



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 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 (arrived 7:57 p.m.)
Ed Strumello
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT:

MaryAnne Mascolo, Superintendent
Christine Syriac, Associate Superintendent
Rick Belden, Asst. Superintendent, Finance & Operations
Leslie Sojka, Asst. Principal
Mary Sue Feige, Principal
Nancy Snopkowski, Director of Special Services
Kurt Miller, First Selectman
Alison Brett, Teacher
Ernie DiStasi, Asst. Principal
Trisha Danko, BOE Member
Andrew Moyher, 225 Mountain Road

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:06 p.m.

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

Mr. Putorti explained to the board that the Board of Education staff would present the Level Services Budget and asked that the members hold their questions until the end of the presentations. Mrs. Syriac presented a Power Point presentation which explained the philosophy while crafting the 2012-13 BOE Budget. Among points made during the presentation were the ideals that were kept in mind during the process. These ideals include protecting the quality of the school system in difficult economic times, promoting Seymour as an attractive community to raise a family due to the quality of the school system and the number one priority is to keep our focus on student learning. Mr. Belden presented the detail of the Level Services Budget. He indicated there were no significant changes. He noted that he applied some of the changes that were suggested during the last budget season to make reading of the budget information easier. A Level Services budget takes all the fixed costs and moves them forward one year which becomes the baseline or starting point to craft the budget. Mr. Belden reviewed each section of the budget noting any changes. The total Level Services Budget is \$1,543,721. Mrs. Syriac then went over the roadmap of the budget which detailed the 4.7% increase. The roadmap showed what positions are to be eliminated due to the consolidation of Chatfield and LoPresti Schools and the proposed new positions across the district, thus cutting \$353,290 from the budget increase. The proposed Superintendent's Budget is \$1,411,447 (4.7% increase).

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

Mr. Putorti proposed that the board go through the budget section by section to answer questions anyone might have. Discussion included replacing the Director of Special Services after Mrs. Snopkowski assumes her position as Associate Superintendent. Ms. Mascolo stated she would strongly disagree with not funding this position because litigation is huge in the area of Special Education and there are so many laws and regulations that must be followed. The board asked about the Director of Instruction position and wondered if it could become a combined position with the Director of Special Services for one year. Ms. Mascolo explained there are state standards coming and we will have to meet those standards. Ms. Mascolo stated that when she came to the district in 2002 there were virtually no curriculum in place and the curriculums that were in place were not followed. She likened the lack of curriculum to educational malpractice and also stated that finally after 30 years Seymour High School has all curriculums in place. We have to make sure the high school continues to grow. Removing either one of these positions would be a huge mistake. Mrs. Harmeling indicated that just because the public wants a position out doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. We might be able to take a look at these positions in the future but not when standards are in the near future.

There was discussion on the perception of the public that Central Office is overstaffed and there may be a misunderstanding that Central Office only works 180 days. The misconception of the price point for Central Office is the real issue. Comparisons with other districts have been done and found that Central Office is right where it should be. Mrs. Harmeling asked the board to make a decision on whether Central Office is top heavy or not, whether we should cut or not and then stand by that decision as a unified Board of Education. Ms. Mascolo stated that the certified staffing levels in Central Office have not increased in 25 years. Ms. Mascolo added that the Board of Education members were well aware of administrative responsibilities as well as the fact that state and federal mandates have grown exponentially over the years and as leaders of the community who are well respected, they should stand up and say we are not overstaffed in the administrative ranks. There was a brief discussion on whether we can save money by eliminating a high school assistant principal and replacing with an Assistant Principal/Athletic Director. It was decided that this was an area to investigate and possibly make changes in the future. Mr. Putorti asked for the participation numbers in clubs; Ms. Mascolo will provide him with the information. Mr. Belden noted that due to the consolidation of Chatfield and LoPresti Schools, custodians will be allocated differently when Chatfield LoPresti School opens. He felt the existing staffing is appropriate and noted that the square footage of the new school is greater than the total of both schools.

Mrs. Magri asked about gate receipts and Mr. Belden explained those funds are deposited into the Student Activity Account to be used to defer costs such as team entry fees. The proceeds do not offset the budget. When asked if we have looked at changing our legal counsel, Ms. Mascolo indicated that we currently use Siegel & O'Connor for labor negotiations, expulsions, etc. and Shipman & Goodwin for special education issues. She felt we are paying for their experience and expertise. MaryAnne stated that we can look at legal costs but reminded them that both firms are currently working on cases. She said she would bring the attorney rates to the Board.

Mr. Putorti noted the time was now past 9:00 and said the questions and discussion can be continued during tomorrow's session.

2. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

None

3. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

None

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mrs. Harmeling) 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 9:09 p.m.

Submitted by
Lee-Ann Dauerty