AD HOC BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 7, 2014
Chatfield-LoPresti Gym
7:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kristen Harmeling, Chairperson
Yashu Putorti
Pat Boylc, Board Clerk
Saundra Gesek, BOE
Jennifer Magri, BOE
Fred Stanek, BOE
Christine Syriac, Superintendent
Rick Belden, Asst. Superintendent of Finance & Operations
Nancy Sopkowski, Associate Superintendent
MarySue Feige, Principal, BS
David Olechna, Principal, CLS
Bernadette Hamad, Principal, SMS
Glenn Longarini, Principal, SHS
James Freund, Asst. Principal, SHS
Leslie Sojka, Asst. Principal, CLS
Virginia Tagliatela, Director of Special Education
Jennifer Batterton
Alison Brett
Trisha Danka
Cindy Dion
Eugene Driscoll
Kelley Garofalo
Agatha Parlak
Kathleen Pelletier
Tara Petrino
Katie Riordan

I. CALL TO ORDER
A. Salute to the Flag
   Mrs. Harmeling called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance

II. REPORTS AND INFORMATION
A. Ad Hoc Committee Opening Comments
   Mrs. Harmeling stated that the purpose of this meeting was to get input from the public before the budget was presented to the town. She asked that people remember that the state mandates a certain amount of what we can/cannot do, that we have a finite amount of money and that our resources are limited. This is not a budget presentation but strictly a meeting to give out current information and to have an informed discussion.
B. Presentation
The presentation is attached for review. During the presentation Mrs. Harmeling stressed that we have been working with little to no increase since 2008 and we need to get the word out to the community to get them to vote in support of the budget. She also commented that a lot of the new programs that have been introduced have been funded with grant money, i.e. the Alternate Energy Program at the High School. Also, our technology infrastructure is ready to support a 1-to-1 or BYOD Program. A technology grant has just been awarded for approximately $250,000, to help support this objective. She mentioned the importance of technology as a survey revealed that 85% of our parents are on Facebook and/or other social media sites.

III. OPEN DISCUSSION
A. Opening Discussion on Issues Pertaining to School Budget
Mrs. Dion, 18 Carriage Drive, Seymour CT 06483 wanted to know why there is no consistency between the elementary schools in regard to programs, i.e. a Coding Program is offered at Bungey but not at Chatfield-LoPresti. She says this makes parents angry therefore causing some people to refuse to vote. Mrs. Syriac said they have worked very hard to align academics between the two schools but as far as voluntary programs that has to be decided on a building level. The committee brought up the new state guidelines that say we can't use our internet system to alert parents to vote. Mrs. Syriac said Mr. Miller would have to send a message to the entire town. Mrs. Parlak, 239 Pearl Street, Seymour wanted to know if a Seymour Public Schools Community Page couldn't be created, including a full-fledge Facebook page. The vote could be posted on there to get people out to vote. She also felt a Chat Page instead of these meetings would be helpful and reach more people. She also stated that the Board of Education should do these presentations at the PTA meetings, and a mailer should also go out to the entire town. Mr. Putorti said he felt that this was a way to get the pulse of the town and that possibly they could do the budget review as a webinar. Mrs. Conroy, Skokorat Street, Seymour, stated that she was blown away by what is being done in Seymour's Schools but we need to get the positives out to the media. It seems that the negatives are out there but not what our children are really doing. Mr. Putorti stated that bad press and sporting news is easy to get out but it is not as easy to get good press about academics published. Mrs. Parlak said she would help get a newsletter written by parents and teachers put out quarterly if the Board of Education paid for the printing and postage letting people know what is really happening in our schools. Mrs. Brett, 11 Stanley Drive, Seymour, said that she felt teachers and staff are the most important and that people move to town for the educational system especially in regard to special education. She stated that since she has been in town the number of special-education staff has decreased. Mrs. Syriac responded that she would look into this claim and report back to the BOE with her findings. She doesn't believe the PK-12 department is smaller. Mrs. Dion wanted to know if the elimination of the Curriculum Director hurt us with the implementation of the common core. Mr. Putorti said of course it made an impact by forcing other staff members to assume those responsibilities. Mrs. Brett suggested we use outside events such as sports to lobby for the budget. Mrs. Syriac talked about the Citizens Academy and how it was an outreach program to the community. It is hoped that those that attend will talk to other community members and either get the word out about what is happening in the schools or encourage them to attend the Citizens Academy themselves. Mrs. Petrino, 18 Woodcrest Road, Seymour, wanted to know the demographics of who has attended the Citizens Academy. Mrs. Syriac said it was a good split of Board of Finance members, retired staff, parents, and community members, but she would like to see more people attend. Mrs. Hamad suggested we take "the show on the road" to places like the Senior Center and do a presentation there. The other suggestions were to have longer voting hours or additional voting places.
IV. CLOSING REMARKS
   Mrs. Harmeling thanked everyone for coming.
V. ADJOURNMENT
   The meeting was adjourned 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by:
   Pat Boyle
   Board Clerk
Community Budget Meeting

January 7, 2014

Education by an Ad-Hoc Committee

Presented by Mrs. Johnson

[Image of children playing]
THANK YOU FOR COMING!

Meeting flow:

Salute to Flag

Opening Comments

Presentation:
- Budget - Current Budget & Process
- Budget - Trends
- Seymour Schools Strategic Plan

Discussion
OPENING COMMENTS

- Ad-hoc Committee of the BOE – an opportunity to
  “Listen & learn”

- This meeting in response to requests to give Seymour
  community members a chance to proactively weigh in
  before budget presentation and submission

- A note of caution: limited resources & state mandates
OPENING COMMENTS

Seymour Schools, by the (approximate!) numbers:

- 300 FT & PT Employees
- 2,320 students
- 20+ Clubs
- 20+ Sports Teams
SEYMOUR SCHOOLS 2013-2014 BOE-APPROVED BUDGET

$24,558,220 79% of budget

$15,359,670
$3,554,103
$5,644,447
$545,200
$950,805
$1,435,918
$184,270
$125,595
$945,390
$30,150
$83,471
$1,767,315
$261,900
$54,750

$30,942,984
SEYMOUR SCHOOLS 2013-2014 BOE-APPROVED BUDGET

$24,558,220
79% of budget

$15,359,670
$3,554,103
$5,644,447

Certified Staff
Non-Certified Staff
Employee Benefits

$545,200
$950,805

Professional Services
Infrastructure Services

$1,435,918

Transportation

$184,270
$125,595

Insurance
Communications

$945,390

Tuition

$30,150

Travel

$83,471

Adult Education Services

$1,767,315

Supplies

$261,900
$54,750

Equipment
Conferences & Seminars

$30,942,984
CERTIFIED STAFF: MAIN COMPONENTS

50% Certified Staff

- **Teachers**: 50%
- **Administration**: 1.3%
- **Substitutes - certified**: 11.7%
- **Nursing**: 1.2%
- **Append E Non-Sports stipend**: 0.6%
NON-CERTIFIED STAFF: MAIN COMPONENTS

11% Non-Certified Staff

- Custodial services
- Office support
- Technical services
- Student paraprofessionals
- Appendix E Sports Stipends
- Security Services
- Substitutes - non certified staff
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: MAIN COMPONENTS

- 18% Employee Benefits
- 3.3% Health insurance
- 20.3% SS/Medicare/Pension/Retiree Benefits
- 76.4% Workers comp/life insurance/unemployment/tuition
SEYMOUR BUDGET PROCESS
(DATES ARE APPROXIMATE – SET BY CHARTER, BOF AND BOS)

- Superintendent presents budget to BOE
- BOE approves budget (with revisions, should they choose to make any)
- Budget is submitted to Town
  - BOE presents budget in budget workshop to BOF
  - BOF files budget for Town Hearing (with revisions to BOE bottom line, should they choose to make any)
  - BOF files budget for Annual Town Meeting (with revisions to BOE bottom line, should they choose to make any)
- First Referendum
- If fail, BOF makes revisions to BOE bottom line, resubmits to referendum vote
  - Previous step repeats until budget is passed.
  - The BOE adjusts the budget to reflect approved referendum amount allocated to BOE.
BUDGET HISTORY

Approved Budget (after referendum passed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>$5,000</th>
<th>$10,000</th>
<th>$15,000</th>
<th>$20,000</th>
<th>$25,000</th>
<th>$30,000</th>
<th>$35,000</th>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.79</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.06</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Required "cutting" $1.3M from the budget in order to meet non-negotiable increases (insurance, utilities, salaries, etc.)
BUDGET HISTORY

Approved Budget (after referendum passed)

In 1,000s

- 2008-2009: $29,117
- 2009-2010: $29,117
- 2010-2011: $29,117
- 2011-2012: $29,785
- 2012-2013: $30,398
- 2013-2014: $30,943

6% OVER 5 YEARS, OR AVERAGE 1.2% PER YEAR
REFERENDUM HISTORY

Approved Budget (after referendum passed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Actual Increase</th>
<th>% Requested Increase</th>
<th># Referendums</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>FOUR*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>THREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>FOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>THREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>THREE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Includes failing a 0% increase on the third referendum.
REFERENDUM HISTORY

Approved Budget (after referendum passed)

- Since 2010, the town General Government budget has passed in the referendum prior to BOE budget passing
- In three of four years, voter turnout decreased after the General Government budget passed (2012 is the exception)
- Voter turnout averages between 14%-18%

In 1,000s

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SEYMOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS GOALS

Focus on each to improve student achievement
SEYMOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS GOALS

Goal One: Curriculum
Develop and implement a well-articulated Pre-K through 12 Curriculum that identifies knowledge and skills along with appropriate instruction and assessment strategies.

STEPS THE DISTRICT HAS TAKEN:
• Additional high school courses focused on STEM, the Arts, Fine arts, alternative energy
• Creation of new ELA and math curriculum
• Other curriculum on five-year cycles to refresh and renew – a collaborative effort: teachers, administration, consultants
• Continual Professional Development
• Full day kindergarten
• SRBI
SEYMOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS GOALS

Goal Two: Technology
Redefine and recreate the learning environment (instructional approaches, technologies, and resources) in ways that incorporate our emerging understanding of how students learn and how technology is changing the way they engage with the world.

STEPS THE DISTRICT HAS TAKEN:
• Infrastructure updates – WiFi in all schools
• Smart Boards in all classrooms: elementary and middle schools
• Interactive iPad/Desktop/video screen for multimedia learning in HS
• Technology integration specialists & embedded PD
• Tablet/laptop/google chromebook purchases and pilots – we are ready for a one-to-one environment and BYOD
SEYMOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS GOALS

Goal Three: Communications
Improve internal and external communication in order to unite parents, educators, students, and the community in working collaboratively to achieve our Mission and Goals for learning.

STEPS THE DISTRICT HAS TAKEN:
• Citizens Academy
• Increased use of e-blast system – school as well as central office
• Press-releases to local media
• Personnel starting to use more social media to communicate with parents
DISCUSSION THOUGHT-STARTERS

*How can the budget better support issues pertaining to...*

- Curriculum?
- Use of technology to improve instruction and student engagement?
- Communication with parents, other town departments and boards, and community members?
- Overall student experience and achievement?
How can we better inspire enthusiasm among the community during the budget process?

- Information sharing?
- Meeting and referendum reminders?

(Note: the Superintendent can no longer use the e-connect system for reminders to vote)
PUBLIC COMMENT

Questions on Presentation Information?

- Parts of the budget & ways to save
- Budget process
- Budget history/trends
- Strategic plan
Thank You!