

BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
INFORMATION SESSION  
FEBRUARY 1, 2021  
**MEETING MINUTES**

The virtual Information Session of the Brookline School District was conducted on Monday, February 1, 2021 at 6:32 p.m. via [Zoom](#) (Meeting ID: 977 3548 2740 Passcode: Ytdc75).

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, Brookline School Board, presided.

Members of the School Board Present: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman  
Karen Jew, Secretary  
Rebecca Howie  
Alison Marsano

Members of the School Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services  
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator  
Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School  
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy  
Alana Justice, Clerk  
James O'Shaughnessy, Esq., School District Attorney

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Chairman Haag noted the Information Session was being conducted in accordance with the requirements of [House Bill 1129](#). He outlined the procedures noting that following this virtual meeting, questions and comments from the public shall be solicited and received via electronic mail, voice mail, text message, or by other electronic means.

On February 8, 2021, the governing body will hold another live virtual meeting to consider and address comments received from the public. The governing body shall then discuss, debate, and be permitted to amend the posted warrant.

Superintendent Corey presented an overview of the budget (copy attached to [agenda](#)). Displayed was a chart depicting historical and forecasted enrollment numbers. Currently the District has 572 students and is projecting 601. Projections are provided by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC). The historic high was in 2010/2011 (659). NESDEC projections see the District heading towards that figure again in FY23 through FY26. That uptick is also being seen in the other 2 districts. Growth in the community has always gone hand in hand with the economy. In FY20, the Cost Per Pupil (CPP) in Brookline was \$15,040 (State average \$17,189). Contributing to the CPP is debt of which there is very little in Brookline at this time.

The budget process begins with the Principals presenting the Business Administrator with a Needs Assessment (July – September). Those items are discussed, and plans outlined for when and how to address each (October-November). The draft budget is presented to the School Board and Finance Committee for feedback. From there, the tax effort is determined using the final budget and revenue estimates. A comparison is done of the tax effort percentage to the tax cap percentage (can only increase 8% from year to year), and adjustments made as needed. The Public Hearing presentation is done in January and tonight the Information Session, under this new format.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the tax cap calculation. For the tax year 2020 (FY21), the operating budget was \$9,651,760. The original FY22 draft budget was \$10,025,776, which was a difference of 3.9%. In order to comply with the requirements of the Tax Cap, the budget needs to come in at \$9,867,097. The difference would take place in the operating budget as the warrant articles remain constant in the originally proposed FY22 budget and the Tax Cap budget. What does differ is the revenue; loss of FY21 State Grant (\$591,264). It is not yet understood what will occur with the State Grant as the State budget is in process. However, for the sake of moving forward, the Administration had to provide a budget that demonstrated the removal of that revenue source.

A slide was shown identifying how the total tax effort (amount that has to be raised through taxes) is determined; total of the warrant (operating budget and warrant articles) minus local revenue, State aid grant, retained State tax, FY21 State grant. The FY22 operating budget of \$10,025,776 and warrant articles totaling \$501,236 result in a total warrant of \$10,527,012 (4.1% increase over the FY21 budget). The proposed FY22 Tax Cap would result in an operating budget of \$9,867,097 and warrant articles totaling \$501,236 for a total warrant of \$10,368,333 (2.5% increase).

The differential between the FY21 total tax effort (\$6,308,087) and the total tax effort of the originally proposed budget (\$6,971,413) is 10.5%. To comply with the Tax Cap, a reduction of \$158,679 is needed to achieve a total tax effort of \$6,812,734 or 8.0%.

Superintendent Corey provided an overview of the warrant. Article 1 is the elections. Article 2 is the operating budget. Article 3 is the Maintenance Trust Fund, which is funded through year-end Unreserved Fund Balance (UFB) (unallocated dollars from the prior year's budget remaining at the end of FY21). Article 4 is the Special Education Trust Fund (funded through UFB). Article 5 is the Contingency Fund (funded through UFB), Article 6 is the Brookline School District's portion of the School Administrative Unit (SAU) budget. That budget is allocated to all three school districts within the SAU and must be approved by all 3 districts. The total of the original draft budget is \$10,527,012 (4.1% increase over the FY21 budget). Total of the FY22 Tax Cap budget is \$10,368,333 (2.5% increase). The difference is \$158,679.

Items cut from the originally proposed budget to achieve the Tax Cap budget were the position of Tech Integrator at RMMS (\$114,189 fully loaded position), two proposed Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS) Paraprofessionals (\$43,640) and a movement of the cost of projectors to be covered by the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) Grant (\$850).

Looking at local revenue sources; totals for FY21 (\$1,002,641) and FY22 (\$796,000) represent a reduction of 21%. Noted was that both the original and tax cap budget include \$200,000 of the UFB being returned to the tax base to help offset the cost of taxes. In FY21, the district was able to return \$491,731 to the tax base as a result of savings achieved last March and last June.

With regard to revenue received from State aid, estimates for FY21 (\$3,210,223) and FY22 (\$2,759,599) represent a reduction of 14%. Reiterated was the loss of the one-time FY21 State grant (\$591,264).

Assuming all articles are approved as written, the total FY22 tax effort for the original budget would be \$6,971,413 for a tax rate of \$10.24/thousand and the total FY22 tax effort for the tax cap budget would be \$6,812,734 for a tax rate of \$10.00. Adding to that the State tax rate (\$0.93), the total Brookline School District rate would be \$11.17 under the original budget and \$10.94 under the Tax Cap budget. This assumes a 1.5% increase in the Brookline tax base.

Chairman Haag noted the Board would open the floor, following the reading of each article, for clarifying questions. Opinions for or against should be relayed to the Board via [Kenneth.Haag@SAU41.org](mailto:Kenneth.Haag@SAU41.org), or written submissions to the SAU office at 4 Lund Lane, Hollis, NH 03049. All public comment received will be gathered and reviewed at the February 8, 2021 meeting.

### Article 1

Election of Officers. To elect all necessary School District officers for the ensuing terms by official ballot vote on March 9, 2021, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy, 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.:

- To choose a Moderator for the ensuing year.
- To choose a Clerk for the ensuing year.
- To choose a Treasurer for the ensuing year.
- To choose one (1) member of the School Board for the ensuing three (3) years.

### Article 2

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$9,867,097**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$9,857,075**, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the school district or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Majority vote required to pass. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 3-0-0.**

Charts were displayed identifying cost differentials related to new item requests, major changes in the operating budget from FY21 to FY22, and a summary of the default budget (the amount of the same appropriations as contained in the operating budget authorized for the previous year, reduced, and increased, as the case may be, by debt service, contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced by one-time expenditures).

The default budget would show increases in wages/benefits (\$48,911), special education services/transportation (\$275,234) and retirement benefits (\$67,805), and reductions in health/dental/FICA/NHRS (\$1,957), regular education transportation (\$22,077), transfers (\$10,000) and various other small amounts (totaling \$2,100).

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Last year's estimated FY21 kindergarten aid was \$120,535. He questioned the actual.

Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator, stated kindergarten aid is embedded in the Adequacy Aid. She will look to the State to provide the breakdown, and would hope to have it available for the meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pauer questioned if it was impacted by lower than expected Keno sales. Superintendent Corey noted although the funding was originally generated from Keno, the program has been moved, and now comes under the Adequacy Aid. The information will look to be provided at the February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Peter Webb, Esq., Moderator, Brookline School District

Felt it important to ensure taxpayers understand that the original budget represents what the Administration believes is needed to operate the schools. However, at the 2019 Annual Meeting, the taxpayers adopted a Tax Cap, which states the “governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year’s actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than 8%.”. In order to conform to that, the Administration had to reduce the original budget amount.

Under normal circumstances, when having in-person meetings, the way the law is written, is that the School Board has to conform to that 8% ceiling, but the voters are entitled to exceed that. Under the current environment, the amending of the budget will have to be done by the governing body/School Board. Virtual hearing statutes have delegated, in his opinion, to the School Board, the right to amend articles. It expressly does so, after the week of public input, whereby voters are supposed to make the Board aware of their positions, their preferences. It is the obligation of the School Board to make whatever appropriations are believed appropriate. It is a curious twist, but is the right of the Board to amend the budget to fund for the additional amount or any amount in excess of the tax cap.

Chairman Haag thanked the Moderator for his input, and stressed the importance of public input, for or against.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

What budget items make up the difference between the proposed budget and the default budget.

Superintendent Corey noted items cut from the originally proposed budget to achieve the Tax Cap budget were the position of Tech Integrator at RMMS (\$114,189 fully loaded position), two proposed Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS) Paraprofessionals (\$43,640) and a movement of the cost of projectors to be covered by the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) Grant (\$850).

Chairman Haag spoke of increased costs in areas outside of the control of the Administration, e.g., special education costs have increased roughly \$336,000, benefit costs for the New Hampshire Retirement System are up roughly \$91,000. That increase in cost on top of the loss of revenue, impacts this budget. He noted, in FY19 the tax rate was \$10.90, in FY20 it was \$11.28, and in FY21 it was \$10.48. Now we are at \$10.41.

### **Article 3**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$75,000** from the June 30 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2021 to be added to the previously established SCHOOL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE FUND. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 2-1-0.**

### **Estimated Net Tax Impact**

- No rate increase in FY22. The Unassigned Fund Balance is the sum of unspent taxes and revenues. Expending \$75,000, that could potentially be returned as revenue, equates to **foregoing a potential rate reduction: \$0.08/\$1,000.**

Superintendent Corey explained, by utilizing the Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB) to fund this article means that the District would not return the \$75,000 to the tax base to offset the tax rate. What that means per \$1,000 of home value is \$0.08. Noted was the projected FY21 ending balance of \$50,000, the requested allocation is \$75,000, and proposed use is \$52,901. The result would be an anticipated FY22 ending balance of \$72,099.

The availability of the trust provides the Board a mechanism to address unanticipated expenses that cannot be delayed. Proposed expenditures for FY22 include classroom flooring (\$22,723), exterior door ramps (\$8,000) and HVAC controller replacement (\$22,178) at RMMS.

### **Article 4**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$25,000** to be added to the previously established SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND, this sum to come from the June 30 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 1-2-0.**

### **Estimated Net Tax Impact**

- No rate increase in FY22. 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: \$0.03/\$1,000.**

The current balance is \$200,000 with an anticipated use of \$0. There are concerns regarding the potential for unanticipated uses of the fund. With the allocation of \$25,000, the anticipated FY22 ending balance is \$225,000. In order for the trust to be utilized, a public hearing would have to be conducted and School Board and Finance Committee approval gained. The intent is for unplanned expenses. Noted was that a single out-of-district placement could cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Were the fund not available, reductions would have to be made within the regular education budget.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Asked if members of the Finance Committee could provide the rationale for non-approval.

Brian Rater stated his personal feeling this fund is nearly fully funded (\$225,000 was the amount set as a goal). He voted against the article only because of the difficult tax year resulting from the loss of State funding. Matthew Mailloux, Finance Committee, echoed the remarks.

*The Zoom session was ended due to an inappropriate interruption. After restarting, the decision was made that a single participant looking to re-enter would not be permitted to do so as the identity of the individual was unable to be established.*

### **Article 5**

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 up to **\$40,000** to go into said fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2021. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 2-1-0.**

### **Estimated Net Tax Impact**

No rate increase in FY22. The Unassigned Fund Balance is the sum of unspent taxes and revenues. Expending \$40,000, that could potentially be returned as revenue, equates to **foregoing a potential rate reduction: \$0.04/\$1,000.**

*No public input was provided.*

### **Article 6**

Shall the voters of the Brookline School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$1,953,257 for the forthcoming fiscal year in which **\$361,236** is assigned to the school budget of this school district? This year's adjusted budget of \$1,918,864 with \$354,875 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. The Finance Committee recommends this article 2-1-0.**

### **Estimated Net Tax Impact - \$0.38/\$1,000**

The SAU budget is adopted by the SAU Governing Board and has a public hearing in December. Should the proposed budget not pass, the default budget comes into play. The article is required to receive a majority vote of all three districts combined in order to pass.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Questioned the percent of increase for Brookline's share of the SAU budget. Ms. Seeley stated it to be an increase of 13% from FY21 to FY22 for the Brookline portion.

### **Article 7**

Shall the school district accept the provisions of RSA 198:20-b providing that any school district at an annual meeting may adopt an article authorizing indefinitely, until specific rescission of such authority, the school board to apply for, accept and expend, without further action by the school district, unanticipated money from a state, federal or other governmental unit or a private source which becomes available during the fiscal year? **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.**

Superintendent Corey explained the action is something that has been done on a yearly basis; Article 8 allows the district to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations.

Article 7 would provide a broader authority, and permit the school board to "apply for, accept and expend, without further action by the school district, unanticipated money from a state, federal or other governmental

unit or a private source which becomes available during the fiscal year.” This came about due to the different funding sources that became available this year as a result of the pandemic.

*No public input was provided.*

### **Article 8**

If Article 7 passes, this article is unnecessary:

to see if the school district voters will authorize the Brookline School District to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 3-0-0.**

This is the traditional article that is hoped will be replaced with article 7 as that article provides broader authority. Article 8 addresses the special education components alone.

*No public input was provided.*

### **Article 9**

To see if the school district will vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain any unused portion of the year-end unassigned general funds, from the preceding fiscal year in subsequent fiscal years, provided that the amount of year-end unassigned general funds does not exceed, in any fiscal year, 2.0 percent (can be up to 5.0%) of the current fiscal year’s net assessment under RSA 198:5. **The School Board recommends this article 4-1-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 1-1-1.**

**\*For FY22, this number is anticipated to be \$129,519.**

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Questioned the dollar amount used to calculate the 2%. Ms. Seeley stated it to be the net assessment. The exact number (net assessment equation) was not readily available, but will be provided for the February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Asked if the district uses this retained fund balance in addition to the other funds, Superintendent Corey stated the district presently does not have the retained fund balance. If approved, there would potentially be discussion in the FY23 budget to eliminate the contingency fund.

Asked why the 2% figure was chosen, Superintendent Corey stated the desire to stay on the low end of percentages, and when looking at 2% (approx. \$129,000) it would allow for elimination of the contingency and discussions around some of the other retained fund balance articles, e.g., the 2% could be used towards maintenance items should the Board so choose.

### **Article 10** - Petition Warrant Article K to 8 Feasibility Study

Shall we direct the Brookline School Board to convene a study committee investigating the feasibility and suitability of expanding responsibility of the Brookline School District to grades K to 8, with the committee consisting of a School Board member, Selectboard member, Finance Committee member, and two members of the public, reporting findings by November 3, 2021?

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

The basic idea behind the study proposal is to look at bringing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade from the COOP School District (Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS)) into the Brookline School District. The COOP School District would become a 9-12 entity, and the Brookline School District a K-8 entity.

The current HBMS facility is aged (constructed in 1953) and not built to be a middle school. There were additions completed in 1961 and 1982, a renovation in 1993, and a maintenance upgrade in 2003. There was a major renovation and addition in 2005. It has an aging HVAC system. There is the potential for operating cost savings of over \$500,000/yr.

The Brookline Capital Improvement Plan talks about the COOP; \$1.2 million in facility improvements planned over the next 5 years including things like asbestos abatement, asbestos tile removal, fire panel replacement elevator replacement, etc. The building was configured as a high school not as a middle school. It does not have the ideal pod design for teams.

There is the potential for a Brookline only SAU that would result in a streamlined SAU. That could be part of this project. Seventh and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students would have shorter travel times, and there would be cost savings in the area of transportation. Student population projections through NESDEC suggest that Brookline will see a 51% increase in grades 7 and 8 by FY29.

Brookline currently spends less than Hollis in the elementary schools; about 17% less. Brookline spends about \$17,300/student in K-6 and Hollis over \$20,000/student. In the COOP (FY21) we are at about \$20,000/student. If you take the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students out and subtract it from what we spend in K-6 for Brookline and multiply it by the 182 students we expect to have next year, that is \$532,000/year in operating costs we would save. Even if we spent \$20 million on a new school at 1.5% interest, the payment for that bond would be about \$308,000/year.

If you look at CPP in the State, it typically goes down in the middle and high schools because of class sizes. That is not the case in SAU41. Hollis goes down in the COOP, but Brookline goes up.

Office growth in the SAU has been substantial; 15% reduction in students since 2007, but now we have 3 Superintendents, the SAU budget is up 70%. In FY07 the cost per student for the SAU was \$391. Next year, with the budget being proposed, it will be over \$800/student.

We're spending 13% more for the SAU budget this year over last year. Our Superintendent is the 10<sup>th</sup> highest paid in the State (of 101 Superintendents). We're 1 of 8 SAUs that have multiple assistant superintendents. Others include Derry, Dover, Exeter, Keene, Nashua, Plymouth, and Salem.

The Hollis School District is proposing an article this year to spend over \$1.5 million to renovate the SAU building and barn. There will be a cost impact to Brookline. If comparing recently presented test scores between Brookline and Hollis, Brookline has similar test scores in the English area and slightly better test scores in the area of math (if averaging grades 3-6 together). He feels confident if bringing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to Brookline the same will be true.

NESDEC projections for 2023 to 2029 suggest Brookline will have more students in the middle school than Hollis. The middle school will start running out of capacity. There is a bubble coming up in Hollis in K-6. Their space needs are increasing dramatically. Hollis would actually benefit if we moved the students out; they could potentially use the current middle school for grades 6-8 or 5-8.

The COOP Articles of Agreement (Article 15) provides a fair process for anticipated grade reduction. It includes provisions for reimbursement to Brookline for its investment and equity in the HBMS building. Proceeds can be used as a down payment on the CSDA expansion or for a new school.

Mr. Pauer stated there are advantages of expanding CSDA; pod design and improved HVAC, roughly half a million in operating cost savings that could be achieved. The study could look at accommodating an SAU for Brookline. We could see improved student performance and outcomes based on what we are seeing in Brookline versus Hollis. Busing would be better for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and there would be cost savings on transportation. The study shows there are opportunities, and the realignment seems to be congruent with the population projections. It appears to support the needs of both Hollis and Brookline and our students.

Tom Solon, 2 Shady Rock Road, Brookline

Noted information has been shared at school board meetings that Hollis is not proposing a renovation this year.

Vice Chair Sarris stated the proposal to renovate the SAU facility has been withdrawn. It is a conversation the Board is part of. It is not something that is being done without the consideration of all of the districts at the SAU level. In light of everything that has gone on this year, that is something that is not going to be on the warrant this year.

Chairman Haag noted A chat message from Tom Solon, which states the CPP at the middle school was heavily impacted by a current bubble of special education students.

Tom Solon, 2 Shady Rock Road, Brookline

Questioned the study being cited as he believes the proposal is for a study.

Chairman Haag stated his belief a study is what is being proposed. He asked for clarification of how the data presented was developed.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Stated he collected data from the Department of Education and NESDEC projections, which he received from the SAU (October 2020 projections). As far as the CPP, he took the total budget for the district and divided it by the number of students.

Asked about the \$532,000 operating savings mentioned, Mr. Pauer stated it is derived by reducing the COOP CPP by the Brookline CPP, and multiplying that by 182 (number of students expected next year).

Superintendent Corey noted there to be a similar article at the COOP district, and questioned, if that passes, if Brookline would have a year to study. Mr. Pauer stated his belief it would be a study that Hollis and Brookline would do together.

Tom Solon, 2 Shady Rock Road, Brookline

Questioned how the revenue is accounted for in the CPP calculation.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Responded that revenue is not accounted for. However, Brookline receives a greater amount, which would skew the numbers more for Brookline. Based on what he has done, savings are likely underestimated.

Kyle Lotring, 7 Summit Lane, Brookline

Questioned what impacts the aid being mentioned?

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Stated it to be a combination of demographics, e.g., number of students, income level. It is a formula dictated by the State. He looked at the aid that is received by the two elementary districts. The aid Brookline receives has historically been larger than Hollis.

Chairman Haag questioned how the SAU cost would go away. Seems there would be less absorption by sharing the cost with a smaller cohort of students. Those services would still be required, and the districts the Administrative team has to support would still exist.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

The SAU has a lot of staff (17). We have 2,369 students in SAU41. If you go back to 2007, we had close to 2,800 students. We have lost about 15% of the population but have doubled staff. We had a staff of 9 doing the job for an SAU with a population of 2,800; 1 Superintendent not 3. In a Brookline only SAU there could be a smaller staff. It would have to be studied. We have a relatively small SAU with a lot of senior people in it. There is an opportunity to look at how we are structured as an SAU; number and levels of people. There would be the opportunity, if building a new middle school or expanding, to take into consideration incorporating an SAU office.

Chairman Haag commented he does not understand how the absorption rate would differ. There is the potential we would be creating two administrative offices as opposed to absorbing the costs across the SAU.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Suggested the study should look at it. He does not believe it to be a core part of the proposal. It is an opportunity to take a look at it. The primary factor is the operating costs we would save and the benefits of keeping our children in town. If we let this go and don't do anything, we will be looking at expanding the middle school again. He does not think that is the wisest expenditure of money for Brookline.

Chairman Haag read the question "I believe I heard a savings of \$580,000 versus \$380,000 bond cost means roughly \$200,000/year in savings. How quickly does that get absorbed with unexpected costs?"

Chairman Haag noted there are special education and other unknown costs that are not accounted for in the figures presented.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Stated the number is an average number for all students; includes all transportation costs, all special education costs. It has everything built in. You are looking at \$200,000 - \$250,000 for costs if paying for a new school.

That is part of what the study would look at. He is uncertain what is meant by unexpected costs. We have a lot of unexpected costs in the current budget and baseline. It is a realistic first order number to look at.

Chairman Haag remarked by going to a smaller cohort in the SAU (grades 9-12) and then having a Brookline K-7 district, if an unanticipated special education placement were to come into the district that cost would be spread among a smaller cohort. That is an unexpected cost that isn't in any of the calculations. He believes that was what the question was driving at. The numbers assume a very static profile.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

If you have more students, you have a higher chance because the population is bigger. If you have a smaller population you have a smaller chance of it. He believes that works out in the law of larger numbers.

Member Marsano questioned how two SAUs would offer a cost savings in the cost of a building when we have a different building that needs work.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Hollis is contemplating spending \$1.5 million on renovating that SAU building. The need is partially driven by the increased staff.

If you take that money and put it into an office space in an expanded CSDA or middle school in Brookline you would be better served. As far as the SAU costs, you have to really look at how the structure would work, e.g., how many people do you need to service Brookline?

Member Marsano stated the building she was referring to is in Brookline. We already have buildings in Brookline that need to be addressed, and it is not CSDA. A new building will cost, at a bare minimum, \$20 million. We already know that because we have talked with architects/designers.

She looks at that \$20 million cost plus the need for new staff to run a new SAU. Just because you throw in a new SAU does not mean the old SAU gets downsized. In regard to transportation, the bus barn is in Hollis, and the cost of coming out to Brookline to transport kids to and from the school still has to be accounted for. There would have to be additional buses coming to Brookline as we would have more kids going to a different school. You just shift a dynamic, it doesn't necessarily translate into a cost savings.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Stated his belief there might be some cost savings there. That would have to be looked at. He was not concerned with cost savings in the busing area, but worried more about wear and tear on our students with the amount of travel time.

He stated agreement with the \$20 million cost of a new facility. Although a low-end, there would be funds resulting from the middle school under the grade reduction scenario. Those funds could be used as a down payment. He believes it worthy of a study. Whether or not the SAU is a part of it is just an opportunity to consider. It may not make any sense. The study would identify what benefits could be derived.

Chairman Haag read the question "How would your cost model apply if your proposed new building were an added resource for the COOP, e.g., have the anticipated growth remain in the COOP."

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Stated he was not anticipating it as a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade school that would remain part of the COOP, although an interesting possibility. That may be a course of action to consider as an option; whether the grade reduction officially moves the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade out of the COOP and into Brookline or maybe it stays in the COOP, but the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are in the Brookline Middle School and they stay in Brookline. That could be an option He is uncertain what the savings would be. That is something the study committee could look at.

**Article 11** – Petition Warrant Article – Tax Impact Notation

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5 V-b, requiring that the annual budget and all special warrant articles having a tax impact, as determined by the school board, shall contain a notation stating the estimated tax impact of the article: The determination of the estimated tax impact shall be subject to approval by the governing body. Mr. Pauer noted [Chapter 32](#) - Municipal Budget Law, Section 32:5 – Budget Preparation states in part “V-b. Any town may vote to require that the annual budget and all special warrant articles having a tax impact, as determined by the governing body, shall contain a notation stating the estimated tax impact of the article. The determination of the estimated tax impact shall be subject to approval by the governing body.”

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

The article would make the warrant more complete for the average voter. The School Board has done this in its presentation, but the information does not currently appear on the warrant. It would increase transparency. The tax impact is estimated by the Finance Committee (or budget committee) and approved by the school board (governing body).

Vice Chairman Sarris spoke of appreciating the aspect of transparency. She is concerned with the legality of an estimate being put on the warrant. If the estimate is not accurate, what would that do for transparency. She worries people may not take in that it is an estimate.

Ms. Seeley stated the accuracy of the estimate will vary as the tax base is not necessarily going to be 1.5% and revenue will not necessarily be what is projected. It could be wrong the second you put it on paper. She would be hesitant to put the information on the ballot.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Remarked we have estimates every year, it is just that they are not in one place for people, and they are not printed on the ballot. Estimates are estimates. They could be off, but they are typically not too bad. When you are voting on something the only information you can go on is what you know. Having the best information available on the warrant makes a lot of sense for the school district.

Chairman Haag read a question regarding whether there has been any legal review or consult on this topic. Superintendent Corey stated there are districts that do this now. It is more of a preference of the citizenry.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road, Brookline

Remarked the RSA is pretty prescriptive on the language for this warrant article. School Boards and Selectboards can actually choose to do this. This would just make it a requirement that the information be placed in the warrant.

**Article 12**

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

*The Public Hearing was declared closed at 8:24 p.m.*

*The February 1, 2021 Information Session of the Brookline School District was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth Haag, Chairman, Brookline School Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman, Brookline School Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Jew, Secretary, Brookline School Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rebecca Howie, Brookline School Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alison Marsano, Brookline School Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alana Justice, Clerk, Brookline School District