY21, \$776,929 was returned to the tax base (mostly due to underspending as
6 a result of COVID). That return of tax dollars was recognized as revenue in the last cycle. This year, we do not
7 expect that revenue windfall. Not expected to recur this year is \$40,000 in State Special Education Aid and
8 \$32,000 in Federal Medicaid Aid. Fifty-two percent (\$0.60) of the increase in the Hollis School District tax rate
9 in the coming year is attributable to lost revenue. A very similar phenomenon is experienced in the COOP
10 School District. It is believed the rate to Hollis in that regard is nearly (\$0.70). When looking at how much the
11 tax rate increases in the coming year it is skewed by the fact that we got a windfall last year that we will not see
12 this year.

13
14 Although Adequacy Aid increased by \$357,313, retained tax decreased by \$420,400 (large shifts due to single-
15 year state funding change). The net decrease is \$63,086.

16
17 The Hollis School District Tax Rate for FY23 (\$8.60/\$1,000) is a 15.5% increase over FY22 (\$7.45/\$1,000).
18 Adding to that the State tax rate for the Hollis School District for FY23 (\$0.68), which is a reduction of 31%
19 from FY22 (\$0.99) for a total Hollis School District rate for FY23 of \$9.28/\$1,000 or a 9.9% increase over
20 FY22 (\$8.44).

21
22 The School District is only one portion of the overall tax rate. The projected FY23 rate for the Town is \$5.64
23 (reduction of 0.2%), the Hollis School District Local Tax is \$8.60 (increase of 15.4%), Hollis School District
24 State Tax \$0.68 (reduction of 31%), COOP Local Tax \$7.97 (increase of 22.6%), COOP State Tax \$0.70
25 (reduction of 31%) and county tax \$1.09 (reduction of 0.9%) resulting in a Hollis Tax Rate of \$24.68 (increase
26 of 8.7%).

27
28 In addition to the effects of the large amount of revenue not being returned to the tax base, is the fact that the
29 way the long-term debt instruments in the Town and School District are amortized, we do not have the full
30 impact in the coming budget year (FY23). There are two bonds being proposed in the Town. Neither have any
31 payment in 2022. That artificially lowers the forecast of the tax rate. A slide was shown identifying the
32 calculated rate and increases (upper chart), \$475,000 average debt service over the coming 15 years, and what it
33 would have done to the tax rates in FY23 if paid in that year, e.g., the Town rate would have increased \$0.22
34 (3.7%) and the school district (\$0.11) reasons being there is a little less debt being proposed and there is a
35 nominal payment for interest in the coming year.

36
37 - **Ground Rules for Conduct of Public Hearing**

38
39 Chairman Gehan went over the rules for conducting the Public Hearing.

40
41 **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

42
43 - **Bond**

44
45 *Tammy Fareed, Chairman, Hollis School Board declared the public hearing open at 7:00 p.m.*

46
47 **Article 1** - To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$3,116,000** (gross budget) for
48 renovations / improvements at Hollis Primary and Hollis Upper Elementary Schools related to kitchen and

1 bathroom renovations, roofing projects, air source heat pump installations, interior doors, etc. per the complete
2 list approved by the Hollis School Board and to authorize the issuance of **\$3,116,000** of bonds or notes in
3 accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33); and to authorize the School
4 Board to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and to raise and
5 appropriate the sum of **\$77,900** for the first year's principal and interest payment on the bonds or notes issued.
6 **The School Board recommends this article 4-0-0.**

7
8 The project would include roofing at HPS; section #1 library (\$345,000), #2 small corner section (\$48,500), #3
9 classrooms (\$416,000) and at HUES, #1 east side (\$252,500) and #2 west side (\$185,100), air source heat
10 pumps (8-9 classroom pumps) (\$200,000) and renovations to bathrooms (\$555,000), kitchen (500,000),
11 cladding gym exterior (\$200,000) and interior doors (\$130,000) at HPS. Adding to that a contingency of 10%
12 or \$283,210, the total cost is \$3,115,310.

13
14 ***School Board Chairman Fareed opened the floor for public input at 7:02 p.m.***

15
16 No input was provided.

17
18 ***The Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:03 p.m.***

19
20 - **Proposed FY23 Budget**

21
22 **Article 2**

23
24 To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the three-year collective bargaining
25 agreement reached between the Hollis School Board and the Hollis Education Support Staff Association for the
26 2022-23 school year, which calls for the following increases in support staff salaries and benefits at the current
27 staffing levels:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2022-23	\$87,661

28
29
30
31
32 and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$87,661** for the fiscal year, such sum representing the negotiated
33 increase over the 2021-22 salaries and fringe benefits.

34
35 Amy Kellner, Alt. School Board Representative, stated Article 2 is the Hollis Education Support Staff
36 Association (HESSA) contract. A three-year contract was negotiated (FYs 23, 24, and 25). The contract is not
37 sanbornized meaning that each year the terms of that year's agreement will come before the voters for approval.

38
39 HESSA membership includes custodian and maintenance employees, paraprofessionals, secretaries, and food
40 service employees. There are 45 staff positions currently with 12 openings; 9 open paraprofessional positions
41 and 2 open custodian/maintenance positions.

42
43 For FY23, the district is offering a shift in categories; custodial staff will go from category 1 to category 2 (on
44 the salary table), maintenance staff from category 2 to category 3, and a 4% increase will be offered to
45 employees on and off the step table.

46
47 The monthly insurance caps are being increased by \$50 for a two-person plan and \$100 for family plan and
48 offering 1 additional paid holiday for all support staff. Total cost for FY23 is \$87,661.

In FY24, it is a 3.5% increase for all employees. Monthly insurance caps are being increased by \$50 for a two-person plan and \$100 for family plan, and \$500 towards the annual insurance premium for part-time employees. The total cost for FY24 is \$69,256.

In FY25, it is a 4.5% increase. Monthly insurance caps are being increased by \$50 for a two-person plan and \$100 for family plan. The total cost for FY25 is \$74,497.

The total contract cost (all three years) is \$231,414.

Management rights secured through previous agreements were maintained and clarifying language included to tighten up some existing loopholes. The main goal in the negotiation was to reach a contract that would compensate fairly and competitively to address some of the staffing shortages and attract and retain high quality employees. There was the need to produce competitive pay in comparison to other districts and retail establishments that are offering \$15-\$17 hourly wages.

Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:07 p.m.

No public input was offered.

The public comment period was closed at 7:08 p.m.

Article 3

To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis School Board and the Hollis Education Association for the 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 school year, which calls for the following increases in professional staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2022-23	\$191,599	2023-24	\$267,436	2024-25	\$275,629

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$191,599** for the fiscal year, such sum representing the negotiated increase over the 2021-22 salaries and fringe benefits

Robert Mann, School Board Member, stated Article 3 is the Hollis Education Association (HEA) contract. A sanbornized three-year contract was reached (FYs 23, 24, and 25). The key highlights include adjustments to the benefit cap for single, two-person and family plans. He noted the prior agreement had not included changes to caps. Historical lane change variations were removed from within the table. With the way the lane changes were set up, an employee moving from a bachelors to masters would translate into a lane change not just a step change. The way the table progressed had some variation that did not really follow any specific pattern

1 (somewhat random). They were removed through a smoothing process which makes the relative changes
2 roughly 3.1%.

3
4 The on-step teachers will receive a step increase plus 2.5% change to the table each year of the agreement.
5 Those who are off-step are compensated through a flat rate. Negotiated were adjustments to those flat rates for
6 each year of the contract.

7
8 A chart was displayed showing the off-step increases for each category and each year of the contract. Another
9 chart was provided showing the financial impact of the increases to the health insurance caps for each year of
10 the contract as well as the current cost for comparison.

11
12 The costs for each year of the contract are: \$191,599 (FY23), \$267,436 (FY24), and \$275,629 (FY25) for a
13 total contract cost of \$734,664. That would have a net impact of \$0.11 on the tax rate (\$50.85 on average
14 single-family residence (\$460,000).

15
16 Although a three-year agreement, we only appropriate the first year costs.

17
18 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:12 p.m.*

19
20 Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive

21
22 Questioned why one contract would be sanbornized and the other not. School Board Member Mann responded
23 sanbornization, in this district, is used as a negotiating item. In certain years the School Board, through the
24 negotiation process, may find it advantageous to put forward sanbornization. In other years there are factors
25 that make it less sensible to do. It is an aspect that is carefully considered before being discussed during
26 negotiations.

27
28 *The public comment period was closed at 7:13 p.m.*

29
30 **Article 4**

31
32 Shall the School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$625,021** as the Hollis School District's
33 portion of the SAU budget of **\$2,107,176** for the forthcoming fiscal year? This year's adjusted budget of
34 **\$2,018,210** with **\$598,582** assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article does
35 not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit. **The School**
36 **Board recommends this article 4-0-0.**

37
38 **Estimated net tax impact is \$0.36/\$1,000 or \$165.87/\$460,000 (average single-family residence).**

39
40 Budget drivers include salaries (\$70,192); \$45,000 new Compliance and Communications Specialist position,
41 \$16,000 Board approved salary adjustments (looking to remain competitive with neighboring districts, put
42 funds into the budget to provide flexibility to make adjustment(s) based on competitiveness or performance),
43 and 3.0% increase for all staff (contracts identify a range of 2-4%), benefits (\$64,042); \$32,555 for new
44 compliance and Communications Specialist position, health insurance rates +3.9%, health insurance
45 membership changes, and equipment/software (\$5,025); includes \$3,700 for four desktops and 1 laptop.

46
47 Within the proposed budget is the additional position of Compliance and Communications Specialist. This need
48 is identified based on increasing demands for compliance documentation and other communication matters that

1 absorb a significant amount of time of the senior district leadership and cut into the time needed to carry out
2 their primary functions of educational and fiscal management.

3
4 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:16 p.m.*

5
6 No public input was offered.

7
8 *The public comment period was closed at 7:16 p.m.*

9
10 **Article 5**

11
12 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$23,970** to be added to the
13 previously established MAINTENANCE FUND FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND ASSOCIATED
14 STRUCTURES at 4 Lund Lane in Hollis, Map 56, Lot 2. This amount to come from the unassigned fund
15 balance available for transfer on July 1 of this year. This amount represents rental proceeds and unexpended
16 maintenance funds to be received from SAU 41. **The School Board recommends this article 4-0-0.**

17
18 Chairman Gehan noted the Hollis School District owns the SAU 41 building on Lund Lane. As the landlord,
19 they are charged with maintaining that asset and performing maintenance. The Maintenance Trust Fund is used
20 to accumulate funds to cover the cost of projects. Major expenditures are approved by the Administration. The
21 School Board evaluates and presents the plan to the Budget Committee for input; however, the School Board
22 makes the final decision.

23
24 The opening balance is \$88,946. With an appropriation of \$23,970 and planned expenditures of \$37,000 (2nd
25 floor bathroom and hallway renovation), the projected FY23 ending balance is \$75,916. The building was a
26 residential building gradually converted to a professional space. There remain oddities, this being one.

27
28 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:18 p.m.*

29
30 No public input was offered.

31
32 *The public comment period was closed at 7:18 p.m.*

33
34 **Article 6**

35
36 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$150,000** to be added to the
37 previously established SCHOOL BUILDINGS MAINTENANCE FUND from the Hollis School District's June
38 30, 2022 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2022. **The School Board recommends this
39 article 4-0-0.**

40
41 There is no tax rate increase. The Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB) is the sum of surplus remaining at the end
42 of FY22. If not utilized, the funds would be returned to the tax base and used to offset the amount that has to be
43 raised in taxes to support the FY23 budget. Approval of the article equates to foregoing a potential rate
44 reduction of \$0.09/\$1,000 or \$39.81/\$460,000.

45
46 There is the need to maintain infrastructure. The Trust is a mechanism for accumulating funds for planned
47 maintenance. A slide was displayed identifying anticipated expenditures from the fund totaling \$200,155.

1 With an opening balance of \$122,530, an allocation of \$150,000 and planned expenditures of \$200,155 the
2 projected FY23 ending balance is \$72,375.

3
4 Chairman Gehan questioned if the cost identified to address the restrooms (\$78,000) would be removed from
5 this calculation should the bond pass, Superintendent Corey stated that to be the case.

6
7 Member Roy noted the items identified are intended to reflect the proposed projects to give the voters an idea of
8 how the allocation would be expended in the coming year.

9
10 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:21 p.m.*

11
12 No public input was offered.

13
14 *The public comment period was closed at 7:22 p.m.*

15
16 **Article 7**

17
18 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$25,000** to be added to the
19 previously established Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis School
20 District's June 30, 2022 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2022. **The School Board**
21 **recommends this article 4-0-0.**

22
23 There is no tax rate increase. The UFB is the sum of surplus remaining at the end of FY22. If not utilized, the
24 funds would be returned to the tax base and used to offset the amount that has to be raised in taxes to support
25 the FY23 budget. Approval of the article equates to foregoing a potential rate reduction of \$0.01/\$1,000 or
26 \$6.63/\$460,000.

27
28 The intent of the Trust is to accumulate funds as a form of contingency. Special education costs are driven by
29 individual students. If a student(s) came in off-cycle with substantial needs that are not budgeted for, this would
30 allow a funding source to cover the cost of those services without having to go into the primary operating
31 budget and perhaps limit regular educational programming. There is a non-statutory cap of \$280,000 for this
32 fund. The opening balance is \$75,000. If the article is approved, the balance in the fund will be \$100,000.

33
34 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:23 p.m.*

35
36 No public input was offered.

37
38 *The public comment period was closed at 7:24 p.m.*

39
40 **Article 8**

41
42 To see if the School District will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated
43 expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$95,000** to go into the fund. This sum to
44 be raised by taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund.

45 **The School Board recommends this article 4-0-0.**

46
47 **Estimated net tax impact is \$0.05/\$1,000 or \$25.21/\$460,000 (average single-family residence).**

1 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:24 p.m.*

2
3 No public input was offered.

4
5 *The public comment period was closed at 7:25 p.m.*

6
7 **Article 9**

8
9 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$14,297,406** for the support of schools,
10 for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory
11 obligations of the district. This appropriation does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

12 **The School Board recommends this article 4-0-0.**

13
14 **Estimated net tax impact is \$8.00/\$1,000 or \$3,955/\$460,000 (average single-family residence).**

15
16 Chairman Gehan spoke of the proposed budget coming in under guidance. A slide was shown highlighting
17 additions to staff (5.6 Full time Equivalents (FTEs)).

18
19 Major increases include employer retirement contributions (7.6% or \$92,838), retirement benefits (208.7% or
20 \$84,942), contracted special education services (397% or \$20,365), speech pathology salaries (12.7% or
21 \$17,159), legal services (105% or \$14,850).

22
23 Major decreases include teacher salaries (2.2% or \$80,158), special education salaries (\$9.1% or \$19,673),
24 computer equipment (100% or \$18,603), maintenance salaries (10.7% or \$13,500) and contract negotiations
25 (86.1% or \$15,500).

26
27 *Chairman Gehan opened the floor for public comment at 7:28 p.m.*

28
29 Drew Mason, 61 Baxter Road

30
31 Questioned staffing levels; one slide indicated 124 staff members and another 139.

32
33 School Board Chairman Fareed responded on the one slide only the full time employees were added if reaching
34 a number of 124.

35
36 *The public comment period was closed at 7:29 p.m.*

37
38 **The Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:29 p.m.**

39
40 **DISCUSSION OF WARRANT ARTICLES**

41
42 - **Votes to Recommend / Not Recommend Warrant Articles**

43
44 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 1**

45 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

46
47 **ON THE QUESTION**

1 Member Hyde remarked it is important to point out the nature of taking advantage of low interest rates on bond
2 capabilities when expecting that will not be the case in upcoming years. Getting some of these items addressed
3 so that other items can be handled within the operating budget is the reason he will be supporting this article.
4

5 Member Le Doux commented it is wise to pursue this. The concern he has is if the Board has identified all of
6 the items that need to be addressed. If faced with another \$2-3 million of improvements required within 3 years
7 and bond rates are 6%, he fears the public will be much more reluctant to support that.
8

9 Member Roy stated the items being addressed were taken from the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). At the
10 meeting held earlier in the evening, the School Board discussed the two bond articles in the Town and one over
11 at the COOP; all combined, it is a large amount in one budget season. When putting together what would be in
12 the bond request, the Business Administrator looked closely at prioritization, which is what resulted in the
13 identified items. There are certain items within the operating budget that are the most urgent, must occur, and
14 cannot be dependent upon bond approval. It was the next grouping in the list of priorities that were identified
15 for the bond request.
16

17 Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator remarked in reviewing the CIP one of the things considered was
18 incorporating into the bond the large ticket items that are difficult to manage through the Expendable Trust.
19 What remains in the CIP are items that can be easily managed year-over-year in the CIP.
20

21 Chairman Gehan remarked given the unique situation with long-term debt rates still being low and the
22 expectation that they will go up significantly, he believes we are recommending voters take on more long-term
23 debt than we might normally be comfortable with. Having said that he has the tax rate increase going up \$2.00.
24 About \$1.30 of that is the revenue effect from the school district.
25

26 The Committee discussed the importance of relaying the unique situation to the taxpayers. Member Rydstrom
27 suggested relaying that last year was artificially lower than it would have been otherwise (by \$1.30).
28

29 **MOTION CARRIED**

30 **8-0-0**

31 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2**

32 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

33 ON THE QUESTION

34
35
36 Member Hyde commented given the economy, particularly for the types of workers covered under the HESSA
37 contract, attracting and retaining qualified individuals is getting more and more competitive. With all of the
38 openings highlighted currently, there is the need to fill that gap. One of the ways to do that is with
39 competitiveness in salary structure.
40

41 Chairman Gehan stated agreement commenting one of the key indicators is, are we losing staff and are we able
42 to hire staff. With 12 openings among this staffing group it makes a compelling case.
43

44 **MOTION CARRIED**

45 **8-0-0**

46 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 3**

47 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

1 ON THE QUESTION
2

3 Chairman Gehan spoke of having agonized over the contract. When looking at a contract he considers if we are
4 filling positions and if we are losing staff to proximate districts. He does not think either of those things are
5 happening with the teacher population, and the increases approved in the contract for people on-step approach
6 over 16% over the three-year period and for those off-step it is approx. 10% over the three years of the contract.
7 In this environment, particularly when we are asking voters to step up and support some long-term
8 infrastructure investment and an expectation that there are not that many industries that are going to receive
9 those type of salary increases over the next three years, he does not feel he can support this contract.
10

11 Member Le Doux asked for a point of clarification, if voting to approve the article, are the next two years
12 automatic, and was told it is a sanbornized contract. Member Le Doux stated he has heartburn with that. If
13 posting a job opening and not having a number of applicants that would say we have a problem. He does not
14 think that has routinely been the case within the Hollis School District.
15

16 Superintendent Corey stated 7 years ago when he started if they had a 1st grade opening, they would have 100
17 applicants. This year, because of everything going on, they are lucky to get a handful. The shift in education
18 has been monumental. What we have is an incredible staff and they have been working diligently, but many
19 younger educators who pursued education have been lured into other fields. He believes we will see education
20 struggle in the next 5 years to hire staffing.
21

22 Budget Committee Member Mann noted “teachers” also include special education providers. Superintendent
23 Corey stated that to be correct. Member Mann added it is larger than the classroom teacher. It extends to
24 special education educators as well as related service providers.
25

26 Superintendent Corey noted every year the State does a critical shortage list. For the first time he believes all
27 areas will be identified. We did not see classroom teachers identified 3-4 years ago. It used to be special
28 educators, math, science; those critical positions, and now it is becoming all positions.
29

30 Vice Chairman Harris commented this contract places us at the right competitive position among the districts
31 that are nearby. We have certain advantages, but we still have to be above certain other districts. We do not
32 have to be at the top but have to be at a competitive position.
33

34 Budget Committee Member Mann pointed out if remembering where we were last year with COVID, we were
35 one of the very few districts that was in-person for the school year. Our test scores actually reflect that.
36 Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug has given presentations across the SAU to each board about how well
37 students did over COVID. The district is in a much different position than other districts across the State. Our
38 scores were very comparable if not higher in certain cases. That is due to the staff that showed up and worked
39 extremely hard under very difficult circumstances. That did not take place in a lot of other districts that were
40 remote for most of the year.
41

42 Member Hyde commented he is very empathetic to the realities of showing up when it was at a risk, you did not
43 know what you were coming into, and being able to give good services. Also the nature of teaching as a
44 profession and finding enough staff to service it and then being able to hire them. Just like in healthcare, we
45 will face some interesting challenges and he believes making us competitive with the surrounding areas is
46 important to do to continue delivering the excellence we require to have as delivered services. He is not in
47 favor of sanbornization of contracts, but it has been used as a negotiating tool. We have heard that we are not

1 experiencing people leaving, but as people retire, we need to be able to fill positions with really good quality
2 folks.

3
4 Member Rydstrom stated he could not support a sanbornized contract.

5
6 Chairman Gehan echoed the expressions of support for the teachers. He goes back to what we are asking of
7 taxpayers this year, and a 2.5% table adjustment plus a 2 point step; 5.3% a year is just too steep for him. If the
8 table adjustment had been something south of that he would have enthusiastically supported it, but he does not
9 feel comfortable with it in its current form.

10 **MOTION CARRIED**

11 **5-3-0**

12 *Members Gehan, Le Doux and Rydstrom voted in opposition*

13
14 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 4**

15 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

16
17 ON THE QUESTION

18
19 Member Rydstrom asked for additional information around the need for the full-time Compliance &
20 Communications Specialist.

21
22 Superintendent Corey spoke of the number of regulations coming down from the State with requirements
23 around various grants, compliance issues, and accounting aspects, which has been significant. We are also
24 seeing an uptick in how we function around criminal background checks and those type of things, e.g., a few
25 years ago it became mandatory that he is the only person that gets to see those. It continues to add more
26 burdens.

27
28 On the day-to-day operation side, it is the various lawsuits that come in. We recently were attached to a lawsuit
29 in one of the other districts that required probably 2½ days of gathering information to meet the request of the
30 subpoenas. That typically means two out of the three senior administrators are unavailable for those days
31 working on that issue.

32
33 In addition, there is the requirement to respond to Right-to-Know requests. The SAU received a number of
34 those over the summer months. Sometimes they are open ended and require thousands of pages of email and
35 other documentation. We need to work with legal counsel on those issues and ensure we comply.

36
37 This position would focus in on those issues. We recently had a subpoena and were able to gain some
38 assistance with that through a staff member on board, which really made the process easier for us and opened
39 his eyes to the fact that when you are doing something on a constant basis you know the ins and outs. The SAU
40 has only received a handful of Right-to-Know requests during his tenure; most being in the last year. Each time
41 he has to go back and refresh. If a member of the office staff were trained as that primary responsibility, they
42 know exactly what it entails and how to go through the process of working with IT and identifying the email
43 accounts and all of the details that go into responding to such requests.

44
45 This position would allow senior management to focus more on the day-to-day operations and curriculum issues
46 rather than compiling documents for Right-to-Know requests.

1 Asked, he provided the example of a request received this summer for all documents pertaining to Critical Race
2 Theory and professional development that staff underwent around that. It is a very time consuming process
3 because the systems that we have do not filter that out by function, they filter it out by dollar amounts and
4 things like that. That request came in in July and consumed approx. 5 days' worth of senior administrator's
5 time. We continue to see an uptick in those type of requests in the current climate.

6 **MOTION CARRIED**

7 **8-0-0**

8
9 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5**

10 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

11 **MOTION CARRIED**

12 **8-0-0**

13
14 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 6**

15 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

16 **MOTION CARRIED**

17 **8-0-0**

18
19 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 7**

20 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

21 **MOTION CARRIED**

22 **8-0-0**

23
24 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 8**

25 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

26 **MOTION CARRIED**

27 **8-0-0**

28
29 **MOTION BY MEMBER HARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 9**

30 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE**

31
32 ON THE QUESTION

33
34 Member Hyde asked for clarification on the shared resources that were identified; SAU Directed Food Service
35 Substitute and SAU Directed Classroom Substitute. Mentioned was that the cost would be determined based on
36 where they spend their time (which district). He questioned, if there is not a demand for the two positions to
37 cover an absence, how the sharing and attribution of those costs would be allocated.

38
39 Superintendent Corey responded in terms of the food service substitute, the Food Service Director would assign
40 the individual to address the wealth of tasks that need to be done behind the scenes, e.g., inventory. On the days
41 that we have the substitute available they would be assigned by the Director to do those type of tasks. If we are
42 fortunate enough to have no one out across the SAU and have the classroom substitute, again there are a number
43 of administrative tasks that most often come under the purview of the Assistant Superintendent. She would
44 assign that person to assist with data collection or different tasks that need to be addressed. Asked how the cost
45 allocations would be attributed, he explained it would be based on which district the work was completed for.

46 **MOTION CARRIED**

47 **8-0-0**

1 **OTHER BUSINESS**

2
3 The next meeting is the School District meeting on March 9th.

4
5 **ADJOURNMENT**

6
7 **MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO ADJOURN**
8 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LE DOUX**
9 **MOTION CARRIED**
10 **8-0-0**

11
12 The February 8, 2022 meeting of the Hollis Budget Committee was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

13
14
15
16 Date: _____ Signed: _____

DRAFT