

# BUDGET COMMITTEE

## Minutes of May 22, 2007

Meeting was held in the Community Room, Hollis Town Hall and was called to order by Chairman, Mike Harris at 7:30 PM.

Members present: Mike Harris, Chairman; Chris Hyde, Vice Chairman; Melinda Willis, Selectmen Representative; Bill Beauregard, School Board Representative (arrived late); Scott Bartis, Bob Labednick, Mort Goulder; Deborah Adams, Secretary

### Review of Minutes

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of November 28, 2006. Seconded by Scott. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott. No one was opposed. Bob and Mort abstained. The motion PASSED 4-0-2.*

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of December 6, 2006. Seconded by Scott. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott. No one was opposed. Bob and Mort abstained. The motion PASSED 4-0-2.*

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of December 22, 2006. Seconded by Scott. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott, Mort. No one was opposed. Bob abstained. The motion PASSED 5-0-1.*

*Mort moves to approve the Minutes of January 9, 2007. Seconded by Scott. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott, Mort. No one was opposed. Bob abstained. The motion PASSED 5-0-1.*

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of January 18, 2007. Seconded by Mort. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Mort. No one was opposed. Scott and Bob abstained. The motion PASSED 4-0-2.*

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of February 13, 2007. Seconded by Mort. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott, Mort. No one was opposed. Bob abstained. The motion PASSED 5-0-1.*

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of February 15, 2007. Seconded by Mort. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott, Mort. No one was opposed. Bob abstained. The motion PASSED 5-0-1.*

*Melinda moves to approve the Minutes of March 27, 2007. Seconded by Bob. Voting in favor of the motion were Mike, Chris, Melinda, Scott, Mort, Bob. No one was opposed. The motion PASSED 6-0-0.*

*Chris moves to approve the Minutes of April 24, 2007. Seconded by Bill. Voting in favor of the motion were Mort, Bob, Chris, Bill. No one was opposed. Mike, Scott and Melinda abstained. The motion PASSED 4-0-3. (Note – This vote was taken later in the meeting, after Bill arrived).*

### Town Report

Melinda reports that all is going well, with the rain event in April considered. The budgets are currently tracking well. They have already had a phone conference with the Governor and Paul and Jeff will be meeting with FEMA tomorrow. They anticipate being reimbursed for 70% of the cost of the labor and materials that were storm related. This 70% will come from the Federal Government with the remaining 30% being split 50/50 with the State, although the State has not made a decision on this yet. Mort asks if these funds will cover the repair to the culvert on South Merrimack Road. Melinda explains that the town already has money set aside for this. FEMA will only pay for damages that were the direct result of the storm and not for items that were already being planned.

Mort stresses that there is nothing wrong with South Merrimack Road. Melinda argues that the culvert has failed, which is why the State ordered the town to close the road. Mort again stresses that the road is fine. Melinda explains that the road is currently open, yet this was only accomplished by a temporary fix. Mort feels that temporary can last for 10 years. Chris comments that while the town plans to fix Ames Road, the residents of this road would prefer that it not be fixed. Melinda explains that they will apply for this to be repaired, yet still need to decide if they will actually do the work. The culvert was damaged, so some work will have to be done. Bob points out that if they decide to keep Ames Road closed permanently, this will create a safety issue at the corner of Witches Spring Road and Silver Lake Road. Debbie mentions how the residents of Ames Road have been calling town hall complaining of the safety issues with large trucks speeding down Ames Road as a cut through over to Witches Spring Road. Melinda states that this is still under consideration and that the selectmen would have a public hearing prior to making the final decision.

Melinda explains that the damage done to Route 122 when the Mossman Road private dam broke will be handled by the State as this is a State road. Bob questions how the South Merrimack Road culvert will help with the water level of the ponds on the east side of this road. This water is very high. He questions how the culvert will help to keep the water off of the road. Mike recalls that the road was raised in this area a few years ago. Melinda explains that Reggie Ouellette will be shooting the grades and will be working with Dennis LaBombard to design the best plan. The road will be raised somewhat with extra culverts added. Bob states that when it rains, the field on the west side of the road floods, as well as on the east

side. He is concerned that the culvert will not do anything to help relieve this problem. Chris agrees that this is an issue. Melinda states that this will be taken into consideration. This same problem occurs in other parts of town as well. Bob indicates that he is concerned about the town spending money on this if it will not fix the problem. Melinda assures him that they will not be using a band aid approach, but will do it right.

Chris asks about the engineering reports on the Farley Building and the town hall. Melinda explains that the town hall report is fairly positive. They need help with the structure of the roof and its supports. The first floor structure is not sufficient for the weight of offices and files. The selectmen have voted to proceed with plans to renovate this building and will attempt to get some grant funds to assist. She will discuss with the staff how to keep business as usual during the process. Mike asks if there will be any change to the size or the way it is used. Melinda states that there will be a minor addition to the size and there will be changes to the way it is currently being used. There were some conceptual drawings done several years ago that they plan to revisit. This will be a good starting point. They will also be meeting with the staff to discuss their needs. Chris questions whether this will be sufficient in size and scope to carry through to build-out. Melinda states that they will have to review this as well. The Space Needs Study did much of this work already. They will need to look at what is reasonable to do at this time.

Mike does not feel the current space is big enough. Melinda points out that the upstairs is beautiful, yet is currently only used by the band and a karate club. They are looking at using this area for meeting space and utilizing the community room for offices. They will need to install a lift to access the upstairs. Mike asks about the timeline for this work. Melinda is not sure yet. They have decided to start the process and do not know if they will be bringing this forward for 2008. They may need more time to look into obtaining grant money.

Melinda explains that the Farley Building was not as good of a report. There were a significant number of issues that were raised in a 1991 report that were not addressed. These issues are not insurmountable, yet are significant. They need to determine what was done to the building and why other issues were not addressed. This will take more time. They do want to eventually use this as a town building, possibly for the town clerk and the seniors. There are also 4 meeting rooms up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Chris comments that the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is also very nice, yet repairs that were performed in the past have essentially butchered this space. Melinda agrees that this space could be nice. She stresses that this building will be done at a much slower pace than the town hall.

Mort questions where the money will come from to implement these ideas and what money will be cut to allow for it. Melinda states that they will be discussing this. They are hoping to get some grant money. Both structures were built in the 1800's. They are very historic. Mike agrees that it would be great to preserve, yet feels the Farley Building will be far too expensive. Melinda agrees that they may find this to be the case. Ideally most people will want to preserve this structure, yet there is also an idea to tear it down and construct a replica. Debbie cautions about getting grants to assist with the coast, as most grants also come with many conditions and stipulations that actually drive the costs up, which will ultimately cost the town more money in the long run. Mike agrees with Debbie on this. They should look into grants, yet will need to read the fine print before accepting anything.

Chris points out that parking around the town hall is at a premium. He asks if there has been any thoughts regarding changes that could be done to all for more parking. Melinda states that many ideas have been discussed. Right now the library parking lot is used for additional parking for town hall. Chris comments that this works fine, unless the church is also using this for parking. Melinda comments that Hollis residents are spoiled with close parking. She points out how Nashua does not have good parking close by. Mike feels there will be traffic safety issues at the Farley Building with vehicles waiting to turn into this area. This could become a problem.

Melinda mentions that when the town hall is renovated, part of this design will be a climate controlled document storage area. Many documents are currently stored down in the damp cellar. The selectmen have discussed getting these documents out of the cellar and storing them off-site. This will not be a large expense. The selectmen have voted to close town hall on July 10<sup>th</sup> for cleaning out the basement. Chris suggests creating electronic copies of these documents so they do not have to be stored. Debbie states that there will be problems with doing this. The state currently requires that paper copies of **all** land use files be retained permanently. These paper files are accessed on a daily basis for a number of reasons. It would be difficult to have these documents stored elsewhere and would be very expensive to have them scanned to create an electronic copy. Many of these documents are extremely large, which will also create difficulty with the scanning process.

### **Subcommittee to Review Financial Aspect of Hollis Schools**

Melinda presents a proposed subcommittee mission statement and subcommittee configuration to all members.

#### **Mission Statement**

The scope of work for the subcommittee is to analyze, in today's dollars, the cost of educating the children of Hollis from preschool – 12<sup>th</sup> grade at 3 points in time and in varying school configurations.

Three points in time:

- Known school population and costs for the 2006-2007 school year.
- Anticipated school population and costs in 10 years.
- Anticipated school population and costs at buildout.

Configurations to be analyzed:

- Current baseline of Preschool – 6<sup>th</sup> grade Hollis, 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade Coop
  - a. a. Operating Costs
  - b. b. Capital Costs
- Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> grade Hollis, 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade Coop
  - a. c. Operating costs
  - b. d. Capital costs
  - c. e. Costs of "buying out" 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades from the Coop
- Preschool – 12<sup>th</sup> grade Hollis
  - a. f. Operating costs
  - b. g. Capital costs
  - c. h. Costs of "buying out" 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades from the Coop
- Capital Costs are to include:
  - Current bonding costs
  - Anticipated cost of building new infrastructure

#### Committee Configuration

- 1 Hollis Budget Committee member
- 1 Hollis Coop School Board member
- 1 Hollis School Board member
- 4 Hollis citizens at large

Melinda also presents a spreadsheet showing figures for the above configurations. Mike comments that it will be difficult to anticipate enrolment this far out. The cohort survival does not go out this far. Melinda states that she used the NRPC (Nashua Regional Planning Commission) figures that were used for the Space Needs Study Committee. Mort states that demographics are changing and people are having less children and also sending their children to private schools. Mike agrees that using the NRPC figures at this time is the best they can do. Melinda states that the Strategic Planning Committee also performed a more comprehensive analysis, which is more refined. Mike asks if this analysis shows that the demographics in Hollis make it more likely to do xxx, vs. NRPC's analysis showing Hollis doing zzz. Melinda confirms that this is correct.

Melinda explains her spreadsheet. The far right column lists the current building capacities. This will help the subcommittee with their analysis of when new building will be needed. Mike feels this is a very good start. He would like some flexibility to change the Jr. High population to meet the changing needs. Melinda explains that if the Jr. High is Hollis students only, this gives them the option of moving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade up to this building if necessary. Mike agrees. As the demographics shift, they may need to move classes up or down. Melinda cautions that some of this may get into more of the education side of the issue. The bottom right of the spreadsheet shows buildout with only 459 students in the Middle School, with a school capacity of 550. This allows room to move other students in.

Mort feels these numbers may be dropping. There are not as many children now. Mike agrees. Melinda mentions that she is the youngest of the baby boom generation, whose children are beyond elementary age. The next generation (Y) have not had as many children. Mike agrees that the fertility rate is dropping. Melinda points out that they will not know if there will be another boom with the next, upcoming generation. Mort does not feel this will happen and does not believe they will be able to afford many children. He points out that the number of marriages is also declining. Mike agrees, yet this will not change the number of children.

Mike comments that he likes what Melinda has put together. This is the best data so far. Melinda would like the subcommittee to use this as a baseline and can refine it further. She recalls that the Land Protection Study Committee also did an analysis with data straight from the schools. Mort cautions about turning out data that people will not believe. Melinda agrees they need results that are believable.

Chris mentions that the BudCom members that were present at the previous meeting did not want to see this subcommittee as Hollis only. Debbie points out that during the last meeting they veered away from the original intent of the selectmen. Mort stresses that the high school is overcrowded and getting more so. He does not want to give this school any more space and would like to force some of this back into Brookline. Chris states that they will have to build something somewhere. Mort hopes that someday Brookline will be large enough for their own high school. Melinda feels that it already is large enough. Mike agrees that the high school is too big, yet this is an educational issue.

Melinda stresses that part of educating the people is to give them the financial analysis. They need to hear that the current configuration costs them

xxx dollars. More buildings will cost xxx more dollars. Splitting the coop partially or entirely will cost xxx dollars.

Bill arrives at this time.

Melinda stresses that the purpose of this analysis is to have real figures rather than guessing.

Melinda discusses the proposed configuration of the subcommittee. She has proposed having 1 Hollis Budget Committee member, 1 Hollis Coop School Board member, 1 Hollis School Board member and 4 Hollis citizens at large. Chris asks if any selectmen will be participating in the subcommittee. Melinda explains that they are all too busy. They would be willing to assist, yet not to sit on a subcommittee full time. Bill asks whether this subcommittee is intended to make decisions or merely to do an analysis. He feels that if they are only doing data gathering, they do not need board members to participate. Melinda would like to have board member participation. If one analysis includes moving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade up into the middle school, it would be helpful to have a member of the Hollis school board. Bill feels that this would be helpful later in the process, after the analysis has been completed.

Melinda states that the 4 citizens at large would be doing most of the work, with the BudCom and school members being used as consultants. This would keep the citizens from going off on a tangent that is irrelevant. Mike comments that data or legal issues would also be more readily available to board members. Bill questions the educational impact. Melinda stresses that they are not looking at this now. The review will be strictly financial. Otherwise it will get into too many variables. Mike states that they will be assuming the use of existing facilities, educational specifications, etc.

Melinda states that if there is an official discussion to keep or dissolve the coop, one component of this discussion would be financial, another would be educational and another would be infrastructure. This subcommittee will focus only on the financial angle. This would also be good for Brookline to do as well. This information will allow the BudCom to inform the citizens of Hollis what financial implications there will be. Mort feels that this will be a waste of time. The last time this issue was studied, it was not good. Melinda explains that the last time they were comparing apples to oranges. Changes were made in the analysis. This needs to be a financial analysis from Hollis' perspective only.

Chris states that one big problem is the space needs at the high school. One idea that may work now is to create a 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school with a 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade middle school configuration. This configuration is missing from the mission statement. Mike explains that this is what he meant about needing flexibility to change the grade configurations with the analysis. Melinda agrees. Rather than moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade up, they may need to move 9<sup>th</sup> grade down.

Scott would rather not get caught up in the minutia. They need to focus on big numbers. There are too many variables. They should not bring in education or the minutia of grade levels into the analysis. He is not sure this will be effective. Melinda states that there will be other data coming out of the coop. Mike states that they are merely looking at getting the financial obligation for the basic variables. Scott agrees with this, yet he does not want to get too far into the details, as this would be a waste of time. Bill agrees that any discussion of moving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade up to the middle school is preliminary. There are educational values to keeping the 6<sup>th</sup> grade with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Bill states that they need to value the capital assets of the coop to help determine depreciation rates, etc. Mike states that they need to determine what it would cost if they have to buy out Brookline. Bill points out that the subcommittee will need access to the business administrator and to all principals. If they are not making changes to the educational services, then they will need the principals to explain what services are offered now and how this would work if changes were made. They will need data regarding the number of classes, the number of students in each class, etc. He does not see how they can do this analysis without talking with the principals. Melinda stresses that they do not need to make this too complicated.

Bill states that the Hollis school board members are too busy to be pulled into another group. There is too much going on. They may be able to participate at the back end of the analysis, but not on a monthly basis. Mike asks if Bill is saying that the school board does not wish to participate in this subcommittee. Bill admits that he has not asked them. Melinda points out that the Hollis school board will require much less participation than the Coop school board. Mike would like to solicit the school boards for participation. Bill explains that it is not a matter of not participating, it is a matter of how much and what timing will be required. This subcommittee may be for just data gathering and data crunching, which does not require a school board member.

Chris foresees difficulties with obtaining the data through the SAU. Bill states that if they have a well defined model, then this can be submitted to the SAU and they can negotiate a timeline for getting the data. Much of this will be done during the summer while many things are going on at the SAU. They do not have a lot of time. Chris stresses that this is always the argument regardless of the time of year. Melinda states that this could be done as simply as assuming the same cost per student in each time period, then they will need input from the school board regarding additions to the buildings or changes to the configuration. The rate of construction can be calculated by square footage.

Mike does not feel this will be too complicated. He asks for volunteers from the BudCom to serve on this subcommittee. Melinda mentions that she has had a couple of residents show some interest. Mike states that Gerry Gartner has indicated interest as well. There was also an accountant in town that wanted to help, yet he cannot recall his name.

Bill stresses that they need to be more specific about what level will be needed for this model. If they do not want minutia, then what specific list of questions need to be answered. Mike states that if they split the coop at the middle or high schools, they need to know what Hollis' obligations are

now and in the future. They also need to know the cost of new construction. Bill states that while this is a reasonable discussion to have with the administration, this is not a clean, simple break. He questions at what point they compromise education. Chris feels that the buy-out figure should be simple. There are no defined specifications. This is a negotiated item between the two towns. Scott stresses that they do not need to set this all up tonight. As they discuss items, they will continue to raise more questions. He suggests setting up some tasks tonight and discuss this further at the next meeting. Mike agrees.

Chris mentions that he has data for the coop regarding their debt loads and building costs. With this he can calculate the depreciation. Mike asks about the demographic data for population. Melinda states that she can refine her data. Mike states that she will need data for each grade for each year. This can be obtained with the cohort survival. Bill indicates that he has some of this data.

#### Items to discuss at the Next Meeting

- Cost per student – Melinda will provide this data
- Buy out costs – Chris will provide this data
- Hollis' share of new construction – SAU should have this information.

#### **School Report**

Bill indicates that for the next meeting he should have quotes for the security and safety items required for maintenance at the schools. The biggest item will be the phone system. He has been pushing for an open source VOIP PBX system. They are currently getting quotes for this. Mort suggests leaving the system as it is, with no changes. He questions what problems this would create. Bill explains that staying with the existing system will mean not having any voice mail, no call forwarding, and having a phone system that they would be unable to obtain replacement parts for any necessary repairs. He stresses that this is a very old system at the Primary school. He expects to have a proposal for the next school board meeting.

Mike asks if they will have any telephones that will remain working if the electricity is down. Bill indicates that they will have a few select phones with this capability; office, nurse, preschool wing. Chris asks if the SAU office will be getting the same phone system. Bill indicates that they will. The previous quotes did not include the SAU, yet the newer quotes will include this building at the same cost. Mort questions why they need to change if they have a system that works. Bill stresses that what they have is NOT working. He adds that they are also looking at getting Charter broadband for the entire SAU. This will dovetail for all the buildings. They are getting proposals for this now. He will bring actual figures to the next meeting.

Bill mentions that they will soon be hiring a new Director of Maintenance. They received a good set of resumes for this position. Hutter will assist with the interview process. Mort questions what this will do to the budget. That is all he cares about. Bill points out that this position is already included in the budget.

Bill explains that Hutter will be performing a maintenance evaluation. This will give them a list of short, medium and long term maintenance items. Having this list will help them to get the most for their money. Bill mentions that the new accounting system is in the final stage of roll over. The payroll system began in April. The human resources module is the next item to get going. All data for every school in the SAU had to be converted into this new system. This has been a long term process. Much training was required and then the trainer scheduled for April had a personal crisis that delayed the process more. There has been a variety of very challenging things. The human resources module focuses around categories, which will assist with the FTE data that the BudCom has requested. The new system will help to automate the data. He does not have this information available this month, however this should be ready for August.

Bill indicates that he is trying to track all of the Hollis school district's assets. This will include the life expectancy for all assets, mechanical systems and other large items. This will help the school board and administration forecast what they have for maintenance issues. This will produce a schedule of when items will need to be replaced.

#### **Retirement Program**

Bill states that the Senate is debating this issue. Chris states that the Senate took a vote, yet the firefighters and police complained about something, which caused it to go back for revising. He stresses that if the BudCom wishes to have any impact on this to Senator Gottesman, they need to do something immediately. This issue could have a steep and onerous impact to both the town and the school. Bill questions whether Senator Gottesman has any interest in speaking with the Selectmen about this. Melinda hopes he would have an interest. Mort stresses that they need to change the compensation to the employees. Melinda explains that when they are in a multi-year union contract and the State changes the retirement in the middle of this contract, the tax payers end up funding the change.

#### **Budget Guidance**

Mike states that he would like to start this process early. Chris agrees. The BudCom needs to establish what guidance to give to both the town and school. He asks if anyone would like to change the formula. Several months ago he sent out an email to all BudCom members about this issue. He is not sure if anyone had an interest in his suggestions. He posed several questions. If they use the CPI, when is this established? Should growth be considered? How is the student population taking into account? What should be the driver of the budget; population, numbers of houses, etc.?

Mort states that compensation for inflation and growth should be a factor. Mike comments that they need to be consistent on what number is being used. The Hollis BudCom has historically used the August CPI for the previous 12 months and the October enrollment data. Chris argues that there is no August CPI figure. Melinda states that the CPI is set in August using the July figures. Mike mentions that some towns are actually saying no increase at all.

Chris stresses that they need to stabilize the growth in taxes. Mort points out that Nashua said no increase last year and only allowed 2% this year. Hollis is not doing this and the voters are going above the BudCom and approving other things. Melinda states that many items have been compounding, such as the addition to the middle school

Bill states that it would be helpful to get some guidance on what areas of the budget they BudCom feels they can make an impact. They have many fixed items; salaries, benefits and special education. He mentions that they will have negotiations with both unions this year. He questions what areas of the budget can be reduced for negative growth, other than reducing teachers or classes, that will not affect services. Salaries are the biggest driver. They cannot reduce non-teacher positions, nurses, administrators or coordinators, as those are essential. Chris points out that they have 2 curriculum coordinators. He feels this could be reduced. Bill argues that doing so would reduce services. Melinda suggests having a change in service rather than a reduction in service. Mike recalls that when they went to having an inclusive model for special education, this gave a better service with less cost. He is not sure why this is out of control again. Bill states that they need better efficiencies. Mike agrees.

Bill questions what overhead costs can be reduced. He points out that the buildings are getting older, not younger. Chris mentions that the debt service is lower, which is a help. The trend from 1999 is dramatic. The percentage of expenditures for regular education vs. special education vs. administration has changed drastically. The 6% - 9% salary increases each year hurts the budget. This amount is well above inflation. He suggests this as an area to negotiate. They need to reward good performance rather than automatically handing out raises. Bill states that if there is a reduction of 10 students at the primary school, altering salaries is not correlated to growth.

Mort points out that the teachers in Nashua are fed up with the school system there and want to move to Hollis, yet Hollis does not need to buy them. He agrees they need enough salary to attract good teachers, but they do not have to overpay them. Chris agrees they need to attract good teachers, but they also need to be losing other teachers.

Mike asks if they should stick with the traditional formula for budget guidance or should the BudCom do something different this year. They need to make this decision early in the process. Mort states that the BudCom just needs to stand firm. The school and town should go to town meeting with what they want and most likely the voters will give it to them anyway. At least this way the BudCom has not allowed more than what they gave for guidance. Bill asks how they can implement a growth element to the guidance. Chris suggests looking at a 3 year average, then continue rolling this 3 year average from year to year. Mike states that the BudCom has not taken into account for declining population. Chris argues that this should be done. The school has had a declining population for 3 years in a row and this fact was not used to prepare the guidance formula. Bill stresses that he needs real examples of how to cut the budget due to negative growth. Chris states that if they use an average, they will not be penalized immediately for negative growth, yet they can begin to plan for it. Melinda points out that they did do that this year. Some positions were reduced as the demographics have changed. Chris stresses that most of the cuts made had nothing to do with growth.

Mike comments that when the population grows they tend to be more efficient about increasing the budget to compensate, however when the population decreases they are not as efficient in making reductions. Mort states that when companies are fast growing they tend to be less efficient, yet when cuts are made it forces them to become efficient. Mike feels the BudCom needs to give some good recommendations to the school before they go into negotiations. He points out that if they support a 3% salary increase, they are ultimately supporting a 6%-9% total salary increase that includes step/track increases. Bill would like to get this guidance by August, before they begin formal negotiations. Informal discussions with the union will start at the end of June. Mike stresses that they should set some expectations during these discussions. Mort would like them to simply say NO to increases. Medical, pension and salaries should all remain the same.

Chris feels they need to go into this with a history of past raises and comparisons to State/Federal positions. Mike agrees. This is a bargaining tool. Bill suggests having a non-public discussion regarding negotiations at the beginning of the June BudCom meeting. Mike agrees. He would like all members to come prepared to discuss specific concerns they may have. Melinda asks if there will be a BudCom members assisting with negotiations for the school and town. Chris would like some advice from counsel on this. He does not want to have a BudCom member locked into any decision. Bill suggests they could sit on the team as a private citizen, not as a BudCom member.

### **Other Business**

Bill is concerned about a recent Nashua Telegraph article regarding the Farley Building. The article seemed to point fingers and allege that there has been a misappropriation of funds for maintenance items. Melinda explains that the engineering study performed in 1991 indicated that certain items should be taken care of. The 2007 engineering study indicates that some of those items were not performed. She does not recall when the coop school board presented this to voters. She wonders if they indicated that they would do some of the maintenance or not, or whether they just never addressed this issue at all to the voters. Mike recalls spending money on some items, yet they chose not to do others. They decided to not utilize the building in a way that would require those other items to be corrected.

Chris comments that it appears that they will have a full agenda for the next meeting. He suggests delaying the discussion on the coop analysis for another month. Melinda disagrees. She explains that the outcome of the subcommittee's data will be used by the Strategic Planning Committee in

their report for the March town meeting. They are already behind their anticipated schedule of starting this subcommittee last March. She would rather focus on these items and have meeting throughout the summer and not take a month off as usual.

Mike suggests having the non-public discussion of the negotiations on the agenda first for next month. Bill suggests starting the meeting earlier, so they will still end at a reasonable hour. All members agree to a 6:00 pm start time.

Bill asks if there would be any interest in having a public hearing on the budget guidance. Scott does not support this. Bill feels it would be good to have their guidance discussion, yet before a vote is taken, having a public hearing to get public input. Debbie points out that not many people show up for the public hearing on the actual budget. She questions why the public would have any interest in this. Mike agrees. This is a good point. Bill states that many people have been attending the school board meetings lately and the budget has been a topic of discussion. There may be more people interested in this process now. He could always advertise the public hearing at the school board meetings. Melinda points out that all BudCom meetings are public and they have always had a public hearing on the budget.

Mike states that if they do decide to hold a public hearing on the guidance, the best time would be to have it in September. Melinda feels it would be better in August, as they need to start much earlier with this process. Scott argues that they should not be catering to one specialty group. Bill states that he is not suggesting this. He is merely hoping to get more people involved in the process. Mike agrees that it is worth trying. Mort reiterates that they do not get an audience at the public hearings on the budget, so why waste the time.

*Scott moves to adjourn. Seconded by Melinda. Motion unanimously approved.*

**Next Meeting** will be held June 26, 2007 at 7:30 PM in the Community Room, Hollis Town Hall

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Adams, Secretary