

**school news**

# Proposed Dummerston School Budget Shows Increase of 5.7%

By Amy Dews

At its January 22nd meeting, the Dummerston Town School Board approved the FY09 school budget that will be presented to voters at town meeting. Shown in Figure 1, the total combined FY09 budget can be broken down into two portions: The Dummerston School (K-8) budget and the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (WSESU) assessment. A change you will note this year is the missing line item for the Brattleboro Union High School (BUHS) & Vocational Assessment. With the full implementation of Act 130 in FY09, the BUHS & Vocational Assessment is no longer included in our budget. Dummerston taxpayers will see a separate BUHS education tax rate listed on their FY09 tax bill.

In Figure 1, the section entitled **Dummerston K-8** shows the costs associated with the elementary and middle school programs. The Dummerston School (K-8) budget is determined by the Dummerston Town School Board and is presented to Dummerston voters for their approval at town meeting. For FY09, the proposed total operating budget for the Dummerston K-8 school is \$2,591,722 which equals the first four lines of Figure 1 - General Operating fund, Preschool, Special Education, and Early Essential Education program. It is important to note that the Dummerston School Board controls only the General Operating fund with portions of it determined by contractual obligations and outside influences.

In the General Operating fund, the proposed FY09 budget includes the following notable items (\* indicates an extraordinary expense):

- 5% increase in health insurance premiums,
- 4.25% increase in teacher salaries per the current contract,
- an approximately 25% increase in Operations and Maintenance primarily due to the increased cost of fuel oil,
- reduction of one (1) bus in the Transportation line item to maximize efficiency and minimize student time in transit,
- payment for 0.2 FTE (1 day per week) of nurse's salary and benefits (\$14k) by the WSESU Intensive program,
- \$6,500 in rental income (\$6,000 from WSESU Intensive program and \$500 from usage fees),
- \$8,000 income from the Miller Fund to supplement the gap in federal reimbursement for students participating in the free/reduced lunch program,
- \$30,000 reimbursement to the state for a FY04 special education appropriation that has been disallowed\*, and
- \$19,000 subsidy of the Nutrition program\*.

The **Preschool** line item reflects Dummerston's participation in the preschool/average daily membership (ADM) program offered by the state. In this program, Dummerston receives money from the state based on the number of Dummerston preschoolers attending qualifying preschool programs in our area for both FY07 and FY08. Currently, there are six qualifying preschool programs who participate: Brattleboro Nursery School, West Bee Nursery School, Neighborhood Schoolhouse, Timson Hill Preschool, Winston Prouty Center

and Hilltop Montessori. While retaining 30% of this money for administrative costs, Dummerston passes the remaining 70% on to the qualifying preschool programs that Dummerston preschoolers attend. Dummerston School is allowed to include these preschool students in its ADM student count, which is the figure that the state uses to calculate our equalized pupil number and, ultimately, our per pupil cost. Preschool programs use these funds for tuition reduction, professional development for staff, and/or program improvements. {"Equalized Pupils" is a number created by the state to account for the more intensive needs of some students in a school district. Thus, for example, a school district with an actual ADM count of 1000 students may have an equalized pupil count of 1025 students because some of the 1000 students have higher than average needs which the school must meet.}

The **Special Education** line item is determined by the needs of our K-8 Special Education students and their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) according to federal and state laws. The **Essential Early Education (EEE) Program** line item is Dummerston's assessment for this state-licensed preschool classroom for both typically developing and special needs children, ages 3 to 5 years old. In addition, EEE staff provides additional services to Dummerston students in area preschools.

At town meeting, the Dummerston Town School Board will ask the voters to approve the following uses of the **Capital Plan Fund** in FY09:

- \$22,307 to complete the water project per federal regulations regarding arsenic levels in water\*, and
- \$48,700 for the following capital improvements\*: painting (\$1200), replacement of a HVAC unit ventilator (\$8000), paving (\$12500), ceiling replacement (\$1000), sealing of expansion joints (\$8000), building security (\$3000), mobile computer lab (\$10,000), replacement locks (\$2000), and new carpeting (\$3000).

When combined with Debt service (our bond payment), the total combined Dummerston K-8 FY09 budget totals \$2,744,303 and reflects a 5.01% increase from FY08. It is important to note that when the one time and extraordinary expenses (noted by \*) are removed from the FY09 proposed budget, the net increase in the FY09 K-8 budget is a little over 1%.

The second section of Figure 1 shows the *continued on page 11*

**Figure 1: Proposed FY09 Dummerston Town School Budget**

<b>Dummerston K-8</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>% change</b>
General Operating fund	2,017,437	2,077,624	2.98%
Preschool	7,498	19,246	156.68%
Special Education	453,507	452,001	-0.33%
Early Essential Ed Program	38,916	42,851	10.11%
Debt Service	86,118	81,574	-5.28%
Capital Fund Expense Water		22,307	--
Capital Fund Expense	10,000	48,700	387%
<b>Dummerston K-8 Total</b>	<b>2,613,476</b>	<b>2,744,303</b>	<b>5.01%</b>
<b>WSESU assessment</b>	<b>141,046</b>	<b>144,660</b>	<b>2.56%</b>
<b>Combined Total:</b>	<b>2,754,522</b>	<b>2,888,963</b>	<b>4.88%</b>