

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Concord School Committee
Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Ripley Building
Concord, MA
December 12, 2006
6:00 p.m.

Minutes

PRESENT:

Ms. Betsy Bilodeau
Mr. Peter Fischelis
Mr. Michael Fitzgerald
Mr. Chad Koski
Ms. Jan McGinn
Ms. Rebecca Shannon
Mr. Jerry Wedge

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Brenda Finn, Superintendent
Mr. John Flaherty
Ms. Diana Rigby

PUBLIC HEARING

The meeting was called into Open Session by Mr. Fitzgerald for CCSC at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. Fitzgerald addressed the issue regarding the School Committees' consideration of budget support in the FY08 budget for the Concord-Carlisle Adult and Community Education administrative function. He stated the reasons why CCACE was self-funded and suggested this might be discussed as a community-wide issue.

Gaytana Frueniere, in the audience, stated she teaches papermaking for ACE. She would like to see funding because it would be a hardship if fees were increased.

Phyllis Hughes, Carlisle, stated she believes this community education program is better than the programs in larger communities. She stated a professional staff of 2 ½ people serve over 4,000 students.

Joe Wheeler, Westford Road, Concord, stated Town Meeting is an important process. He felt the School Committee should have had this public hearing because Town Meeting said to have it, not because Ms. Hamm pressed them on it.

Ellie Garvey, in the audience, stated the ACE is a wonderful program with wonderful teachers. She wanted to note ACE also serves K-12 students with chess, foreign language enrichment, and the music program.

Richard Wheeler, Sudbury Road, stated education needs to be looked at on a broader scale than K-12. Adults are interested in continuing education. Handing off the

responsibility of fundraising is not the best course of action. The skill of education lies with the School Committee, they need to keep in mind the broader constituency.

Phoebe Hamm, Musterfield Road, stated a public hearing is a good way for the community to come together on an issue. She felt 6:15 was too early, that 8 p.m. at the Town House, so it could be on live TV would have been better. There was not much advance notice to this meeting. Ms. Hamm stated the appropriations over the past few years from \$60K to \$4 and stated this is not acceptable.

Louise Halderman, Heywood Road, stated when ACE began in 1981, it was intended to be as self-funded as possible.

Judy Scott Nikki, Prairie Street, stated it is important to build diversity within the community. She lives across from Thoreau, and feels she signed up for two new schools. We are talking about a small amount of money compared to what was spent on the physical plant.

Mary Clark, Bartlett Hill, stated we cannot find more dedicated educators. She stated 1/3 of the offerings go to K-12 children. She hopes the School Committee feels we have to nourish this program.

Peter Kaplan, Wright Road, stated ACE is about community enrichment. Court Booth does great work, he is dedicated and puts the community first. To raise fees, diminishes the program. We need to continue to offer these services.

Paul Percy, Williams Road, stated for the past 12 years he and his wife have enrolled in music and art classes. He stated he also volunteers as a tax counselor and there are elderly in Concord who live on a fixed income and could not afford a fee increase.

Dr. Finn stated she received emails from Karen Belinski and Lucy Roseborough in support of funding the ACE program.

Deborah Janzik, Carlisle, stated she is the ½ person. She is at the high school every night and stated ACE provides programs such as Drivers Ed after school and after sports. They provide SAT prep, sports programs, financial courses, foreign language and the radio station in the evening. She stated there are friendship groups that develop from many of the classes.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated the funding of Adult and Community Ed. is an issue both communities need to wrestle with.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called into Open Session by Ms. McGinn for CSC at 7:14 p.m.

IV. RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Finn recognized Kimberly Miner, Concord and David Tobin, Carlisle for receiving the Superintendent's Award for Academic Excellence. She read a testimonial on each student and presented each with a certificate.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to approve permission to plan seventh grade student trip to Montreal

Mr. Unobskey welcomed Courtney Welburn and stated he is excited to play a role in this initiative. Foreign language in middle school is a way for kids to try something new and explore language.

Ms. Welburn stated she has wanted to plan this trip for a long time. Students having the experience of hearing and speaking the language first hand is invaluable. The trip will run 3 days and 2 nights and will cost \$400 per student. There will be approximately 45 students attending the trip. Mr. Unobskey stated financial aid will be offered.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CSC to approve the request of Courtney Welburn and Arthur Unobskey to plan a trip to Montreal for 7th grade French students in the spring of 2007. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

V. REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

A. Adult and Community Education 2006 Annual Report

Mr. Booth presented the annual report. He detailed programs that are available for K-12 students such as drivers ed. and test prep. He stated the Village University is a program of daytime courses for people in retirement. There are offerings for infants and toddlers at the preschool, the Picnic in the Park is put on by ACE, and the Alliance for Teen Safety is part of ACE. He recognizes the budget cannot support salaries for office staff and will reduce hours and staff as well as withdraw from school initiatives that don't recover their costs.

Jim Saltonstall read a memo which was distributed to the committee and audience. He applauds the recommendation to enlarge the discussion to include the community.

Mr. Fischelis asked how our fees compare to other towns. Mr. Booth stated our fees are in line with surrounding school districts. Acton/Boxborough charge less, other towns charge more. Mr. Fischelis asked which programs could be eliminated. Mr. Booth stated it hasn't come to that yet, an example of a reduction could be the Chamber of Commerce membership or the Emergency Planning program by the Fire Department.

B. Willard School Building Committee Update

Mr. Wedge stated the committee is making great strides. The Project Manager position has been narrowed down to one candidate. The committee is negotiating with Daedalus Projects, Inc. They have received proposals from architects. The

January 3 meeting is to develop a short list of architects to interview. They hope to be working with an architect by early February.

Mr. Fischelis asked if we had heard from MSBA about a walkthrough. Mr. Wedge stated we are in touch with our contact, they are not in a position to tell us anything yet. Dr. Finn stated they have read the Statement of Interest, because they have asked for an amendment.

C. CPS FY08 Budget

Mr. Flaherty stated the developed budget falls within the levy limit factors. There is an enrollment driven decline at CMS and the elementary schools.

He stated the cost drivers were: Steps: \$326,089; Lanes: \$55,000; Scale %: \$219,818, Negotiations Contingency: \$150,000; Private Placement Tuition Rate Increase: \$125,000 and Sped Transportation: \$25,000. There was an amount of \$343,074 specified for additional needs.

Mr. Flaherty stated Regular Education increased 5.38%, Special Education increased 2.50%, Operations decreased by 1.11%, Administration increased by 7.86%, and Fixed Costs increased by 17.21%.

Mr. Flaherty stated the program area distribution was Regular Education 52%, Special Education 26%, Operations 15%, Administration 7%, and Fixed Costs .3%.

Mr. Wedge asked if 26% for Sped was less than last year. Ms. Rigby stated it is the same.

Ms. Shannon asked if a student took the Chinese program and decided it was too difficult, would he take another foreign language. Dr. Finn stated she doesn't see it to be a problem. Mr. Fitzgerald stated the Chinese language program in Carlisle is a huge success.

Capital Plan

Mr. Flaherty presented details of the capital plan at Willard, Peabody, Sanborn, the transportation building and Ripley.

Ms. Shannon asked if it had been determined we need the new software. Mr. Flaherty state we are trying to see if we can make the existing system work, if we don't need to replace it, we will shift back projects at the middle school to this year.

D. CCRSD FY08 Budget

Mr. Flaherty stated the preliminary budget for FY2007-08 for CCRSD was \$20,369,327. The contributions are assessments: \$17,601,053; excess and deficiency: \$420,000; investment income: \$25,000; miscellaneous income: \$5,000. State sources are Chapter 70: \$1,704,025; Regional Transportation Aid: \$317,383; Charter tuition reimbursements: \$7,916; MSBA Reimbursement: \$288,950.

The uses of the budget are salaries: \$12,781,290; non-salaries: \$6,632,910; projected debt service: \$955,127.

Mr. Flaherty stated the cost drivers are Steps: \$194,456; Lanes: \$58,500; Scale %: \$203,808; Case Programmatic & Transportation: \$181,095; Negotiations/Contingency: \$117,936; Retirement: \$15,928; and Health Insurance: \$144,937.

Mr. Flaherty stated the identified needs for CCRSD as 1.5 FTE regular education \$81,323; administrative support for compliance \$30,000; 1.0 FTE special education staff \$54,061; capital outlay \$98,000, and maintenance contracted services.

Mr. Flaherty stated the increase by program area was regular education 8.76%, special education 1.15%, administration 3.72%, operations 5.71%, fixed costs 6.27%, for a total increase of 6.15%.

Mr. Flaherty stated the distribution by program area was regular education 47.12%, special education 19.23%, administration 5.98%, operations 13.49%, fixed costs 14.18%.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated at the Carlisle Finance Committee last night, the committee debated whether to move their levy limit to match Concord's and the vote was no. Ms. Bilodeau described what was involved in getting the regional board to vote a budget if there isn't a match. It is an excruciating process and should be avoided at all costs. Mr. Fitzgerald stated we will monitor the situation and see what happens. He stated we will move forward with the Concord levy limit.

Capital Plan

Mr. Flaherty identified the capital needs at the high school. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if there was a plan to purchase an additional modular classroom. Mr. Flaherty stated there is one in the 07 capital plan, one in the 08 capital plan and potential for a third. The site is potentially in the courtyard.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the ACE is not within the budget, we have heard but not addressed the concerns from the community. This would mean budget cuts in the high school program. We need to plan a meeting with all parties.

Ms. Bilodeau stated the school system does provide in-kind contributions to Adult and Community Ed.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

Warrant Articles

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CSC to approve the warrant article for the CPS Budget of \$26,423,840. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CCSC to approve the warrant article for the CCRSD Budget of \$20,369,327 and an assessment of \$12,191,417. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Fischelis and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CPS to approve the warrant article for the capital plan of \$860,000. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CCSC to approve the warrant article for the capital plan for high school improvements. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A. Vote to approve CPS FY08 Budget

A MOTION was made by Mr. Fischelis and seconded by Mr. Wedge for CSC to adopt the CPS FY08 Budget of \$26,423,840. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CSC to approve the CPS five-year capital improvement plan as presented. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

B. Vote to approve CCRSD FY08 Budget

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Mr. Fischelis for CCSC to approve the CCRSD FY08 Budget of \$20,369,327 which is comprised of assessments: \$17,601,053; excess and deficiency: \$420,000; investment income: \$25,000; miscellaneous income: \$5,000. State sources are Chapter 70: \$1,704,025; Regional Transportation Aid: \$317,383; Charter tuition reimbursements: \$7,916; MSBA Reimbursement: \$288,950. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Mr. Fischelis to approve the five-year capital plan for CCRSD as presented. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

C. Vote to approve school calendar 2007-08

Ms. McClausland stated 2 calendars were developed, one for the Concord Public Schools and one for the high school. Professional days are different for both systems, CPS changed a January professional development day and the high school moved a March professional development day to January.

Ms. Shannon asked if there was a cost associated with this change. There will be an estimated \$5K per district for transportation.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Bilodeau for CCSC to approve the calendar as presented, pending approval of CCTA. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

A MOTION made by Ms. Bilodeau and seconded by Mr. Fischelis for CSC to approve the Concord Public School calendar as presented pending approval of CTA. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

D. Vote to approve Carlisle teacher request to enroll student @ CCHS for fall 2007
A MOTION was made by Mr. Fischelis and seconded by Mr. Wedge for CCSC to approve Ms. Graham-Hadley's request to enroll her child in the Concord-Carlisle High School and that tuition be waived. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Shannon stated she has signed up for an Adult & Community Education Class and will be unable to attend the Finance Committee meetings. Other members will cover the meetings.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. District Holiday Events

FYI

IX. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Charlie Blair, of the audience, asked why the transportation building can't use the town sewer and needs to be on septic. Mr. Flaherty stated the distance to the sewer is too great.

Mr. Blair asked if the School Committee considered leasing the three modular classrooms rather than purchase.

Mr. Blair asked if the possibility of attaching to the fiber optic cable was considered. Mr. Flaherty stated there is a concern with how much bandwidth that would occupy and would interfere with school systems.

X. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, a MOTION was made by Mr. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Shannon for CCSC and a MOTION was made by Ms. Shannon and seconded by Ms. Shannon to adjourn the Concord School Committee meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan
APPROVED: 1/23/07