

JOINT WORKSHOP of the Burrillville Town Council, School Committee and Budget Board held Wednesday, November 2, 2005 at 7:00 P.M. at the Media Center, Burrillville High School, 425 East Avenue, Harrisville, RI 02830.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Town Council: Council President Wallace F. Lees; Councilors Jacqueline Zahn, William A. Andrews, Nancy F. Binns, Margaret L. Dudley, Ronald E. Faford and William E. Gonyea.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

School Committee: Chair Mary Margaret Karmoyzyn, Joan Cote, Paul Couture and Raymond J. Trinque.

MEMBERS ABSENT: School Committee Members Dorothy Cardon, Peter Lambert and Scott Moore were excused.

Budget Board: Chairman Arthur R. Hurley, Mark Brizard, Brigitte Buxton, Michael Molloy, and Matthew Trimble

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Relative to discussions and considerations of Fiscal Year 2006/2007 Budget

There was a discussion of the purpose of the meeting. Walter J. Kane, Town Solicitor, explained provisions of the Town Charter that require the Town Council and the School Committee to meet to discuss strategy regarding collective bargaining and recommended that discussion should take place at a future meeting in executive session.

Councilor Margaret L. Dudley said that she had requested the workshop so that the Town Council, School Committee and Budget Board could begin planning early for what appears to be a difficult FY 2007 budget.

Councilor Margaret L. Dudley said that it would be important to control health care costs. Councilor Dudley suggested the possibility of investigating an alternative, voluntary, “wellness” based policy for enrollees who are at lower risk. The advantages and difficulties of implementing such a program were discussed. Participants generally agreed that controlling health care costs is important, supported wellness programs and discussed other alternatives, such as higher deductibles and co-pays, percentage-of-service payments, changing health care providers, requiring plan 65 with a prescription rider, medical reimbursement accounts, increased use of an insurance broker, etc. Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, pointed out that change would be necessary town-wide to realize genuine savings.

Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, distributed a spreadsheet of three-year budget projections, a copy of which is on file with the record of the meeting, for discussion. Mr. Wood explained the document, noting the restrictions on the Town's ability to raise funds for increased operating budgets due to the demands related to debt service. He discussed variables that might affect the projections. There was general discussion of the affect of increases in health care, utilities, etc.

Mark Brizard of the Budget Board recommended that increased energy conservation efforts should be made in all Town buildings, suggesting that there are companies that can be hired to implement a conservation program; those companies are paid a percentage of the savings. Mr. Brizard suggested equipment reviews and replacement of out-dated, inefficient equipment, i.e. boilers. School Committeeman Raymond Trinqué agreed and discussed the School Department's current tracking efforts in conservation and information. Mr. Trinqué pointed out that there would be saving if the Middle School could get electricity from Pascoag Utility District rather than National Grid. Mr. Trinqué also discussed the importance of contracts for maintaining the buildings. There was general discussion of these issues and whether a review subcommittee could be appointed.

Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, warned against the practice of using the fund balance to balance operating budgets. Mr. Wood

explained his opposition. Barbara A. VonVillas, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools discussed the cooperative relationship between the municipal government and school department.

Councilor Margaret L. Dudley suggested that the ice skating rink should have greater revenues. There was discussion of efforts made to improve the operation of the rink, the problems associated with management and maintenance, the possibility of outside management and the importance of managing the building as a business.

Mark Brizard of the Budget Board recommended that the School Department would benefit from better long-range financial planning. There was discussion of the school's business manager and superintendent's ability in the area of finance. Brigitte Buxton of the Budget Board suggested that the School Department's budget would be more easily understood if their submission were more detailed. Barbara A. VonVillas, Ph.D. outlined the budget processed used at the School Department.

There was general discussion of several issues, including the effect of the changes in RIGL §45-13-13, the use of bus monitors, competitive bidding practices, the use of buses for sports events, and the impending reduction in funds from Ocean State Power.

There was discussion of the impact that charter schools have had on

the Burrillville School Department and the School Department's expenses related to students who are being educated outside the Town. Councilor Jacqueline Zahn suggested that the Town should consider addressing school reimbursement issues legislatively. It was suggested that the School Department should develop a legislative agenda and participate in the annual meeting with the legislators which the Town Council usually scheduled in January.

Arthur R. Hurley, Chairman of the Budget Board, discussed additional information that the Budget Board would like to have provided to them with the School Department Budget, i.e. student population and an accurate final budget. Barbara A. VonVillas, Superintendent of Schools, discussed budget preparations. Raymond Trinqué indicated that the School Department would provide whatever information the Budget Board requests.

Council President Wallace F. Lees thanked the School Committee, Dr. VonVillas and Ms. Kimation, and the Budget Board for their participation in the workshop.

VOTED to adjourn at 9:00 P.M.

Motion by Councilor William A. Andrews. Seconded by Councilor William E. Gonyea. The motion was unanimous. Voting in favor of the motion were Council President Wallace F. Lees, Councilors Jacqueline Zahn, William A. Andrews, Nancy F. Binns, Margaret L.

Dudley, Ronald E. Faford and William E. Gonyea.

Louise R. Phaneuf, Town Clerk