

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - FY 2015-2016
PRESENTATION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION'S PROPOSED BUDGET
FEBRUARY 18, 2015**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Wednesday, February 18, 2015 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. He stated they were here tonight regarding the education operating budget.

Board Members Present

Brian A Lema, Chairman
Joseph Castignoli, Vice Chairman
Mickel Montano
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick
Scott Marlow

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Dr. Elizabeth Feser, Supt. of Schools
Michael Cummings, Asst. Supt of Schools
James Richetelli, Chief Operations Officer
Susan Kelleher, Director Pupil Personnel
Susan Glennon, Chairman (BOE)
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Chairman Lema stated tonight they would discuss the proposed Board of Education budget. He invited Dr. Feser and staff to make any presentation and then the Board would ask questions.

Board of Education Chairwoman Glennon made some opening remarks. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to come before them. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of the long range planning work the Board of Education had conducted and returning the district to a K-5 configuration. She also spoke of new courses being added to the high school curriculum, pointing out students have risen to the challenge of these rigorous courses. She stated many students take more than 1 AP course. She also pointed out Milford is DRG D and ranked in the top of its grade which is quite an accomplishment and something Milford should be proud of. Ms. Glennon spoke of the use of smart boards and tablets at the elementary level and the pilot intern program for high school students. She also stated middle school students can earn high school credit. She also spoke of the work at the elementary and pre-K levels. Ms. Glennon expressed her hope the Board would recognize the dedication of the Board of Education in bringing the best education for its students.

Dr. Feser provided to the Board with a handout (Summary of Major Budget Requests). She reiterated as Mrs. Glennon stated that the district is moving back to the K-5 reconfiguration as well as going through a redistricting. She stated there would be some temporary costs associated with the elementary reconfiguration. She referred to the handout and continuing with an explanation of the handout. She explained regarding the elementary reconfiguration, the addition of teachers is primarily due to "economy of scale."

Mr. Marlow asked if the request for additional teachers would be new hires.

Dr. Feser stated they will have staff reductions at the middle and high school levels and some could move into the elementary positions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if teachers have the option to bid on the K-5.

Dr. Feser stated it is generally based on seniority.

Mr. Cummings spoke as to the contractual obligations. He stated while seniority is always a part of it, administration can place a teacher.

Dr. Feser continued from the handout addressing the request for additional teacher leaders. She explained the landscape of the role of the principal has changed dramatically.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the salary of the highest paid teacher.

Mr. Richetelli stated teacher salaries could be found in Appendix E.

Mr. Marlow asked if the person applying for this position would need to be an administrator or have administrator experience.

Dr. Feser stated the person that they hire would have to have administrator certification.

Ms. Glennon added the Board of Education has had presentations from teacher leader. She stated the teacher leader has been able to do a lot with student mentors and leadership.

Mr. Marlow asked if they are going in the direction of having a lead teacher leader.

Ms. Glennon stated this is an alternative in lieu of having an assistant principal.

Mr. Castignoli asked how many teacher leaders they currently have.

Dr. Feser stated there are currently 4 and that they are looking to add 4 more.

Ms. Kelleher stated they also have an additional teacher leader for EOL.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the current salary of a teacher leader.

Mr. Richetelli stated it depends on where they are on the scale.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how long the current teacher leaders have been in place.

Mr. Richetelli stated 2 years.

Dr. Feser continued with the handout addressing the temporary needs for the coming year which tie in to moving the schools from K-2 and 3-5 configurations to a K-5 configuration. She stated it will take many additional hours to achieve the change. Regarding the secretarial request, Dr. Feser stated the elementary secretaries don't work during the summer, so they are asking them to work this year during the summer to achieve the move. She stated they would also need temporary IT help. Dr. Feser stated there is a lot of equipment that has to be moved. She stated the goal is to have every computer ready to roll at the start of the school year. Dr. Feser stated next month is kindergarten registration and since they do not know where they

stand with the redistricting, the thought was for this year to do a central registration at the Parsons Complex. She stated an administrator and teacher would be on hand to address questions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the teachers would be paid additional monies.

Mr. Cummings stated they would be released from their day.

Dr. Feser stated they have not hired that person as yet, but that person would stay on over the summer for those people who register over the summer and to help out at the end of the summer when they generally get busy with additional registrations right before the start of school. She stated the position would end at the start of the school year. Dr. Feser also addressed moving expenses which she stated they expect to cost \$300,000, although they only asked for \$50,000. She stated it is based on what took place when they switched the configuration several years ago.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they had a contract with a moving company.

Mr. Richetelli stated they will likely go off of the State bid. He stated they think the \$300,000 will cover it.

Dr. Feser stated they will need time for network wiring. She stated there are some buildings that have classrooms that do not have wiring.

Mr. Cummings stated with each building there is a "reset." He stated the halls will all switch, especially where there were kindergarten rooms. He stated they will do a lot of repurposing where they can.

Dr. Feser explained the \$50,000 for building projects. She stated there may be changes that may have to be made to a classroom. Regarding instructional supplies she stated there will be additional teachers so there will be a need for classroom libraries, etc. Regarding the library, Dr. Feser stated they want to make sure there are sufficient titles in each school. As to musical instruments they want to make sure all of the schools have equipment and they are not denied the instruments one school may have and another may not. Dr. Feser stated the professional development is for those teachers they know will be changing grades. There could be a teacher that moves 2 or 3 grades. Because of the varying curriculum, the additional professional development is requested.

Mr. Marlow asked about the request for media aides in the Executive Summary.

Mrs. Glennon stated that was an expense the Board of Education removed from the budget.

Dr. Feser stated the costs for the elementary reconfiguration total \$1,877,500, much of which is a onetime fee. Continuing with an explanation of the handout she addressed the academic improvement, specifically the academic support specialists. She stated reports state that the intervention programs around math and language arts in middle and high school are lacking. These specialists would work with those students who have been identified, and pointed out they are not always a special needs student.

Mr. Marlow asked when this would take place, during the school year or after.

Mrs. Glennon stated it would not be during the school day.

Mr. Cummings stated they would adjust some of the current FTE in the high schools so that someone is available every period.

Dr. Feser stated the guidance counselor is for the Academy and that they are looking for someone to be there 5 days a week. The role of the counselor has increased in light of many things, one being Connecticut Core. This person would also work with the GED students, which is a much more rigorous program. At the Academy they are looking to move students into internships. She stated the goal is to get students out at least once a week.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many students are enrolled at the Academy.

Mr. Cummings stated they are 80-85.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about attendance.

Mr. Cummings stated attendance is 80-85%.

Dr. Feser stated they are looking to classify the director as full time. In the afternoon when the academy kids have gone, they have the homebound program for kids who are at home or expelled. The director would also take on the Title 1 grant, which she commented is mammoth. The director will also be taking the lead with internships, working with local businesses, etc. Academy has established a relationship with Treat Farms.

Mr. Marlow asked if the director actually spends time teaching in the classroom.

Dr. Feser stated no she is not teaching, but does spend time in the classroom.

Mr. Castignoli asked what the total salary would be.

Mr. Richetelli stated it is in the appendix. He stated the salary for step 1 is \$114,000.

Dr. Feser stated they also have some requests tied to safety and school climate. She spoke of the greeters at the elementary schools which have proved to be invaluable. Dr. Feser stated they are asking for greeters at each of the middle schools. She pointed out there is no greeter or no security guard at those schools. She stated they are asking for a greeter at each middle school.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated he thought visitors to a school have to be buzzed in to get into the school.

Dr. Feser replied yes, but that individual still then has to come into the office to sign in.

Mr. Richetelli stated these changes are all part of Public Act 13-3, in light of Sandy Hook. He went on to explain the front door atmosphere at the front door at a school.

Mrs. Glennon stated this position was asked for in last year's budget, but was eliminated at the Board of Education level. She commented she has had principals come to her. She stated she feels this is a high priority.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the front doors are safety doors.

Mr. Richetelli stated that is one of the next phases of the security phase. He stated the first phase is radio communication in the schools.

Dr. Feser stated the next request is for a security coordinator. She stated the focus on security is more prominent than ever, not just because of Sandy Hook, but what has happened nationally. We are seeking a person who would be responsible for security in all the schools. They would oversee all the mandated training as well. She stated that person would also sit on the School Community Working Committee.

Mr. Marlow asked where the person would be based and if the position would help with administration as well.

Mr. Richetelli stated that person would be based at Parsons, but would be in the schools all of the time. He spoke of the required drills which then have to have a debriefing. He also spoke of the requirement of the School Community Working Committee. He stated this person would sit on the committee for all of the elementary schools.

Mr. Marlow asked if the SRO and greeters would then come under this person.

Mr. Richetelli replied yes. He also stated this person would also oversee residency.

Dr. Feser explained how they address a residency issue.

Mr. Castignoli asked who is doing the work of this security coordinator.

Mr. Richetelli stated it is done by many, many people. He explained all the assessments that were required which then allowed them to apply for the grant. He stated right now the work is disbursed. He stated he does some of the work as well as the building maintenance director and a great deal of work from the police department. He stated there are a great number of schools that are going towards a security coordinator. Although the stated has not mandated it, it is in their report.

Mr. Castignoli questioned what other schools comparable to Milford have this position.

Mr. Richetelli stated they only have the information from those districts who responded to the inquiry. He stated it is something they need to have to insure the safety of the children and staff.

Dr. Feser stated the last request under safety and school climate is for two additional SRO's who would be split. She stated the SRO's have established wonderful relationships with students and staff and have become part of the faculty and are able to pick up so much information. She stated the desire would be to have two, one assigned to the middle school and one assigned to the elementary schools. She stated it would be a split between the schools and the city.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the cost for two additional SRO's.

Mr. Richetelli stated there rate of pay is equivalent to an entry level patrolman. He stated they basically are sworn full time police officers.

Dr. Feser stated they are requesting an additional school custodian at East Shore Middle School due to the additional square footage. She stated they are also requesting an additional special education van driver and van. She pointed out they don't use Durham for this transportation and that they annually bid for the vendor they use. She stated they currently have 3 vans.

Mrs. Kelleher stated there are 4 kids that are in school in Stratford.

Dr. Feser stated although the output is \$60,000, it will recognize a savings over time.

Mr. Marlow asked about additional insurance.

Mr. Richetelli stated no, it is under the city's insurance.

Mr. Castignoli asked if the driver position is a part time position.

Ms. Kelleher stated it is a full time paraprofessional.

Dr. Feser continued with an explanation of the handout speaking to the summary of some major budget savings/reductions (p. 2 of the handout).

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the 13.4 staff reductions were retirements.

Dr. Feser stated it could be. She also stated they anticipate openings at the elementary level.

Mr. Fitzpatrick commented the number could actually be hirer.

Mr. Richetelli stated they typically budget for 16-18 retirements per year.

Mr. Castignoli asked how they are saving the \$30,000 by reclassifying the teacher at the academy.

Dr. Feser explained they are taking off the teacher position. She stated the savings on the teacher reduction is \$30,000, but they added \$22,000 for the salary position adjustment.

Mr. Richetelli stated he would get an analysis to the Board.

Mr. Castignoli stated he would like to see the actual numbers. He stated they are not using actual numbers.

Dr. Feser referred back to the handout and stated they expect with the reconfiguration they will need fewer buses. Also they will recognize a savings in fuel because they are able to go with the city's contract.

Mr. Richetelli explained when the city goes out to bid, they will not realize that number until November. He explained the process regarding fuel.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the contract with Durham.

Mr. Richetelli stated it came up last year, so there are two years left on the contract.

Dr. Feser explained they did a significant amount of curriculum work over the year which has given them a savings. She also spoke of the energy conservation savings, as well as energy upgrades which would result in additional savings.

Mr. Marlow asked if the energy person is paid out of this.

Mr. Richetelli stated it is found in the salary schedule.

Dr. Feser referred to the handout for the last piece of savings which was with computers. She stated they were able to purchase a significant number of computers because of a grant they received last year. She stated because of that they were able to reduce their computer budget line by over \$400,000. She gave a recap of the major requests v. savings and the 2014-2015 budget v. 2015-2016 budget.

Chairman Lema thanked the Board for their presentation. He stated they would now go through the budget book page by page.

1000 Series - Salaries

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there were any retirements in the past year or any anticipated retirements.

Mr. Richetelli stated possibly one retirement this June.

(p. 2) Dr. Feser explained the numbers could shift depending on the redistricting, the same with special education.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for a breakdown on coaches.

Mr. Richetelli stated it could be found on A-15.

Acct. 1121 - Secretarial (p. 5) – Mr. Castignoli asked if they were contractual salaries.

Mr. Richetelli stated they are just beginning negotiations. He stated the secretary contract expires June 30, 2015. He also explained the * found on p. 5. He explained those positions could actually be found on page 8, hourly aides. Mr. Richetelli explained those two positions were removed. He stated it was a technical correction.

Chairman Lema asked about the stipend for the athletic directors.

Mr. Richetelli stated they are actually teachers, but they are paid a stipend which is over there teaching salary.

(p. 7) Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what a non-certified supervisor position is.

Dr. Feser stated that is the building maintenance supervisor position.

Mr. Castignoli stated overtime if going up over \$100,000.

Mr. Richetelli stated that is the overtime discussed from the handout concerning the reconfiguration.

(p. 8) Mr. Castignoli asked if they were hiring 2 more paraprofessionals.

Mr. Richetelli explained they are moving from one classification to another.

Chairman Lema asked about line 1130 (p. 8)

Mr. Richetelli stated those are costs associated with retirement.

2000 Series - Benefits

Chairman Lema asked if most of this area is contractual.

Mr. Richetelli replied yes.

3000 Series - Contracted Services

Mr. Castignoli asked for an explanation of contracted services.

Mr. Richetelli stated the two trainers at the two high schools are contracted, also network management, etc.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about health costs for education.

Mayor Blake referred Mr. Fitzpatrick to the City budget.

4000 Series - Facilities

Mr. Marlow asked if the jump in utilities cost was due to the extra square footage at East Shore Middle School.

Mr. Richetelli stated this is due to this past year and during the project work. Also, the new wings are air conditioned, so that is a cost that was not there before.

(p. 17 – 4104) Energy Conservation Services - Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if this is where the \$127,000 comes from.

Mr. Richetelli stated he would provide a breakdown.

Chairman Lema asked about any significant projects coming up.

Mr. Richetelli stated the recent bond authorization include traffic and safety at Meadowside Elementary School. He also spoke of the work at Foran this summer.

Chairman Lema asked about the replacement of the turf fields.

Mr. Richetelli stated this past summer they did Jonathan Law and this summer they will be doing Foran.

5000 Series - Transportation, Tuition and Other Support

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the Bridgeport Aquaculture which is a part-time program.

Mr. Richetelli stated the program is so popular they have to have 2 buses, one for Foran and one for Jonathan Law to get the student there.

(p. 25) Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about costs for the tuition at Aquaculture and noted it went down.

Mrs. Glennon stated it is a bulk rate that they pay.

(p. 25) Tuition Special Ed – Mr. Castignoli asked about reimbursement.

Mr. Richetelli stated there is a formula which is calculated once they reach their threshold.

Mr. Castignoli asked who determines the threshold.

Mrs. Kelleher replied they do.

Mr. Richetelli referred Mr. Castignoli to p. A-3 of the appendix, question #12.

(p. 24) (5401) Telecommunications – Chairman Lema asked for details.

Mr. Richetelli stated that is the voice over activation. He stated the increase would finish the rest of the district.

Chairman Lema asked if they could expect a decrease in that account over the next year or two,

Mr. Richetelli replied yes.

6000 Series - Educational Supplies

(p. 31) (6411) Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the jump.

Mr. Cummings stated the breakdown could be found on p. 35. He explained there was a lull where they did not purchase any books, mostly because of Common Core. He stated as the revision of the programs is completed and the materials become available they are purchasing.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about AP classes and the reaction of colleges. He commented he has heard mixed reaction.

Mr. Cummings stated it is really the financial incentive of the college that is going away. He explained a school such as UConn still gives the credit.

Dr. Feser spoke of an assessment was conducted several years ago for the AP requirements that was favorable.

7000 Series - Equipment

(p. 38) (7392) Mr. Castignoli asked if that is the addition of 3 vehicles.

Mr. Richetelli stated it is the van they spoke of earlier and then a vehicle for the Asst. Maintenance Director (current vehicle is a Jeep Wrangler with over 187,000) and then a vehicle with a snow plow on it, which is included in that number.

8000 Series - All Other Educational Support

(p. 40) Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about professional development costs and when they are held.

Mr. Cummings stated it could be someone coming into the district to provide a service or they could be going to classes. He stated they also pay for staff for additional training. He explained there are 4 of those during the course of the school year. He explained they continually provide the training because they found there is more impact when it is held over a period of time.

Grants Details

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there is an individual who seeks grants and writes them up.

Mr. Cummings stated there is a collection of people. He stated Title grants go through him, Special Ed is Ms Kelleher, but basically it falls under the person who is administering that grant. He stated for continuing grants they work with the state. He stated they also get notifications from the State regarding upcoming grants as well as from the education website. He explained it is a continual process and they are always the alert from various email sites.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about any grants for autistic students.

Mrs. Kelleher stated there are not specific grants that they have found.

Chairman Lema thanked the Board for their thorough and informative presentation.

Mr. Castignoli asked for the total enrollment in the district over the last 3 years.

Being no further business to discuss, the Board recessed at 8:51 p.m. Chairman Lema stated they would resume budget deliberations on Monday, February 23, 2015, following their regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary