

Town of Colebrook
Board of Finance

Regular Meeting Minutes of February 22, 2024

Members Present

Duncan Wilber
Kathleen Adams
Todd Hiller
Thomas McKeon
Mark Masslon
Scott Norton

Members Absent

Others in Attendance

Robert Gilbert

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chairman Wilber.

1. Superintendent Robert Gilbert presented the 2024-2025 Board of Education Budget to the Board:
 - a. Beginning with highlighting the return on investment to the town, statistics were presented showing that Colebrook is the highest in ELA (English Language Arts) and Math within the district wide SBAC testing results in percentages above goal with scores of 74 in each.
 - b. Current enrollment is 70 with 66 students in-house. In a 10-year forecast, 2024-2025 enrollment is projected at 63, a projected low of 60 in 2026-2027, and an increase to a projected high of 83 in 2032-2033. A reduction in special education outplacements comes with the graduation of two students this year.
 - c. Staffing will decrease by 1 paraprofessional and professional music will decrease to 1 day from the current 1.5 days due to the decreased enrollment in the upper grades. A math tutor will be retained, and the expense will be added into the budget proposal figures as the current funding under ESSER grants is expiring.
 - d. Electricity and propane line items were increased, and the oil line item removed with the proposed totals of electricity and propane roughly equating the current year totals of electricity, propane, and oil. Discussion ensued reference the HVAC project's completion in time to avoid the use of oil and the deadline to purchase it within the consortium nearing. Mr. Gilbert will obtain the figures for the number of gallons of oil purchased, the upcoming purchase price, and the deadline date and provide them to Mr. Wilber for further discussion at the next meeting.
 - e. Discussion on the funding of a contingency fund in the range of \$20,000, however Mr. Gilbert said that \$13,000 was more feasible with potential \$12,000 in healthcare savings and \$1,000 in furniture savings.
 - f. Overall, the total Board of Education budget request will be \$2,161,417 that equates to a proposed decrease of \$24,657 and thus a 1.1% budget decrease.
2. Update of the mill rate outlook and potential issues for the 2024-2025 budget indicated the grand list will decrease by 0.6%. Inter-government & State Aid is projected to increase by 5%. Total revenues will remain relatively flat without an increase in the

current mill rate. Budget proposals from the Board of Selectmen, Capital Committee, and Region 7 are pending.

3. The school HVAC project was updated to include distribution of the bid tabulation sheet for the HVAC project. One project bidder subsequently withdrew the bid upon realization of having missed approximately \$400,000 in electrical work in the bid figure. The two remaining total base bids including allowances were higher than projected with figures of \$2,467,000 and \$2,371,000. Discussion will continue.
4. Motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2024, regular meeting made by T. McKeon, seconded by M. Masslon. Approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott T. Norton
Secretary