

2/3/16: Special Meeting - Budget Review

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

6:08 PM

Attendees: Board Chair: Aimee Genna, Board members: Kelly Coddling, Mae Lyons, Joan Trivella, Eric Anderson, Keith Atchinson, Superintendent: Dr. Louise Berry and Board of Finance Liaison: Jeffrey Otto

- Meeting called to order at 6:08pm
- Mae made a motion to go in to Executive Session with Dr. Berry and Mr. Otto to discuss the contract negotiations with BES principal, Fran King. Eric seconded. All in favor.
- The Board moves in to executive session at 6:11pm
- Mae made a motion to come out of executive session. Kelly seconded the motion. All in favor.
- The Board came out of executive session at 6:33pm
- Kelly makes a motion to approve the agreement as discussed in executive session regarding the resignation of Mrs. Fran King. Eric seconded. All in favor.

SCHOOL BUDGET DISCUSSION

- Dr. Berry addressed the Board to explain how she came to the budget numbers recommended in the Proposed Budget packet
- Dr. Berry stated that Special education costs remain a major concern and have a tremendous effect on the budget
- Dr. Berry asked the Board for specific programs that we would like to be considered
- Mr. Otto brought to the Board's attention the minimum requirements for the school budget. "It can't be any less than last year's budget."
- Mr. Otto mentioned that the Governor stated that grants money would decrease throughout the state, however Brooklyn's grants have increased
 - ECS grant up -\$32,604
 - Adult Education grant up- \$1,546 (this figure does not come in to the school system)
 - Public Transportation down - \$18,354
- Aimee asked about the \$17,000 worth of capital money that was spent in the past week for technology
 - Aimee said she heard about this from First Selectman, Rick Ives.
 - Dr. Berry is unsure what this is and will look into it and come back to us.
- Kelly asked about our need for a School Psychologist and Social Worker
- Mae mentioned that we should consider a full time assistant principal at BES citing the recommendation from Mr. Carolan in his exit interview
 - The Board would like to look further in to adding budget for a full time assistant principal at the elementary school
- Dr. Berry will provide a breakdown of the Instructional Staff, General line item for our next meeting
- Dr. Berry mentioned the reporting from the outsourced French River speech assistant and supervisor is outstanding and thinks it is well worth the cost.
- Mae asked if we could inquire with Special Ed Director, Amanda Brown to find out her evaluation of the progress of the children who are seeing the contracted speech assistant
- Aimee recommended that we break out the cost for the outsourced speech assistant as a separate line item to be more accurate with the budget projections

- Joan asked about the increase in anticipated expense for the Coordinator of Business Operations/Asst Financial Secretary and why it is increasing. More details will be provided from Dr. Berry at the next budget meeting.
- The Custodial staff budget increase is due to going from a part time building facilities director to a full time person
- Eric requested an itemized breakdown of the Instructional Services line item (321.A)
- Aimee asked for clarification about the increase in the legal services line item recommended for next year.
- Kelly asked for a breakdown of the additional fees for Physical Examinations & Special Ed Nurse (line 343)
 - Aimee asked if we move the cost for the Special Ed Nurse to the Special Ed budget
- Joan suggested that we separate the costs for physicals from the Special Ed costs
- Joan asked what caused the Repairs anticipated costs to go down by \$45k
 - For next year's budget, we need to get an itemized list of anticipated expenses from Tony
- Discussion around the Special Education Transportation line item (519.B)
- Aimee asked if we need to follow the new state mandated school calendar
 - Kelly asked that we look in to this further. She and Joan recall that this was approved by the state Board of Ed
 - The Board is wondering if Woodstock Academy would have to follow the new state calendar
- Eric asked who our Insurance Liability provider is.
- Aimee asked about Travel, School Related Functions (item 581) and why that is lower than usual
 - It was stated that more of the functions are located here
- Aimee asked why the Office Supplies line item was doubled? (611.A)
 - We are no longer getting free supplies from Staples.
 - Aimee brought up the idea of combining with the Town of Brooklyn for a better discount or Premium account
- What is the Information Technology Software line item? What does that cover? (611.N)
- Kelly asked if the stoppage of the Target donations from the Red Card contributions would affect our budget
 - Dr. Berry doesn't recall ever getting any money from Target. She will look in to it.
- Kelly asked about the Dues and Fees for Board of Ed line item (810.A). What do we spend it on?
 - Dr. Berry mentioned the CABE membership as part of the budget
- Joan asked about the fees to digitize the Policy Manual
 - Mae mentioned that she received a letter saying that it was no longer an option. The Board will look in to this further.
- Kelly brought up the NFA Transportation issue and how it would affect our budget
 - Eric suggested that we get a survey out to inquire about parent interest in NFA
 - It was suggested that we reiterate to the parents that it is only a 2 year offer for the free transportation and that the Brooklyn BoE has not guaranteed that transportation would be paid for after the two years.
 - It was noted that the tuition numbers presented at the 2/2 NFA Q&A meeting were not accurate and may not offset the cost of bus transportation
 - Jeff suggested that we ask NFA for proof of their insurance and that it would cover a bus on Brooklyn Schools grounds
- Eric asked if the school has ever looked in to solar power for the schools. Eric will provide more information to the Board after some research.

- The next budget meeting will be moved from February 9th to February 16th at 6pm to provide more time for Dr. Berry and the finance secretary to provide more detail around the questions that were posed tonight.
- Dr. Berry noted that she sits on a committee which noted that the projection of students at NFA is significantly lower than it is now and that is why they are recruiting at nearby schools
 - Mae asked why the town of Norwich has multiple designated schools and is that something that we should consider in our decision?
- Joan motioned to adjourn. Keith seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:12pm