

Beekmantown Central School District

Board of Education Work Session

Place: MS/HS Library

March 27, 2007

Time: 6:15 p.m.

Agenda

1. Call to Order

at: 6:20 p.m.

by: Stan Kourofsky

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karen Armstrong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frank Hay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard LaVigne
<input type="checkbox"/> Jane Donahue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leonard King	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> George Palmer (<i>arrived 6:36 p.m.</i>)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathleen Grinberg-Funes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stan Kourofsky	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Trombley
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timothy Palmer, Ex-Officio, Student Board Member		

Also Present: Mark Sposato Ron Clamser Diane Fox Sue Coonrod Roxann Barnes
Jen Hicks Jen Parliament Gary Lambert Sandra Gardner Ed Cook
Don Strong Michelene DeBella

Visitors: Susan King Earl Burnell Patty Gallagher Lucy Giroux Nancy Coty
Kevin Downs

2. Miscellaneous

1) Review of the financial reports:

Appropriation Status Report – (February)
Treasurer's Revenue Report – (February)
Cafeteria Revenue & Expense Report - (February)
Treasurer's Monthly Report – (February)
Trial Balance – (February)
Warrant Report – (February)
Extra-Curricular Activities Account – (February)

All of the financial reports were accepted and moved to the next meeting for a vote.

Discussion: Ms. Grinberg-Funes asked (regarding the Cafeteria Revenue & Expense Report) what the \$438,091 total represents and why has it gone up. Jennifer Parliament, District Treasurer, explained this amount represents the year-to-date expenditure total.

2) Resolved, that the Superintendent of Schools recommends to the Board of Education to approve Jennifer Carron to provide computer instruction for Incarcerated Youth Program under the supervision of the Coordinator of Incarcerated Youth Program at the Clinton County Jail for 3½ hours per week in the evening at a rate of \$30.00 per hour (grant funded) effective March 28, 2007.

Motion: RL Seconded: KA Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0 (Accept Reject Table)

Discussion: Ms. Grinberg-Funes asked if there was any conflict of interest because Ms. Carron is an employee of BCSD. Dr. Sposato replied no, others have done it in the past.

3) Five Year Capital Facilities Plan - Don Strong

Don Strong, Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds, presented the Board with the District's Five-Year Plan. The Plan is a result of the Building Condition Survey conducted by Thomas Associates and is on file with SED. The Five-Year Plan is intended to be a tool utilized by the district to actively manage its capital needs. The Plan identifies the current condition of the district's facilities and prioritizes the necessary improvements for each facility. Total cost over 5 years is estimated around \$9.6 million.

Discussion: Mr. Hay asked where the money will come from and if it will need to be bonded. Dr. Sposato replied the Board has several options to fund the projects. Ms. Grinberg-Funes was concerned about the district's liability for risk exposure regarding items addressed in the Executive Summary. Dr. Sposato replied that there is nothing at this point that is an immediate safety concern and as those types of items arise, Mr. Strong will inform the Board. Dr. Sposato advised the Board to keep in mind that the larger items need to be filed with SED and that takes time. Dr. Sposato also told the Board the reason for bringing this

up now is for budgeting and planning purposes. Ms. Grinberg-Funes wanted to know if any of these items were in relation to the Capital Project that was just completed, and if so, why do they need repairs this soon. Mr. Strong replied no, these are not related to the Capital Project just completed. Mr. Hay asked if there is any reserve fund establish for this purpose. Dr. Sposato replied no, but reminded the Board there is Excel Aid available. In closing, Mr. Strong recommends the Board re-establish an Operations Committee.

4) United States Postal Service at West Chazy request for building use – Don Strong

The Postmaster at the US Postal Service at West Chazy approached the district requesting possible use of the West Chazy building as a temporary post office location should an emergency arise damaging their current facility. Mr. Strong stated this request is part of the post office Exposure Control and Health/Safety Plan.

Discussion: Dr. Sposato commented that he was unsure if the Board needed to pass a resolution authorizing the Post Office to use the building. He also stated this would mean the building would need to be clean and utilities maintained to be ready for use, which would cost the district money. Ms. Grinberg-Funes asked if there is any way to recoup money for staff time and utilities. She also asked who would be responsible for theft or loss of equipment. Dr. Sposato replied that could be checked with the insurance company. Mr. LaVigne stated the Post Office would be responsible for their insurance and security. Dr. Palmer stated the District should charge rent. The Board asked Mr. Strong to pursue possible options with the Post office and find out how much space would be needed.

5) 2007-2008 Budget 6:58 p.m.

Dr. Sposato passed out copies of revised budget documents to the Board. Changes in the new documents include BOCES totals and revised health insurance rates. There is also a new spreadsheet for contingency budget. At this point in time, the budget is at \$35.055 million compared to \$33.6 million from last year, an increase of 4.2%. Dr. Sposato commented that this budget is basically a contingency budget. He also requested the Board give direction on the following: Reserve FTE's, Dodge Library funding, amount to use from the Fund Balance to balance the budget, establishment of a cafeteria account code, monies related to Capital Project interest, and monies for a Superintendent search.

Amount to use from the Fund Balance to balance the budget:

Dr. Sposato presented the Board with 3 options of utilizing \$750,000; \$850,000; and \$950,000 from the fund balance to balance the budget. The Business Office recommends a conservative approach of using no more than \$750,000 from the Fund Balance.

Discussion: Ms. Armstrong asked Dr. Sposato what he anticipates is going to be the Fund Balance as a result of the operations for the current school year. Dr. Sposato asked the Board to direct all questions relating to the budget to the Treasurer and/or business person and Payroll and Benefits. Ms. Parliament replied that her best estimate for the remaining appropriations for 2006-2007 is around \$400,000. Ms. Armstrong asked if all of the revenues estimated for this year have come in. Ms. Parliament replied there is a little remaining but it will be very close to estimates.

Monies related to Capital Project interest and Fund Balance Reserve:

Ms. Parliament reported to the Board that there is approximately 1 million dollars in the Capital Debt Reserve that can only be used to pay towards principal and interest for the Capital Project. Dr. Palmer asked if this money could be used to fund future Capital Projects. Ms. Parliament replied no. Ms. Parliament also explained to the Board that no additional principal can be paid on the current bonds until 2013. For that reason, it is the recommendation of the Business Office to use \$200,000 of the balance in the Capital Debt Reserve each year to subsidize interest payments on the bonds. If the Board chooses this option for 07-08, the Business Office would only recommend using \$550,000 from the Fund Balance instead of the \$750,000 to balance the budget.

Ms. Armstrong had additional questions relating to encumbrances and projections of the appropriations balance. Specifically, she thought the estimated fuel encumbrance (account 1620-479) was excessive in comparison to last years' total expenditure. Ms. Parliament and Mr. Strong stand behind their estimate. In addition, Ms. Armstrong calculates a higher amount than \$400,000 remaining in the appropriations, but acknowledges the Business Office sees the larger picture. Other accounts that Ms. Armstrong questioned included: Teachers Retirement Incentive and Special Education Tuition. Ms. Parliament explained that all of these numbers have been included in her calculations, also taking into consideration expected expenditures, and adjustments have been made accordingly for 07-08 budget projections. Ms. Parliament also offered for Ms. Armstrong to come into the office at anytime and compare calculations.

A lengthy discussion ensued about how much money to use from the Fund Balance to balance the budget. Ms. Parliament and Mr. Clamser both tried to explain to the Board that using too much of the Fund Balance

to offset the budget would falsely lower the tax rate in one year, risking higher increases in the future.

Mr. Trombley asked the Superintendent if he feels the budget has been trimmed by everything that he wants to cut. Dr. Sposato replied that while the budget maintains current programs he would like to see additional funds given for more academic programs. Mr. Trombley questioned the need for Department Chairs and Deans. He also asked if the Department Chairs have accomplished anything. Dr. Sposato replied that Department Chairs and Deans are very necessary and wanted by the Administrators. Dr. Sposato also stated presentations have been prepared in the past to inform the Board of their accomplishments but the Board President has removed them from the agenda. Ms. Grinberg-Funes expressed her disappointment that those presentations never materialized.

Dr. Sposato reminded the Board that they cut dollars and he decides what programs, etc. will be affected. Mr. Hay agreed with Dr. Sposato and said the Board pays the Superintendent and the Administrators "top dollar" to make those professional decisions. He continued that it would be foolish for the Board not to take their recommendations. Dr. Sposato stated that if the Board has a question about the return on investment for any item, it should be responded to in a timely manner.

Mr. Kourofsky commented he would like to see a balance between meeting the needs of the district and giving relief to the taxpayers. Ms. Grinberg-Funes said she doesn't know how that can be an equitable solution. A discussion ensued and Mr. Hay commented that he does not think the district should use the reserve to constantly reduce the tax rate because the reserve will be used up someday and tax payers will be hit up for 10% or more increase in the future. He remembers several years ago the Board reduced the tax rate and ended up having to borrow money at the end of the year to cover expenses. He continued that the tax payers were hit up for a huge increase the following year.

Ms. Armstrong stated the Board of Education will approve the total budget that will go out to the taxpayers and basically it is her opinion that it is not the Boards responsibility to decide how much of a Fund Balance the district is going to have and how much is going to be used. Ms. Grinberg-Funes disagreed and stated it is the Boards responsibility as the governing body. Ms. Armstrong stated she is not in favor of cutting the budget or reducing staff and wants to find a balance. She continued it is the Business Office responsibility to make decisions on the Fund Balance. Ms. Grinberg-Funes responded the Board is responsible for deciding based on the Business Office recommendations.

Reserve FTE's:

Dr. Sposato is requesting the Board consider adding 1 Instructional and 1 Non-Instruction FTE as a reserve. Additionally, each elementary school could use an additional FTE for Instructional purposes. The consensus of the Board agreed to add 1 Instructional and 1 Non-Instructional to the budget.

Dodge Library funding:

Dr. Sposato informed the Board that this budget includes \$6,500 for the Dodge Library as in years past. He reminded the Board the district also gives the Library the building and water at no charge. He recommended the Board not fund the Library since the Library will be collecting its own taxes in the future and funding the Library would present legal repercussions. Ms. Grinberg-Funes wanted to know if the Library has any programs that include the kids. Dr. Sposato replied they don't do anything with the school specifically but have programs during the summer time. The Board decided to keep the \$6,500 in the budget.

Establishment of a Cafeteria account code:

Dr. Sposato explained to the Board that the current budget does not include any funds to subsidize the cafeteria except for \$6,000 in Buildings & Grounds for repair items. Ms. Parliament recommends the Board not allocate additional money to subsidize the Cafeteria as the Cafeteria has been self-sufficient and does not need the extra funds. Mr. LaVigne asked if the Cafeteria is still paying for monitors. Ms. Parliament replied no, those are being paid out of the General Fund. Mr. King asked if the courier is paid out of the Cafeteria. Ms. Parliament replied yes. Dr. Sposato stated there has been some discussion whether the courier should be Cafeteria or Buildings & Grounds. The Cafeteria uses the courier about 60% of the time. The Board decided not to add additional funds to the budget to subsidize the cafeteria.

Monies for a superintendent search:

Dr. Sposato first made it clear that he has not resigned as Superintendent to date. Some of the discussion included costs associated with searching for a new superintendent and costs for an interim superintendent. The Board was split whether to add this item to the budget. Mr. Kourofsky changed his point of view to shift the majority on the side of not budgeting for this expense because there is enough money in the superintendent salary code to cover those expenses.

Misc. Budget Discussion

Additionally, it was discussed that current budget totals are based on projected assessment increases. The Board will have to decide on possible reductions should the budget become a Contingency Budget. Dr.

Sposato mentioned to the Board this budget is a minimal increase which is almost at the Contingency Budget cap. Should the budget go to Contingency, it would provide the taxpayers with little benefit.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Board asked to see the following new options:

Option 1: adding 1 reserve FTE each for Instructional and Non-Instructional.

Option 2: Option 1 plus 1 additional Instructional FTE for each elementary school.

Both options will be presented for each of the scenarios using the \$750,000; \$850,000 and \$950,000 from the Fund Balance to balance the budget as well as using \$200,000 from the Capital Debt Reserve.

3. Executive Session *None at this time.*

4. Additional Items to Discuss 9:09 p.m.

Dr. Palmer would like to see a district wide newsletter distributed in the future that will include reports from each building Administrator, the Superintendent, and Board President. The Board gave the go ahead on the idea which will be followed thru by Dr. Palmer and Mr. Kourofsky.

The Board agreed to give a donation from the Board members to the Courtyard Escape Project.

Mr. Trombley would like to see the Adventure Club climbing wall put back up. He requested it be put on the next Agenda for a vote. Dr. Sposato responded that the next Board meeting is the budget discussion and a formal presentation on the climbing wall would take time to prepare. Dr. Sposato continued, the issue was the club did not want the old wall put back up, rather it wanted a larger wall and curriculum for PE. Other issues included space and scheduling conflicts for use of the wall. Dr. Sposato doesn't see it as a Board voting issue at this point. Mr. Trombley would like to see the PE department write a curriculum for the climbing wall over the summer. Mr. Cook said for the climbing wall to be part of PE curriculum, staff would need to be trained on safety. Mr. Cook is going to look into the matter and report back to the Board.

Mr. LaVigne would like to correct his vote on the substitute bus driver rate of pay because he believes that his vote was based on incorrect information. Mr. LaVigne claims the Head Bus Driver, Mr. Hobbs, told him that no current employees would be harmed by lowering the rate of pay. A discussion took place and the Board decided not to revisit the vote at this time and not raise the rate of pay in next years' budget. Mr. Kourofsky will review the minutes and previous documentation on this topic and will determine how to proceed.

Ms. Grinberg-Funes asked if there will be a "Meet the Candidates" forum this year. Mr. Kourofsky replied that he has not heard anything from the BTA.

5. Adjournment 9:55 p.m.

Motion: FH Seconded: KGF Yes: 8 No: Abstain: (Accept Reject Table)