

**HOLLIS BUDGET COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 13, 2024
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Hollis Budget Committee was conducted on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hollis Town Hall Community Room.

Mike Harris, Vice Chairman, presided:

Members of the Committee Present: Tom Gehan, Chairman (participated electronically beginning at 6:35 p.m.)
Mike Leavitt, Secretary
Christopher Hyde
Mark Kost
Darlene Mann
Mark Le Doux, Select Board's Representative
Amy Kellner, Hollis School Board Representative

Members of the Committee Absent:

Also in Attendance: Carryl Roy, Vice Chair, Hollis School Board
Tammy Fareed, Secretary, Hollis School Board
Robert Mann, Hollis School Board
Anne Wake-De Pasquale, Hollis School Board
Andrew Corey, Superintendent, SAU 41
Gina Bergskaug, Superintendent-Elect, SAU 41
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator, SAU 41
Lauren DiGennaro, Director of Student Services, SAU 41
Donna Smith, Assistant Business Manager, SAU 41

Vice Chair Harris lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

As Tom Gehan was out of town, his attendance in person was not reasonably practical. Noted was his ability to hear the proceedings and the ability of those in attendance to hear him. As required, all votes would be taken by roll call.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

PRESENTATION

- Budget Process

Vice Chair Harris provided a presentation (can be viewed [here](#)). Upcoming meetings include the February 19, 2024, COOP School District Public Hearing, March 12, 2024, Town Elections, March 14, 2024, Hollis School District Annual Meeting, March 16, 2024, Town Meeting, and March 19, 2024, COOP School District Annual Meeting.

The Town of Hollis is a Municipal Budget Law district under [RSA 32](#). The Budget Committee is responsible for creating and presenting the budget for the Town and Hollis Schools. There is a separate budget committee

1 for the COOP School District. The Budget Committee provides guidance and will take positions on all the
2 articles.

3
4 A slide was shown identifying the assumptions and biases. Assumptions are made that the local economy
5 remains strong, but inflation remains a concern. The tax base will increase 2.0% in the coming year. Some
6 leading indicators suggest population growth may create strain on services. Vice Chair Harris remarked
7 population growth has been a significant factor recently. Staff have been added in the town, and it is likely staff
8 will be added in the schools. Population growth in the schools may also cause us to look at facilities as well.
9 The school board is setting up a committee to do that. Schools must be responsive to potential changes in
10 revenue from the federal and state sources.

11
12 Biases were identified as being committed to provision of high-quality education, we support compensation,
13 benefits and work environment structures that enable Hollis schools to attract and retain high quality employees,
14 support class sizes consistent with the Hollis educational specifications. This is an important one, which seems
15 to have been getting a little out of control. Staffing and budgets should, over time, show linkage to the trends of
16 the student population. We look to decrease locally controlled unfunded liabilities that have long-term budget
17 impact, e.g., medical and retirement plans, manage the number of employees, and manage debt service burden
18 by avoiding additional bonding until older debt is retired.

19
20 Guidance to the School Board was for a 0% increase. Special education costs and salaries increased by
21 approved union contracts are exempt from guidance.

22
23 The proposed operating budget is \$16,464,092, which is \$1,499 under guidance (\$16,465,591).

24
25 A slide was shown depicting the increase in population (24% since 2000 and 4% since 2020), median household
26 income, increases in town property valuation (58% since 2022), average single-family home value (increased
27 59% from 2022), and the increase in the average single-family home tax bill (17% since 2022).

28
29 The total number of employees in the district is 131 full-time and 16 part-time. Staff vs. student population is
30 impacted largely by special education (driven by student needs).

31
32 A chart was shown depicting the average tax bill for single-family residence from 2013-2023 (blue line adjusted
33 for inflation).

34
35 Displayed was a chart showing the total debt burden for all long-term debt and capital leases across the three
36 entities (Town of Hollis, Hollis School District, COOP School District (Hollis portion)). Debt is about to begin
37 falling off. There are facility studies in the town, police and fire department, and will be in the school district.
38 Those studies could result in the need for further bonded debt in the future.

39
40 Regarding the amount of the tax bill that goes towards paying debt service; last year 9.5% of the tax bill went to
41 pay debt service, it was reduced to 8.8% in FY24 and 7.2% projected for next year.

42
43 The school district fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30th and correlates to the end of the school year
44 (FY24 is school year 2023-2024). In FY24, enrollment was at 680. The Administration anticipates that
45 increasing to 686 for FY25. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) expects a dramatic
46 increase in enrollment in the coming years.

A chart identified staff versus student population. Vice Chair Harris commented it is growing beyond what we would like.

Displayed was a chart identifying where classrooms fell in terms of education specifications versus projected class sizes.

The Cost Per Pupil (CPP) in comparison to the State average for elementary education tracks closely. FY23 is approx. \$572 under the state average. It is useful to view in terms of inflation adjustment. The same data was adjusted for inflation and shows the district is \$358 below the state average.

Comparing the CPP to 119 comparable districts, a higher percentile means that we are spending relatively more than the comparable districts.

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:46 p.m.

- Overview of Warrant Articles

Article 1: Support Staff Contract Year 3 of 3 (\$89,179)

Article 2: SAU Budget Assessment (\$734,279)

Article 3: SAU Building Maintenance Trust (\$23,970)

Article 4: School Building Maintenance Trust (\$125,000)

Article 5: Special Education Trust Fund (\$25,000)

Article 6: Contingency Fund (\$95,000)

Article 7: Operating Budget (\$16,464,092)

Article 8: Any Other Legal Business

There are elements of the budget that are unknown until after the Town and School District meetings, which makes it difficult to forecast a tax rate, e.g., what state aid and other revenue sources will be, what spending will be approved at the three meetings conducted by the other entities. The assessed value (aggregate property value of entire town) which is the denominator for tax rate calculation is an estimate and will not be finalized until later in the year.

The presentation assumes a 2% increase in the tax base. The Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) sets the tax rates in the October/November timeframe.

Spending is only part of the tax rate. The tax rate will go up even when spending goes down if revenue and state aid go down by a greater amount. The approved appropriations less revenue received results in the actual tax effort; the amount that must be raised through taxation.

Unlike the Town, the school districts have limited ability to accumulate unexpended funds. It largely rolls back to the taxpayers. A larger return of tax dollars to the tax base was recognized as revenue in the last cycle. Adequacy Aid increased by \$66,435 and retained tax by \$31,876.

The Hollis School District Tax Rate for FY25 (\$5.83/\$1,000) is a 6% increase over FY24 (\$5.48/\$1,000). Adding to that the state tax rate for the Hollis School District for FY25 (\$0.59), which is a decrease from FY24 (\$0.63) for a total Hollis School District rate for FY25 of \$6.46/\$1,000 or a 6% increase over FY24 (\$6.11).

The School District is only one portion of the overall tax rate. The projected FY25 rate for the Town is \$4.33 (increase of 9%), the Hollis School District Local Tax is \$5.83 (increase of 6%), Hollis School District State Tax \$0.63 (no change), COOP Local Tax \$5.77 (increase of 14%), COOP State Tax \$0.59 (reduction of 2%) and county tax \$0.86 (reduction of 2%) resulting in a Hollis Tax Rate of \$18.01 (increase of 8%).

- Ground Rules for Conduct of Public Hearing

Vice Chair Harris went over the rules for conducting the Public Hearing.

The Public Hearing was declared open at 6:53 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

- Proposed FY25 Budget

Article 1

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

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2024-25	\$87,179

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$87,179** for the third year (2024-25 school year), such sum representing the negotiated increase over the 2023-24 salaries and fringe benefits. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.**

Estimated Net Tax Impact: \$0.03/\$1,000

Vice Chair Harris stated the highlights to be salary increase totaling \$72,097 (4.5% increase), increase in insurance caps costing \$2,400, \$500 towards insurance premium (part-time) at \$2,400, the total previously negotiated \$74,497, and new components totaling \$12,682 for a final total of \$87,179.

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 6:54 p.m.

No public input was offered.

The public comment period was closed at 6:55 p.m.

Article 2

Shall the School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$734,279** as the Hollis School District's portion of the SAU budget of **\$2,377,762** for the forthcoming fiscal year? This year's adjusted budget of **\$2,356,823** with **\$727,813** assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.**

Estimated Net Tax Impact: \$0.25/\$1,000

Budget drivers include increases over FY24 in the areas of salaries (\$81,980); \$20,033 merit bonus pool increase based on historical trend, \$37,962 School Board approved addition to budget for FY24 salaries, and 3% salary increases and benefits (\$70,839); increase to taxes and retirement due to increased salaries, Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) of increase for health insurance rates (18.7%) and GMR of increase for dental insurance rates (4.7%).

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 6:56 p.m.

No public input was offered.

The public comment period was closed at 6:57 p.m.

Article 3

To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$23,970** to be added to the previously established Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund for Administrative and Associated Structures at 4 Lund Lane in Hollis, Map 56, Lot 2. This amount to come from the unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1 of this year. This amount represents rental proceeds and unexpended maintenance funds to be received from SAU 41. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.**

Estimated Net Tax Impact: None

The Hollis School District owns and maintains the SAU offices of 4 Lund Lane. They charge SAU 41 rent for this space. The purpose of the article is to allocate funds to the expendable trust, which serves as a savings account to carry forward SAU 41 rental income on 4 Lund Lane for major maintenance. The funding source is the SAU 41 rental income.

Major expenditures are proposed by the administration. The School Board evaluates and presents plan to the Budget Committee for input, and the School Board makes final approval of expenditures.

The projected FY25 opening balance of \$116,720 and the proposed allocation of \$23,970 would result in a projected FY25 ending balance of \$140,690. No projects are proposed for FY25.

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 6:58 p.m.

Drew Mason, Baxter Road

If there are no projects planned, why add to the fund?

Vice Chair Harris spoke of the desire to contribute to the fund for planned and unanticipated future expenses.

Mr. Mason questioned plans for future expenditures.

Superintendent Corey responded the \$23,970 allocation requested represents the rental fees charged the three districts for the rent of the building. It has always been agreed that the rental income would go into the maintenance trust fund for the upkeep of the facility.

Future plans include the likelihood there will be the need for new portions of the roof, decking projects, internal painting, and general maintenance.

The public comment period was closed at 7:00 p.m.

Article 4

To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$125,000** to be added to the previously established School Buildings Expendable Maintenance Trust Fund from the Hollis School District's June 30, 2024 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.**

The Unassigned Fund Balance is the sum of unspent taxes and revenues. Expending \$95,000, that could potentially be returned as revenue equates to foregoing a potential rate reduction of \$0.04/\$1,000.

The FY25 projected opening balance is \$215,000. The proposed allocation is \$125,000. Projects planned for FY25 include:

Exit Lane Addition – end of Drury Lane (both schools); \$25,000

Elevator Retrofit – Phase I (HUES); \$36,000

Classroom Flooring (HUES); \$35,000

Boys Bathroom Stall Replacements (HUES); \$20,000

Exterior Cameras – Additional (HUES); \$20,000

Entrance Security Upgrades (HUES); \$20,000

Secure Entrance Upgrade – Phase I (HUES); \$20,000

Secure Entrance Upgrade – Phase I (HPS); \$40,000

Alarm Access control updates (HPS); \$35,000

Wall mounted heating controls (HPS); \$20,000

The cost for FY25 projects is \$251,000 and the projected FY25 ending balance \$89,000.

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 7:01 p.m.

No public input was offered.

The public comment period was closed at 7:02 p.m.

Article 5

To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$25,000** to be added to the previously established Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis School District's June 30, 2024 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.**

The Unassigned Fund Balance is the sum of unspent taxes and revenues. Expending \$25,000, that could potentially be returned as revenue equates to foregoing a potential rate reduction of \$0.01/\$1,000.

The fund is a mechanism for saving to help address major unexpected special education costs. Use of the trust would lessen the risk that ongoing educational programs would be reduced to fund unforeseen special education costs. The FY25 opening balance is \$150,000.

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 7:03 p.m.

No public input was offered.

The public comment period was closed at 7:04 p.m.

Article 6

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

The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.

Estimated Net Tax Impact: \$0.03/\$1,000

The \$95,000 Contingency Fund has been in place to cover instances such as the cost of a teacher should enrollment change over the summer, etc.

The fund is lapsing meaning it is returned to the taxbase at the end of the year if not utilized. The funds cannot be carried forward from year to year.

Selectman Le Doux commented given the demographics we are facing and the fact we are seeing elevated instances of special needs children, he would like to see the Committee to go on record and ask our representatives in Concord to see if they can amend the statute to allow us to have an ongoing fund where we could put smaller increments aside and allow it to accumulate.

The cost of a special education teacher could be \$150,000 - \$200,000 (all in). Superintendent Corey stated that could be the cost to service a student.

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 7:06 p.m.

No public input was offered.

The public comment period was closed at 7:06 p.m.

Article 7

To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$16,464,092** for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory obligations of the district. This appropriation does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.

Estimated Net Tax Impact: \$5.52/\$1,000

The guidance provided by the Budget Committee was a total of \$16,465,591. The proposed budget came in (\$1,399) under guidance.

Total additions to staff are 5.7 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs). Staff changes were identified as the addition of 3 regular paraeducators at HUES, 1 regular education teacher at HPS (anticipated enrollment increase), 1 Pre-K Coordinator/Pre-K Teacher at HPS, 1 Pre-K Intensive Needs Paraeducator at HPS, 0.5 regular Pre-K Paraeducator at HPS, and the addition of 0.2 Special Education Secretary serving both schools.

Major increases were identified as the new special education positions; increase of \$190,055, special education transportation increase of \$102,309, classroom teacher salaries increase of \$68,863, teacher degree changes for an increase of \$38,572, extended school year wages at an increase of \$25,900, and computer equipment replacement at an increase of \$16,150.

Major decreases include teacher retirement benefit (\$0 proposed for FY25 resulting in a decrease of \$61,295). Bond interest decreased by \$27,838, health insurance by \$22,324, school psychologist by \$21,428 and behavior specialist by \$21,318.

Vice Chair Harris opened the floor for public comment at 7:10 p.m.

Drew Mason

Asked for an explanation of the increase associated with extended school year salaries.

Superintendent Corey explained the district is required to offer students who have it in their IEPs, an extended school year. The extended school year salaries are teachers or individuals hired, other agencies, etc. to come in and teach summer school for those students, as required.

Mr. Mason spoke of the class size specification for 1st grade being exceeded, and asked what the thought process is and the number of additional students that would have to enroll over the summer to cause the need for an additional section to be added.

Superintendent Corey responded that the 1st grade class size is over specifications due to an enrollment increase late in the summer. We went out to hire. There are not as many teachers as in the past. The conscious decision was made to go over specification slightly and distribute those children over the four existing classrooms believing that to be in the best interest of the students. That is partly why you see funds in the budget to reduce class sizes as there is the desire to go back out during normal hiring time at which point it is believed the pool of candidates will improve.

For an additional teacher to be warranted, we would have to exceed educational specifications in a particular grade level. A decision would likely be made based on spring enrollments.

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

Article 8

To transact any other business which may legally come before said meeting.

The Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:14 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF WARRANT ARTICLES

- Votes to Recommend / Not Recommend Warrant Articles

MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 1, HESSA SUPPORT STAFF, YEAR THREE OF A THREE-YEAR CONTRACT, AS WRITTEN FOR EIGHTY-SEVEN THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE DOLLARS (\$87,179)

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost, Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2, SAU BUDGET, AS WRITTEN FOR SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE DOLLARS (\$734,279) AS THE HOLLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT PORTION

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost, Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 3, SAU BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND, FOR THE SUM OF UP TO TWENTY THREE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED SEVENTY DOLLARS (\$23,970)

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost, Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 4, SCHOOL BUILDINGS MAINTENANCE FUND, FOR THE SUM OF UP TO ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$125,000)

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost,
Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

**MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5, SPECIAL EDUCATION
EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND FOR THE SUM OF UP TO TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS
(\$25,000)**

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

ON THE QUESTION

Asked, Member Mann explained this trust fund has a non-statutory cap defined as \$280,000, which is what is
being built towards by allocating funds to it.

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost,
Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

**MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 6, ESTABLISHING A
CONTINGENCY FUND, IN THE SUM OF NINETY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$95,000)**

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

ON THE QUESTION

Selectman Le Doux stated there to be the need for a discussion with our state representatives. It seems
ludicrous that we cannot build up an emergency savings fund. As Selectmen they manage the unassigned fund
balance, which provides them with tremendous liquidity in case there is an emergency. There is no such
liquidity for the schools.

Member Mann noted that what the schools have now is a mechanism called the Retained Fund Balance. What
that allows the schools to do is, if approved by the Legislative Body, set aside up to 5% of the district
assessment in a fund. The way that RSA was originally worded allowed a maximum of 2.5%. It has changed in
the past few years.

Once approved, which this district has done, the only way to increase that percentage to the 5% threshold is to
add an article to increase the maximum percentage. Once approved it remains in place until rescinded.

What that does is allows the School Board, annually, to set aside a maximum. At this time, for the Hollis
School District, what has been approved is a maximum of 2.5% of the district assessment.

1 Selectmen Le Doux asked if that is part of the budget before the Committee and was told it is not. The district
2 currently has that in place. It doesn't need to be voted on every year. The only vote that is required is by the
3 School Board itself to set aside up to the 2.5% approved threshold.

4
5 Asked what the amount comes to, Superintendent Corey stated it to be approximately \$180,000. Member Mann
6 stated her belief the Hollis School District has never retained the full 2.5%.

7
8 Vice Chair Harris suggested an article to increase that amount to the 5% allowable. Member Mann remarked
9 that was discussed last year, but there was a great deal occurring with the warrant itself and district wide. The
10 School Board and Budget Committee both consciously decided it was not the right time to put the 5% language
11 forward. We didn't address it this year, and it is something that can be addressed in the future.

12
13 Superintendent Corey stated when approaching the end of the fiscal year, if there remains a budget surplus, the
14 Administration requests the School Board determine the amount to be set aside (up to the 2.5%).

15
16 Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator, stated it is not an accumulation. The amount to be set aside in the fund
17 must be voted upon by the School Board each year.

18
19 Member Mann added you are not adding to it unless the board decides to set aside an additional amount. For
20 example, if there is \$250,000 in there now, when the board sees the budget surplus at year end, they would have
21 to vote to set aside \$250,000 that in effect is a renewal of the amount already set aside, but since it is not at its
22 maximum, and say the maximum is \$300,000, they can vote to set aside the full \$300,000. There is a level that
23 we are at right now that essentially needs to be renewed.

24
25 Selectman Le Doux commented it sounds as though, by law, it goes away at the end of the year, and was told
26 that is the case. Asked how that \$180,000 miraculously shows up the next year, Superintendent Corey stated
27 with this year's budget number, which is the \$16 million we are talking about, we will have a surplus at the end
28 of this year, the School Board will approve retaining up to 2.5%. That will result in the district technically
29 having available to expend this year's budget number and the 2.5%. At the end of the year, if not utilized, the
30 2.5% goes away.

31
32 Asked for further clarification, Member Mann stated the amount (2.5%) is embedded in the budget on the
33 revenue side. When you look at the results we see every month you see that it is tracked on the revenue side.
34 Since it is not something that they plan to access or is not accessed by June 30th, it becomes available to be
35 reallocated as retained funds.

36
37 Selectman Le Doux stated, on the town side, the Selectmen approve a Contingency Fund annually for roughly
38 \$70,000. The last time they fully expended that was when fighting a natural gas pipeline under the town square,
39 and thankfully they had the funds. But if it is not expended by the end of the fiscal year, the money from that
40 goes directly into the unassigned fund balance. It is fully transparent, it is audited, and the Selectboard has set
41 up a policy to try and keep that around 10% of the overall town budget as that seems to be the sweet spot for
42 maintaining a healthy bond rating.

43
44 There have been discussions around this table about the need, at some point in the not too distant future, for
45 additional capital spend on buildings, etc. for schools. He does not want us to have this oh no moment where
46 our bond rating comes under question because we haven't set up enough fiscal reserve. He is looking for a
47 transparent mechanism. If it doesn't exist, it doesn't exist.

Member Mann responded it does not exist.

Selectman Le Doux stated the need to have a dialogue with our state representatives.

Member Hyde suggested the Committee should discuss this during the coming year. Since the courts don't allow the town to feed into the schools from its retained fund, which is 10% of a \$30 million budget, should something occur, it makes a lot more sense to have it sit available on the school side where it belongs and can be accessed.

Selectman Le Doux remarked you know you will have a capital need and you know you will rely upon a bond rating. There is nothing better than having a clean balance sheet. Member Hyde remarked it depends on where it can be accessed at least without a court special ruling.

Selectman Le Doux added conceivably if the schools had an immediate emergent need we could go to the DRA and petition for release of X number of funds. That has been done in the past in other districts. He is simply looking at it from a taxpayer standpoint thinking can we make this a little more transparent because it sounds like we have a fund, but we don't have a fund.

Vice Chair Harris remarked it is something that is worthy of discussion.

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost, Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY MEMBER HYDE TO RECOMMEND THE OPERATING BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF SIXTEEN MILLION FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR THOUSAND NINETY TWO DOLLARS (\$16,464,092)

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

ON THE QUESTION

Chair Gehan echoed the remarks concerning the economics and the fact that the Budget Committee provided a guidance amount of 0% increase, which was met, but the budget is still increasing significantly. That is really driven by a previously approved Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). There was a lot of thoughtfulness and intent on the part of the Budget Committee with the town, but a lot of these increases are pre-approved by the voters, if you will, in the form of a CBA.

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost, Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Vice Chair Harris restated the upcoming meeting dates. February 19, 2024, is the COOP School District Public Hearing, March 12, 2024, Town Elections, March 14, 2024, Hollis School District Annual Meeting, March 16, 2024, Town Meeting, and March 19, 2024, COOP School District Annual Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Budget Committee February 6, 2024

MOTION BY MEMBER LE DOUX TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost,
Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

OTHER BUSINESS - None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER LE DOUX TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HYDE

A Viva Voce Roll Call Vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Tom Gehan, Mark Le Doux, Darlene Mann, Mike Harris, Christopher Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Kost,
Amy Kellner

8

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The February 13, 2024 meeting of the Hollis Budget Committee was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Date: _____ Signed: _____