

1 **HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT**
2 **BUDGET COMMITTEE**
3 **PUBLIC HEARING**
4 **FEBRUARY 6, 2019**
5 **MEETING MINUTES**
6

7 A Public Hearing was conducted by the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District Budget Committee on
8 Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 6:35 p.m. at the Hollis/Brookline Middle School Library.
9

10 Chairman Darlene Mann, presided;

11
12 Members of the Committee Present: Raul Blanche, Vice Chairman
13 Matt Maguire, Secretary
14 Tom Enright
15 Brian Rater
16 Lorin Rydstrom
17

18 Members of the Committee Absent: David Blinn
19 John Cross, School Board Rep.
20

21 Members of the School Board Present: Tom Solon, Chairman
22 Cindy VanCoughnett, Vice Chairman
23 Holly Deurloo Babcock
24 Elizabeth Brown
25 Melanie Levesque
26 Krista Whalen
27

28 Members of the School Board Absent: John Cross, Secretary
29

30 Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
31 Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent
32 Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
33 Linda Sherwood, Assistant Business Administrator
34 Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
35 Bob Thompson, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School
36

37
38 **HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT**
39 **FY20 BUDGET**
40

41 Chairman Mann explained the purpose of the Public Hearing was to introduce the articles with stated financial
42 impact to be voted on at the District Annual Meeting.
43

44 A brief synopsis of the different Warrant Articles was provided. The total, excluding the overall capital
45 expenditure of the bond for the facility renovation, is \$24,372,347, which represents an increase 7% over FY19.
46

47 **Article 2**
48

49 *To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items for the second year of a three-year collective*
50 *bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board and the Hollis*

1 *Education Support Staff Association for the 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, which calls for the*
2 *following increases in support staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:*

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Estimated Increase</i>
<i>2019-20</i>	<i>\$70,621</i>

3
4
5
6
7 *and further to raise and appropriate a sum of \$70,621 for the second fiscal year (2019-20 school year), such*
8 *sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in support staff salaries and benefits required*
9 *by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. This is the second year of a*
10 *three-year agreement. Negotiated cost item increases for the next fiscal year (2020-21) will require approval of*
11 *a specific warrant article at the 2020 annual meeting.*

12
13 Chairman Mann noted the estimated tax impact is \$0.03/\$1,000 in Hollis and \$0.05/\$1,000 in Brookline. In this
14 year of the contract, teachers will move a step on the table, and the table itself will increase 2.5%. Employees
15 off the step table will receive a 3% increase. There are no changes to the health insurance caps. The salary
16 schedule itself has consolidations to even out the increases that occur between steps. There is the addition of an
17 education wage adjustment of \$1/hr. for bachelor's degree and \$2/hr. for master's degree

18
19 ***Chairman Mann opened the public comment period at 6:39 p.m.***

20
21 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

22
23 Questioned the average value of a step. Ms. Whalen noted it varies; however, stated her belief the average
24 increase would be 2.5 - 3%. Mr. Pauer remarked that would result in employees receiving a 5 - 5.5% raise on
25 the hourly rate. He stated his opinion that is very generous, and some hard thought should be given to providing
26 5-6% raises.

27
28 Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive, Hollis

29
30 Stated her understanding of the work done by the Hollis School District (HSD) regarding the salary table, and
31 questioned if that effort was undertaken in the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District (COOP) as well.

32
33 Ms. Duerloo Babcock responded the salary table was consolidated and some positions moved around.

34
35 Ms. Shanley stated her support of the article. She commented most individuals don't have to go before the
36 public for their salary increases.

37
38 Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

39
40 Stated her opinion the contract is fair. She questioned the typical hourly salary for support staff. Ms. Whalen
41 stated her belief the table begins at \$12.00.

42
43 Ms. St. John commented, given the dollar value, a 5% raise is fairly insignificant.

44
45 ***The public comment period was closed at 6:43 p.m.***

1 **Article 3**

2
3 *To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$23,113,302** for the support of schools,*
4 *for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory*
5 *obligations of the district. This appropriation does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.*

6
7 The estimated tax impact is \$6.47/\$1,000 in Hollis and \$11.47/\$1,000 in Brookline.

8
9 The \$23,113,302 budget represents a \$1,413,203 or 6.5% increase over the FY19 budget as a result of many
10 non-discretionary increases as well as some discretionary ones. The budget would result in a 0.6 FTE at the
11 HBHS to align class sizes, continued cyclical technology upgrades, and continued facilities maintenance.

12
13 A chart was displayed summarizing the key items in the budget. Non-discretionary items are those that were
14 voted on in previous meetings, contracted, or mandated by State or Federal law. This year the most significant
15 impact to the budget is due to the increases in non-discretionary items. Approved in last year's meeting was the
16 professional staff contract (\$342,447 or 13.0%), anticipated benefit increases (\$440,642 or 9.2%), an 8.0%
17 Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) for health insurance, increases that occur every two years for the New
18 Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS), the bond approved for the new turf field (\$200,854 or 32.4%), special
19 education program needs, which are mandated (\$447,185 or 9.9%), and the increased cost under the regular
20 education transportation contract (\$110,340 or 14.6%). Within the special education figure there is included
21 another approx. \$60,000 increase in transportation costs.

22
23 Chairman Mann commented on the competitive bidding process undertaken with the transportation contract.
24 The non-winning bid would have increased the cost of transportation on the COOP School District by more
25 than double the increase.

26
27 Costs related to discretionary items represent a reduction from the FY19 budget (\$128,266 or 3.8%) and include
28 items on the capital improvement plan, technology and computer upgrades/changes, curricular needs in both
29 schools, etc.

30
31 ***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 6:48 p.m.***

32
33 Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

34
35 Requested and was granted time, beyond the two-minute comment period, to propose an amendment and
36 provide the rationale.

37
38 Ms. St. John proposed a \$48,081 amendment bringing the total budget to \$23,161,383. That would be a tax
39 impact of about \$1.15/\$100,000 (of assessed value) for Hollis and \$2.98/\$100,000 for Brookline. The
40 amendment would fund a position that was originally in the SAU budget for a permanent part-time Nurse
41 available to rotate through the districts to fill in for absences including field trips, professional development,
42 illness or vacation SAU wide. Forty-eight thousand eighty-one dollars is the COOP portion of the shared cost.

43
44 Ms. St. John noted the presentation was provided at the Brookline Deliberative Session, and was not supported
45 there. The total cost of the part-time position is \$72,526 (between Hollis and the COOP).

46
47 Ms. St. John commented on having been a member of the Hollis School Board and served on the SAU 41
48 Governing Board Budget Committee. She was aware of the position and the value and benefits it provides.

1 There has been and continues to be a shortage of nurses to serve as substitutes in the southern portion of the
2 State. There is an educational value to the continuity of care for students with medical and neurological needs.

3
4 She is uncertain of the exact number of families in the COOP community living with chronic, complicated, or
5 life-threatening illnesses, but she does know there are many. Several families have reached out to her in support
6 of this effort.

7
8 When coverage is not available, a non-medical staff member fills in. The example was provided of each school
9 nurse in the SAU having 20 absences that required direct coverage, the permanent substitute nurse would
10 provide that support. One hundred twenty days out of the 180 days direct nursing coverage. Those remaining
11 60 days would provide 10 days per school building to support health screenings, direct student medical contact,
12 nursing administrative support, or in some cases direct health education with the student population.

13
14 There is new and emerging research that shows that adverse child experiences such as a medical condition can
15 impact their learning. She is of the opinion this position would provide that level of support.

16
17 Sheila Mandragouras, 6 Barton Road, Hollis

18
19 Noted she is the Nurse at the Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS). She spoke of the medical needs at
20 HBMS, e.g., Diabetes, seizures, allergy action plans. There is a need to have RN coverage. She spoke of the
21 need for coverage for her when attending field trips with students who have chronic medical needs.

22
23 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

24
25 Stated the proposal for the nurse was not supported at the Brookline Deliberative Session. The money that goes
26 into that may or may not fund the position; if not supported by the other district, the funds would have been
27 added to the budget and unable to be used for that purpose. He stated his understanding the position was in the
28 budget during the rounds of discussion, but was cut as the process continued.

29
30 He stated concern with the operating budget believing it to be unsustainable. It is over \$23 million. The Hollis
31 tax rate for the COOP will go up 9.5% and 12.1% in Brookline. These kind of increases are not sustainable.

32
33 He stated concern with residents being told it was believed there would be a 2.5% bond rate on the turf field,
34 and it ended up being about 52% higher at 3.8%. That will cost quite a bit of money each of the ten years of the
35 bond. He asked for clarification of the bond rate, and was informed it is at 3.75%.

36
37 Mr. Pauer requested the Committee and School Board consider what could be done to reduce the budget.

38
39 Chairman Mann commented, when interest rates on bonds are recommended it is at what we estimate being able
40 to close at. Due to extenuating circumstances surrounding when the District was able to close on the field, we
41 missed the window to be able to close at those rates. That yielded a higher rate that will have a higher impact to
42 the taxpayers over the next ten years.

43
44 Pam Arpin, 58 Nevins Road, Hollis

45
46 Stated she and her husband moved from Montana in January 2011. Their children were in college at the time.
47 Their children graduated from the high school in Billings, Montana. It was a three-story brick building
48 constructed in 1937. Renovations were made over the last 82 years to comply with handicap access and

1 technology upgrades. Her children did not have air conditioning, AstroTurf fields or a variety of other modern
2 amenities. However, when she asked her children if they felt they had lacked in their education they all agreed
3 they received a better than average education and were very well prepared for college.
4

5 The number of students in their classrooms averaged 33 and the student body was near 2000 for each of the ten
6 years they were associated with Billings High School. Teachers were creative and made use of every space
7 within the school. They engaged their students in group discussions and debates, and there was a strict no cell
8 phone in the classroom policy.
9

10 If 82-year-old Billings High School could make do without constant upgrades, expansion, renovations, Hollis
11 Brookline should be able to do the same. The website shows actual enrollment and budget history since 2005.
12 She questioned how many families who moved into this community so their children could partake of an
13 excellent school system, remained within the community once their students graduated. She also questioned the
14 number of graduating students who returned to the community, and what enhancements or improvements have
15 been made for the people who are still living here.
16

17 Ms. Arpin remarked the over 55 community cannot sustain this anymore and they are not receiving anything in
18 return.
19

20 Tom Gehan, 104 Broad Street, Hollis
21

22 Remarked there have been comments made around asking the School Board and Budget Committee to sharpen
23 pencils and cut the budget. He noted the slide that identified discretionary versus non-discretionary items. The
24 teachers' contract was voted on by the voters. This is not something the School Board or Budget Committee
25 can cut. Benefit costs come from the insurance providers and there is virtually no control over that. The turf
26 field bond, again, was voted last year at the District meeting; no control over cutting that. Student Services is
27 driven by the needs of the students that require special education services and there is virtually no discretion
28 there as is the case with transportation. The important note on this slide is that discretionary items have gone
29 down almost 4% in light of a large increase in the overall budget. This fact is very important. Although he does
30 not like paying more taxes, he believes it commendable that we could get to a budget and there was enough
31 discipline to cut discretionary items in the way being seen.
32

33 Nancy Dulac, 151 Old Milford Road, Brookline
34

35 Stated the 12% increase for Brookline is unsustainable. The increases are on the verge of pushing her and many
36 she knows out of Town. She has resided here for nearly 40 years and her husband grew up here. They are not
37 going to be able to take another hit like this, and this is before the bond.
38

39 Chairman Mann noted the 12% is the overall impact of everything being presented, including the bond that will
40 be discussed shortly.
41

42 Ms. Dulac reiterated 12% is enough to push them nearly over the edge. She spoke of senior citizens and others
43 who cannot add more to their income to be able to take this hit.
44

45 Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive, Hollis
46

47 Questioned what the total operating budget was at the start of round 1 of the budget discussions.

48 Superintendent Corey stated it to have been \$25,329,571. Ms. Shanley stated her understanding most of the

1 reduction was in discretionary items. Superintendent Corey stated that to be correct. Ms. Shanley stated the
2 Principals had to pair their lists of wants, needs, desires down by over \$2 million. She congratulated them on
3 accomplishing what she views as a huge accomplishment.
4

5 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

6
7 Agreed there are non-discretionary items, but there is another knob that can be used and that is to reduce the
8 size of the staff, which is 55% of the budget. That is something that should be looked at hard. We have had a
9 declining enrollment since 2007-2008. If you look at the HBHS it is 931 students and this year we are down 71
10 students to 860 yet the budget is up from \$18.1 million to nearly \$23.4 million. It is really not sustainable.
11 These kind of increases year after year will force people out of Town. He requested the Budget Committee look
12 at what can be done to keep the tax impact down to a reasonable level.
13

14 Tracey Christian, Hollis Lane, Brookline

15
16 Questioned the bond for the turf field and whether there was a lawsuit. Chairman Mann stated two
17 opportunities to purchase the bond with the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank, which typically offers very
18 competitive if not sometimes the best rate for bonds, were missed. The District went with a private lender.
19

20 Ms. Christian added it was because of the lawsuit, and was told that was the case.
21

22 Ms. Christian spoke of being the parent of a child who has a life-threatening allergy. She has lived in places
23 where they didn't have nurses and can tell you it is terrifying. She has been fortunate enough to have never
24 experienced an issue where her child needed help and a nurse was not there, but towns over from where she
25 lived in Pennsylvania did not have a nurse and had an incident where a child died. Her child is older now and
26 can handle himself better, but it is terrifying to have a younger child dealing with these issues. She requested
27 people consider having a nurse available all the time.
28

29 Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

30
31 Asked the Principals how often class sizes exceed specifications; what the typical student/faculty ratio is.
32 Principal Barnes responded it depends on the class. If talking general core classes, it is in the 20 students/1 staff
33 member range. Some could be as high as 28 and some could be as low as 15. In terms of exceeding
34 specifications, a review of the Master Schedule indicated 1/3 of the classes exceeded the Board's recommended
35 maximum. There are 300± sections, and roughly 120 sections are over-subscribed by that metric.
36

37 Ms. St. John asked for clarification what is being indicated is that at the high school the teacher/student ratio is
38 lacking, and we are doing the best we can. Principal Barnes stated the teachers are doing an amazing job with
39 what they are given.
40

41 Principal Thompson stated at the middle school the Board stated a class size of 20 and 7th grade is not a problem
42 (smaller class, which is an anomaly), but in the 8th grade it is a larger class and they are running on average 22-
43 23. Certain classes such as accelerated math in 8th grade and the French classes are running around 27 students;
44 well above the Board standard of 20.
45

46 Asked if he wished to address the proposal regarding the Nurse position, Superintendent Corey stated the
47 position was in each of the budgets; Brookline, COOP, and Hollis. It was apportioned to the equivalent of 1
48 full-time person. As they went through the multiple rounds of the budget, they prioritized pieces, and

1 unfortunately not all three of the budgets could support that. When the cut was made it was made across the
2 board. There is nurse coverage at the HBHS from basically the start of the school day to about 4:30 p.m., which
3 is an extension of the hours at the HBHS based on needs for students in extra-curricular activities because we
4 are required to cover them. We have increased the nursing services this year based on student need.

5
6 In both buildings, there are outstanding nurses who provide outstanding coverage. He does support the
7 position, but he is also charged with making difficult cuts. This is one where he felt we could stick with looking
8 to agencies. He stated his belief both Principals would agree the substitute pool in this area has gone up with
9 quality people that live in our community. They don't always work out as many of them are working full time.
10 We do make it a priority to send a nurse with a student on a field trip as the desire is to send a known individual.
11 There are certain cases where the administrators are the coverage, and it is not ideal, but it goes on across the
12 State. As Ms. St. John said, there is a nursing shortage, and it is very difficult to attract nurses.

13
14 He would support any money added to the budget to increase nursing. He believes it will still be difficult to
15 attract someone unless offering a benefit package. Many nurses can work on an hourly basis for significantly
16 more money in a different environment, but what will sometimes bring them to a school district is the benefits
17 package.

18
19 He did not wish for people watching to think we are different than any other school district; we have
20 outstanding nurses, have coverage, but on certain occasions we have fallen back to our administrators. On other
21 occasions we have had the ability to transfer a nurse from the HBHS down into the HSD for coverage on a
22 given day. We work very hard at that. It falls under Student Services, and Amy Rowe, Assistant
23 Superintendent of Student Services, is also in contact with agencies and when we can get one, we pay that
24 hourly rate.

25
26 John Finnern, 51 Hannah Drive, Hollis

27
28 Questioned if this was the proper forum for discussion of the \$2 million on adding on even more rooms to a
29 high school. Chairman Mann noted the bond hearing that would follow this Public Hearing the subject of
30 which is the bond article.

31
32 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:15 p.m.***

33
34 **Article 4**

35
36 *To see if the school district will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated*
37 *expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate up to **\$100,000** to go into the fund. This sum to*
38 *come from the unassigned fund balance available on July 1, 2019, and no amount to be raised from taxation.*
39 *Any appropriation left at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund.*

40
41 Chairman Mann stated the way the estimated tax impact works is we're foregoing a reduction in the tax rate. If
42 this does not take place, you would see taxes go down by \$0.04/\$1,000 and \$0.07/\$1,000.

43
44 The article establishes a contingency fund. This article has been in place for 4-5 years. It is one that needs to
45 be annually placed on the warrant to be voted on by the legislative body. It was originally put there because we
46 don't have the same capability as town budgets to retain fund balance. Funds remaining at year end roll back
47 into the general fund of the Town unless an article is passed approving the allocation. This combined with the
48 \$142,000 we hold in reserve through the retained fund balance is another form of contingency fund where in

1 order to expend, it requires approval of the School Board and the Budget Committee, and the District must
2 petition the State.

3
4 *Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 7:17 p.m.*

5
6 Webb Scales, 49 Dupaw Gould Road, Brookline

7
8 Questioned if the language is boilerplate. To say the sum will be paid from unassigned fund balance and then to
9 say no amount to be raised through taxation is a gross misrepresentation. This is money that was raised through
10 taxes, and the Board did not spend it. It came from taxation. If it doesn't go into this fund, that money will
11 reduce our coming year's taxes. Unless the language is required, he would request it be stricken from the
12 warrant article.

13
14 Chairman Mann responded it is required and approved language from legal counsel. The Hollis Budget
15 Committee's contingency article reads differently because they raise and appropriate through taxation for their
16 contingency fund.

17
18 Mr. Scales questioned why this isn't a line item in the budget.

19
20 Chairman Mann stated it is in fact a line item in the budget. By State Statute, in order to fund that line we must
21 have a specific article that addresses funding the contingency.

22
23 Mr. Scales clarified his meaning to be why isn't there a line item in the budget that is just a chunk of money for
24 contingency. Chairman Mann responded that is what this is. In order to call it that, we must put this article
25 forward to fund that line. This is the legal way of identifying the line in the budget and having it funded; either
26 through unassigned fund balance or through raising and appropriating.

27
28 Mr. Scales stated, as a voter, it is very uncomfortable to face this article because if the Board believes we need
29 that contingency it should be in the budget. If it is just a contingency, then the Board won't spend it and it will
30 be in the unassigned fund balance at the end of the year and it will be returned to the taxpayers. To place this
31 article in front of the voters, particularly in the current environment, there is a huge temptation to vote it down.
32 If the Board can't state this is something that is needed, the taxpayers will vote it down. The fact that it is being
33 brought forward suggests it is needed. If there were some way to include it in the budget, he believes it would
34 be a huge improvement.

35
36 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

37
38 Stated the Brookline School District (BSD) contingency fund is ¼ this size and the budget is a little less than
39 half of the COOP budget. He believes this to be excessive. He does not believe this to be needed at all. He
40 would like to get a read from the SAU if there is an idea of the amount of the unassigned fund balance.
41 Chairman Mann stated the results that were shared at the last Budget Committee meeting were the expectation
42 we won't be able to meet all the obligations, which include funding an expendable trust fund for maintenance
43 items and potentially the special education fund or returning anything to taxpayers. There is the very real
44 potential we need the contingency for this year due to some budget stresses that were unanticipated.

45
46 Mr. Pauer questioned the order in which they are funded. Chairman Mann stated they are funded in the order
47 they are approved at the Annual Meeting. Mr. Pauer commented if this article comes up first and approved it
48 would be funded fully before any other articles. Chairman Mann stated that to be correct.

1 School Board Chairman Solon noted an agenda item for the School Board to address the ordering of articles.
2

3 Mr. Pauer stated there are funds there that are targeted for specific reasons because we think we need them, and
4 this is one for things we can't think of. He does not believe this goes above the other ones. He does not believe
5 this one is needed. He would like to see \$100,000 back to the taxpayers.
6

7 Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive, Hollis
8

9 Questioned if the contingency fund has been used in the past. Superintendent Corey stated that has not occurred
10 during his tenure (5 years). Chairman Mann stated her recollection the year before his time was the year the
11 retained fund balance was instituted. That school year we did have two items that required emergency
12 expenditures before the school year started. We had the retained fund balance and when we petitioned the State
13 to release those funds, because it was new, not all funds were released. She stated her belief a portion of the
14 retained fund balance was used and perhaps a small portion of the contingency. Had we not had that, we would
15 have had to rely upon the contingency.
16

17 Superintendent Corey commented the most likely example of the need for the fund at the HBMS would be the
18 elevator. We have been piecemealing that for 3-4 years. The company that put that in is no longer in business,
19 and at some point, we will not be able to secure parts. When that will happen is uncertain. The item is in the
20 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), but should it go before we envision it happening, that is where he would for
21 funding.
22

23 Chairman Mann commented on other items due to changes in enrollment in the HSD. After the budget was
24 approved, the District needed to fund another position. They are working hard this year to not have to use their
25 contingency, but it is still to be determined.
26

27 Ms. Shanley spoke of the unanticipated expenses that could, and have in the past, come about requiring the
28 expenditure of funds, e.g., sudden mechanical failures, snow removal from roofs, pipes bursting. Without the
29 ability to look to the contingency fund to address such unanticipated expenses, monies would have to come
30 from regular education line items within the operating budget.
31

32 Asked for clarification of the approval process for expenditures from this fund, Chairman Mann stated the
33 School Board would seek approval from the Budget Committee.
34

35 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:25 p.m.***
36

37 **Article 5**
38

39 *Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$878,364** as the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School
40 District's portion of the SAU budget of **\$1,719,314** for the forthcoming fiscal year? This year's adjusted budget
41 of **\$1,691,711** with **\$864,235** assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article
42 does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit.
43*

44 Chairman Mann stated the estimated tax impact for Hollis to be \$0.34/\$1,000 and for Brookline \$0.64/\$1,000.
45 The article, as indicated in the language, has an amount to raise an appropriate as well as an adjusted budget.
46 Ballot votes take place at each of the districts. Passage of the article is determined by the cumulative votes of
47 all three districts.

1 The article cannot be amended. It is the result of a process that involves members of each of the school boards
2 and each budget or finance committee, meeting with the administration to develop the budget. A public hearing
3 was conducted at the December SAU41 Governing Board meeting, and the budget approved at that time. The
4 SAU budget has consistently been about 3.5% of the total budget. The increases in the SAU budget itself are
5 due to salary and benefit related changes.

6
7 Since the building itself at Lund Lane is owned by the HSD, the HSD manages building maintenance.

8
9 *Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 7:28 p.m.*

10
11 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

12
13 Questioned the amount of increase, and was informed the 8.8% increase is related to the COOP portion of the
14 budget. Mr. Pauer stated the overall increase in the SAU budget was 8.43%. Chairman Mann stated this has an
15 apportionment formula associated with it. The number that is apportioned to the COOP is an increase of 8.8%.

16
17 Mr. Pauer commented the ultimate vote to approve this budget is just the SAU 41 Governing Board. The
18 Budget Committee can help recommend a budget, but does not participate in approval of this budget. Chairman
19 Mann stated the Budget Committee helps build and discuss the budget, but the approval of it is by the
20 Governing Board after their public hearing.

21
22 Mr. Pauer stated concern commenting when he sees an administration budget increasing over 8%, it alarms him.
23 The SAU overall population; in 2008 was 2,708. We have gone down to 2,439 this year. The population is
24 down 10%, but the SAU expenses are way up and staffing is way up (60%). That is not the right direction. We
25 should have more teachers and less administrators.

26
27 The SAU gained an Assistant Superintendent position by converting the Director of Student Services to the
28 Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. That will cause growth; another six-figure administrator is not
29 what we need.

30
31 Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

32
33 Noted some of the increase is related to a one-time expense that will result in a decrease next year.
34 Superintendent Corey stated that to be correct. There is a one-time expense for one of the positions. He
35 clarified the SAU is not adding a new six-figure position; we're taking the existing position known as the
36 Director of Student Services and changing the title to that of Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. That
37 gives the SAU far greater coverage and meets legal requirements that we are now required to address. In
38 addition, with the way the State taxes retirement, the position of Assistant Superintendent is taxed at a lower
39 rate and will result in an approx. \$5,000 reduction.

40
41 Ms. St. John questioned prior to adding some additional staff at the SAU in the previous budget, wasn't there a
42 very high turnover rate because of the stress and demands on that staff. Superintendent Corey stated we have
43 significantly reduced turnover, which he sees as long-term savings. There have been many more mandates that
44 have come down from the State requiring many items in the Business Office, the office of the Superintendent,
45 Student Services, etc. He does not disagree the population has gone down. He has the population at 2,510. At
46 the same time, the State mandates have gone up.

1 Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive, Hollis

2
3 Remarked most of this increase, besides the one-time temporary position, is non-discretionary, e.g., benefits,
4 contract obligations. Chairman Mann stated that to be correct.

5
6 School Board Chairman Solon commented there is no Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). These are
7 conscious choices of what we will pay and what kind of options are available. These are conscious decisions
8 that have been made to have an administration that is paid fairly for the work they do, and allow us to attract
9 and maintain the people necessary to get the job done.

10
11 Chairman Mann stated the administrators do operate under contract. It is not a CBA, but they are all contracted
12 increases.

13
14 Ms. Shanley commented she is not certain they are paid what they are worth. She spoke of the level of work
15 accomplished by the administration. It is ridiculous, and they deserve every penny.

16
17 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:34 p.m.***

18
19 **Article 6**

20
21 *To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$67,000** to be added to the*
22 *previously established Athletic Program and Services Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis*
23 *Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2019 unassigned fund balance, available on July 1, 2019.*

24
25 Chairman Mann stated the tax impact would be the foregoing of a rate reduction in Hollis of \$0.03/\$1,000 and
26 in Brookline \$0.05/\$1,000 by approving the article. This trust fund was established several years ago. It
27 assigns the athletic fees, that are paid to the district, to a specific trust fund so that those funds can then be used
28 and spent specifically on athletic purchases. A public hearing takes place annually to release these funds, and it
29 ensures what people have paid in to participate in sports is used to offset a portion of the athletic budget.

30
31 ***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 7:35 p.m.***

32
33 No public input was offered.

34
35 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:35 p.m.***

36
37 **Article 7**

38
39 *To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$75,000** to be added to the*
40 *previously established School Building and Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come*
41 *from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2019 unassigned fund balance, available on*
42 *July 1, 2019.*

43
44 Chairman Mann stated the tax impact would be the foregoing of a rate reduction in Hollis of \$0.03/\$1,000 and
45 in Brookline \$0.05/\$1,000 by approving the article.

46
47 Chairman Mann stated the fund was established 3-4 years ago, and the District typically allocates about
48 \$40,000/year. There were some maintenance items addressed resulting in a beginning balance for FY20 of

1 \$105,000. The proposed allocation is \$75,000. Planned expenditures include replacement of the HBMS fire
2 panel (\$60,000), and the next phase of roof repair (\$35,000), which would yield an ending balance of \$85,000.
3 There are an additional \$97,000 of capital maintenance items already included in the operating budget. These
4 are items that were originally targeted for the operating budget and were moved to the maintenance fund to
5 relieve some of the pressure on the budget.

6
7 *Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 7:37 p.m.*

8
9 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

10
11 Commented the discussion around the contingency fund was that it could be utilized for any type of
12 expenditures, and asked for clarification on the belief a lot of the things discussed during public input that were
13 facilities related could utilize this fund. Chairman Mann stated they were examples of reasons the contingency
14 fund could be utilized, but if any of those examples came to fruition, the District could consider utilizing the
15 Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund as well.

16
17 School Board Chairman Solon stated the major distinction to be this is planned expenditures. The CIP is
18 designed to identify known future expenditures and the fund is a mechanism for saving for those known
19 expenditures. The intent of saving for known large expenditures, over a period of time, is to avoid spikes in the
20 tax rate from one year to the next. In this instance, the fire panel is not a long-term plan, but it is known, and
21 was described as a need by our emergency services because of malfunctions that have been occurring.

22
23 The contingency is for unexpended expenses whether that be something that was planned for in the CIP at a
24 future date and requires attention sooner than anticipated or for item(s) that were completely unexpected.

25
26 Mr. Pauer questioned if the elevator at the HBMS could be addressed through this fund. School Board
27 Chairman Solon stated that to be an item in the CIP, but were it to fail prior to the year identified within the CIP
28 for replacement, the funds could come from contingency.

29
30 Mr. Pauer recommended the contingency warrant article be placed after the maintenance trust article as this
31 article is a known need. He would also like to see the special education trust come before the contingency fund.

32
33 Kristine Opalka, 105 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

34
35 Questioned the amount of the unassigned fund balance on July 1, 2018. She asked how the District determines
36 the amount that might be available to fund the articles, and if the funding is not available through the
37 unassigned fund balance, how the articles are funded, if approved.

38
39 Chairman Mann explained the unassigned fund balance is what remains at year end (monies not expended from
40 the approved budget, and any revenue overruns). We anticipate every year that there will be some unassigned
41 fund balance. There was only one year where the budget came in within hundreds of dollars of the approved
42 amount.

43
44 Ms. Opalka questioned what has historically remained at year end, and was informed it has ranged from
45 \$150,000 to over \$600,000 due to extenuating circumstances such as attrition not planned for (when staff
46 members leave and we hire replacements at a lower cost) and/or one year where there were higher than
47 anticipated attrition as well as changes to student services mid-year, which meant we didn't need to incur costs
48 as a result of students leaving the district.

1 As we approach the end of a school year there are sometimes items that are planned for that the School Board
2 can encumber funds for from the unassigned fund balance. We haven't had that happen in at a minimum of two
3 years.

4
5 Anything remaining in the unassigned fund balance, after warrant articles that are approved, is returned to the
6 tax base to offset monies that must be raised for the coming year's budget. It is anticipated there will be a
7 sufficient amount to cover the warrant articles, which is why they are put forward. If funds are not available,
8 the articles are not funded.

9
10 Ms. Opalka questioned the average of the unassigned fund balance over a five-year period. Chairman Mann
11 stated the average amount returned to the tax base has been \$300,000 - \$400,000.

12
13 Ms. Opalka questioned if on July 1, 2017 the unassigned fund balance was in excess of \$700,000. Chairman
14 Mann stated that to have been the year that the District had higher than anticipated attrition (anomaly). There
15 were five staff members on the higher end of the step table who retired (unanticipated) and were replaced with
16 employees that were not paid at that same level, and there were several special education students that left the
17 District. As a result, the District didn't incur the substantial services that were budgeted for.

18
19 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:45 p.m.***

20
21 **Article 8**

22
23 *To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to **\$25,000** from*
24 *the June 30 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2019 to be added to the previously*
25 *established Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. No amount to be raised from taxation.*

26
27 Chairman Mann stated the tax impact would be the foregoing of a rate reduction in Hollis of \$0.01/\$1,000 and
28 in Brookline \$0.02/\$1,000.

29
30 The Special Education Trust Fund is designed specifically for unbudgeted and unanticipated expenses to the
31 District. There are a lot of significant and contributing factors to the special education programs. There are
32 times when students moving into the district come with significant costs that were unanticipated. This fund is
33 specifically designed to address those type of needs. The Student Services budget is approx. 20% of the total
34 budget and includes costs related to tuition, transportation, programs delivery, and staff. We are reimbursed in
35 revenue through special education aid at about 13% of total costs. The State has an annual change to the
36 definition of what can be requested, and it has never been met at 100%. It is more in the 67% range.

37
38 The use of the funds is restricted to that purpose and requires a public hearing to expend. The current balance is
39 \$150,000. The District has an internal cap of \$280,000.

40
41 ***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 7:48 p.m.***

42
43 No public input was offered.

44
45 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:48 p.m.***

1 **Article 9**

2
3 *To see if the school district will authorize the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board to access future year*
4 *state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations.*

5
6 Chairman Mann stated the article is required by law to be placed on the ballot every year, and enables the
7 District to receive the special education funds (formerly known as catastrophic aid).

8
9 ***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public comment at 7:49 p.m.***

10
11 Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

12
13 Questioned if the slides presented would be published on the SAU website, and was informed they already are.
14 Chairman Mann noted there were two typos and that she would make the corrections.

15
16 ***The public comment period was closed at 7:51 p.m.***

17
18 Superintendent Corey informed the Budget Committee and School Board of his receipt of a Petition Warrant
19 Article, which reads “Because there is a possibility that Article 1 will be defeated or that other considerations
20 will result in the space created by Article 1 not being adequate or available for the Hollis Brookline High
21 School Robotics Teams, to see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$550,000 for
22 the purpose of funding a facility for the Hollis Brookline High School and Middle School Robotics Teams.
23 Funds to be transferred to the Hollis Brookline Robotics Boosters for this purpose. (Majority vote required).”

24
25 Legal counsel was consulted; it is a valid Petition. It will appear on the Warrant Article. The aspect that is not
26 legal is the transferring of funds to a private entity. There are two pieces for the group that has filed this; they
27 can either change the Petition and get 25 more signatures or the Petition can be changed on the floor the night of
28 the meeting. It was not part of tonight’s meeting as there is the requirement for it to be advertised in newsprint
29 and a public hearing conducted in both Hollis and Brookline.

30
31 Superintendent Corey spoke of a meeting scheduled with Drew Mason, Moderator, to discuss the Annual
32 Meeting.

33
34 The Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:52 p.m.

35
36
37
38 Date _____

Signed _____