

## Rye Budget committee meeting minutes

May 28, 2020

Attendees: Chair Jaci Grote, Phil Winslow, Shawn Crapo, Mae Bradshaw, Ralph Hickson, Scott Marion, Peggy Balboni, Kate Drago, and Kevin Brandon.

### **Chair Jaci Grote opens with pledge of allegiance.**

Jaci Grote reads COVID 19 instructions for Zoom meeting. These are also posted on the website.

Scott will share the screen so we can see the spreadsheet. Rye School district end of April 30<sup>th</sup> Report.

Scott Marion reports that we are just under \$390,000 in the General Fund balance and we are still waiting for Portsmouth High School tuition balance request of reduction of \$200,000 and we can possibly do \$205,000. We are looking into COVID 19 supplies that we can purchase now, and we are confident that we can do more than that. This includes all encumbered expenses 2.8 % of the last quarter.

Mae Bradshaw opens with the questions: Page 15 ¼ way down the page top under special Education transportation budget is a negative balance can you tell me what this is due to?

Scott says its due to special requirements for children that are not normal. We did negotiate a 20% revenue back from the transportation department due to their savings this year based on gas, maintenance, etc.

Jaci Grote asks about the anticipated balances. Are you going to put the warrant article money into the account?

Scott explains that he will spend the money on things we know we need. Examples: thermometers, COVID 19 supplies, etc. We will be getting a part of the Care account funding.

Shawn asks about the closing of the schools. Could there be a need for more staff?

Scott explains that we are set up for 25 per class normally and we can fit 15 comfortably under the current situations. The town is in a very good spot right now.

Peggy Balboni asks about video communications how are we doing?

Scott explains that the technology Director, Brian Groton is trying to prioritize the licenses and spend our money more wisely. He is doing a great job. We are moving from Zoom that has privacy breaches to Google and its free to schools.

Peggy: Are the kids home with books? How is that working for the elementary students?

Scott explains that kids are not learning the same as they have in the past. We are giving physical materials to the younger kids. Math is the toughest subject to teach right now. We will be doing a star assessments fall, winter and spring to see how the kids are doing under these conditions.

Question: Professional Development monies are not used? But no one knows what is going to happen in the fall.

Scott replies that there is not as much planning as necessary. I think there is only one person in the country who thinks things are going back to school normally in the fall!

Students are not good learners at video. Issues with learning lost.

Question: How do you manage peoples lives during COVID? There is difficulty in continuity?

Jaci Grote asked the budget for next year, how are we doing?

Scott explains we are running toward a surplus and I feel we are doing a great job!

Peggy Balboni asks about the financial notes “reallocate”? Does this mean we are re shifting to other areas needed?

Possibly from elementary school to the middle school.

Shawn asks about the WIFI in the schools to cover other areas of assistance.

Scott says you can plan for one of these scenarios. You must plan long term.

Peggy asks about the special education can we get any assistance from the state for this? Scott did get an extension for the school year, but it will be virtual.

Jaci Grote: when will we know the effects of the school year on the budget?

Scott replies we are forcing the issue every two weeks instructional and facility plans. Our biggest issue is to find the best way to teach in this environment and that is really the key! We are pushing leaders to spend money. We have looked at having teachers come in during the summer that would be \$75,000 which I feel that is money well spent.

Jaci Grote says we need to do the best for our teachers. Everyone is stressed during this time especially the teachers.

Scott replies that look at Portsmouth school. They are being asked by town council for 0% increase. That's really a negative with collective bargaining.

Jaci Grote asks are there any other questions?

Phil explains why they asked for \$200,000 savings. He gives applaud to Scott and Mae for the great job they have done.

Shawn ask hypothetical \$75,000 for the summer is that Rye specific or is it Regionally or State?

Scott replies that there could be something done regionally, and I feel that we are the best position possible. Under the cares organization we can get some assistance with educational funding but getting it is not easy.

Mae asks in reviewing financial statement there is a lot of capital that has not been used. Is that because we are holding off?

Scott does not have an answer for this. He will dig deeper and let the committee know.

Kevin says because none of us expected this is there anything that says anything to the standards, and you cannot spend more than you expected. Is there anything being looked at as far as access in capital or such?

Scott has no answer for this.

Shawn: I think this goes back to the warrant articles.

Jaci Grote: nobody was prepared for this managing the re-opening of the state, the Cares act, etc. After all the dust settles, we will look at this. I think we should regroup in August as we will have a better idea of where we are.

Phil Winslow, we looked at the water bill from last year and 90% were paid by May 15<sup>th</sup>. This year 80% have been paid so people are having some financial stress. Therefore, we are looking at the TAN to help with the financial stresses in the town.

Jaci Grote recommends meeting again August. It is agreed the next meeting will be August 27, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

Scott Marion moves to adjourn the meeting.

Mae Bradshaw moves to second it.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm

Next meeting will be August 27, 2020 at 6:30 pm.