

Milford Board of Education

Minutes for the Budget Workshop:

January 13, 2009

Board members present:

David Amendola
David Hourigan, Chair
James Quish
Joanne Rohrig
James Santa Barbara
Pam Staneski
Greta Stanford
David Steinlauf

Board members absent:

Tracy Casey
Cindy Kopazna

Administrators present:

Harvey Polansky, Superintendent
Michael Cummings, Asst. Superintendent
Philip Russell, Deputy Superintendent
Susan Kelleher, Dir. of Pupil Personnel Services

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a budget workshop on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 in the Board of Education Meeting Room in the Parsons Complex. Board chair David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

II. PROPOSED BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Hourigan told the board the meeting would be less formal than the business meetings. He encouraged the board members to ask questions of administration as they reviewed the detailed budget. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Polansky.

Dr. Polansky told the board the budget is a fiscal plan that maintains the status quo. Nothing new has been added. He reminded the board that over 90% of this budget is contractual, transportation or special education. The budget was developed with only the mandated and required expenses.

The board then began their review the account series 1000, salaries and benefits. He reminded the board the figures are contractual. The teachers' salaries are based on a step process and as the teacher completes a degree program, the salary scale increases.

Questions were asked about the special education staffing needs. Dr. Polansky explained special education needs are high all over the state. Teachers handle many different needs from cognitive and learning issues to hygiene issues.

Mr. Steinlauf asked what criteria was used in forecasting the paraprofessional special education numbers. Dr. Polansky told him some of it is based on known cases. At the beginning of the year, we have some kindergarten children who were unknown to us and become identified as special education requiring a paraprofessional.

Classroom paraprofessionals can be controlled. The "student" dedicated paraprofessionals are difficult to forecast.

Mrs. Staneski told the board the classroom paraprofessional forecast last year was based on the K-3 class size. This commitment was made by the board when they approved the priorities and assumptions.

As the board reviewed the aide's positions, Mr. Quish asked for clarification on the different titles.

Mr. Hourigan asked administration if the hourly aides were paid \$9.50 to tutor and the employee correcting a test was being paid \$30 an hour. He was told one was part of the bargaining unit and the other was not.

During the review, the board questioned the overtime salaries and was told between 80-90% was custodial. This was partly due to construction.

Mrs. Staneski asked for a breakdown of overtime of the custodians and the projects. It seems that if it was planned better, we should be able to minimize overtime.

Dr. Polansky said a lot of places include the overtime into the project. The contractor would build that cost into the price. That would then become reimbursable by the state.

Mrs. Staneski would like to see the overtime costs built into the project.

Mr. Russell told her the building committee needs to build it into the cost of the project.

Mr. Hourigan stated that the building committee was going to seek restitution from the builder that worked on the Law project last summer. He then said if the money was reimbursed, it would go back to the city, not board of education. Mr. Bradbury told him that is correct, but no money has been received to date.

Mrs. Staneski said that with future projects, we should be able to build into the cost the overtime predicted so we could get reimbursed.

The board continued to review the 1000 series account asking clarification questions to more understand the budget numbers and descriptives.

Mrs. Rohrig asked if the stipend positions could be eliminated and was told yes.

Mrs. Staneski asked if a stipend is not being used for which it is funded, could it be used to fund another program and Mr. Russell said yes. .

The board then requested a copy of all middle school stipends.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked how many teachers retired last year and was told 17. He felt the figure for retirements seemed quite high.

Mrs. Stanford asked if there are any negotiations this year. Mr. Russell told her negotiations would begin for next year, this fall. Administrators, Secretaries, Food Services, Custodian and Paraprofessionals contracts will begin negotiations this fall. Their respective contracts expire June 2010.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked why unemployment compensation is budgeted for \$40,000 and the actual forecast is \$25,000. Mr. Russell explained one is if there is a layoff; the employee is entitled to unemployment. Another is there are number of part time employees that we are guaranteed positions. They too would be eligible to unemployment during the time they are not working. Dr. Polansky said there are other cases that are presented to the state.

Dr. Polansky reported the district typically spends between \$38 – 40,000 on unemployment compensation.

Chairman Hourigan then asked for a recess at 8:45 p.m.

Mrs. Stanford made a motion and Mrs. Rohrig seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting was called back to order at 9:00 p.m.

The board then reviewed the 3000 account series (Contracted Services). This account includes education related services. Many of these services are required by the state.

The board then reviewed the 4000 account series which included utilities and maintenance.

The board asked for clarification on many of the 4200 account series.

Minor revisions were recommended by the board.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Hourigan asked for Public Comment.

C. Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni said 1118 regular education shows increase while special education shows significant decrease. Explain.

J. Whitaker – He does not understand why we pay Aquaturf because we have an employee trained to do the same work. He questioned personnel secretaries. There are four when there used to be three union positions. Moving the dumpster has been in the budget since 2002. It keeps getting budgeted but never done.
Why?

L. Mauer – 22 Norway Street – With the state about to release the budget, does the board have a contingency plan should ECS get cut?

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hourigan asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Stanford made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Rohrig seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Greta Stanford
Corresponding Secretary

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary