

Staff Contracts Up For Voter Approval at Sanborn Regional School District

This year on March 12, at the ballot booths in Kingston and Newton, voters will be voting on the proposed staff contracts for the teachers, called Professional Staff, and for the Support Staff, or Paraprofessionals.

These proposed contracts have multi-year impact.

The Professional Staff Contract will cost \$508,964 in FY 2019-2020, an estimate based on existing staffing, insurance elections and educational attainment. The following year, there will be another increase of \$529,794.

There are some significant changes in this contract from prior years. The employee insurance contribution is increasing from 10% where it has held for a long time, by 1% a year. The cost of living increase is 1.75%. In addition to Cost of Living increases, there is a matrix that awards step increases for years of service and continuing education credits. The net total estimated increase, based on existing staff, is 3.38% for the coming fiscal year.

Similarly, the Support Staff Contract has movement on the insurance contribution as well as a 2.5% Cost of Living increase. The Support Staff also has step increases built in to the contract matrix. The net increase, also based on the existing staffing, is \$85,173 in the first year, and is a 3-year contract. The percentage of net increase is 2.78%.

Approval of these contracts will cost taxpayers and estimated \$0.40 in mil rate increase in Kingston and 0.51 in Newton. For a \$275,000 house, that translates to \$110 in Kingston for the first year and \$140 in Newton.

Approval of these contracts is recommended by the School Board and the Budget Committee.

The education portion of our property taxes (about 70-80% of the total) is increasing rather sharply this coming year, with or without the staff contracts. The default budget alone, due to an 8% increase in Special Education tuition as well as insurance increases, will wipe out the school tax reductions experienced this past year with the frozen budget spending of the prior year for close to a flat tax over the two year period. Passing the proposed budget will mean a tax increase over the recent two-year period.

When combined with the proposed contracts, the total increase is estimated to be \$1.84 in the mil rate in Newton, and \$1.64 in Kingston. With the default budget alone, the estimated tax increases will be \$1.41 and \$1.46, respectively, with the approval of these contracts.

The Superintendent has urged, if choices need to be made by individual taxpayers, he asks that the Contracts be approved, even if it means defeat of the proposed budget. He states that passage of the contracts is of supreme importance to the District.

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