

CUMBERLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 16, 2006

MINUTES

A special meeting of the Cumberland School Committee held on Thursday, February 16, 2006, at the Administrative Office/Cafetorium, 2602 Mendon Road, was called to order by Chairman Paul Neves at 6:30 PM, with the following present:

Paul Neves, Chair, Donald J. Costa, Vice Chair, Arthur DaCosta, Clerk,

Rosa Crowley, Linda Teel, Robert C. Thibodeau, Earl T. Wood

Also Present: Donna A. Morelle, Ed.D., Superintendent, Joseph A. Rotella, Esq., Director of Administration

I. Approval of Agenda - On a motion by Mr. DaCosta, and a second by Mr. Wood, it was VOTED 6-0 TO APPROVE the agenda, with Ms. Crowley not having arrived.

II. FY 2006-2007 Budget Workshop - The Superintendent reviewed her goal to address 100% of the needs of 100% of the students in the district 100% of the time. The proposed budget increase is 10.93% over the operating budget of 2005-2006. The committee has an obligation by charter to hold two budget workshops and the first was Saturday. This budget supports the core courses, technology and

addresses capital improvements and repair of buildings.

Ms. Crowley's arrival is noted at 6:45 p.m.

Dr. Morelle reviewed the slides of InSite Data for 1999-2005, showing Cumberland at the bottom. Discussion ensued regarding expenditures per pupil. She then suggested that a space utilization task force be formed as well as a health care study group with the CTA. Mr. Thibodeau proposed increasing revenues with swipe cards for free or reduced lunch, offering centralized copying and/or computer repairs for seniors, selling advertising space within classrooms and getting Ritalin out of the schools because it's killing kids. The Business Manager noted that she has been able to increase revenues with tuition reimbursement, medical copays, increased medicaid reimbursements and rentals. Ms. Teel believes there should be a marketing plan for the new facility and even the new science wing and arts facility. She asked what is needed K-12 for a 21st Century education. The Superintendent felt this sets the groundwork for a transformational state. Mr. Neves asked for the cost to bring libraries up to standard and to meet the new graduation requirement. The Superintendent noted there are some equity issues with texts and explained that some schools didn't need additional books and used money from the principal's line for other areas. Ms. Kavanagh commented that textbooks and technology are inadequate and the committee members should stand behind the children.

Cumberland School Committee

The public was given an opportunity to comment and ask questions. Ms. Miller stated she is embarrassed that Cumberland is last in per pupil spending and noted this is the best budget presentation she has seen. Ms. Beaulieu commented on the recent presentation by Ashton School as a Benchmark and asked what would be needed for other schools. The Superintendent explained there is a three year rollout in the district. Ms. Beaulieu commented on the basic technology being taught at the high school. The Superintendent noted the pattern of past decisions and the impact those have had. Mr. Rotella pointed out that state funding is decreasing and this places a burden on the town. The Superintendent noted that some costs are hard to predict and the budget can't be broken down into educational areas alone, i.e. literacy.

Mr. Neves expressed concern for the self-imposed 4.5 cap and the state 5.5 cap. Mr. Costa noted that the state gave a reprieve last year with pensions, but that still has to be paid out. The Business Manger noted the state appropriation in 1997-1998 was 30.53% and in '05 was 26%. She noted a lot of the five million dollar increase has nothing to do with programing, but fixed costs, such as utilities and technology. Mr. DaCosta made a motion to send the budget back to the administration for review. Mr. Wood provided a second. Discussion ensued regarding the need to forward a budget to the town by March

first. They are only required to hold two workshops, which has been done. Mr. DaCosta and Mr. Wood agreed to WITHDRAW their motion and second.

Mr. DaCosta made a motion to symbolically approve the budget. A symbolic second was provided by Mr. Wood. On a roll call straw vote, it was VOTED 6-1 TO APPROVE the budget, with the following voting AYE: Mr. Wood, Ms. Teel (Absolutely), Mr. DaCosta (Positively), Ms. Crowley, Mr. Costa, Mr. Neves; NAY: Mr Thibodeau.

III. Adjournment - On a motion by Mr. DaCosta, and a second by Ms. Teel, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE adjourning at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Harris

Recording Secretary