

27-C

Education Budget Ad Hoc Meeting

The School Budget Ad Hoc Committee meeting was called to order on April 10, 2013 in Meeting Room 3C at City Hall at 5:40 by council member Colleen Stanley, the Chairman of the committee.

Committee members Joseph Scozzafava, Gregg Seabury, Fred Visconti and Michael Haddad were present. Dr. Sal Pasquarella, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. William Glass, Deputy Superintendent of Schools; Joe Martino, Director of Finance for the school administration; Kimberly Mango-Thompson, Human Resources Director/Legal Counsel to the BOE; Deborah Mailoux-Peterson, Pupil Services; and David St. Hilaire, Finance Director for the City of Danbury. Also attending the meeting were BOE members Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Gary Falkenthal, Richard Hawley and Sandy Steichen were in attendance. Ex-officio members Levy, Rotello, Teicholz, Taylor, Nagarsheth and Cavo were present. An interested member of the public was also in attendance.

Chairwoman Stanley thanked everyone for attending the meeting. An informational packet providing a brief overview of the budget was distributed.

Dr. Pasquarella advised that once again, everyone was very mindful of the economic conditions. He thanked David St. Hilaire, Director of Finance for the City of Danbury; Antonio Iadarola, P.E., Director of Public Works for the City of Danbury and Richard Palanzo, Superintendent of Public Buildings for their work on the replacement of boilers and windows. Significant energy savings have been achieved.

Dr. Pasquarella stated that an 18% budget increase in benefits was anticipated and in working with the City of Danbury Finance Director the number was reduced to 6%. The proposed budget for FY13-14 contains \$4.4M in new allocations. He has been working with the State on Alliance Funds, which must be used for new initiatives. \$2.7M has been recommended but he does not have the final amount that will be appropriated out of the Education Commission. ECS Grant funding is expected in the amount of \$1.7M however, a plan needs to be submitted to spend the funds towards closing the achievement gap. Technology and its infrastructure, hardware, software, the reduced lunch program, insurance and maintenance contract costs were discussed. Dr. Sal advised that system-wide approximately 50% participate in the reduced lunch program, which is not funding by the school system. Council member Stanley stated that she would have liked to have seen more detail for budget line items, in particular the technology area.

Upon the request of council member Seabury, Dr. Pasquarella gave a brief overview of the teacher evaluation system which will be phased in over the next couple years.

Council member Haddad commented that the numbers in the books are not correct. David St. Hilaire explained that the cut-off for the Proposed Budget Books is sooner than the determination of firm numbers and are based on best estimates. Mr. St. Hilaire further stated that \$350,000 in unexpended funds from last year's budget was transferred to a technology savings line item for future infrastructure improvements. Dr. Pasquarella advised that \$200,000 in unexpended funds from last year's budget were returned to the City.

Chairwoman Stanley requested information regarding workers comp claims. Dr. Pasquarella and David St. Hilaire advised that in spite of safety measures taken by the staff, injuries do occur.

Chairwoman Stanley asked Dr. Glass to provide information on the improvement of testing scores. Dr. Glass stated that there has been testing score growth in all areas tested and by "working smart", are at the top of the district performance group. Danbury is out performing its demographic. Some funding for professional development has been received thru grant subsidies. He advised that Danbury is 164 out of 169 in pupil spending.

Discussion followed regarding the salary for the Assistant Superintendent, which showed an 18% increase. Dr. Glass would be assuming some of the duties resulting from a staff member's retirement. \$10,000 of the increase is a stipend, which would go away upon replacing the retired staff member.

David St. Hilaire discussed salary and benefits and non-salary and benefits. The non-salary and benefits line is basically flat.

Security and safety costs were discussed. The item has increased in order to provide additional security and safety advocates at all of the schools.

Upon the request of Council member Teicholz, ex-officio, Headstart was discussed. Operations and transportation for the new facility will be the responsibility of Headstart. There is \$485,000 resulting in a \$50,000 reduction. Teacher salaries are part of the BOE budget.

Council member Haddad stated he would like to be provided with additional information regarding the cost associated with the purchase of books.

Joe Martino discussed fuel use and savings. Significant savings were realized from the boiler and window replacements. Mill Ridge saw a 50% reduction. By instituting the Health Savings Account program, resulted in significant savings.

Council member Seabury moved to recommend to the Council as a Whole to increase last year's BOE spending from \$115,795,291 to \$117,045,291, which represents a 1.08% increase. Council member Visconti seconded the motion. **Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Council member Seabury moved to adjourn at 7:15pm, seconded by council member Stanley. **Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Chairwoman Stanley thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Colleen Stanley, Chairman

Joseph Scozzafava

Gregg Seabury

Fred Visconti

Michael Haddad