

**BOARD OF FINANCE  
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - FY 2016-2017  
PRESENTATION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION'S PROPOSED BUDGET  
FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 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 Fitzpatrick  
Mickel Montano (7:37 pm)  
Joseph Castignoli  
Lauren Secondi

Also Present

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

Board of Education Chairwoman Susan Glennon thanked the Board for the opportunity to present this evening. She stated the Board of Education budget represents a .853 increase, which is the lowest in about a dozen years. She stated the budget also reflects the needs of the school. She continued reading from a prepared statement pointing out their major requests and where they found savings.

Dr. Feser stated the primary purpose and design of the budget this year was to sustain and strengthen. She also expressed her support to the Board over the years. She spoke of the recent reconfiguration to K-5, new math and reading programs, more AP classes, additional pre-K classes, science and technology, equipment for the art and music programs, new textbooks, classroom technology and more. Dr. Feser stated when putting the budget together they were mindful of costs. She continued with a review of the handout. She stated they are looking for a pre-k program at Pumpkin Delight, where they have their neediest children and where a pre-k class could target getting children ready for school. She stated there is no cost to the budget because of monies from special education tuition.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the cost for future years.

Dr. Feser stated it could continue to be covered by tuition; however, at this point they are not sure at this point.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the cost of benefits per each teacher.

Mr. Richetelli stated it was difficult to put a number on one teacher because the costs per teacher could vary.

Mayor Blake stated the COBRA rate for a family is approximately \$27,000 and \$16,000 for a couple.

Mr. Richetelli stated they feel confident they can continue the program at Pumpkin Delight with no additional funding requests in the budget.

Dr. Feser also noted the pre-K students would be charged tuition.

Chairman Lema asked if the long range plan is to have pre-K at every school.

Mrs. Glennon stated the desire of the BOE is to have pre-K distributed throughout the district and not just at one or two schools.

Dr. Feser stated they are looking to develop a computer science pathway. She explained the program would begin in the middle school and continue into the high school. She stated in this budget they were looking for \$4,500 for this program.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the number of teachers that would be needed.

Mr. Burt explained they were making changes to existing high school classes where there is existing staff and that they felt they could make the enhancements without additional personnel.

Dr. Feser stated they are looking for a language lab into East Shore Middle School this year at a cost of \$3,650. She stated a lab was put in at West Shore Middle School last year and the hope is to put one at Harborside Middle School next year. She stated they are asking for \$25,000, a onetime cost. She stated they have also requested a school resource officer. She stated they are invaluable at the schools and spoke of the interventions. Dr. Feser stated they are integrated into the fabric of the school. The amount requested is half of the amount needed, because the police department would put the other half in.

Mayor Blake stated this Board can make the adjustments as can the BOA. He pointed out the police department did not put that request in this year.

Dr. Feser stated the request in the amount of \$180,000 was for additional buses to accommodate the additional students.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many students.

Mr. Richetelli stated there are an additional 250 students that would take the bus. He explained the variables and calculations that were part of the decision. He provided the Board with a lengthy explanation of the factors that go into the process.

Dr. Feser stated the last request was for natural gas which was an oversight in their last budget.

Mr. Richetelli explained for this year they have identified areas in other utility (electricity, water, gas) accounts to cover the deficit this year.

Mr. Castignoli asked the correct number for this year's budget.

Mr. Richetelli stated \$94,262 deficit in the natural gas account.

Dr. Feser summarized the handout and the requests made. She continued with an explanation of the savings they were able to find in the budget. She stated the elementary reconfiguration cost was a onetime cost.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they spent the \$476,000.

Dr. Feser replied yes. She continued with an explanation of the savings fund in the budget. She stated they also looked at instructional support where they were able to save. Dr. Feser acknowledged the work of Mr. Burt in finding the savings in the budget.

Mr. Castignoli asked if it was hardware that has become obsolete.

Mr. Burt referred to the use of Chrome books which ties into their educational.

Chairman Lema asked about textbook adoptions.

Chairman Glennon added this is a budget they are very proud of and that they looked at every line item as to how much was actually spent and needed.

Dr. Feser explained it refers to textbooks. She stated they feel good about this budget.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the cost of the reconfiguration and the percentage.

Dr. Feser stated it was approximately \$1.937

Mr. Richetelli stated the percentage was 2.12% was dedicated to reconfiguration.

Chairman Lema stated the Board would now go through each series of the budget.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the large increase in life insurance.

Mr. Richetelli stated the contract they were locked into expired.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the increase in adult education.

Mr. Richetelli stated there are mandated courses which must be provided.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about substitute pay.

Dr. Feser explained it is the interns that they get from the local colleges and universities. She stated those fees are reimbursed to the colleges/universities. She stated long term assignments are the most costly.

Mr. Castignoli asked if the workers compensation was self-funded.

Mr. Erodicti stated the BOE is fully insured.

Mr. Richetelli stated they use CIRMA. He also explained the supplement that is paid to retirees over age 65.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if it is a contracted figure.

Mr. Richetelli explained it is strictly the premium.

(P. 11) Trumbull Vo Ag – Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the increase.

Mr. Richetelli stated that was due in part to the change of students who are now bussed.

Chairman Lema (p. 8) asked if a media aide is being added.

Dr. Feser stated there was a media aide position that was being paid by Title 1 funding and is now in the budget.

Mr. Fitzpatrick commented overall the number of media aides is up.

Mr. Richetelli explained additional aides were needed when the district went to the K-2, 3-5 configuration the additional aides were needed.

Mr. Castignoli asked what tuition/non-public is. He stated it continues to go up every year.

Mrs. Glennon stated it is increased tuition that continues to rise. The number of students has not necessarily changed.

### **1000 Series - Salaries**

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about technology in general which is always training and how they are trained.

Dr. Feser stated the district pays.

Mr. Burt added there is a multitude of ways for training.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the average number of retirements per year.

Mr. Richetelli stated the number they use is 18, which is an average.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many unfilled administrative positions.

Dr. Feser stated there is one position unfilled at the academy.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the number of students at the academy.

Mr. Richetelli stated it was 83 as of 10/1/15 (XIII)

### **2000 Series - Benefits**

Mr. Fitzpatrick noted the increase and questions why.

Mr. Richetelli stated they have had a few major cases.

Mr. Castignoli asked the rate.

Mr. Richetelli stated he would provide the Board with that information.

### **3000 Series - Contracted Services**

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how much the SRO is in that budget.

Mr. Richetelli stated there are 4 SRO officers and breaks down to \$40,000.

Chairman Lema asked about the security coordinator.

Mr. Richetelli stated that is in the 1000 series.

### **4000 Series - Facilities**

Mr. Castignoli asked if that gas line is the underfunded account.

Mr. Richetelli replied yes. He stated they are projecting \$94,000 to the end of the year.

Chairman Lema asked about line item 4104 and questioned if the contract for energy services had expired.

Mr. Richetelli replied yes. He stated they realized a great deal of savings, adding it was extremely successful.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the \$100,000.

Mr. Richetelli stated they continue to build their energy conservation infrastructure.

Mr. Castignoli asked if the money is an expense.

Mr. Erodici replied yes.

### **5000 Series - Transportation, Tuition and Other Support**

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many vans the BOE has.

Mr. Richetelli replied they have 3 vans and are getting another shortly.

Mrs. Kelleher explained when the 4th van is ready; a paraprofessional will be transferred to a driver.

Chairman Lema (p. 20) asked if the total budget request was less, noting the high school line item is much higher.

Mr. Richetelli referred the Board to the appendix which breaks down the projects.

Mr. Castignoli asked how much of the money comes back from the state (appendix A-3). Last year the Excess Cost Grant goes back to the city. Last year \$900 was requested.

Mayor Blake stated in the governor's budget this item would be reduced.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about telecommunications (p. 24 #5401) and what drives that cost.

Mr. Richetelli referred Board to p. 27 - telephone, trunk lines, modifications, changeovers. He stated the hope is this account will go down as they continue with their changeovers.

### **6000 Series - Educational Supplies**

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about graduation costs and why Foran is so much higher,

Dr. Feser stated it is due in part to the configuration of the schools.

Mr. Richetelli added one school many hire more police officers.

Dr. Feser (FAQ - p. 27) essentially both schools, but their needs can vary.

Mr. Richetelli explained this series is funded by the per pupil expenditures.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the large increase in testing.

Mr. Burt explained juniors take PSAT's in early October and then in March they will take SAT's instead of the SBAC, also AP testing.

Dr. Feser added this is all in-district testing.

### **7000 Series - Equipment**

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Chrome books could be found under the computer line item.

Mr. Burt replied yes.

Mr. Castignoli asked about equipment.

Mr. Richetelli stated the city applied for an emergency management grant. He stated this is for a generator to be located at Jonathan Law. He explained the State pays for a part of it and this is the city's portion.

### **8000 Series - All Other Educational Support**

No questions.

### **Grants Details**

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the BOE has a grant specialist.

Mr. Richetelli stated each department is responsible for researching their own grants. He added through professional organizations they are made aware of what is out there.

Mr. Burt added there is a grant for that career pathways course.

Chairman Lema stated the balance is the appendix which has a great deal of information.

School Board Chairwoman Glennon encouraged the Board members to reach out to the administrators or BOE members if additional questions come up.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about musical instruments.

Dr. Feser stated both high schools now have an orchestral and both schools have increased the size of their bands.

Chairman Lema thanked Dr. Feser

Mr. Castignoli and Ms. Secondi moved to recess until February 22, 2016. Motion carried unanimously.

Being no further business to discuss, the Board recessed at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy  
Recording Secretary