

**Hampton/Scotland Ad Hoc Committee
Programming Subcommittee
For Inter-district Educational Cost Sharing**

Hybrid meeting held in Hampton Town Hall on May 12, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Meeting Audio Link

https://scotlandct-my.sharepoint.com/:u/g/person/adminassist_scotlandct_org/EZzUwFHTEFNEqtpjCGu_9cEBHb5O37w4_PzfebHas2wgkQ?e=UzcdZk

1. **Call to order:** Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. Present: Gary Greenberg via video, Wendy Sears, Rose Bisson, Kathy Donohue, Cassidy Martin and an audience for citizens.
2. **Approval of Minutes April 21, 2022:** Motion made by Kathy Donohue to table approval of minutes, with second by Rose Bisson. Motion carries unanimously.
3. **Work Session For Budget:** Gary Greenberg has been contacting as many people as possible regarding the grant situation. This is an important piece because significant portion of budgets (100-200K per year) often comes from grants. We can work as carefully as possible to figure out the operating budget but still not encompass all expenditures. In particular, the concern is how the arrangement would affect grant allocation. So the question he has been posing is, if we were working with the same data as we are currently using for grant application in each school and applied that under a cooperative agreement model as we have designed, what would happen to grant funding?

Title I Grant & REAP grants, told that our funding would have been exactly the same. Because BOEs continue to be the Local Education Authority, they would continue to get the grants that they have gotten. Only difference is that the grants will not come, for the most part, directly to the BOEs, they would come to the fiscal agent appointed by the cooperative committee, and then back to BOE and then back coop committee. That's how they do it in Region 4. There are some grants that will go directly to the fiscal agent, but not sure which ones. As far as he can tell, there is a mechanism in place for grant funding for this type of arrangement. Grant funding will remain the same even if there is only one school. This may seem too good to be true, and the possibility exists that the State Dept of Education may make adjustments.

More importantly, it would appear that neither Hampton nor Scotland will qualify for Title I grants this coming year, not sure why. Valerie Bruneau said that the same thing happened in Andover a number of years ago. This information is preliminary and will wait for June decision. If Title I goes away then Title IV goes away too. Title I and Title IV control whether you get REAP money.

First issue is that this could create a cash crunch. Important expenditures have habitually been funded in Scotland using grant money, and he believes that our new superintendent is trying to discourage that practice starting this year.

Second, to the extent that we don't know about this, we (as a cooperative school) are not in any different position than we would be in an individual school district. Grant funding is

uncertain and is in no way guaranteed. Schools ought to budget based on operating expenditures and revenue and hope for the best with grants.

In conclusion, he found that grant funding is volatile, but no more volatile for a cooperative school than for an individual school.

When it is time to present, use full disclosure, that there are some things we know and some things we don't know based on the general uncertainty surrounding grants.

We can propose an operating budget with more predictability and greater certainty than we can propose expected grant funding.

Notes were forwarded from Wendy Sears regarding changes made to documents from last meeting.

All changes made in red font and reviewed by all members.

Information was requested regarding line items in the Pre-K Department in Scotland. The items in question related to custodial and administrative services provided, Readiness Liaison from Eastconn, percentage of services utilized by preschool from special education (PT/OT etc.).

Changes to FICA (or Medicare only) for Teachers and Instructional Aides for Pre-K were made and will be double checked to ensure that all salaries were taken into account.

Pre-K department, other than double-checking FICA, should be complete.

Change to Special Ed Certified Teachers from 3 to 2.5, based on next year's special education staff at both schools.

Pg 10: Business office was changed at 3-17 meeting, changing to 1.0 FTE with salary \$51,685.

Pg 11: Change in Final Estimated Total tied to Chart A on page 12, which reduces the Combined Town/BOE Expenses by the RD11 fuel and transportation expenses on Hampton's budget (\$62,325), making the new combined town/BOE expenses line \$338,942 (relative to the Elementary School Budgets only).

Chart B "Estimated per pupil cost per town"- looking at per pupil cost means that Hampton's RD11 numbers need to be removed to compare expenses equally. Then add line to Chart B that adds Hampton's RD 11 cost back in, so that number is still represented in Hampton's overall BOE expenses, and it allows the total savings to each town to be more accurately represented.

Change was made to note below Chart A, adding more descriptors for clarification.

Added a note to bottom of Chart A indicating that Scotland carries their RD11 expenses in the Town Budget not in the SES Education Budget.

It was discussed that Chart B contains a lot of information and will be a lot for the public to take in. It was determined that the best way to ensure that people understand the overall Chart is to review it line by line during the informational meeting.

Page 11: added language to ensure that it clearly represents titles on the Charts.

There was discussion about teacher steps, years of service, union contracts and tenure.

Appendix A: page 1- Hampton Counselor salary \$64,431, but her step does not pay \$86,284 because she is not at the top of the pay scale. Rose will get more information on this.

Services and Programs Spreadsheet has not progressed. Question was raised as to whether we needed to move the information we have into our Report, or work on gathering the additional information we need to complete it. Kathy will re-forward information on the Science Program she sent previously so it can be included. The subcommittee agreed to keep the spreadsheet and work to complete it. Rose wanted to see research on elementary school students using foreign language programs online.

Page 2 of Appendix A: Numbers were adjusted to include 2 pre-K teachers, and salaries, but bottom numbers remain the same because of how the calculation was done.

Insurance Costs: Adjustments made to 15% increase estimates based on revised group insurance numbers.

Elementary Budgets by School and Year spreadsheet: Missing number for Hampton's 2020-21 Actuals. The two numbers that were provided were inconsistent and will be reviewed so that the correct number can be added to spreadsheet. \$2,036,750 vs. \$2,021,300 (difference of 15,450)

21-22 FY Staffing Levels Current and Estimated: Was unsure if 0.2 pupil personnel director position in Hampton was already included in this spreadsheet. The Special Ed Director at 0.2 is the same position, and so already included.

Recommended Class Sizes Based on Student Count: The top part includes current student count per class. The bottom part includes information on classroom sizes and number of classrooms if all of the students were currently in the cooperative school based on the subcommittee's classroom size recommendations. The Pre-K3 and Pre-K 4 designations should be removed, and Pre-K totals used instead in both the upper and lower blocks.

Opted to keep the 22-23 projected student numbers & # of Classrooms.

Added \$360 in Pupil Transportation in Pre-K for Field Trips.

Kathy was going to get the number of rooms and capacities for Hampton Elementary School to allow for a better comparison between HES and SES of space and capacity. She requested this information from the architect, and they will be sending information.

Kathy reviewed the other cooperative models to see if they added itemized figures or a lump sum figure for additional expenses to their towns for things such as administrative support, consultants, audit etc. The problem that she ran into was that these other models are for High Schools that still have full elementary schools, so the comparison is not the same. There will be additional expenses, but the subcommittee is unsure of how to determine what those costs might be. These costs won't be significant, but the subcommittee doesn't know how much to budget.

Rose pointed out that the individual town expenses does not include costs for a Superintendent and Special Education Director for each Town BOE. Kathy disagreed that that would not be needed and would be excessive. Rose requested that the record reflect that she believes it is a mistake to not account for a Superintendent as an individual town expense. There was discussion among members on this subject. Suggestion was made that a Superintendent could fulfill the role of supporting the individual BOEs, and this person's role would be limited to mostly budgetary support. The recommendation was made to include this support role in the job description of Superintendent and to consider incorporating this suggestion into the Cooperative Agreement.

Discussion occurred around the budget for Building and Grounds Department in Scotland which changed for the 22-23 FY from approximately 182K to 196K due to increase in custodian salaries. The choice was made early on to use Scotland's Building and Grounds budget numbers, but Cassidy felt that based on this increase for the coming fiscal year and comparing it to Hampton's current Department total of \$200K, that we should consider increasing this Department. Cassidy will forward a copy of Scotland's BOE anticipated 22-23 FY budget.

There was discussion about Capital Improvements and how they differ from improvements or expenses directly related to educational costs. The Capital Improvements to either town's school building, no matter where the cooperative school is located, will still be the

responsibility of the respective town.

Kathy brought up concerns regarding the changes to the Educational Cost Sharing grant from the State Department of Education. Her concern had to do with the change to the formula that determines the amount of money the grant provides to municipalities. Scotland currently receives 1,274,671 and that amount will be reduced each year until it reaches the total reduction of \$307,481 by 2030 (24% reduction). Hampton's ECS grant reduction will be \$414,823 by 2030 (39% reduction). This does not consider the impacts of student enrollment decreases, low birth rates in Hampton for those families who would attend public school (birth rates are higher within the Mennonite community who provides their own schooling). People move in and out of town, but with birth rates low the prediction is that class sizes will continue to decrease at HES.

The reductions will begin in 2024. Kathy will forward the chart out to the group.

Couple these reductions with the expected loss of other grant revenue (Title I, REAP etc.), and our potential decrease in enrollment, and the towns will have greater costs to carry with potentially fewer students.

There was discussion about birth rates and where to get them.

There was discussion about how per pupil estimates are figured for each of the Town's budgets and corrections were discussed for Chart B, which will be incorporated in next revision. Question was raised about how the town's cost per student was figured, regarding estimated per pupil savings and what number of students was used. Consensus was that the total student count, not just the "in-building" number, should be used to determine current individual town per pupil costs, and should also be used in Chart B, for Estimated Per Pupil Cost Per Town. The figures need to include the out-of-district students, because those expenses are included in the individual town budgets. Wendy will adjust the Chart B with all changes discussed and send out to members.

There was discussion about the fluctuation in enrollment over the course of the 21-22 school year. The subcommittee used the enrollment numbers for October 1, for both the individual town budget figures and for the Cooperative School budget figures. Whether the enrollment numbers fluctuate up or down in reality, the numbers being utilized are consistent across the board, allowing the subcommittee to reflect the trends accurately. The numbers are not set in stone, but they work to show the trends in the various areas.

4. Audience for Citizens: none

5. Next Meeting Date and Time & Agenda Items: Tentative meeting scheduled for Monday May 23rd at 7pm at Scotland Community Hall at the Fire Department, Hybrid Meeting. Will double check with Juan to confirm.

6. Discuss Future BOE/Town Meetings- Timeframe: Discussion on remaining work and request for information that members want to see included in Report of Subcommittee.

7. Audience for Citizens: Dennis Labelle asked about Transportation Contract. Discussion was had previously about possibility of combining the contract, but no action taken. Dennis brought up how distance affects rates for contracts. Recommend that Cooperative School Committee consider combining the transportation contract, which could reduce the cost for busing and reduce the time on the bus for kids, which could be paid through assessment the same way that the Cooperative School would be funded.

Kathy requested that Dennis (Chair of the RD11 BOE) forward to the Subcommittee a copy of the Special Education contract, with subcontractor hourly rates so we can work to determine what the additional expense would be to the separate BOEs for consultant services etc. (if needed).

An audience member asked about when Scotland Elementary School was built. Wendy reviewed the pictures of the “As-built” blueprints from the major renovation to determine that the year of the complete overhaul of the school was 2006.

8. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Kathy, Members unanimously agreed to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Meeting minutes submitted by Wendy Sears