

Cumberland Public Schools

Office of the School Committee
2602 Mendon Road, Cumberland, RI 02864
401/658-1600 Fax. No. 401/658-4620

Lisa A. Beaulieu, Chairperson
Raymond Salvatore, Vice Chairperson
William J. Dennen, Clerk

Paul DiModica
Craig Duffy
Mark Fiorillo
Linda G. Teel

Minutes Approved – 7/9/2015

Minutes

A special meeting of the Cumberland School Committee was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at 6:30PM at the Cumberland High School Transitional Building Cafetorium, 2602 Mendon Road, Cumberland, R.I.

Call to order by: Lisa Beaulieu, Chair
Time: 6:51pm
Committee present: Lisa Beaulieu, William Dennen, Paul DiModica, Craig Duffy, Mark Fiorillo, Ray Salvatore, Linda Teel

Staff in attendance: Dr. Phil Thornton, Superintendent
Alex Prignano, Business Manager

Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Beaulieu led the committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve the Special Meeting Agenda made by Mr. DiModica; Second Mr. Salvatore. **Motion approved 7-0.**

Report Out of Executive Session Meeting on 6/17/2015

Mrs. Beaulieu stated that no votes were taken in Executive Session on 6/17/2015.

Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session

Motion to seal minutes of executive session on 6/17/2015 made by Mr. Salvatore, Second Mr. Dennen. **Motion approved 7-0.**

Public Hearing

Reading of Policies

Policy I-11 Dual Enrollment Program encourages more children to dual-enroll in high school and college. It was noted that there is no cost to the district due to this new policy, aside from some small administrative impacts. Mr. Fiorillo asked that the policy be read into the record. He noted that the full committee would vote on this policy in July.

Public comment

There were no comments from the public on this new policy, and the public hearing was closed.

Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Amended FY16 School Budget

Mrs. Beaulieu stated that the committee had a revised budget that includes all of the additions that were discussed previously at the fiscal subcommittee and the full committee meetings. Dr. Thornton said that a few weeks back he had provided a list to the committee with possible cuts. He recommends using up to \$1.3M in fund balance to balance the budget and he thinks that using the proposed \$1.9M is too much fund balance.

Mr. Prignano reviewed the changes to revenues in the budget to reconcile the budget, given the other changes the committee asked to make.

The changes in revenues from the budget that was submitted to the town are as follows:

Town appropriation	-807,069
Fund Balance Capital	427,432
Fund Balance	368,758
Section 125	-100,000

Total revenues in this proposed budget: \$62,051,944

Mr. Dennen asked for the total fund balance that is included in this proposed budget and Mr. Prignano said the total is \$1,919,000. Mr. Prignano said that he agreed with what Dr. Thornton had said earlier and that using that much fund balance to balance this budget would create a hole that would need to be filled in future years. He estimated that there might be a \$4-5M gap in FY2018.

Mr. Duffy asked what this budget would mean for future years. Mr. Prignano replied that his recent 3-year forecast showed an approximately \$2M gap next year (with no use of fund balance and no additional money from the town), but it could be less because of pensions. He said that this proposed budget includes several new positions which would add to this gap, and he expects the gap could be about \$4-5M in FY18. Mrs. Beaulieu pointed out that the new positions that are added in the FY16 budget could be removed in FY17 and this would help close the gap in future years.

Mrs. Beaulieu said that committee does not want to dismantle the district's educational program, and that the committee wishes to maintain class sizes. She stated that Cumberland has one of the highest student:teacher ratios in the state for high school and that cutting teachers would make matters worse. Mrs. Beaulieu added that the changes proposed in this budget address two areas: maintaining the program at the high school and expanding intervention where needed most. Mrs. Beaulieu said that the town council president had indicated that he would be working on a solution to the funding issue with the committee, and that the committee has been fiscally responsible.

Mr. Duffy said that he liked all of the changes on the list and would like to have them, but he asked about what happens next year if this budget is approved. Mr. Prignano said that if the committee used \$1.9M of fund balance this year, that money would need to be replaced next year. If fund balance money were used next year for FY17, that would leave no fund balance left for FY18 when the gap could be \$4-5M.

Mr. Fiorillo asked about class sizes. Dr. Thornton said that he was projecting some Science classes to have 30 students, under his recommended model, but that adding teachers would make the situation better.

Mr. Salvatore said that he supported using the \$1.9M in fund balance to maintain the integrity of the education in Cumberland.

Mrs. Teel asked about how much money was to be spent on facilities in the proposed budget. Mr. Prignano said that \$427k of fund balance was for facilities. There was some discussion about paying for capital projects with fund balance money. Mrs. Teel said that she favored protecting academic programs and helping students through interventionists and small class sizes. She said she hopes the town and school committee can come together to properly fund the basic education program.

Mr. DiModica said that the audit shows a \$3.8M fund balance currently, and the current budget had designated \$525,000 of fund balance that will not be used. Mr. Prignano said that he expects a \$600,000-\$800,000 surplus in the current year. But, he expects the district will do capital projects over the summer to lower this amount.

Mrs. Teel asked about state reimbursement for capital projects. Mr. Prignano said that the state will reimburse 41% of these costs, but these reimbursements are not reflected in the proposed budget.

Mr. Silvia, the town's finance director, spoke about the money for the health and wellness improvements in the schools that the town council is considering tonight. The town is proposing financing these with a \$5M 10-year master lease, which would have an annual payment of \$575,000. \$182k would come from the town budget and \$182k would come from the school budget. \$205k in reimbursement money would be used to pay the remainder of the payment.

Mr. Prignano walked the committee through the various changes in expenditures that were in the proposed budget.

Mrs. Beaulieu reviewed several line items and compared the proposed budgets with the actual expenditures from previous years. She said that the committee has proposed using \$1.9M in fund balance next year, but that expenses in some line items could be reduced based on prior year expenditures, and this would reduce the use of fund balance money next year.

Mrs. Teel made a motion to reduce those line items.

Mrs. Beaulieu summarized her proposed reductions:

- Charter school tuition based on actual money the district has spent, not on RIDE estimates (reduction of \$100k)
- System-wide textbook (reduction of \$3k to \$7,000)
- Certified retirement (reduction of \$50k to \$4,934,890)
- Medicare (reduction of \$30k)
- Social Security (reduction of \$30k)
- Severance (reduction of \$10k)

The total of these changes is \$223,000. Mrs. Beaulieu said that the effect of this would mean the district would use 1,696,000 in fund balance, instead of 1,919,000.

Salvatore seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-1, with Mr. Duffy voting against.

Vote for budget as amended

Motion made to approve budget as amended made by Mrs. Teel, second by Mr. Salvatore.

Mr. Duffy said that the superintendent and business manager want to spend less the committee is proposing. He said he supports what they put before the committee.

Mr. Dennen said he feels the same way as Mr. Duffy and that he feels uneasy about using more surplus than recommended by the superintendent and business manager.

Mr. Fiorillo agreed, saying that he does not want to use too much fund balance. He said he is not convinced that we need the extra teachers at the high school and he would like to go with Dr. Thornton's and Mr. Prignano's recommendations. Mr. Fiorillo said he would also be interested in adding more guidance and social workers at the elementary schools.

Mr. Salvatore asked for clarification from Dr. Thornton on his recommendation for use of fund balance. Dr. Thornton said that he recommended using \$1.3M. The current proposed budget includes an additional (approx) \$400,000 in fund balance, with the changes approved earlier. Mr. Salvatore said that the additional \$400,000 will move the district forward educationally, and Dr. Thornton agreed. Dr. Thornton said he also agrees that the district needs additional social workers, but he is trying to be fiscally conservative.

Mrs. Beaulieu said that she was concerned about making cuts but never putting them back in the budget. She said that historically, the district designates money from the fund balance but does not spend it and that this proposed budget helps address this.

Mr. Salvatore urged the committee to vote for this budget. He said that the district has been adding to its fund balance in recent years and this proposed budget tries to address that. Mr. Prignano said an average of \$300,000 has been added to the fund balance per year, and this represents less than a half of a percent of the budget.

The motion to approve the amended budget passed 4-3, with Duffy, Dennen, Fiorillo against.

Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Employee Contracts for Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent

Mr. DiModica said that the Assistant Superintendent's contract, as presented by the administration, was voted on earlier in Fiscal Subcommittee and that it was approved on a 2-1 vote.

Mr. DiModica made the motion to approve the contract, second by Mr. Salvatore. Mr. DiModica said he thought the salary in this contract (contract A) was too low compared to the job that the Assistant Superintendent is doing for the district. Dr. Thornton said that he had done some salary “comps” and that Mr. DiModica was right and the salary was too low by about \$3000; Dr. Thornton said he had prepared a second contract (contract B) with a salary of \$127,500.

Mr. Salvatore and Mrs. Teel agreed that the salary for this position should be higher than this contract.

The motion failed on a 2-5 vote, with Mr. Dennen and Mr. Fiorillo voting yes.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve the alternate contract for the Assistant Superintendent, second by Mr. Salvatore.

Mrs. Beaulieu said that the Assistant Superintendent was well-respected by teachers and others across the district and state.

Mr. Fiorillo said that his decision to support the original contract was not a reflection on the current Assistant Superintendent, and that he is outstanding. Mr. Fiorillo said his decision was based on fiscal matters only. Mr. Dennen said he agreed with what Mr. Fiorillo said.

Motion passed 7-0.

Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Employee Contracts for Superintendent

Mr. DiModica said that fiscal subcommittee met earlier and on a 3-0 vote approved the contract for the Superintendent.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve the contract, second by Salvatore.

Mr. Duffy asked if similar salary comps were done on the superintendent, and Dr. Thornton said that those comps were done and he wanted the committee to know that he is happy and appreciates their support.

Motion passed 7-0.

Old Business

SC-PR-6-2015-20- Occupational Therapy Services

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THERAPY WORKS INC. FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$317,475 AND AN HOURLY RATE OF \$87 FOR AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST AND \$43.50 FOR AN ASSISTANT.

Mr. DiModica said that this had been approved in fiscal subcommittee on a 3-0 vote and that the money for this was coming out of the special education budget for 2015-16. He said that the recommended vendor for this contract was not the lowest bidder, but the lowest bidder was out of state and unlicensed.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Fiorillo. Motion passed 7-0.

SC-PR-6-2015-21- Physical Therapy Services

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MELANIE GIROUX AND KIMBERLY BARRIERE FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES IN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$60,000 AND AN HOURLY RATE OF \$68 FOR A PHYSICAL THERAPIST AND \$45 FOR A PT ASSISTANT.

Mr. DiModica said that this had been approved in fiscal subcommittee on a 3-0 vote and that the money for this was coming out of the special education budget for 2015-16. He said that the recommended vendor for this contract was not the lowest bidder, but the lowest bidder was out of state and unlicensed.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Dennen and Mr. Fiorillo. Motion passed 7-0.

SC-PR-6-2015-22- Clinical Services

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGY & LEARNING, LLC FOR CLINICAL SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$141,000 AND AN HOURLY RATE OF \$125.

Mr. DiModica said that this had been approved in fiscal subcommittee on a 3-0 vote. He said that the recommended vendor for this contract was not the lowest bidder, but the lowest bidder was out of state and unlicensed.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Fiorillo.

Mr. Fiorillo said that he has worked with these vendors as a liaison to special education advisory committee and as a parent of a child who receives services. He said these are outstanding services provided by great people. He urged full support.

Motion passed 7-0.

SC-PR-6-2015-27- Data Backup Hardware

This resolution was withdrawn by the administration.

New Business

Discussion and/or Vote to Rescind Teacher Dismissal Recommendations

Mrs. Beaulieu said there were two dismissals discussed in executive session and the administration was now recommending rescinding the dismissals (to bring the teachers back).

Mr. Salvatore made a motion to uphold the recommendation by the administration, second by Mr. Dennen. Motion passed 7-0.

Discussion and/or Vote to Rescind Teacher Non-Renewals for the 2015-2016 School Year

Mrs. Beaulieu said there are 18 individuals and the recommendation is to rescind their non-renewal notice, which means the teachers would be brought back into the school program for 2015-16.

Motion to rescind the 18 teacher non-renewals made by Mr. Fiorillo, second by Mr. Dennen and Mrs. Teel.

Motion passed 7-0.

Discussion and/ or Vote to Approve 1st Reading of New Policy I-11 Dual Enrollment Program

Mrs. Beaulieu said that since this is the first reading, this was discussion only tonight. It will be considered for a vote on a future agenda.

Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Resolutions:

SC-PR-6-2015-28- Resurfacing of Parking Lot at Joseph L. McCourt MS

A RESOLUTION EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO AWARD TO HARTFORD PAVING OF JOHNSTON, RI FOR REPAVING THE MCCOURT MIDDLE SCHOOL PARKING LOT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$75,575.26

Mr. DiModica said that this was approved in fiscal subcommittee on a vote of 3-0.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Dennen and Mr. Fiorillo.

Mrs. Teel asked if this project would be eligible for 41% state reimbursement, and it was confirmed that the project qualifies. Mrs. Teel asked that we get clarification from the town on whether or not the reimbursement money would be returned to the school department, or if it would go to the town.

Mr. DiModica said that this current project would resurface about half the parking and the road behind McCourt. He said the fiscal subcommittee thinks additional work should be done, including adding a walkway/sidewalk coming down the driveway for students - and Mr. Prignano is going to get a quote for the entire project. Mr. DiModica said that the parking lot should be completely replaced, and that the town might assist in funding this once we know the exact costs for doing so. Mr. Fiorillo said that the town council may be considering a resolution for the town to use some surplus money to pay half of the cost for the entire project. The town

would like the town engineer and a member from the highway department to consult on the project. Mr. Fiorillo said that he hopes the entire parking lot can be redone.

Motion approved 6-1, with Mr. Salvatore voting no.

SC-PR-6-2015-29- Graphics Design/ Digital Photography Lab Hardware

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO EXECUTE A PURCHASE ORDER WITH CDWG OF VERNON, IL FOR COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER LCD DISPLAYS FOR THE GRAPHICS DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY LAB IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$24,806.00

Mr. DiModica said that this was approved in fiscal subcommittee on a 3-0 vote. He said this is a budgeted item in 2014-15 budget.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Fiorillo. Motion passed 7-0.

SC-PR-6-2015-30- Graphics Design/ Digital Photography Lab Software

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO EXECUTE A PURCHASE WITH GOV CONNECTION OF MERRIMACK, NH FOR SOFTWARE FOR THE GRAPHIC DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY LAB IN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$4,054.96.

Mr. DiModica said that this was approved in fiscal subcommittee on a 3-0 vote.

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Dennen. Motion passed 7-0.

Personnel Recommendations

Dr. Thornton said there were no personnel recommendations.

Comments from the public:

There were no comments from the public.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Fiorillo, second by Mr. Dennen. Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01pm.

William J Dennen, Clerk
Cumberland School Committee