

BUDGET / FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

Monday, June 20, 2011

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: William O'Dell (Chair), John Bento and Diana Campbell

School Committee, Administration and Staff: Marjorie McBride, Denise Arsenault (6:40), Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade, Pauline Silva and George Simmons

Bill O'Dell called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Diana Campbell motioned to approve the minutes to the May 16 and June 13, 2011 meetings; John Bento seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

FY 12 Budget Approval

MOTION: Diana Campbell motioned to accept the budget as presented and forward it to the full Committee for approval; John

Bento seconded.

Pauline reported the FY 11 fund balance of \$400,000 will be transferred to FY 12. A reduction of \$850,000 is needed to balance the budget. In addition, five and a half new staff members will be needed due to increased enrollments and the educational needs of our students totaling \$550,000. The reductions will come from the elimination of six certified staff, two non-certified staff, reduced out-of-district SPED placements, energy efficiency with utilities, reduced unemployment reimbursement to state, new copier contract and various other efficiencies.

A preliminary projection by the House Finance Committee indicates \$538,953 more in state aid than was anticipated (categorical aid, compensation for high SPED students, regionalization bonus); the final budget must pass the House and the Governor.

The transfer of the FY 11 fund balance to FY 12 is a new action; it is not good accounting practice but Joint Finance has charged the District with this action, and both Towns do this. Looking forward, subsequent budget years will be more difficult, the transfer of the fund balance should not be a continuous practice and we would not have fared well if our dire situation was not expressed to Joint Finance. Melinda proposed a change in the designation of the school-based administrator being eliminated. Hugh Cole, with the highest number of Title I students, needs their second administrator for the short term and Melinda suggested the elimination of a high

school dean instead which administratively should not be an issue. In response to Marj, Pauline explained although there has been a moratorium on new asset protection projections submitted to RIDE, our \$1.9M in housing aid reimbursement is from projects already in the Plan from 2005.

The motion to accept passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Facilities Update

Guiteras School

George reported the only place that water damage has occurred is at the ramp area at the back of the building; the building cracks are monitored and each year the outside of the building is treated and the inside is repainted; once the state funds are released we should repaint the building, but this is not an emergency situation; most of the cracks in the building are not coming through to the inside and are caused by ground settlement. We are not eligible for any type of tax credit.

Bill has concerns with the limited crossing signage on Washington Street; he asked George to meet with Principal Whipp to address this.

Diana suggested a letter be written to Diane Mederos requesting police presence at crossing time; flashing lights alerting a school zone are not allowed by the Historic District Commission.

Portable Classroom: Guiteras is the best possible location; permitting will be difficult and time consuming and will be pursued; in the meantime, classroom configurations will be explored.

Mt. Hope High School

A structural and forensic engineer will come on Tuesday; SMMA has a plan in place but we must consult with Joe daSilva before doing anything; Joe is aware this is an emergency. The wall can be made safe but the source of the problem, the erosion, is a major concern. The Trust has not been contacted yet. A timeline will be more apparent next week.

George Simmons left the meeting at 7:05 PM.

FY 11 Budget Update

GASB 54 Fund Balance Policy

Pauline presented a draft policy establishing guidelines and expectations for District spending and the identification and classification of fund balances in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 54, which is effective June 30, 2011. The Committee discussed the appropriateness of this “policy” as a School Committee policy versus an internal policy versus “guidelines” and whether it should be reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee.

ACTION: After discussion Bill O'Dell directed the Superintendent to recommend to the full Committee approval of the policy at their June 27th business meeting.

Joint Finance Committee Subcommittee Proposal

The meeting called by David Barboza regarding the formation of a subcommittee, as was agreed upon at the Joint Finance Committee Meeting, was cancelled; no Joint Finance meetings will take place while litigation is in process. Bill does not believe Joint Finance has the authority to form a subcommittee to study our budget; if the subcommittee's purpose is to find efficiencies in public services like trash pick up and recycling, Bill does not feel a subcommittee is needed for that. Marj agrees.

Melinda and Denise felt that it would be a step in the right direction and would show the public we are trying. Bill reiterated another committee is not needed for that; offers to collaborate were made several times in the past that were not answered; how much more transparent can we be. John argued that circumstances have changed; a collaboration would be established and non-involvement would be devastating in March. Bill feels it is the process that is the issue; he said David agrees and did not want a subcommittee to tear the figures apart and David is upset that Joint Finance was made the "devil."

Melinda has heard from parents who have suggested an independent auditor; she feels we must galvanize with the public as our financial condition will become dire. Marj believes talks need to begin in January about what is facing the District and the Towns and to strategize. Bill realizes his position is in the minority and feels more discussion is needed.

Diana shared information she heard that Hasbro may be bringing in 800 new jobs next year and suggested that many of the employees' families could move into Bristol.

Denise Arsenault left the meeting at 7:38 PM.

Executive Session

MOTION: In accordance with Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1)-(9), 2(b), at 7:38 PM Diana Campbell motioned to go into Executive Session for discussion of a legal issue. John Bento seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Resumption of Meeting

Open session resumed at 7:45 PM.

Adjournment

MOTION: At 7:46 PM Diana Campbell motioned to adjourn. John Bento seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

/ca