

**ENFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 19, 2010**

The Enfield Board of Education held a Special Board meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 in the Board Conference Room located at 27 Shaker Road, Enfield, CT.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Stokes called the special meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Chairman Stokes

3. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT** Chairman Stokes announced the fire evacuation announcement.

4. **ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Judy Apruzzese-Desroches; Vincent Grady; Joyce Hall; Chuck Johnson (arrived at 6:30 PM); Peter Jonaitis (arrived at 6:20 PM); Tom Sirard; Greg Stokes; Donna Szewczak; and Stacy Thurston.

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** John Gallacher, Superintendent; Tony Torre, Assistant Superintendent; and Chris Chemerka, Business Manager.

5. **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Dr. Gallacher thanked central office staff that worked on this budget presentation. Ms. Chemerka deserves the bulk of credit for this presentation. If Board members have any questions, they can either ask them at the conclusion of the presentation or e-mail us.

Ms. Chemerka reviewed the current budget status with Board members. She reviewed employee benefits, property/liability, student transportation, utilities, special education tuition, education supplies, educational services program, athletics, administrative and Board expenses; new equipment, equipment maintenance, plant maintenance, health services & supplies, nutrition services and technology.

Dr. Gallacher stated the budget that was adopted last year, had some serious unknown areas. The budget is fluid and can change. Excess costs are important this year. Last year, we had the Board's Budget Advisory Committee and they recommended not freezing the budget but to let the principal's know they would not process any purchase orders until they knew exactly where we stood with the budget.

Chairman Stokes stated we are approximately \$515K short with the FY09/10 budget.

Ms. Chemerka reviewed the Fixed Cost Budget Process for 2010-11 with Board members regarding past budget impacts and decreased budgets; budget percentages for salaries, benefits, transportation, special education, technology and all other; current special education numbers and out-placed students; special education excess cost; staffing; employee benefits; student transportation; special education tuition; technology; and all other categories. Mrs. Chemerka estimates the fixed cost budget for 2010-11 will increase \$4,993,698 or 7.96% increase for a total FY10-11 budget of \$67,704,705.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches would like to see what the per pupil cost would be without SPED costs. Ms. Chemerka will get that information for her.

Dr. Gallacher stated that if staff plans to retire, they will need to notify us on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Chemerka stated step increases can be issued two times during the year. Dr. Gallacher stated in the beginning of the year and again in December.

Mr. Jonaitis asked Mr. Torre if the bubble set is included in the step increases. Mr. Torre stated that is correct, that is when we went from 14 to 12 steps.

Ms. Chemerka stated that due to lenient state regulations, subs can collect unemployment on the days they don't work. Mrs. Szewczak asked if they decline a job can they collect. Ms. Chemerka stated no, we could fight them on this. Dr. Gallacher stated this is a good example of why you should contact your legislators.

Mr. Johnson asked if there were any type of limitations. Ms. Chemerka stated no. Chairman Stokes stated we need to watch this and start cleaning house if we don't use them.

Mr. Grady asked if the transportation software has saved us any money. Ms. Chemerka stated we have not started to use it yet.

Mr. Sirard asked why we need to buy diesel fuel. Ms. Chemerka stated this was agreed that we would purchase the fuel and they will house it at their facility. Dr. Gallacher stated we can get a tax break where they can't. Ms. Chemerka stated this is a huge cost savings.

Mr. Jonaitis asked who we transport for summer school. Dr. Gallacher stated we transport special education students and the elementary students. The current K and grade 1 students are invited to attend and the Board pays for them to attend.

Mr. Johnson asked what the average salary is for a summer school teacher. Dr. Gallacher would need to get the exact amount. At the secondary level, it is self funding.

Chairman Stokes thanked Ms. Chemerka for her presentation.

Mrs. Szewczak asked why the athletic line item is off. Ms. Chemerka stated due to the pay-to-play, athletics did not collect as much revenue as anticipated. Dr. Gallacher stated this is because of the free/reduced students and multiple sports per family.

Mr. Sirard asked about the data mining software. Dr. Gallacher stated this is to keep up with AYP and SBRI (Scientific Based Research Instruction). Staff will take the test scores and can see if the student is doing ok.

Mr. Sirard asked how much of this is demographics. Dr. Gallacher stated demographic software was purchased last year to help with school organizations. A lot of school systems extended the distance for busing students.

Mr. Sirard stated in order to get grant money what is this actually costing us. Ms. Chemerka stated it is not costing us anything. The data mining can be used for AYP and NCLB.

Dr. Gallacher stated AYP is Adequate Yearly Progress and this comes from No Child Left Behind. They have set a bar that you must attain and if you don't there are penalties. Every child must reach 100% by 2014.

Mr. Sirard stated we are spending a lot of time collecting data. Ms. Chemerka stated it is an unfunded mandate from the State that we must comply with.

Dr. Gallacher stated that he knows it is a tough economy. He is looking for direction from the Board for the Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> Budget Workshop. What are you looking for? Dr. Gallacher is leaning towards reductions but does not want to cut back to a zero percent. He could give you a wish list or reduce down. We have already done what other towns are just starting to do with reductions. We have been on the low end of the revenue side.

Mr. Jonaitis asked how we compare to other districts with salaries and benefits. Dr. Gallacher stated we are comparable.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we are already at bare bones. We will need to start looking at programs and bodies next.

Chairman Stokes stated the last two years we got through by cutting \$4 million and \$2 million dollars. You have bodies and programs. We no longer have facilities to cut from. The Town Council allocates the money. We need to find a budget that will support a strong education without dismantling education. We need to find a balance.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated we need to establish our priorities. Is the delivery of hard core education our priority?

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated we already know this year we are short \$500K could it be more. Ms. Chemerka stated we are short in SPED funds. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated the amount could be low. Ms. Chemerka stated that is correct it could be higher.

Mr. Johnson asked if Dr. Gallacher is looking for a percentage to use. Dr. Gallacher stated he would appreciate some concept of a percentage. Mr. Johnson asked Dr. Gallacher for his best assessment of what is required to provide proper educational services to our students.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if the contracts are included in the fixed cost amounts. Dr. Gallacher stated they are included.

Dr. Gallacher stated he is anticipating 10 retirees this year. Mr. Jonaitis asked about an early retirement incentive. We could save money by doing this. Ms. Hall stated we have explored this before and the first year you would not save any money. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated you will need to payout the first year. Dr. Gallacher stated most want some type of a payout. Mr. Jonaitis stated we should look at this more closely.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated we actually go through the budget process two times. We will submit a budget to the TC and they will most likely reject it. Then we will need to start the entire process again.

Mr. Sirard does not want to throw good money after bad and for unfunded mandates. If it costs us more money why are we doing it? Chairman Stokes stated a lot of the unfunded mandates are not like that. Mr. Sirard stated this is not right. Ms. Hall stated the Federal government was even worse when it came to SPED. They promised 40% and gave us around 9%.

Mr. Jonaitis asked what would happen if we did not comply with the mandates. Dr. Gallacher stated you would be breaking your oath as a Board member to uphold State and Federal laws. You could also jeopardize your funding.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches asked Ms. Chemerka to break down the monies we receive from Enfield Taxpayers and how much is coming from Federal, State and private grants. Ms. Chemerka stated we have around a \$62 million dollar budget, the ECS was about \$27 million,

and the rest would be local. That does not include the grants. Mr. Torre stated the Superintendent has to sign off or we would not be in compliance. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated Board members are sworn to comply.

Mr. Torre explained how it works when we take ELL (English Language Learner) students. We must comply with all of their requirements or we are not in compliance with the State. We need to present data showing this. Mr. Johnson asked what if we don't do everything they are asking us to do, what would happen. Mr. Torre stated they would get a complaint and we would be in trouble with the State. They determine the assessments we must use.

Ms. Chemerka stated we are responsible for SPED students from age 3-21.

Mr. Johnson asked about the line item transfers and have they been made yet. Ms. Chemerka stated not yet. The Finance Committee wanted to discuss them at the next meeting.

Chairman Stokes stated no one wants a tax increase. My concern with a percentage is that it is hard to ask for a percentage without the examination of the cuts. We live in a reality where everyone is being taxed. The direction for the superintendent is for you to present a budget that supports education. If Dr. Gallacher presents us with a budget that is 6 or 7% we will have his back. We are asking him to do what he feels is right. Chairman Stokes does not want an arbitrary number until we can back it up.

Ms. Hall asked if we need ground rules. Are we going to except larger class sizes? What is our maximum number? Mr. Johnson does not believe we need to set ground rules. Dr. Gallacher is a professional and he will come up with a budget that is best for the district. Ms. Hall stated we have class size maximums in place. Mr. Johnson stated we have tried to adhere to them in the past. They are not written in stone.

Ms. Hall stated our primary concern for class sizes in the past has been in the elementary grades.

Mr. Sirard stated Dr. Gallacher knows what is best for our District and our town. Mr. Sirard trusts that Dr. Gallacher will present a fiscally sound budget. Board members will take the budget from that point. We need a starting point.

Mrs. Szewczak asked if Dr. Gallacher received any feedback from any of the principals. Dr. Gallacher stated no. What he brings on Saturday will be his ideas. He has not met with ADCO yet. Some of the principals will protect their own staff. There are some things that are easy to do. He has looked at some of the current class sizes where there are 29 or 27 students in a grade 2 class. When these students move to grade 3, Dr. Gallacher is looking at only having 1 section in grade 3. We have not discussed closing any buildings. Dr. Gallacher will present his budget based on the current school configurations.

Mr. Sirard stated there are no cuts that are off the table. Mr. Sirard stated he is not saying to put 39 in a class. What is the fire code for a classroom? Dr. Gallacher believes it is 30.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches asked if we are still seeing disparity across the district with class sizes. Dr. Gallacher stated yes. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated redistricting could save us money. Dr. Gallacher stated redistricting would require time.

Mrs. Szewczak asked how long it took to redistrict the Alcorn students when that closed. Dr. Gallacher was not here when that was done. Some grade six students went to the middle school.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we could ask each building principal to cut 5% from their budgets. Dr. Gallacher stated a lot of places do that across the board. Ms. Hall stated we would need to divide all of our expenses by building in order to do this.

Chairman Stokes stated we can not please everyone. We need to find a balance. Test scores and AYP will be the next hurdle for Board members. We need to find a balance to make education work. Everything we do will have an affect.

Mr. Sirard stated he is looking at now and not down the road. There will be more money down the road.

Chairman Stokes repeated what Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated last year, academics before athletics. Last year we did a good job of trying to save programs. This year we need to decide what our priorities are. Our budgets have already been cut down lean.

Mrs. Szewczak asked what is holding us back, our regular education or special education funds. Those funds are self perpetuating. The special education students are protected. Regular education students are suffering. We are cutting the budget out of our regular education funds. Chairman Stokes stated we are trying to please many.

Mrs. Szewczak agrees that we should produce the best budget that we can. If the Town Council is unhappy with the percentage we present them with, that is their right. If the Town Council tells us to make further cuts that will not bother Mrs. Szewczak but at that point, we still need to look at education. The Town Council should be the ones to tell us to go lower. Mr. Grady stated the Town Council does not understand education. Mrs. Szewczak stated we need to let the Town Council know what negatives have come out of this budget for regular education.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that we are at a time now that what we worked so hard to get for the kids may be more than we can handle now. Maybe some of those things may have to go. Ms. Hall stated we are doing less than we did 20 years ago. We used to offer more languages. Mr. Jonaitis stated we will have to look at programs being offered.

Mr. Sirard stated no thieftom is off limits.

Chairman Stokes stated this has been a healthy dialogue and presentation. What we have to do together is as a Board of nine. The strongest message we have is to have a unified voice. If we are going to support education during these tough economic times, a unified voice is needed for February 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### **6. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR MATTER(S) RELATED TO PERSONNEL – REVIEW CANDIDATE(S) FOR HR DIRECTOR POSITION**

Mr. Sirard moved, seconded by Mrs. Szewczak to enter into Executive Session to discuss Matter(s) Related to Personnel – Review Candidate(s) for HR Director Position. A vote by **show of hands 9-0-0**, motion passes unanimously.

#### **Recess:**

At 7:54 PM, the Board took a 5 minute recess and then returned to the Executive Session.

Dr. Gallacher and Mr. Torre joined the Board in Executive Session.

Mrs. Szewczak moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to end the Executive Session at 8:23 PM. Motion passed unanimously by a **show of hands 9-0-0**. No other actions were taken while in Executive Session.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Sirard to adjourn the Special Meeting of January 19, 2010. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Joyce P. Hall  
Secretary  
Enfield Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary