

Special Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee

Thursday, November 20, 2014 at 6:00 PM

Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts Media Center

350 Division Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860

Minutes

I Meeting will come to order

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, called the special meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

a. Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Araujo-here

Also in attendance were Mrs. Patricia DiCenso, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Lee Rabbit, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Technology, Ms. Kathleen Suriani, Elementary School Performance Officer and Ms. Melissa Devine, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms. Cano, Mr. Coughlin and Mr. Tenreiro were not present.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II Public Participation

Comments from the public are invited at this time. Citizens wishing to speak should sign in with the Committee Chair before speaking. The Committee is precluded from discussing or acting on items raised by Public Comment, which are not already on the agenda. Public comment will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

None

III Executive Session III through V were cancelled 11/20/14.

IV Reconvene to open session; cancelled 11/20/14

V Report out vote(s) of executive of 11/20/14; cancelled 11/20/14.

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, announced that executive session III through V were cancelled due to lack of verbiage.

VI Action Item

a. FY15 Budget Revision

Mrs. DiCenso: I want to give you the reason why we are here re-visiting the budget.

The first presentation was given in April. We closed the books in July. We brought forward to you the budget to re-visit and approve. We gave the budget original approval in April. This is the final budget for approval.

We had to put all salaries in; budget increases and adjustment in Special Education. We will be posting this final document once it has been approved.

Now, I will be turning it over to Ms. Devine, our Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Spooner moved to approve the FY15 Budget Reconciliation. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Ms. Devine: Originally the budget in April was \$107,022,821.00. After April 15, 2014, the City approved an allocation over last's year allocation.

Some of the changes include reduced nursing services, student enrollment caused for a change in state aid. The special education tuitions change on a daily basis and we saw an increase of \$97,617.00.

Utilities decreased and the City reduced the costs for charge backs. During the winter months, when the City is utilizing all of their plows to get the streets plowed, we sometimes have to call a third party vendor to clear the school lots before it becomes too hard to plow and remove.

Ms. Nordquist: In some areas where there are parking bans they use the school lots.

Ms. Devine: There is also street sweeping and the general maintenance decreased by \$50,000.00 which was originally increased in April.

Mr. Spooner: At the start of the school year, I heard we had 238 maintenance tickets to repair.

Mrs. DiCenso: We created a dashboard and when we receive information from leaders of the building or union leaders, we put it in the dashboard and monitor the complaints.

Red indicates no progress; yellow indicates it is in progress; and green indicates it's on target.

It's knowing the reason why the ticket is held up. Sometimes it's because an item is backordered. We need to have a quicker turn around.

Mr. Spooner: I'm hearing about things such as leaky faucets and lights out, broken valances.

Mrs. DiCenso: We never back filled the assistant director's position and Mr. Cote is monitoring the smaller tickets.

Ms. Bonollo: Can we get them monthly or get access to the computer to review them? We should have bathroom doors that latch.

Mr. Araujo: It may be advantageous to have the Facilities Subcommittee review and report back.

Ms. Devine: There was an increase in transportation of \$72,913.00.

Additions in new curriculum took \$25,000 from secondary next line should say middle schools for moving the 6th grade to Jenks and Slater. We were trying to base it on per pupil cost and trying to be equivalent across the board.

While there was an increase in secondary curriculum, we reduced elementary curriculum and moved \$1,500.00 over for training in web based instruction.

Mrs. DiCenso: In the 2013-2014 budget, there was no curriculum money in the budget. We're looking at pilots and our main goal was

focused on science curriculum-pilot and put it in the next budget.

We wanted to keep \$100,000.00 in there to align to the new common core formula.

Ms. Devine: Charter school enrollment increased, so you will see an increase there.

We also increased the hardware throughout the district and reducing that budget by \$80,000.00. We put in for laptop carts but now replacing with Chrome Lab.

The charge backs were reduced by \$50,000.00.

Originally \$140,000.00 was put in the budget for new fiscal software, but there was not enough time to put it in place. We duplicate the work that the City does. We need to develop a new software and left \$10,000.00 behind for some training and now all buildings are entering all purchase orders and they are maintained through the administration automated system.

Mrs. DiCenso: This automated system was a process and they get pushed through. It is very important to have a streamlined program.

Mike Connolly can see that he can control his people submitting hand written purchase orders.

I don't think we could have taken on two more.

Ms. Devine: The other thing is the Uniform Charter of Accounts (UCOA). We're now generating these numbers to people and hope to give a lecture class. They are 31 digits long.

On the next line you will notice an elimination of a bond put in by the former Superintendent and informed by legal counsel you could not have it there without getting arrested.

\$279.00 for non-public textbooks is exactly what it says. You find a lot more students going on line to purchase their books.

Ms. Nordquist: I know Melissa works very hard at getting back these books.

Ms. Devine: The Committee passed a new policy in spring and it seems to work well.

Overall the net increase/decrease for position changes is due to re-purposed positions and the reduction of some positions left vacant and not filled.

The before and after school program was added in the amount of \$140,000.00. I thought it was grant funded so I had to put it in.

Mrs. DiCenso: This was put in place because parents felt when dropping off students there was not enough supervision.

Ms. Bonollo: Is that a regular stipend?

Mrs. DiCenso: Teachers are paid at an hourly rate.

Ms. Devine: The Diploma Plus program was reduced to zero unbeknown to the Superintendent so the Superintendent put it back in because obviously the program still exists and is not going away.

Mrs. DiCenso: The students that attend this program are from our high schools and it highly impacts the graduation rate. This was reduced by someone who didn't inform anyone.

Ms. Divine: Next is the clerks working at the schools five days before school starts and five days after school ends. This is not uncommon.

College credit or state license is part of the non-certified contract. If you have 60 credits, you do not get a state license.

Health and Dental is difficult to project because many districts pay their own expenses. There was an additional co-pay increase added. We're paying what it costs. This is an area that is just as changeable

as the tuitions.

TIAA CREF, life insurance, Fica and Medicare. All of the different movement and what costs were decreased in salaries but stipends increased. Retirees pay for their own, but it stays flat.

Workers' Compensation was a huge savings and did not know we would have a year that was a hefty drop off resulting in savings.

The line for unemployment shows there was room to cut that by \$47,000.00.

The grant allowance is really a direct cost that we charge business office staff that helps.

Ms. Nordquist: I was curious, have we seen any increase in the ESL budget with unaccompanied minors?

Ms. Devine: We did add a few positions, 2.4 or 2.6 FTE's in ESL.

Mrs. DiCenso: It had an impact of about \$150,000.00. The budget went up in special education as well, 2.5.

Ms. Devine: Teacher assistants etc.

Mrs. DiCenso: When kids came into the district they added

substitutes. \$291,000.00 for ESL and \$284,000.00 for special education.

Mr. Spooner: I wanted to say kudos to the Superintendent and financial guru. When it is broken down like this, it will be easier for Committees in the future.

I think the software project with the City is a really great idea, but I don't think they have the hardware.

Ms. Devine: We're re-vamping a lot of things to make efficiencies. The City's current system cannot accommodate the UCOA numbers.

Ms. Bonollo: Electricity is going up. Are we in a consortium to lock in prices?

Ms. Devine: The Committee approved the electricity contract at the last meeting for three years. We're hoping for efficiencies and pray for warm winters.

Ms. Bonollo: Home schooling, is there a financial impact on us?

Mrs. DiCenso: There is home schooling that we try to do electronically. Some cases may require additional services. There is a line for tutoring that has not increased this year.

Mr. Araujo: The charter schools, do you see a gradual increase?

Ms. Devine: Yes.

Mrs. DiCenso: I'm optimistic that we will be finding ways to keep students in public schools. Losing students to charter schools is something we need to be passionate about.

Ms. Devine: There is a total reduction of \$260,346.00 for a total revised budget of \$106,762,545.00.

The state aid is not final, but we lost \$151,000.00 due to student enrollment. However, we received an additional allocation resulting in \$299,000.00. It was more than one factor that played in the roll.

I'll change the date and include expense and we will send it to the computer department and it will then go on our website and to the City Finance Director for distribution.

Mr. Araujo: The City Council doesn't have to vote on it.

Ms. Devine: They already approved it and they can't vote on state aid. They're voting on the allocation their giving to the School Department.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries unanimously with four members present.

VII Superintendent's Report

Mrs. DiCenso: I want to let everyone know we have been working with Aramark and it has been very professional and both legal counsels have spoken and promise the Committee to being up and running with a compliment of a full meal. They will be present in the cafeteria.

The staff that service our students are all being retained and it's been a re-assuring process with them.

They've been out to visit schools and Sodexo has been welcoming. The keys are being handed off on Wednesday.

VIII Special Reports of Committee Members

Ms. Bonollo: There will be no pop tarts. There is also a wellness subcommittee meeting tentatively scheduled for December 4, 2014 and anybody is welcomed. Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Nordquist: Happy Thanksgiving. Tolman and Shea will be

playing the night before and I encourage you to attend. I feel bad Tolman is unable to play post season. It means a lot to Tolman not able to participate.

Mr. Spooner: Happy Thanksgiving. The game is at Max Reed field for those of you who will be attending.

Mr. Araujo: Happy Thanksgiving. I wish a little luck to the Tigers, but I'm a Raider, so go Raiders!

We're going to have a facilities subcommittee meeting at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, November 25, 2014.

Have a good night and everyone have a safe and happy thanksgiving.

IX Adjournment

Ms. Bonollo moved to adjourn. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Voice vote carried unanimously with four members present.

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, adjourned the special meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Thursday, November 20, 2014 at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

Accepted and Approved by the School Committee 12/9/2014