

WILLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014  
(Unofficial Until Board Approval)

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Erika Wiecenski at the Hall Memorial School Library.

PRESENT: Erika Wiecenski, Herb Arico, Mark Jones, Leo Mercado, Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean, Barry Wallett, Superintendent David Harding

ABSENT: None

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Marybeth Wallett of 23 Birch Meadow Lane, requested the Board to review the policy for sanitary napkin disposal units at Hall School. She requested disposal units be placed in the stalls to avoid embarrassment and to provide a proper sanitary process for the students. She asked the Board to think of the feelings of a middle school girl in this situation. She mentioned the OSHA regulations in dealing with contaminants and bodily fluids and a possible solution to the issue utilizing floor model, plastic receptacles with covers and a step-on hands free lids in each stall. She stated it would be a little more expensive and require more time and effort but that the student's dignity is worth it and it would address the issue for not only the students but any lady visitors, teachers and staff who must also use the facilities. She thanked the Board for their attention and consideration.

Caitlin Halle of 25 Cemetery Road stated she is a grade 6 student at Hall School and she is here about the breakfast program. She stated she is up at 6 a.m. and on the bus at 6:40 a.m. and that it is hard to eat early in the morning. She said she sits on the bus for 10-20 minutes in the morning once arriving at the school to wait for the teachers and that that time could be used to grab breakfast or to have breakfast in the cafeteria. She feels a lot of kids cannot eat that early in the morning and that if they had breakfast at school it would help with tests. She also stated she participates in the nurse supply drive to gain donations for the nurse because a lot of students go to the nurse to ask for food because they did not have breakfast.

PRESENTATIONS:

Superintendent Harding reviewed the proposed 2014-2015 Board of Education Budget stating that there have not been any changes since the last presentation. He reviewed the numbers of the budget reflecting the total amount of \$7,917,165.00 at a decrease of 1.15%. He distributed to Board members the updated enrollment sheet with the Pre-K numbers added in.

Superintendent Harding asked Business Manager, Donna Latincsics, to clarify the increase on substitute wages, Donna responded that due to the minimum wage increases the non-certified substitutes pay was impacted.

Superintendent reviewed the categories included in the budget and summarized that there is approximately a \$92,500 decrease from last year's budget. Superintendent stated that Special Education is always contingent on any new students entering the school or existing students leaving that require services. The numbers are based on what we know now today and could end up being more or less but nothing is built in for that. If the situation arises then Superintendent stated he would go to the Board of Finance and requests funds for the change if necessary.

Herb Arico asked that Superintendent Harding mention to the Board of Finance about the way the Special Education is tight at this time. Superintendent replied he will reiterate to the Board of Finance about the Special Education line items to the new members so that they understand how it works with students that enter or leave throughout the year.

He reviewed that the E.O. Smith budget is approximately a 2.6% increase which results in a \$49,000 increase to Willington. He checked and the overall state average is 3.06%. Board member asked how close to the MBR are we, he responded about \$17,000 left that the MBR total is about \$109,000. He stated he checked with Kevin Chambers of the State Department of Education and was assured the numbers are correct. The State does not give the actual figures until after the ECS and the governor's budget are done. This takes place after our budget season is over.

Board discussed the budget timeline and the E.O. Smith timeline for the MBR numbers which impact our budget, not being available until after Willington presents to the Board of Finance. Erika Wicewski mentioned possibly attending the E.O. Smith meeting or sending a letter to request the numbers earlier with Superintendent stating he speaks with Bruce Silva multiple times to get the figures to base the MBR on. Mark Jones stated that the Willington BOE used to, years ago, present to the BOF five weeks later than we do now and that the BOF requested the numbers earlier because they said the education budget was the largest portion of the overall budget and wanted to know what figures were needed earlier in the process. Board discussed speaking with the BOF so that in the future the BOE can present a preliminary budget early on but then present the final numbers after the EO Smith budget is completed to have more accurate MBR figures.

Michelle Cunningham questioned the process of the MBR calculation. Superintendent replied that CCM will speak to the BOF about the MBR but that it is the decrease in the number of students times \$3,000 or .05 %, whichever is less and in our case the .05% is less.

Barry Wallett mentioned the caveat with the high school about if there are fewer students then we can take that amount of money dollar for dollar. Superintendent Harding replied he didn't find any exceptions but would continue to look for them.

Board discussed the enrollment figures, the report regarding the Pre-K numbers and the projections not being based on any correlation to birth rates just an educated guess at 18 for the pre-k for the next 10 years. Barry Wallett stated Willington enrollment numbers are declining more than expected, not less and would like that reflected in the chart.

Barry Wallett talked about the comprehensive annual budget noting that future liabilities were not addressed and that four years ago this was discussed and at the time no money was put aside and the liability was approximately 1 million dollars .With the health care changes, we need an audit to know what is actually needed so can start allocating money for the fund. Superintendent Harding reviewed slides explaining the original figures and the changes that have occurred over the last year. He stated originally it was supposed to be reevaluated every 3 years or use a non-standard alternative method. It has been done twice, was reduced due to evaluation but with the HSA change it needs be reevaluated. Three years ago it was decided to pay as you go but they did not grasp how it all worked. He has done more research. He reviewed the comprehensive deferred compensation and the different benefits given to teachers that retired in the past and now. He reviewed the formulas used in calculating the payments and the assumptions made about insurance, spouses, ages and duration to get the liability figure. He discussed the options

and the need to constantly reevaluate to determine a rational number for the liability. It is not a 2.2 million liability but it is not zero either. He explained that accounting is required, funding is a choice, the GASB's requirements for a funded plan, and once the money is in the account it cannot be removed or used for anything other than the original purpose. Someone would need to manage the fund and to make the adjustments as needed. He stated we need a detailed actuary report which is required at this point and it will take a couple months to gather the data, analyze it, and receive recommendations on the analysis. It cost approximately \$3,800 just to use the computerized system or about \$9,000 to have someone else do the reevaluation.

Barry Wallett inquired how to adjust the numbers once the data is inputted for yearly changes. Donna Latincsics stated there were three people taking the medical at this time to total \$28,000 and if you take same people today and put at next year's numbers with the HSA it would be \$23,000.

Superintendent stated that by moving to the HSA over 30 years it has an impact on the 2.2 million so it is important to nail the number down accurately. He mentioned retirees must take whatever the current contract is at and that with the HSA town subsidized 70% but for retirees there is not a subsidy and this is not as attractive to retirees so some people may not take advantage of it at all.

Michelle Cunningham asked about the timing of the next evaluation and if it is beneficial to know who will participate and would action to the budget be needed to pay for adequate assessments. Superintendent responded that no, this is not able to be done immediately, the Affordable Care Act impacts this as well and we need a consultant to know what that impact is, we should continue to pay as go this year, get estimate and revisit this at another meeting. It is worth looking into for the future.

Mark Jones asked if the Town Of Willington has this and questioned the 70% the town subsidized for current teachers but not retirees. Superintendent stated no it is for teachers and it is a federal law that the State has to do this as well for its employees. He clarified the subsidy and explained the premium share. He stated he noticed a lot of strategies going forward to negate the 30 year liability that can be used in future contract negotiations.

Erika Wicewski asked about the line item of BOE purchased services and what that contains and the increase. Superintendent Harding and Donna Latincsics replied it contains legal, board recorder salary, and the OPAB evaluation which increased because the evaluation is due this coming year.

Herb Arico asked about the electrical decrease with Superintendent explaining that two loan payments were finished for past lighting projects at HMS and that is the decrease.

Erika Wicewski asked if there was adequate funding to address the issue brought up by Marybeth Wallett earlier this evening. Superintendent Harding stated that the issue can be addressed this year it is a not a problem and Deborah Sullivan stated she will be speaking with Ron Strong tomorrow to take care of the issue as soon as possible.

Herb Arico asked about the \$10,000 for the tractor at HMS and if that would have been supported by CIP. Superintendent responded that the tractor at CES is in need of replacement and the new tractor will go to HMS and the one at HMS will go to CES. He explained that he has been trying to move items to the budget from the CIP as discussed and that CIP still contains the larger items such as roof repairs, concrete, etc. but the smaller items he is trying to take care of. He believes CIP would have supported this one but felt it could be kept in the budget at this time.

Ann Grosjean asked if keeping CIP items in our budget will help us to stay within the MBR and Superintendent replied that at this time we are ok and if bigger items are needed then would consider the MBR and changes to the CIP items.

Herb Arico questioned the line items of counseling and paras under purchased services noting this is a \$480,000 item and it has a 3% increase. Superintendent explained that the purchased services is mostly people for contracted services where you purchase a contract and get a person for the service but you do not pay benefits that would be associated with hiring someone outright. You could take the positions and hire the 12 people but then you have to pay health, retirement etc. and if the student requiring those services leaves or no longer needs the service you would have a union issue to end that position. Herb Arico questioned if the numbers are actual for the purchased services or estimated. Superintendent replied they are actual based on IEP's and 504's for required hours of services for students to figure the needs for the year and if changes are made then will bring those forward at the time if needed.

Superintendent reviewed the portions of the budget including staff, transportation, operations, purchased services and stated that most of the budget is contractual obligations.

Leo Mercado asked if any departments had needs that should be considered and Superintendent replied that the budget is based on the staff needs as they submitted for next year with no contingencies.

Herb Arico asked if we vote today, when does the budget go to the Board of Finance? Members replied it would go on Thursday February 6, 2014.

**MOTION:** by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to move to approve the proposed 2014-2015 Willington Board of Education Budget at \$7,917,165.00.

**VOTE:** Yes: H. Arico, B. Wallett, M. Jones, E. Wiecenski, A. Grosjean,  
M. Cunningham  
No: L. Mercado

Motion Passed

**PRESENT TO SPEAK:**

First Selectman, Christina Mailhos congratulated the Board on a very manageable budget, happy to see both as a parent of two children in the school system and as first selectman. She stated she wanted to point out that there was a lot of to do about the contract and people came out and voted and what actually happened is not what people predicted would happen, there is actually a decrease to the benefits and salaries. Superintendent Harding had the insight and foresight about the benefits and he advised me as well on negotiations because he was thinking ahead 5, 10, and 30 years from now. She thanked everyone for all their work.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Nichole Page  
Recording Secretary