

**ENFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 23, 2010**

The Enfield Board of Education held a Special Board meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 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 8:07 AM.

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; Peter Jonaitis; Tom Sirard; Greg Stokes; Donna Szewczak; and Stacy Thurston.

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

5. **BUDGET WORKSHOP #2**

Dr. Gallacher presented his 18th proposed budget to Board members. He thanked the Board for establishing a process. He has made reductions from last year. This budget was done without the input from any building principals. Dr. Gallacher stated that his proposed budget is a comprehensive plan with reductions while leaving it educationally sound. He further stated there are many ways to get to the bottom number and any and all cuts made will have an impact somewhere. The current budget is already lean and the cuts were difficult to make.

Dr. Gallacher stated that many of the proposed reductions the Board and the public have seen before. Enfield is ahead of many other districts with our reductions. Dr. Gallacher stated a 0% percent budget is not attainable. Dr. Gallacher reviewed his proposed adjustments with Board members. Our current fixed cost increase needed to meet all obligations would be around 8%. State and Federal funds are not as readily available this year due to the general economic climate.

Dr. Gallacher reviewed cost increases vs. adjusted increases for the 2010-11 fixed cost budget. This would be a \$4,933,698 increase from our current budget or 7.96%.

Dr. Gallacher reviewed his proposed adjustments for school support, athletics, nutrition, head start, elementary schools, middle school, high schools and special education. Dr. Gallacher's proposed cuts for the 2010-11 budget would equal \$2,713,128 for a proposed budget of \$64,991,577 or a percentage increase of 3.64%.

Dr. Gallacher would recommend involving the administrators to identify specific cuts. If Board members have any questions, he would like Board members to get them to Chris Chemerka as soon as possible. Chris will be taking a well deserved vacation that was planned well before she started working here. Our next budget workshop will be held on February 2nd. Dr. Gallacher stated we will respond to all Board members with any answers to your questions. This way everyone will be in the same loop.

Mr. Jonaitis asked Ms. Chemerka when she will be gone. Ms. Chemerka stated she will be out of the office on January 26, 27 and 28 from 9:00 – 5:00 PM for Munis training and will be on vacation February 6-12th.

Dr. Gallacher would like to share this information with PTO presidents, high school parent advisory committees, union presidents and any interested community groups if it is ok with the Board. Getting the information out is a difficult task. Next year's budget will be worse. We also need to be thinking about the 2011-12 budget.

Mrs. Szewczak asked how many ARRA Teachers we currently have. Dr. Gallacher stated we have around 10 or 11. Chris will get the total number for Board members.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches would like Ms. Chemerka to identify the ARRA positions and the costs associated with each position.

Dr. Gallacher stated the ARRA funds will vary and are spread out across the district. There is maintenance of effort we need to comply with. Normally you can supplement and not supplant. They let us use the funds to supplant.

Chairman Stokes agrees with communicating with the various groups. He would like Dr. Gallacher to let Board leadership know when he will meet with them. Board leadership can be available to answer any questions.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we could possibly put Dr. Gallacher's proposed budget recommendations on E-TV. Chairman Stokes stated we will have a public hearing where we present the budget to the public. Dr. Gallacher stated that is usually held in the end of April. Chairman Stokes further stated his fear if we make this available on E-TV, the public will think we are actually going to do this. We are in the beginning of the budget process. This is a starting point. Last year, Chairman Stokes stated he received around 500 e-mails from the community during the budget process. Everyone will have opinions.

Dr. Gallacher stated that we did not touch any CIP funds for buildings and grounds. The Town does have control but they said that if we have any big items that are needed (windows, roofs, paving, major improvements, etc.); we would need to notify the Town Manager. In the past, administration would put together a list. The Board would approve the list and we would present it to the Town Council.

Recess:

At 9:05 AM, the Board took a 15 minute recess.

Chairman Stokes thanked Dr. Gallacher for his presentation. Board members have a lot of information to digest. He asked Board members if they had any questions or comments. Chairman Stokes stated that Dr. Gallacher did a good job in a tough economic situation. Dr. Gallacher has served the Board well with this presentation.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about the imbalance of elementary class sizes and how difficult would it be to tweak them to bring them in line. Dr. Gallacher stated you will run into working parents with daycare issues. We have been very accommodating. By tweaking, it will work for just a little bit and you will run into the same problem again. We have capped classes as a way to avoid larger classes. It is easy on paper but difficult to do. You can have children from the same family at two different schools. Mr. Jonaitis would like us to address redistricting as a Board.

Mrs. Szewczak asked if we could reconfigure to a K-4 and 5-7 grades or something similar. Dr. Gallacher stated this has been addressed before. People are resistant to change. If this is something the Board is going to do, you will need to start on this concept now. Mrs. Szewczak stated Board members want to provide a good education for everyone. Mr. Torre stated when you change the grade configurations the curriculum will also need to be changed to reflect this. This is a process that would take more than a year. Mrs. Szewczak stated we need to look at this, changes are needed. Our enrollment numbers are decreasing. We have two high schools and the curriculum offerings are different at both schools. Neither building can hold everything. Maybe we can go to a two campus system. We need to offer the best education with the variety the students need.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated tweaking streets can create issues in other buildings. It is not something that can be done fast or easily and it needs to be done for all buildings. Redistricting needs to be looked at now for next year. We need to look at this prior to the next budget. We need to educate the public about this process by letting them know about it now.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we could possibly tweak a grade level or two that are affected by class sizes. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated it is not that easy. You will split families up by doing this. Mr. Jonaitis stated Board members need to do everything in our power to not have a class size of 29 third graders.

Dr. Gallacher stated this is an emotional topic. In order to make this work, you would need to advertise what the Board is planning to do in order to make the process easier.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we could lease/rent out some of the empty classrooms to daycare providers. Dr. Gallacher stated they are doing this at the community college and it is a thought. Ms. Hall asked if we have schools with empty rooms. Dr. Gallacher stated yes. Ms. Chemerka stated this would fall under the Town's jurisdiction.

Mr. Grady asked about the project choice students and can we adjust this number. Dr. Gallacher stated we have around 75. Mr. Grady asked if we could adjust the classroom sizes by moving them. Dr. Gallacher stated the choice students are placed at certain schools and that becomes their home school. The State only wants to go to certain buildings that are close to Interstate 91. Mr. Grady stated they are not in a neighborhood so by moving them they would not be displaced. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated they need to be treated the same and we could not target the choice students to balance class sizes.

Mr. Sirard stated that we are not living in normal times. Board members need to provide a good education that is affordable. Tough decisions need to be made. No idea is off the table as far as Mr. Sirard is concerned.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about bringing in library volunteers at the elementary schools. Dr. Gallacher stated they are library aides that Jim Bowman oversees and are paid positions. There could be some library volunteers. Mr. Torre stated we have a library curriculum in place. The library is a multi-media area.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if you need to have a certain number of students in a class for it to be offered at the high school. Both Mr. Duffy and Mr. Newton stated they look at the numbers in the spring and if the numbers are not there, they will not offer it or they will see if it is available at the other high school. Some classes they can offer during the second half of the year. Mr. Newton stated he looks at 10 for a starting point for electives. Academic core classes may run with less students.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about the buses that are only half filled. Can we cut some of these out for possible savings. Dr. Gallacher stated our biggest transportation costs are SPED vans. They

are hard to control. The cost is \$200 per day per child. We tried to consolidate buses three years ago. Mr. Jonaitis asked if we could consolidate seats. Ms. Chemerka stated we need to provide seats for each student that rides. Mr. Duffy stated that during the school year, after school activities will decrease the number of students riding on a bus. Mr. Torre stated Smyth Bus works with us on a daily basis to make changes at a moments notice.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated we are required by law to have a seat available on each bus for each student even if they don't take it. Board members tried to have parent's complete wavers but it did not pan out.

Mrs. Szewczak asked what will happen to the teacher if you decide not to have a class. Mr. Newton stated the teacher would be assigned to teach a class that is being offered. Class sizes would dictate this. By looking at the course selections, we can determine what classes are needed as part of the scheduling process.

Mr. Newton stated we are currently sharing teachers. Mrs. Szewczak stated she likes that idea.

Dr. Gallacher will start working with the principals and will see if they have any alternate or additional cuts that can be made. Chairman Stokes stated that would be a good idea and that could be shared at the next budget workshop.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches asked if Board members wanted to look at specific areas for the next workshop.

Chairman Stokes would like to have questions and answers addressed at the beginning of the meeting. We can either start with either the elementary or secondary areas. Dr. Gallacher would like to include athletics with the high school, then address the middle school and finish with elementary and head start.

Dr. Gallacher will e-mail all staff regarding the potential cuts on Monday, January 25th. This is when Board members will start to hear from everyone.

Dr. Gallacher also stated if we are not maximizing the sport, we should look at the numbers and cuts may need to be made. We will need to prioritize our cuts.

Chairman Stokes stated we have two workshops left, February 2 & 13th. We have discussed redistricting, reconfiguration of class sizes or closing a school. Board members can continue this discussion when we are done with the budget. These could be items to research and items to study during the summer. We could start in September with this information for Administration to look into for us to plan for the following school year.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated this is a good idea but does not want to let any time go by. We need to have everything in place.

Chairman Stokes stated if we start to talk about these things after we present our budget on February 17th, people will wonder why we aren't doing them now. We need to separate the years.

Mrs. Szewczak stated Dr. Gallacher can start to look into this. It is a lot of work and will need input from everyone that knows how our schools are run.

Chairman Stokes stated the Board needs to give Dr. Gallacher direction at a public meeting. He can not look into things without that directive from the Board.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated each Board member can start to do their own research on what we think needs to be done. This way when we are finished with the budget we can move forward with this.

6. PROPOSED CHANGE TO BUDGET CALENDAR

Board members discussed changing the date of the February 17th Special Board meeting to February 16th. This is where the Board will publicly approve their budget.

Dr. Gallacher stated we know that all Board member can not always be at every meeting. It would be ok to write a letter of support of the budget to the Board Chairman and have it read as a statement and will be included in the minutes.

Board members decided to keep the Special meeting on Wednesday, February 17th.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sirard moved, seconded by Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches to adjourn the Special Meeting of January 23, 2010. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Joyce P. Hall
Secretary
Enfield Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary