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Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2011

Board members present:

David Amendola
Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
Josip Jukic
Diane Kruger-Carroll
Jay Tranquilli
Jack O'Connell
Dr. Mark Stapleton, Chair
Robert M. White

Board members absent:

Gregory Oliver

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser

I. Call to Order

The Milford Board of Education held a Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday, May 23, 2011, in the Board Room at the Parsons Government Complex. Chairman Stapleton called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

Chairman Stapleton asked for a motion to move Public Comment to after the presentation to allow the public to speak after the superintendent has presented.

Mr. O'Connell asked the chairman why the item that he and two other board members wanted to add to the agenda was not on the agenda. He reminded the chairman that the bylaws state that three or more board members can request to add agenda items. He further stated that the chairman has no authority to ignore the request.

Chairman Stapleton told him nothing has been added to the agenda as it is a Committee of the Whole. He told Mr. O'Connell that he only received one email requesting to add an agenda item. The focus of the meeting was the budget.

He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Feser for the presentation.

II. Presentation by Administration

Dr. Feser opened by stating that the Board of Aldermen approved a budget of \$85,459,589, reflecting a 2.6% increase over the 2010-11 budget. She then narrated a PowerPoint presentation (attached).

The budget amount that was approved left a \$966,481 gap in the Board of Education requested amount. Dr. Feser then explained where the cuts would be made (slide 6). The total staff reductions equal \$734,468 and the non-staff reductions equate to \$388,013

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totaling \$1,122,481. With the savings of \$156,000, she then proposed the following redeployments: add 2 deans of students (one at each high school) and add \$50,000 to unemployment compensation.

Mr. Amendola asked if the dean of students would be in the classroom and was told no.

Dr. Feser reviewed the impact of the reductions.

Mrs. Casey asked to understand the impact of loss of two reading teachers. Mr. Cummings told her that each building will have two reading support specialists. However, more interventions will have to occur in the classroom. In other words, the district is keeping class sizes low, therefore, the teachers will need to do more interventions in the classroom.

Mr. Amendola asked if the district "scores" were going to be okay with the loss of the reading teachers.

Mrs. Casey recommended that teachers float to where the need is with respect to reading teachers. She also needs to understand where the cuts will be made.

Dr. Feser told her the services would have to be done differently.

Mr. O'Connell feels the reduction to the lead teachers is a huge loss. He would like to see the cuts made somewhere else.

Mr. O'Connell would like to see administration find the monies to restore the lead teacher positions.

The board further discussed where the cuts will be made.

Mrs. Casey was very specific in asking where the cuts will be made, and where is it going to hurt the district.

Dr. Feser explained the cuts that were made were done to least affect the students learning. Countless hours were spent finding the areas to cut.

Mr. White asked why we are not looking at reductions in things that are more concrete. For example, cutting white boards. That is something that we would know would have a savings.

Mr. Russell explained administration does two kinds of budget: zero and experienced budgets. Even with those tactics, we have had many accounts fall short or go over the budget amount.

Mrs. Casey asked for the city savings with the positions being cut. She was told approximately \$270,000.

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Mr. Amendola said he has a problem with losing a para or a reading teacher. He feels administration should look at programs.

Mr. O'Connell would like a forensic audit of the special education department.

Mr. Cummings said that over the summer, administration will have to work with the principals to come up with a way to deal with the loss of the reading teachers.

Mr. O'Connell suggested deferring the vote to June 6th.

Chairman Stapleton asked for a recess at 8:15 p.m.

The meeting was called back into order at 8:40 p.m.

Chairman Stapleton told the public the board will recess until May 26th.

Dr. Feser asked the board to send any questions to her by Wednesday so administration can be prepared.

III. Public Comment

Lisa Biagone – 73 Sentinel Hill Road – Recalled the CIAC audit that identified shortfalls and needs. Athletic scholarships are offered to high school students. That is another reason to keep high school athletics. Test scores are important. Would like to see data on how many special needs students are going on to college.

Mike Taylor – 340 Wolf Harbor Road – Listened to the explanation of the whole child. He really appreciates it. Confused by “dean of students” and ‘assistant principal.” With the perception of too many administrators, you just added another one. Are there two people filling it? Administration is looking at over \$100,000 a year per position. You need to explain.

Dr. Feser told the board the stipend would be approximately \$10,000 plus the salary.

Laura Fucci – Welches Point Road – She told the board the ECS money was 1.5M and the Board of Aldermen only gave back 1M. She believes the reductions in teaching staff is going to be detrimental. Should ask the teachers how they feel after the reorganization. There is no incentive to make the Board of Aldermen stop cutting. She has seen the whole range. She wants her 10 year old daughter to have the same education that her other child had and she does not see it.

Lucille Massey – No address given – She is upset that the community is not getting involved. Would like to see the agenda distributed better. Getting rid of paras is not good. She can assume the lacrosse and indoor track should be off the table right now.

Joe Simoncek – Governor's Way – It is hard for the tax payers to understand the compensation and perks are nowhere in line with what the taxpayer gets. For example, sick time pay, medical benefits and vacation.

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Cathy Berni – Centennial Drive – She commended the board for their job. She told the board they should let something fail so the public will put pressure on the Board of Aldermen. She does not see any cuts to athletics. She does not see where the administration got creative. Maybe letter jackets should come out of the budget to pay for a para. She also said she has a problem with enrichment. Those students are going to be the business leaders of our community. She questioned cutting the security guards. She thinks the administration needs to cut other areas.

Jennifer Hewitt – 22 Saranac Road – She has concerns over cutting paraprofessional. She told the board she knows families that are moving out of Milford because they want a better education. She told the board the cuts need to be explained better. She has heard that Milford is not cutting administrators.

IV. Board Comment

None.

V. Adjournment

Mr. White made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Oliver seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Recording Secretary:

Pam Griffin

Corresponding Secretary:

Robert M. White

Milford Public Schools



Proposed Final Operating Budget

May 23, 2011

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Mission of the Milford Public Schools

Students who graduate from
the Milford Public Schools will:

- *Demonstrate mastery of reading, writing, and numeracy;*
- *Comprehend, organize, and analyze information in order to independently solve problems and articulate solutions; and*
- *Demonstrate the attributes of good citizenship and community/school engagement.*

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The 2011 Budget: The Start and the Finish

In February 2011:

The BOE Proposed a 2011-12 Operating Budget	\$86,426,070	\$3.84% Increase*
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In May 2011:

The BOA Adopted an Education Operating Budget	\$85,459,589	\$2.68% Increase*
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* Increase over existing 2010-11 budget

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Effect on Board of Education's Budget

Requested:	\$86,426,070
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Adopted:	\$85,459,589
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Difference:	\$ 966,481
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We need to reduce our expenses by
\$966,481 to meet our budgeted funds.

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Priorities in Determining Recommended Reductions

- Preserving the core academic program
- Meeting the needs of the whole child
- Addressing individual building needs
- Insuring continuous improvement of the instructional program

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Proposed Staff Reductions

7.0 FTE Teachers (2 Law, 2 Foran, 1 spec. education, 2 elem. reading)	\$ 301,000
16 Para-educators (8 regular ed., 8 special ed.)	272,000
4 Security Guards	89,468
1.2 Enrichment Restoration	<u>72,000</u>
Total Staff Reductions	\$ 734,468

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Non-staff Reductions

• Instructional supplies	\$ 73,717
• Stipends for 8 Lead Teachers	60,000
• Textbooks	50,000
• Tech Infrastructure Backup (generator)	50,000
• Utilities	50,000
• Administrative Retirement	30,000
• Computer Software	24,296
• Pupil Personnel Consultation Services	20,000
• Substitutes	20,000
• Professional Development	<u>10,000</u>

Total Non-staff Reductions \$ 388,013

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Summary of Proposed Reductions

Staff Reductions	(\$ 734,468)
Non-staff Reductions	(388,013)
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Total Reductions	(\$ 1,122,481)

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Proposed Redeployments

Using existing dollars to:

Add

2.0 Dean of Students \$106,000
(High Schools, Teaching certification required)

Cover

Unemployment Compensation \$50,000

Total \$156,000

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Summary of Proposed Reductions

Staff Reductions (\$ 734,468)

Non-staff Reductions (388,013)

Redeployments 156,000

Total Net Reductions (\$ 966,481)

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Dean of Students Rationale and Areas of Responsibility

Will enable the administration to give greater focus to improving/supporting instructional program.

Major Areas of Responsibility:

Student Discipline – assist administration with enforcement of school rules, e.g., class cuts, dress code, cell phones, classroom and hallway disruptions.

Student Attendance – lead school-based Truancy Team.

School Culture – contribute to establishing a culture that ensures school safety and is conducive to teaching and learning.

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Impact of Reductions

- The human factor as individuals will lose their jobs
- Some increase in class size at the high school
- Elementary teachers assuming greater responsibility for Tier II literacy intervention
- Special education teachers assuming more responsibility for serving individual needs of identified students
- Elementary principals going without additional support
- Leaner budgets for supplies, professional development, textbooks, etc.

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Impact of Reductions

The "good" in spite of reductions:

- Existing enrichment program is sustained and partially restored and enhanced
- No programs eliminated, instructional or extra-curricular
- High School Principals and Assistant Principals able to dedicate more time to supporting classroom instruction
- With retirements and attrition the number of teachers losing their jobs is reduced

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Why Support Proposed Reductions?

- Careful thought and informed judgment went into decision-making
- No one program or instructional level unfairly burdened
- Academic programs as well as art, music, physical education and co-curricular activities are sustained
- Continuous learning and growth enabled
- Children's learning protected

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**Thank You for
Your Consideration**

Dr. Elizabeth Feser, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Michael Cummings, Asst. Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Philip Russell, Deputy Superintendent of Operations

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