

Seymour Board of Education



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2017
Seymour High School
6:30 pm

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 12/18/17
TIME: 3:45pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Champagne
James Garofolo
Jay Hatfield (6:45 pm)
Edward Hendricks
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kristen Harmeling

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent
Rick Belden, Assistant Superintendent - Finance & Operations
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Rob Dyer, System Technology Coordinator
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal, BS
David Olechna, Principal, CLS
Kurt Miller, First Selectman

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Magri called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:33 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Budget Discussion

Ms. Magri opened the budget discussion by saying more cuts have come down from the State. Mr. Miller and Mr. Wilson have met several times to discuss how to handle the additional approximately \$630,000 in cuts. She acknowledged that this is not a fun discussion and one we would prefer not to have but we are in a situation where a decision must be made and all the Board members should be on the same page. She noted that this is a first time cut and another cut from the State could happen. Mr. Wilson will present his recommendations. Mr. Wilson said this is not a high light but it is a reality that we are facing. He said the recommendations he will be making tonight are the result of a collaborative effort. Mr. Wilson distributed his proposed reductions due to the Governor's Lapse Reductions. The first section dealt with items that could be absorbed by the Board of Education. The second section showed the Projected Cost increases and were items related to transportation and Special Education. The third section reflected the proposed Personnel Cost reductions which included eliminating all clerical paraprofessional positions across the district and eliminating the Winter/Spring College Intern Program. The total Projected Cost Reduction would be \$309,859. Ms. Magri asked Mr. Wilson if he has gone through this proposal with Mr. Miller.

Mr. Wilson confirmed he has reviewed it with Mr. Miller. Mr. Wilson said although it is only approximately \$310,000 this is the best that we can do and that is due to the increases in Special Education costs. Mr. Miller confirmed that for now, he is ok with this amount. He described how the cuts are affecting the town such as the road aid which has been cut in half. He said things are going to change and we have to be more prudent. He said as it stands today, \$310,000 is good. He acknowledged that there was a good dialogue between the town and the BOE and there was lots of good back and forth. Mr. Kubik asked why it is December and we are only now realizing a \$500,000 increase in Special Education costs. Mr. Wilson said this was due to an increase in outplacements and these happened between September and December. Ms. Magri asked what is sacrificed in Technology. Mr. Belden said this line item is typically frozen until the end of the year. The plan was to finish off Chromebooks in the 8th grade and this is now going to be deferred along with the 80 Chromebooks that were planned to complete the 1-1 at the high school. There was a plan to upgrade the servers but this will now happen in next year's budget. Mr. Belden noted that we are at the end of the life for Smartboards and this will have to be addressed at some point. Mr. Kubik asked about the desktops for the teachers and Mr. Belden said they had been purchased through encumbrances at the end of the year. Mr. Kubik asked if the entire line item is frozen and Mr. Belden confirmed that it was. Mr. Miller went through the numbers and how the additional cuts are affecting the town. Mr. Kubik asked how the loss of the clerical paraprofessionals will be absorbed. Mr. Wilson said secretaries will have to take on more work. Mr. Wilson said we are one of a few districts that have clerical paraprofessionals. Mr. Strumello asked if we have sufficient monitor paraprofessionals to cover lunches and recesses since he knows clerical paraprofessionals cover these. He said he was concerned about the ratio of kids to monitor. Mr. Wilson said he understood the plan and he will be working with the Administrators to develop a plan. He thanked Mr. Strumello for voicing his concern. Mr. Hatfield wanted to know when the clerical paraprofessionals would leave. The plan is for their last day to be December 31, 2017. He asked if they had bumping rights which Mr. Wilson indicated they do not. Mr. Garofolo asked how many of them are Seymour residents and Mr. Wilson said he did not have that information. Mr. Miller said that he is holding a Seymour Summit with all department heads on December 20-21 to further discuss the budget cuts. Mr. Stanek said he felt everyone needs to be more conservative when it comes to spending money because the years of more money each year are gone. He said we need to develop a new philosophy. Mr. Miller noted that Seymour received the 18th highest cut in the state. He felt that the state penalized the towns that have been fiscally responsible. Ms. Magri asked if everyone was comfortable with the proposal. Mr. Hatfield asked if there was any way we could maintain the clerical paraprofessionals until the end of the year or give them a little more time before they leave. Mr. Miller explained that there is no more time. He said many people have tried different fixes and this is the only way to cover the loss. Mr. Belden said the BOE has to commit to a number before the end of the year and therefore have to do this now. Mr. Kubik asked about the unemployment costs and Mr. Belden said the number reflected the worst case scenario. Mr. Strumello asked what percentage the clerical paraprofessionals are of the total personnel and Mr. Belden said 3%. Mr. Hatfield asked if there was any other way to achieve a solution to the cuts such as asking the unions to take furlough days. Mr. Wilson said we can ask the unions but they can say no, we cannot make them. Mr. Hatfield wondered if the unions might have some sympathy since it is a large number of people losing their job. Mr. Wilson said timing is very important. Mr. Wilson acknowledged that this is a tough thing to do but it is the only solution that has minimal impact on our students. He said he understood what Mr. Hatfield is saying. Mr. Stanek said that if we see further cuts, then we will have to go to the unions. Mr. Strumello said furlough days can breed hard feelings. Ms. Magri asked again if anyone had any further questions or concerns, hearing none, she called for a motion. **MOTION:** (Dr. Hendricks/sec., Mr. Kubik) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent regarding budget reductions for the 2017-2018 school year

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Dr. Hendricks, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek

OPPOSED: Mr. Hatfield

ABSTAIN: Mr. Strumello

The motion passed.

Ms. Magri thanked everyone for their hard work in coming up with this solution. This is never a pleasant thing to do and she knows people have lost sleep. She thanked the BOE for attending tonight's meeting on such short notice.

IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Dr. Hendricks) to adjourn

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Hendricks, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk