

**Public Hearing
FY '13 Preliminary Budget
Wednesday, March 21, 2012
Wells High School Olenn Auditorium**

The public hearing on the preliminary FY 2013 budget was held on March 21, 2012 as part of the regular School Committee meeting in the Olenn Auditorium at Wells High School.

School Committee Members in attendance: Chair Damon Russell, David Johnson, Marc Saulnier, Russell Fox and Diana Allen. Les LaFond was excused.

Administrators in attendance: Superintendent Elaine Tomaszewski, Jim Daly, Marianne Horne, Chris Chessie, Karen Ropes, Ken Spinney, Bruce Rudolph, Cheryl Mills, Pat Hayden, Jack Molloy and Johanna Reinke.

Superintendent Tomaszewski reviewed a brief presentation outlining budget purpose and governing policy, district themes, process to date, involvement, key goals, School Committee/Finance Committee direction, student enrollments, three lenses, differences, long-term savings initiatives, new initiatives considered & in budget, reductions in personnel, year to year increases, total increases absorbed, preliminary budget per Finance Committee directive, high school study, unknowns, anticipated revenues, estimated impact on mil rate, next steps and take aways. She thanked staff, administration, central office staff and School Committee members for their assistance in the budget process. She also thanked parents and citizens for their attendance at the hearing.

Chair Russell requested persons who wished to speak regarding the preliminary budget come to the podium, state their name and address and present their comments and/or questions.

Jim Olin, Wells

Does the School Committee look at benchmarks for cost per student when preparing the budget?

David Johnson: We are one of the highest per pupil costs in the state. Lots of things go into calculating that (example: veteran teachers).

Elaine Tomaszewski: Local schools have local control; a study was referenced. The results didn't find a direct correlation between the amount of money spend and results. Rather, high achieving schools focused on student learning.

Happy we have such a strong school district.

How much funding was lost due to the grants going away?

Elaine Tomaszewski: \$206,000 – Ed Jobs bill and we won't find out on the grants until June.

How do we determine which classroom teachers go away due to low enrollment?

Elaine Tomaszewski: Generally, it's the newest teacher.

Have we looked at tying performance into the decision process?

Elaine Tomaszewski: The state of Maine is currently looking into performance based criteria as part of teacher evaluations.

What steps do we take to assist with volatile oil prices?

Bruce Rudolph: We have joined a consortium designed to keep the prices down, instituted energy savings and we have \$75,000 in contingency.

Has conversion to natural gas been discussed?

Bruce Rudolph: Yes, we have talked to town officials about this. Right now the gas line stops on the other side of the railroad tracks. The approval process to run lines under the tracks can be difficult.

What is process to work with town to prioritize?

Damon Russell: Prioritizing is done solely within the school district.

Barbara Dailey – Ogunquit

What percentage of the budget does the \$455,557 (total increases absorbed) represent?

Bruce Rudolph: Around 2%

If the estimated health insurance increase is 8%, how has that changed?

Elaine Tomaszewski: Last year, the increase was 6.5% and the year before was 0%.

Does the district have any open positions?

Elaine Tomaszewski: Yes, two teacher retirements that we know of.