

Approved

Milford Board of Education

Workshop Minutes
January 22, 2014

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Michael DeGrego
John DeRosa
Suzanne DiBiase
Laura Fucci
Dr. Heidi Gold-Dworkin
Susan Glennon, Chair
Anthony Piselli
Christopher Saley
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
James Richetelli
Susan Kelleher
Wendy Kopazna

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Glennon called the Budget Workshop to order at 7:03 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Jagodzinski – 27 Berkeley Terrace – Mr. Jagodzinski criticized the previous Board for making decisions privately. He asked the Board to deliberate on the budget in public.

III. 2014-15 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Dr. Feser reviewed the final set of Board questions.

Following the discussion, the Board requested that the technology grant information be included in the budget under the “Grants” section.

Ms. Glennon asked Mrs. Fucci for a motion to approve the budget.

Mrs. Fucci made a motion to approve the Superintendent’s recommended budget for 2014-2015 in the amount of \$90,021.045 and direct the administration to send it to the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen. Mrs. Casey seconded the motion.

Mrs. Casey made a request to amend the motion.

Mrs. Casey made a motion to amend the original motion by decreasing the budget amount by \$611,980 which would make the budget total \$89,409.065. Dr. Gold-Dworkin seconded.

The recommended cuts were made to the following accounts:

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Homebound (1112) Reduction of \$5,000 to make it consistent with the 2013-14 budget;
Summer School (1114) Reduction of \$5,000 to be consistent with the Summer School Director stipend of \$6,300 as referenced in the current MEA contract;
Substitute Teachers (1117) Reduction of \$287,000 - Benchmarking data provided did not show a discrepancy in pay;
Elimination of the Middle School Greeter position (1123) Reduction of \$49,980 existing personnel can be relocated with minimal cost;
Clerical (1128) Reduction of \$5,000 to maintain the allocated expenditures in the 13-14 budget;
Retirements (1130) Reduction of \$40,000 reduction to be consistent with the 13-14 expended amount;
Contracted Services (3306) Reduction of \$10,000 relative to personnel;
Transportation (5100) Reduction of \$80,000 which is the cost of two buses;
Gasoline (5107) Reduction of \$30,000 which goes along with the elimination of two buses, and
Tuition Special Education (5600) Reduction of \$100,000.

Mrs. Casey further said that all of the cuts were made with the focus of *staying the course* for the 2014-15 school year.

Mr. Richetelli raised his concerns relative to the reduction of \$80,000 in the transportation account. Most importantly, nine buses would be eliminated, which equates to the transportation of approximately 272 students.

Mr. Saley suggested the administration be creative; that could mean different start times at the schools.

Mrs. Fucci reminded the Board that the Long Range Planning Committee will make its recommendation to the Board in March. The community should not endure such a big change only to change again the following year.

Mr. DeGrego does not agree with the elimination of nine bus runs. Student's safety would be at risk.

Mrs. Casey made a motion to amend her original motion by adding \$40,000 back into the Transportation (5100) account. Dr. Gold-Dworkin seconded.

Dr. Feser raised a concern relative to the reduction to the Special Education Tuition account by \$100,000.

Mrs. Kelleher added the current tuition request is based on those students who are presently in out of district placements. Since the October 1st count the district has had seven students with autism move into district and within the week prior to the budget presentation, Milford had two students placed at Boys and Girls Village who are a no-nexus which means Milford is responsible for the educational cost of that program. Administration continues to look at the tuition list weekly to see which students are ready to transition back to district but this budget line can be unpredictable.

A Board discussion ensued.

Mrs. Casey then amended her motion to add \$100,000 back into the Tuition Special Education (5600) account. Dr. Gold-Dworkin seconded.

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Being no further discussion, Ms. Glennon clarified the motion is to add \$40,000 to account 5100 and add \$100,000 to account 5600. She then called for a vote.

By a roll call vote 6 yes-4 no (DeRosa/DiBiase/Piselli/Saley), the motion passed.

Ms. Glennon then called for a vote on the original motion.

Mr. Saley requested to make an amendment.

Mr. Saley then made a motion to add \$200,000 to allow the addition of two additional preschool classrooms. Mr. DeRosa seconded.

Ms. Glennon stated Pre-K should not be part of the budget discussion, but rather a programmatic discussion. The intent for the budget is to “*stay the course*.” She reminded the Board Pre-K will be further discussed at the April Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mrs. Fucci recommended that there be community input in the discussion as well.

Mr. Whiskeyman supports the idea of growing the PreK program. However, the Long Range Planning Committee will present a recommendation to the Board in March. The program can be discussed at that time.

Following the discussion, Ms. Glennon called for a vote.

The motion failed 6 no/1abstention (DeGrego)/3 yes (DeRosa/Gold-Dworkin/Saley).

Mr. DeRosa requested an amendment.

Mr. DeRosa made a motion to eliminate two media aides (\$52,834) and .2 guidance (\$13,000). Mr. Piselli seconded.

Mr. DeRosa explained the enrollment numbers at The Academy will decrease significantly next year.

Mr. Cummings reminded the Board the enrollment numbers do not include incoming freshmen, homebound or adult education. In addition, the guidance position also supports transition students.

Mr. Cummings further explained the district continues to add more technology. The media aides will assist in teaching keyboarding across the K-2 schools among other things.

Mrs. Fucci warned the Board students will be expected to take the SBAC on the computer in grade 3.

Mrs. Glennon called for a vote.

By a roll call vote, the motion passed 5 yes/1 abstention (Gold-Dworkin)/4 no (Casey/Fucci/Glennon/Whiskeyman).

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Ms. Glennon reported the new budgeted amount is \$89,513,231.

Mrs. Casey requested a recess.

Ms. Glennon called a recess at 9:55 p.m.

Ms. Glennon called the meeting back to order at 10:00 p.m.

Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Fucci expressed their disappointment of the program cuts.

Ms. Glennon called for a vote.

Mrs. Fucci repeated the motion on the floor with the amended amount.

That the Board approve the Superintendent's recommended budget for 2014-2015 in the amount of \$89,513,231 and direct the administration to send it to the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen. Mrs. Casey had seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-1no (Saley).

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Fucci a motion to adjourn. Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Mrs. Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Ms. Laura Fucci
Corresponding Secretary