

## **School Committee Meeting Minutes for March 18, 2015**

**Members Present:** Paul Ognibene, Chair  
Paul Schubert, Vice-Chair  
Mary McGoldrick, Secretary  
Helene Lieb  
Jeanne Astino

**Others Present:** Barbara Cataldo, Superintendent  
Dave DeGennaro, Business Manager

**Call to Order:** Mr. Ognibene called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Roll call: 5 members present.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Public Hearing**

**FY16 Budget Vote:** The committee opened by announcing this was the public hearing on the FY16 budget. The committee reviewed the FY16 budget. Mr. DeGennaro described the highlights of the budget. The total budget was \$17,505,000 and represented a 3.23% increase over last year's budget. The school district is asking for a \$547, 504 increase over the FY15 budget. Dr. Lieb commented about the percentage and how it had gone down. Dr. Schubert felt services were not spread evenly. A question was asked about speech and language and the average caseload. Typically, a speech and language pathologist will average 35-50 students on a caseload. The Cohasset Public Schools pathologists' average is significantly less.

Mr. DeGennaro talked about the various assumptions that impacted the budget including the leasing of new buses that began their run in January. Additionally, he listed items that were not included in the budget as well as new positions such as coaches and teachers. He also addressed the positions that were eliminated or reduced in the budget.

Next, a description was given about the technology staffing with the new digital initiatives. The organizational chart developed describing the new positions was also discussed.

The total cost center dividing the budget was described to the committee. Most of the funding is dedicated to salaries.

Next, the enrollment history was shown on a chart. Mr. DeGennaro talked about the steady increases in the last several years. Mr. Ognibene pointed out in twenty years we have grown about 40%. Mr. DeGennaro also showed class size projections for next year.

Mr. DeGennaro talked about the considerations for building this year's budget as he does each year. He talked about maintaining class size while staying current with curriculum. He also addressed the accomplishments for the FY16 budget. He explained how we draw upon the requests of the principals based on needs in the district.

Mr. Ognibene then addressed the \$280,000 gap that has impacted the budget. He talked about the new information that impacts the preschool. Mrs. Cataldo talked about the 3 positions to be eliminated for the fall. At the last minute, the district was afforded additional monies. When the money was given, the committee decided to restore the two positions. We were left with the elimination of the preschool position. She asked the committee if the preschool position could be restored in exchange for adjusting other positions in the district. She recommended the committee accept the reduction of services from speech and language and occupational therapist, she felt this would be a cost neutral outcome. Services would not be negated and all services promised already would remain in tact. Mrs. Buchanan performed an assessment on every student's grid and felt this was a correction that should take place. She gave an explanation of the services for each school based on caseloads. Mrs. Buchanan gave an explanation of why the change is appropriate. She explained caseloads as well as distribution of services.

Following comments Mr. Ognibene stated that it was time to close the public hearing and move on. It was time to take a vote. Motion to close the public hearing.

Motion to close the public hearing: Dr. Lieb, Seconded: Ms. Astino, All-Aye

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:10 p.m.

### **Regular Session**

Roll Call to open the regular session at 8:25 p.m. All present.

Dr. Schubert requested to make a motion to change the order of the meeting so the Science Projects from the High School could be moved to the first item. Motion by Dr. Schubert, Seconded by Ms. Astino, All Ayes

Two projects were presented. First Grace Gaumer and Maya Placek presented their science fair project that was supported by Dr. Thomae and Mr. Buckley through CSCR. They completed a project on the inner harbor in town investigating lobster behavior. The project was begun in August and ended on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The girls applied for and were given a grant. They will present at MIT in May.

Next were Sam Morris and Hollis Hunnewell. They presented a CHS Rocketry project. Sam explained how they were building a rocket that they hoped would travel to 600 feet. They were given two articles in newspapers to advertise the launch. The launch is expected in May. They want to teach the science behind rocketry and not just encourage the launch.

The next item to be discussed was the FY16 budget. The committee voted to accept the budget. Dr. Schubert made a motion to accept the FY16 budget of \$17,505,000. Seconded by Dr. Lieb. Roll call vote by all members aye. Need to codify changes by adding two positions back in and reducing Speech and Occupational positions per question from Katie Dugan. Helene Childs, SEPAC, cautioned the School Committee to maintain updates on service delivery for special education students based on these cuts.

Mrs. Cataldo opened a discussion about the district's attendance at the CBC table for the Digital Learning initiative. Mrs. Katie Dugan has been working with the superintendent on the project. Mrs. Cataldo explained about the project and what the schools will be requesting. The Capital Budget Committee would meet the next evening. At the same time the schools would be asking for funding for the switches to ensure there is enough capacity to carry the devices. Mrs. Cataldo spoke about the many meetings she has attended to discuss the initiative and that she is satisfied with the publicizing of the information. Mrs. Dugan commented that there needs to be long term governance of the Digital Learning Committee. Mr. Ognibene recommended that out sourcing be utilized to handle some of the issues during 'spikes' in demand for support.

Mrs. Cataldo presented the 2016-2017 calendar for the district. She stated the committee would look at the calendars tonight and make recommendations and then they would be given to the teacher's association. Two calendars were placed in committee member's packets. The full day professional day was shifted to the voting day in November in preparation of closing town hall for renovations. There was a discussion about changing the winter date to March to coincide with the caucuses. The committee needed to decide when to open the schools. The committee had to consider whether to open school before Labor Day or after the holiday. Mr. Ognibene asked the superintendent to query the teachers and parents as to the start date for school. Mr. Ognibene recommended we hold on the 2016-2017 calendar. He suggested we do the same for the 2015-2016 school year. Mrs. Cataldo pointed out the 2015-2016 calendar has been voted on.

Mrs. Cataldo gave a flood update indicating nothing has happened over the last several weeks. A call is into the builder. There were some comments as to the timelines about staying at the senior center or making other arrangements.

The school website was discussed. We are going through an update and a presentation is expected during the second meeting in April. The leadership team has been directed to look at templates.

The committee needed to retitle the technology position's title. A motion was made to retitle the technology director to Deputy Chief Information Officer. Motion made by Dr. Schubert. Seconded by Mrs. Astino. All-Ayes.

Warrant 15-16S was put forward for approval. A motion was made by Mrs. Astino and seconded by Dr. Schubert. Roll call vote by all.

Mr. DeGennaro gave a monthly update. The district has expended 59.1% of the budget. He expressed concern about the utilities. He discussed the adjustment of the METCO grant due to 9C cuts, which amounted to \$17059.

The school bus auction was the next topic. Mr DeGennaro stated we are not holding the auction because the company advertised incorrect years for some of the buses. The bids need to be reposted. Mr. DeGennaro was asked where the buses are being stored. He stated he preferred not to reveal their location but they were safe.

Mrs. Astino talked about her attendance at the D.A.R. meeting. Students from local schools attend the meetings. She stated Christian Cunnie was one of the recipients at this year's gathering. She stated he would also receive the award at award's night in June.

Dr. Schubert talked about the Mr. Skipper pageant for this year.

The negotiation subcommittee has been meeting.

Mrs. Astino talked about Career Night. She complemented Ellen Maher who put the program together. Dr. Lieb recommended the presenters give out written material on their career.

Mr. Ognibene asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mrs. Astino at 9:30 p.m. and Seconded by Dr. Schubert. Roll call taken.