

**Dresden Finance Committee
Tracy Hall**

**Thursday January 24, 2008
Norwich, VT**

Present: Henry Scheier, Irv Thomae, Al Converse, Paul Tierney, Tom Blinkhorn, Bill Garrity, Dick Podolec, Peter Christie, Karen Kayen, Mike Gerling, Robin Carpenter and John Hochreiter. Chairperson Cheryl Lindberg joined the meeting at 5:15 PM.

Also in attendance: Superintendent Wayne Gersen, Assistant Superintendent John Aubin, School Board Members Chip Fleischer, John Chamberlin and Linda Gray.

Vice Chairperson Podolec called the meeting to order at 5:07 and introduced John Aubin to walk through the handouts presented. John began with page 1 titled Dresden School District Per Pupil Cost Comparison – Secondary stating that we run a labor intensive business and cost do go up greater than CPI. The Dresden District ranks 11th in New Hampshire at \$12,528 per pupil, with Portsmouth immediately ahead of us at \$12,660 and Haverhill Coop just below at \$12,110. Referring to page 2 of that same handout John stated that the Middle School is number one in the state at \$14,213 per pupil with Portsmouth second at \$13,727.

John went on to say that our average cost for teachers is not as high as one might expect given that as teachers retire new teachers are hired at lower salary levels. In further discussion of that set of handouts John stated that there is high value placed on high educational attainment.

Referring then to the contracts and his hand out of bullet points on the teachers and support staff agreements, John said that he believed the agreements to be good if not historic. It is his contention that negotiations have eliminated Track 7 as we know it today. The new track 7 will prove to cost 7 to 9% less than the existing Track 7. This was coupled with a discussion of retiree health and Henry brought the discussion up short in admonishing the negotiators for reducing a benefit negotiated under previous conditions. The negotiators and administration assured Henry that this was not the case. Retiree's benefits would be maintained under the contract term from which they retired. New retiree's would operate under this contract.

Items additionally noted:

Teacher agreement has additional staff development money to assist with creative teaching techniques and oversight.

The Support staff agreement is more expensive due to a new way of acknowledging full time service.

Irv asked if the documents presented reflect the add-backs established at the Dresden School Board meeting yesterday. John Aubin answered that they did.

Dick asked about the percent change of 4.46% and how it arrives at \$403,727? John Aubin referred him to page two of the second handout.

Add Nurses to the bargaining unit	\$ 25,221
Life Insurance	\$ 10,803
10 days Adoption Leave (\$194 per)	\$ 2,314
Staff Development	\$ 17,570
Wages 3%	\$302,292
Benefits on Base Wage	<u>\$ 45,527</u>
Total	\$403,727

There was additional discussion between John Aubin and Dick relative to the presentation of salary figures in succeeding years, the lack of information about health care and benefits at the support staff levels. Dick also questioned the level of benefit to support staff and was told that some of the staff indeed held the position for the sole purpose of attaining the benefit.

Cheryl asked about the question of double counts. John Aubin presented his philosophy based on the need to arrive at a 2.75% target. He talked about the infusion of tuition money from Hanover to Dresden for sixth grade and particularly significant special education costs. John called it an inequity in income from Hanover. Robin disagreed with the presentation and talked about the cost not of the Ray School but of the Hanover tax payer. Robin further noted that the use of one goal or target was not sufficient to the needs of each of the schools.

Irv joined the conversation in noting that there is a difference between school district costs versus the town's elementary school costs. He told us that his concern is in the actual tax impact.

There was significant discussion of offsetting charges and credits and presentation the came down to personal preference.

Wayne suggested that we turn our attention to the most important part of the presentation as noted in the Dresden Assessment on page two with the Assessment to Hanover proposed to be up .7% and in Norwich it will be reduced by 2.9%. He also pointed the group's attention to Page twelve and thirteen for explanations of the revenues and net assessments in each sending town.

Peter asked for an update on the question of higher value from advanced degree holders. Wayne responded that the metrics in education were not easy. Chip

added that the alternative compensation committee had run into difficulty in its research of the model nationally. What they seemed to find were a number of failures. He suggested that a better strategy might be to build on what we have now that is working well. He also told us that the alternative compensation committee will stay in place and actively working.

Cheryl asked why the negotiators agreed to a three year agreement. Wayne forcibly noted that it was so that the district could talk about something other than pay. "We would like to spend out time talking about curriculum and all sorts of other things other than pay."

Robin reported what he and others perceived as an institutional to something other than step and track. He would therefore advocate vigor in future development and assessment.

Linda Gray said that the committee on evaluation has been strengthened by this agreement. Chip told us that the negotiations focused on the sustainability and quality brought to the forefront by the DFC and DSB. Dick suggested that the 2.75% target was a powerful tool that was left unused in the negotiation process. Chip said that ultimately given the agreement as a whole the additional quarter percent allowed both sides to gain.

Tom reminded us all that this has been a very important and useful meeting and thanked the board members and the administration for their willing support of the process. He then went on to note that sustainability remains a concern,

Al made a motion that we go on record as supporting the budget which was seconded by Irv. There was some discussion regarding the form of the motion and its relationship to the articles as they would appear on the warrant. It was the consensus of the group that the motion included the budget, the teacher contract and the support contract. There was also additional discussion on the value of the target in the process this year. Irv focused our attention to the motion and suggested that we vote in a top down manner, the budget followed by the agreements.

The chair asked for a vote. There were 10 in favor and 3 opposed Podolec, Scheier and Tierney were opposed.

Irv made a motion to support the teacher contract settlement and the motion was seconded by Tom. Discussion followed noting the strides that had been made in the agreement and a notation that a 3% increase at the top of the scale was dramatically different than a 3% increase at the bottom. Also it is misleading to say that we are consistent with other districts in that our base and average salary is still significantly higher than other districts. There were some who objected to the length of the contract. Paul noted that from his research the cost of education in our district has increased dramatically more than the income of the people in at

least West Dresden. Dick noted the gap in per pupil costs between us and other districts and showed the group how that disparity continues to be substantial. The question was called by Peter and seconded by Bill. All were in favor of calling the question. The vote on the motion was 10 in favor and 3 opposed. Podolec, Scheier and Tierney were opposed.

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Paul made a motion to support the support staff contract settlement and the motion was seconded by Tom. There was no discussion. All were unanimously in favor.

Upon a motion by Bill and seconded by Tom the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.