

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOARD OF
FINANCE MEETING

SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF FINANCE

April 1, 2008

The Special Meeting of the Chester Board of Finance was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Jennifer Wislocki. Those in attendance included Kim Just, Virginia Carmany, Jennifer Wislocki, Rick Morrow, and Tom Marsh.

A moment of silence was observed for the passing of Roger Trabucchi.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. Kim Caron, Superintendent of Schools, presented the Chester Board of Education Budget via a Powerpoint presentation. This presentation included their mission, the process in developing the budget, budget overview, comparisons and results. Also present at the meeting was Pam Christman, and the Administration from the school.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Needs and requests
 - Teachers to Principal
 - Principal to Business Manger (Garth Sawyer)
- The BOE held several budget workshops and the budget being presented this evening has been adopted by the BOE
- Enrollment figures both past and projected were shared with the BOF
 - Shows a decline of 17 students for next year and possibly future years
 - For next year, enrollment is projected at 324 students, 20 teaching sections and an average class size of 16.2 students.
 - A reduction in teaching positions from 21 in 07/08 to 20 in 08/09 is reflected in the 3rd grade.
 - Enrollment figures are within class size guidelines
- A budget summary sheet was included in the packet. Driving the budget are:
 - Salaries/contractual increase – 1% of total budget
 - Health benefits/FICA – 1.35% of budget
 - Special Education out placement – 1.5% of budget
- The Status Quo figures reported include:
 - Maintenance contracts, repair work, rentals and leases – ½ %
- Supervision District increase represents a 2.3% increase
- A 1.25% decrease is reflected because we no longer have to fund the Teacher Early Retirement Benefit
- Total reductions to the budget are 2.51%
- The net impact to the budget is a 4.08% increase.

Supervision District

Mr. Caron reported that Supervision District provides essential shared services in Pre K through 12. Supervision District provides the following services:

- Administrative and fiscal services
- Curriculum organization
- Professional development
- Special services
- Legal support
- Personnel services
- Student transportation

Chester's share of the Supervision District budget is 2.3%. This is due to staffing and services; .8 music teacher, .5 special education teacher to address increased services hours due to needs at the elementary level, .4 increase for speech and language services (this will be funded through the IDEA Grant), CABE on line policy service, temporary services to address fiscal deficiencies, planning funds for the Governance study and relocation expenses due to the Pre School program.

The process for approving the Supervision District Budget was discussed. The Supervision District Budget is divided between all of the districts, Chester, Essex, Deep River and Region 4.

Reduction to the CHES Budget

- One teaching position – due to decreased enrollment
- One para professional position
- Supply and equipment reductions

Upgrades

- Leadership transition – new principal – 20 days of per diem work from Hank Stockmal
- Per Diem funds for Social Worker
- Spanish Club
- Requests for material and equipment – 6 guitars, tape recorders, listening center

Mr. Caron reported that a status quo budget represents a 4.08% increase, the staffing recommendation represents a .02% increase and the additional services reflect just under ½ % increase. The total proposed budget is \$4,092,361.00 – 4.62% increase.

Information regarding per pupil costs (\$11,331) for Chester was distributed. Chester is just over the average for similar districts and just under the state average.

Mr. Caron continued that per pupil costs include instructional staff and services, supplies and equipment, media services, student support services, administration, plant operation, transportation and out of district tuition costs.

Chester's results on the CMT and SAT were distributed and discussed. Chester outperformed the state in every area.

Mr. Caron reported that the region is working for a Pre-K through 12 system in the future.

Mr. Caron reported that this is a responsible and transparent budget. The new budget document defines exactly what is presented in the budget. This budget supports our mission, meets student needs, allows for continual improvement and provides for continued education excellence.

Administration and Board of Education members were present for any questions from the Board of Finance.

The Boards discussed the special education out placement figures. Mr. Caron reported that all efforts are made to keep the child in the district and overall, the region is quite successful in this endeavor. However, it is sometimes necessary to place a child out of the district. The parameters and costs associated with this process were discussed.

With regard to the Purchased Property Service figures, Hank Stockmal reported on 3 anticipated projects; an upgrade of the electrical capacity in the main hallway, classroom repair, and the fascia board around gym. He continued that we are in year two of the bathroom project.

Tom Marsh thanked the BOE and the Administration for their work on the budget.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Anne Monahan questioned the two new teachers in Supervision District budget. She felt that these teachers will not affect CHES. Dr. Ruth Levy reported that CHES will receive staff support in the music program and the increase in a special education position will be funded by the IDEA Grant. Mr. Caron reported that the \$25,000 for financial services will provide help in developing universal business procedures, staff training on software, payroll management, and MUNIS training. He continued that the finances in the region were the biggest problem in the region. A lot of progress has been made but there is a lot more to do.

A parent was concerned with class sizes and the reduction in teaching staff. Jennifer Wislocki reiterated that this is a Board of Finance meeting and such a discussion would be more productive at a Board of Education meeting.

Other Business

Tom Marsh distributed a packet to board members. This packet will be available electronically as well. This packet included:

- Changes since the first set of budget numbers
- New road figures
 - Sweeping figures from Deep River
- Medical insurance figures
 - 22-23% increase in the premium
- Estimated surplus figures
 - Revenue +\$171,000 more than budget
 - Expenses \$12,000 less than budget
 - Projected fund balance \$1.7 million
- Budget Comparison information
- Accounting – Cash to Accrual Conversion of Salaried Employees
 - Timesheet policy has been instituted
- Capital Improvement Plan – updated

Jennifer Wislocki reported on a request she received from a resident. This resident referenced a procedure in Killingworth and Haddam. Their town's tax bills include information on how much (in dollar figures) of each tax payment goes to fund education and how much is directed to fund town government. The BOF discussed this request and determined that no changes would be made to our current procedure.

Tom Marsh reported that the town of Lyme recently leased a fire truck at 2.9% interest. Tom directed Peter to ascertain specifics of this plan.

ADJOURN

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski