

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—May 6, 2009
Town Hall

PRESENT

Dave Roberts, Chair (absent)
Margaret Connolly, Vice Chair
Joe Heisler
Thomas Ryan (late)
Margaret Connolly
Kevin Coughlin
John Healy

ADMINISTRATION

June Doe, Superintendent (absent)
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Michael La Francesca, Business Manager

Convened: 7:00 PM

Adjourned: 7:42 PM

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

None

CHAIR'S UPDATE

Ms. Connolly presided over the meeting due to Mr. Roberts' absence. On behalf of the entire School Committee and Administration she wished Dave Roberts a speedy recovery and hope he is up and about soon.

REPORTS

Fy10 Budget Amendment:

Mr. La Francesca reported that the Budget Sub-Committee met this morning and would like to present to the Committee tonight an amended budget to be voted on. Budget sub met this morning. New amended budget presented to the SC. There are three areas adjustments were made.

Special Education OOD – Original amount of \$3,621,560.27 will be reduced in three areas – moving \$250,000 into ARRA/IDEA Grant on the Recovery side. The Circuit Breaker relief: Our net claim last year and this year has gone up and estimate we will receive an additional \$49,400.00 from the State, further reducing OOD tuition by that amount. Also, a tuition decrease for a child that was transferred from a residential program to a day program will further reduce our tuition costs by \$66,890.00. This brings the total new request to: \$3,255,270.27.

Unemployment Insurance: This line item change will reflect an increase of \$86,000 for an new requested amount of \$136,000.

Payroll line item: Original request was for \$23,948,256. Reduce our general reserves by \$188,931. There was an additional retirement and a resignation recently that reflects this reduction. Increase of the Middle School Principal salary line item by \$5,150 to attract more qualified candidates. We would like to reinstate four elementary positions at a cost of \$195,709.72. Total new request for payroll will be: \$23,816,125.67. Decrease of \$412,398.27. Proposing the new FY10 Budget amount of \$31,876,500.

On behalf of the Superintendent I request that the School Committee to vote to amend the FY10 School Budget request in the amount of \$31,905,500 as recommended by the Finance Committee. School Operations of \$31,876,500 plus Transportation Subsidy of \$25,000 totals \$31,901,500.

Mr. Ryan discussed the Budget Sub Committee meeting. We talked about the current budget situation and also tried to come in with what town recommended and the finance committee. The proposals that we discussed and were just outlined to reinstate some positions and reallocating some of the ARRA grant money. There are additional positions we will be losing over the course of next year. Reinstating 4 teachers – 3 of the 4 elementary schools to address class size issues. This will not reinstate all of the elementary positions. There will still be about 14 positions that will be eliminated.

A motion was made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Ms. Driscoll to put forth the motion recommended above by Mr. La Francesca. Approved: Unanimous

Mr. Heisler proposed an amendment to the motion:

“Whereas the current budget would result in the layoff in FY10 of approximately 10 existing school personnel, including teachers, aides and clerks, the budget subcommittee recommends that all monies in the general reserves earmarked in FY10 for Cost of Living (COLA) increases for school department management, staff and Unit A members be transferred to the salary (and benefits) line for use in funding positions.

Furthermore, the budget subcommittee recommends that all monies in the FY09 general reserves earmarked for an FY09 Cost of Living (COLA) increase for Unit A members be returned to the Town of Dedham as free cash, and that the School Committee formally request the Board of Selectmen to seek approval from the upcoming Town Meeting to also use those monies to avoid school department layoffs in FY10; and

Furthermore, that the budget subcommittee recommends to the committee as a whole that if the leadership and membership of Unit A votes to approve this plan before the start of FY10 (July 1, 2009) that due consideration be given in subsequent contract talks to making unit members whole in the final year of the new contract.”

Discussion on the amendment was held. Mr. Heisler offers this amendment in the spirit to avoid layoffs. He would like to give credit to Superintendent Doe and Mr. La Francesca for their creative efforts to limit the damage. However, approximately 10 staff will be laid off for current budget as proposed. There is money earmarked in a reserve with no talks scheduled.

Ms. Driscoll fears that coming back to a retro of two years is much more expensive to plan. It's better to manage a budget now and not set up for failure in future with an uncontrollable budget.

Mr. Ryan recognizes that the spirit and essence of amendment is well thought out to keep as many gainfully employed. We have had extensive discussions on current state of the payroll. If additional revenues become available, we know what is prioritized for

reinstatements. Opposed to this amendment because it touches on collective bargaining issues currently before us and we cannot make any promises.

Mr. La Francesca is concerned about releasing money back to town – no guarantee to get it back. If the economic situation continues the Town might not be able to release those monies back to us. He feels the Superintendent should have a voice in this amendment.

Mr. Heisler called union leadership to let them know this is what he was planning on doing. If this past election cycle offered us any lessons, he thinks people want us to be bold and try different things. He apologizes for catching everyone short. He feels there has been a reluctance to talk about this for fear of alienating the unions.

Mr. Ryan addressed the perceived frustration on unwillingness to talk. He wanted to point out that in negotiations with MTA, unfair labor practices are very murky area about what can and can't be said – we choose silence and allowing the collective bargaining process to work it out. There is always concern of compromising the process.

Vice-Chair Connolly entertained a show of hands to determine whether to vote on the amendment to the amended budget recommendation presented by Mr. Heisler or wait for a recommendation from the Superintendent. All were comfortable with voting on Mr. Heisler's amendment.

Motion made by Mr. Heisler to accept the amendment to the amended FY10 budget as presented by Mr. Heisler and seconded by Mr. Ryan for the purposes of a vote: Opposed: Majority

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

A request was made of Mr. La Francesca to put the new budget figures on the website.

A parent attended the Health and Wellness last night at the Middle School and wanted to say it was excellent. Kudos to Gail Kelly, and Maria Antonuccio, Marge Bohan and the rest of the committee. They did a great job.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

None

MINUTES

None

DONATIONS

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Motion made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Healy to go into executive session under exemption 3. Regular Meeting adjourned. Vote by Roll Call: Mr. Healy-yes, Mr. Ryan-yes, Mr. Heisler-yes, Ms. Driscoll-yes, Mr. Coughlin-yes, Ms. Connolly-yes.