

MARCH 22, 2004 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Monday, March 22, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the Resource Center at the Board of Education building.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis (7:20) and Chairperson Morin.

Present: Board of Education members DeAngelo, McKenna, Rodriguez, Roberts, Stanziale, Walsh and Chairperson Hodges.

Absent: Councilor Fortunato and Board of Education members Pilczak and Carney.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Dr. Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of Schools; Judith Golden, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Susan Pinette, Director of Special Education; Karen Baldwin, Board of Education Director of Human Resources; Morris McCarthy, Board of Education Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations; Sal Menzo, Silas Deane Middle School Principal; Thomas Moore, Wethersfield High School Principal; and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Chairperson Morin welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting is to present the Board of Education 2004/05 Recommended Operating Budget and to follow up the joint Fireside Chat [meeting of February 28, 2004](#).

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Montinieri.

Chairperson Hodges asked all in attendance to observe a moment of silence in honor of former Wethersfield school teacher and Board of Education courier Bob Burstein who passed away earlier today.

Board of Education 2005/2005 Recommended Operating Budget

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Patrick Proctor, explained that this has been a challenging budget and he thanked his staff for putting the budget package together. He said that those present were given a copy of the Wethersfield Public Schools Annual Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year 2004-2005 and also a copy of his PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Proctor then proceeded to give a presentation of the 2004-2005 Education Budget. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- Vision of the Wethersfield Board of Education (available on the Wethersfield Board of Education website)
 1. Opportunities and outcomes
 2. The overall quality of our school system
 3. The school system's relationship with the Wethersfield community
- Budget Priorities for 2004-2005
 1. Maintain focus on class size, technology, and textbook resources
 2. Support planning and transition costs associated with the Webb/Stillman/Marsh Street Renovation Projects
 3. Make necessary corrective adjustments to 2004-2005 budget and budget development process
 4. Target budgetary resources to the continuous improvement of student learning
- Current and Projected Enrollment District wide
 1. Current 2003-2004 Total Enrollment is 3,693
 2. Projected 2004-2005 Projected Enrollment is 3,665
- Budget Overview
 1. 2003/2004 Budget is \$34,239,325
 2. 2004-2005 Proposed Budget is \$37,210,834
 3. Increase of \$2,971,509 or 8.7%

- Distribution of Proposed Budget Expenditures by Percent
 1. Salaries 68%
 2. Benefits 15%
 3. Maintenance 5%
 4. Transportation 5%
 5. Tuition 4%
 6. Supplies 2%
 7. Professional Services 1%
 8. Capital 0%
- Contributions to Increase: Budget Components
 1. Core Budget: Fixed/Contractual Costs, \$1,659,552 or 4.8%
 2. Corrective Adjustments to Budget, \$702,000 or 2.1%
 3. Renovation Plan/Transition Costs: Webb/Stillman/Marsh Street, \$146,956 or .4%
 4. New Staff, \$359,580 or 1.1%
 5. New Services: Technology & Texts, \$103,421 or .3%
- Contributions to Increase: Expenditures
 1. Salaries 52% or \$1,539,004
 2. Benefits 30% or \$892,798
 3. Professional Services 1% or \$30,221
 4. Maintenance/Property 8% \$247,188
 5. Transportation 5% or \$163,108
 6. Tuition/Other Services 7% or \$205,761
 7. Supplies Materials 0% or -\$15,105
 8. Capital Outlay -3% or -\$91,466
- New Staff Positions
 1. Information Technology Supervisor(.5 FTE) \$37,500
 2. Grade 1 E-W(1.0 FTE) \$48,913
 3. Grade 1 Hanmer(1.0 FTE) \$48,913
 4. Social Studies Teacher(1.0 FTE) \$48,913
 5. Language Arts Teacher(1.0 FTE) \$48,913
 6. Music Teacher(.4 FTE) 19,685
 7. Reinstate Admin. Secretary I(.6 FTE) \$17,540
 8. Increase Occupational Therapist to .7 FTE \$11,667
 9. Increase Security/Resident Officer to 1.0 FTE \$13,796
 10. Additional Elementary Clerical Support (1.5 FTE) \$19,740
 11. Total Staff Cost \$359,580
- Requests for New Staff Not Funded
 1. Silas Deane Middle School - .8 FTE Reading; 1.0 FTE Special Education; .4 FTE World Language
 2. Wethersfield High School - .5 FTE Latin; .5 FTE Physical Ed Health; 1.0 FTE Social Studies; 1.0 FTE Science
 3. Total of 5.2 FTE or \$254,348
- Technology Initiatives
 1. 61 Computers
 2. 9 Printers
 3. 10 Computer Carts
 4. 9 LCD Projectors
 5. 1 Interactive Whiteboard
 6. Wiring
 7. Total cost of \$102,550; Budget outlay of \$34,468; New Dollars in Budget \$39,468
 8. District and State Comparison of Number of Students per Computer by Elementary, Middle, and High School, and the Budget Impact
- Textbooks/Materials
 1. Language Arts adoptions
 2. Social Studies adoptions

3. Math adoptions
 4. Science adoptions
 5. Value of new texts/materials \$196,009; New Dollars in Budget \$63,953
- Board of Education Reductions to the Superintendent's Proposed Budget (3/11/04)
 1. Reduce proposed IT Supervisor from 1.0 FTE to .5 FTE \$37,500
 2. Eliminate Proposed .25 FTE Webb Principal \$23,562
 3. Eliminate Proposed 1.0 FTE Tech Ed Teacher at WHS \$48,913
 4. Eliminate Proposed p/t Secretary for Webb Principal \$2,049
 5. Eliminate Current RTC Paraprofessional Position at Hanmer \$24,063
 6. Increase Present p/t OT Position by .2 FTE rather than proposed .3 FTE \$5,833
 7. Reduce Proposed c/o Secretary Position from 1.0 FTE to .6 FTE \$7,307
 8. Reduce Cost of Health Benefits for Above Positions \$44,000
 9. Reduce Dollar Allocations for Supplies, Materials, Texts and Equipment \$220,000
 10. Total Reductions \$413,227
 - Present/Future Needs
 1. Technology
 2. Text/Resources
 3. Class Size Reduction
 4. Space/Facilities Improvement
 5. Early Intervention
 6. Curriculum Development
 7. Professional Development

Councilor Czernicki asked Dr. Proctor to explain the Professional Services \$19,924 increase in technical services due to the district's need to retain a consultant to assist in the Web redistricting plan because it's listed as \$25,000 in another section of the budget document. Dr. Proctor said that the amount paid to the consultant is \$25,000 and that the impact to the budget is \$19,924. Councilor Czernicki asked if the half-time elementary secretarial positions were initiated when the schools were neighborhood schools. Dr. Proctor said that he doesn't think there was ever more clerical support, but the Principals are constantly asking for more. Councilor Czernicki asked if the unfunded .5 FTE Physical Ed Health position request is in light of the Town's low Physical Education scores. Dr. Proctor said that this is an issue as well as class size and the system's low amount of Physical Education resources. Councilor Czernicki asked if any costs of opening the Webb and Stillman buildings have been predicted. Dr. Proctor said that the costs are predicted to be over \$.5 million for the two. Dr. Proctor said that the issue of full day kindergarten will have to be revisited to assess space needs. Councilor Czernicki asked Dr. Proctor if all preschool services for children ages birth to three years are being looked into. Dr. Proctor said that the Wethersfield Board of Education has been invited to apply for a non-competitive Discovery Grant in the amount of \$25,000 to learn more about the status and needs of young children in Wethersfield, and what can be done to improve early care and education outcomes for Wethersfield's children.

Councilor Cascio congratulated Dr. Proctor on the Grant application invitation and asked if the Board of Education has to fund the \$25,000 after the first year. Dr. Proctor said that the Grant is administered through the Capital Region Education Council. Councilor Cascio asked who will generate the information and research for the Grant. Dr. Proctor said that Dr. Golden and Dr. Pinette are overseeing the initiative and are putting together an Advisory Council. Councilor Cascio said that he understands that the .5 FTE Latin position has not been filled because no one has been found to fill it. Dr. Proctor said that this is correct. Councilor Cascio asked if this will create over-enrollment in other world language classes. Wethersfield High School Principal, Thomas Moore, said that it is very difficult to find certified Latin teachers and that the world language program has been expanded to accommodate the students into other languages.

Chairperson Morin asked if the reinstatement of the Administrative Secretary I is due to the move to the new building. Dr. Proctor said this position addresses the shortage for the building. Chairperson Morin thanked Dr. Proctor for his informative presentation and announced that there will be a hearing on the Town/Board of Education Budget on April 26 and then the Town Council will begin their budget deliberations.

Dr. Proctor told the Council that if they need additional information they can contact his office.

Chairperson Hodges thanked the Board of Education staff for their reader-friendly preparation of the Budget and also thanked the Council for their involvement in the budgetary process. She said that the Board of Education members have been very diligent in presenting to the Council a comprehensive budget that meets the needs of the children, taxpayers, and community of Wethersfield.

Fireside Chat Joint Meeting of February 28, 2004

Chairperson Morin stated that a summary of the proceedings was distributed and that tonight the Council and Board of Education would discuss where to go from here. He indicated that the most sensible way to decide on how to move forward is through the Shared Services Committee.

Councilor Adil said that he concurs that the Shared Services Committee is a good place to start moving forward by reviewing first the vital areas discussed at the February 28 Fireside Chat joint meeting.

Chairperson Morin asked if the summary will be available in the Library or on the Town website. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she will see to it that the information is made available at both sites.

Councilor Hemmann said that she agrees that the Shared Services Committee is a good venue; however she thinks that the work is too much for one committee and suggests that subcommittees be considered on a temporary basis in order to provide for a joint effort. The subcommittees could then bring their specific suggestions back to the Shared Services Committee.

Councilor Cascio agrees with the idea of starting with the Shared Services Committee; however they meet only one hour prior to the Council meetings. He suggests that the Shared Services Committee also meet at a time that is not immediately prior to a Council meeting.

Board of Education Chairperson Hodges said that once the Council and Board of Education hone in on the top three issues, the planning will need to go to another committee to get to the next step.

Councilor Montinieri agrees that it is a good idea to send this to the Shared Services Committee and asked if they will be meeting only to determine what the next step will be and then bring their recommendations back to the Council and Board of Education.

Chairperson Morin said that the Shared Services Committee could adjust their meeting time in order to provide for a longer discussion time that is not immediately prior to the Council meeting.

Board of Education member Roberts said that the scheduling should not be a problem.

Councilor Cascio said that the Council and Board of Education members should revisit the Fireside Chat summary document by the next Shared Services Committee meeting and bring suggestions and concerns to the Committee at that time.

Chairperson Morin said that he'd like to have the Shared Services Committee determine short term and long term goals.

Board of Education Chairperson Hodges suggested that those members of the Board of Education and Council be present at the Shared Services Committee meeting even if they are not members of the committee.

Chairperson Morin thanked Wethersfield Community Television for attending tonight's meeting to televise it to the public. He also thanked the public for attending and invited any of them to make a brief comment if they wished to do so.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Susan Bookman, 51 Gooseberry Hill, spoke in favor of the Board of Education Budget as proposed. As a Silas Deane Middle School parent, she would like to see the two full-time positions there approved.

Jim Clynch, 903 Ridge Road, asked Dr. Proctor who and what criteria moved six students from the main stream to special education. Chairperson Morin said that Dr. Proctor can make himself available to answer this after the meeting.

Jane Strasser, 93 State Street, said that she supports the proposed Board of Education Budget in its entirety.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:23 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 3/29/04