



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2012

Seymour Middle School

7:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Yashu Putorti, Chairman
Saundra Gesek
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT:

MaryAnne Mascolo, Superintendent
Christine Syriac, Associate Superintendent
Rick Belden, Asst. Superintendent, Finance & Operations
Nancy Snopkowski, Director of Special Services
Jim Freund, Asst. Principal
David Olechna, Principal
Leslie Sojka, Asst. Principal
Bernadette Hamad, Principal
Monica Briggs, Asst. Principal
Mary Sue Feige, Principal
Ernie DiStasi, Asst. Principal
Alison Brett, Teacher
Trisha Danko, BOF
Jodie Mozdzer, Valley Independent Sentinel
Andrew Moyher, 225 Mountain Road

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:03 p.m.

1. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2012-13 EDUCATION BUDGET

Mr. Putorti suggested the board continue going through each section of the budget and start with where they left off during last night's meeting.

In answer to a board member's question on a Behaviorist; Mrs. Snopkowski explained the responsibilities of a Behaviorist. Beginning on 7/1/2012, there is a mandate that Behaviorists must be certified. Currently we have 217 in district and 13 out of district Special Education students. It is expected that the Behaviorist would work 183 days, the board wondered if it would be possible to share with another district. Ms. Snopkowski felt it would be hard to share with another district as many teachers have expressed to her that they would like more time with the Behaviorist. Discussion followed regarding our special education population, have we hit a plateau or can we expect more students to service? How do we compare to past years? Ms. Mascolo said it is hard to predict Special Education numbers; we must service anyone who moves into the district. She indicated our numbers are lower than many districts.

1. **REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2012-13 EDUCATION BUDGET (continued)**

Mr. Garofolo expressed a concern about productivity in the district and asked if we had done any productivity surveys to gauge employee workloads. Ms. Mascolo indicated that we currently non-renew teachers when their evaluations indicate it.

Mrs. Gesek questioned the air conditioning for Bungay School classrooms and Ms. Mascolo indicated that this was done to address certain student health issues. Mr. Belden addressed a question regarding the eRate saying it is based on our free and reduced population. In response to a question regarding summer school, Ms. Mascolo explained that some Special Education students who are out placed attend summer school at the school they attend during the school year while others attend summer school in our district. It is based on the student's needs. Mr. Belden explained the need for a generator at Seymour High School; which is to provide power to our servers when necessary. The hope is the generator will be powered with natural gas. Mrs. Syriac explained that included in the Laptop cart line item are the IPAD carts. There is a pilot program at Seymour High School using Dell "Streak" tablet computers. Mrs. Syriac explained that the STEM program is an integrated program and the teacher would need certification in Science, Technology or Math. She said we will be able to supplement the program with no additional costs.

Mr. Stanek expressed a concern that there was no increase in Fine Arts. He feels we possibly need a drama teacher. We are losing our middle school students because of the lack of Fine Arts at Seymour High School. He feels enhancing our Fine Arts program will help to improve our scores. He reminded everyone of the Broadway type plays that were produced by the high school in the past, which we no longer do. We have a marching band at the middle school but no band at all at the high school. Mrs. Syriac responded that an enhanced Fine Arts program is on the horizon. We need to look at why middle school students are leaving the district. The high school Fine Arts teacher met with the middle school students to survey their interests and we found that at this time, student interest did not warrant a full time Fine Arts teacher. Further discussion included the possibility of making Fine Arts a graduation requirement, reviewing the current Drama Club at the high school, enhancing the Fine Arts program in the future, and having a cooperative Fine Arts program with other local districts. Another suggestion was the possibility of using the public to do Fine Arts programs after school. All the suggestions would require doing more student interest surveys (possibly in Advisory classes) to assess the level of interest. Mrs. Syriac will look into the cost of doing a survey. Mrs. Magri also cautioned the board that students may say they are interested but end up not signing up.

Mr. Hatfield questioned the proposed change in Central Office from a Clerical Paraprofessional position to a Secretarial position. He was concerned that the amount it would cost to change this position might be more than \$3893. Mr. Belden explained that the person currently filling this position was on step 10 of the paraprofessionals contract and the difference between a step 10 paraprofessional and a step 1 secretary is \$3893. The paraprofessionals contract gives the board discretion to hire paraprofessionals based on their experience. Mr. Hatfield felt this change should not be approved and the money saved could be put toward a drama club advisor at Seymour Middle School. Ms. Mascolo said that she wanted board members to understand that every single person employed by this district does work that directly affects children. Everything we do affects children and we are aware of that every day.

Mr. Strumello wondered if we should take a look at our sports program to see if we might be able to consolidate some the programs. Ms. Mascolo suggested this can be done at an Athletic Committee meeting.

Mr. Putorti asked if anyone had any further questions and no one responded.

MOTION: (Mrs. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello to present this budget of \$1,411,447 to the board of finance

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Strumello) to amend previous motion

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mrs. Gesek, Mrs. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Magri

1. **REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2012-13 EDUCATION BUDGET (continued)**

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Strumello) to add two Fine Arts positions at a cost of \$61,279 each at Seymour High School

Discussion took place. Ms. Mascolo asked the board to allow her time to talk to the Administrators to look at the three year plan. Mr. Stanek suggested that we start the budget process earlier in the year so that we could have the time we need to look into issues such as this and to be able to make proposals. Mrs. Syriac indicated that she was concerned because with the addition of two fine arts teachers it would take time to build the program in order to be successful. She again indicated that at this time, the student interest was not at a level to support the program. Mr. Putorti suggested we do another student survey.

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mrs. Harmeling) to present to the Board of Finance this budget in the amount of \$31,328,807 (\$1,534,005 increase/5.1%)

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mrs. Gesek) to amend previous motion

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mrs. Gesek, Mrs. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Magri

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mrs. Gesek) to add a Middle School Drama advisor stipend position at Step 4 (\$1,737) to the budget

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mrs. Gesek, Mr. Stanek

OPPOSED: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Strumello, Mrs. Magri

Discussion followed. Mrs. Hamad, Principal of Seymour Middle School wanted the board to know that we do have many clubs available to the students currently. Many are led by volunteers such as the Ski Club (Ms. Acquavella), the Math Counts Club (Ms. Batterton), Audubon Club (Ms. Lindgren, Ms. Severino), eCybermission Club (Ms. Peterson), Gold Club (Ms. Stevens), and Book Club (Ms. Stedman). Ms. Mascolo said that all the administrators asked for more positions but were asked to rethink their requests because we wanted to put forth a budget that was cognizant of these tough economic times. Mr. Garofolo said he would like those items to be included so the Board of Education would be aware of those situations.

MOTION: (Mrs. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to present to the Board of Finance the budget in the amount of \$31,330,544 (\$1,535,742 increase/5.1%)

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Putorti, Mr. Garofolo, Mrs. Gesek, Mrs. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

Mrs. Harmeling suggested that due to the consolidation of Chatfield and LoPresti calling the budget a "Level Services Budget" could be confusing to the public. She suggested we retire that language and call it the "Board of Education Proposed Budget". The Board agreed.

2. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

None

3. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

None

MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to adjourn the meeting

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Putorti, Mr. Garofolo, Mrs. Gesek, Mrs. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty