

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MONDAY,
JANUARY 30, 2006**

A Special Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Wednesday, January 30, 2006, at the Administration Building, 1110 Main Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 P.M. by Chairperson Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien.

PRESENT Chairperson Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien, Jason Rojas, Jr., Secretary, Robert Damaschi, Karen Howe, Cynthia Reik, Prescille Yamamoto (arrived 6:15), Ram Aberasturia, Marcus Oladell, Hank Pawlowski, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT Dr. Marion Martinez, Superintendent of Schools
Dennis Bieu, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services
Al Costa, Director of Facilities
Jody Lefkowitz, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Jan Skolnick, Consultant to Human Resources
Rich Kehoe, Chairman, Town Council
Donald Pitkin, Minority Leader, Town Council
Stephanie Labanowski, Member, Town Council

Mr. Mainuli distributed a memo that included information from the State concerning the Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER). Mr. Mainuli stated the importance for a school district to meet the MER and not risk losing Educational Cost Sharing funds from the State. He went on to say that drastic cuts to the budget could impact could adversely affect the MER.

Mr. Mainuli also responded to questions concerning the State's Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR). The MBR requires a town to increase its direct appropriation to a school district in the same proportion as any increase in ECS funds. If ECS funds increase by \$500,000, the town's direct appropriation for education should increase by at least that amount.

Mr. Mainuli stated on the positive side, we received good news from the Town regarding self insurance costs. The cost estimates for self insurance received by the Town will reduce our estimate by \$2.5 million.

Comments from Administration and Board Members on the Budget Proposal:

The proposed budget represents an increase of approximately \$5.7 million over the current fiscal year. This represents a 7.77% increase.

- Dr. Martinez re: Two Rivers Middle Magnet – One budget reduction option that is on the table for discussion is for the school district to consider withdrawal from the Two Rivers Magnet School. We would need to give CREC notice one year in advance of the decision.

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- The reduction in personnel, in this budget reduction proposal, is to cut two currently filled positions and one proposed position;
- Staff Development funds will be eliminated in this budget reduction proposal. Ms. Howe asked how this would be affected; Dr. Martinez stated it affects all initiatives;
- Mr. Rojas supports this budget and thanked Dr. Martinez and Mr. Mainuli for their efforts in putting this budget together;
- Ms. Howe – re: math curriculum – materials and resources are being reduced to \$325,000;
- Re: truck for Facilities Department – Mr. Costa stated he will look for a used vehicle. Mr. Rojas asked if this could come from the Town with shared services. Mr. Costa noted the Town vehicles have high mileage. Mr. Damaschi noted it does not make sense to purchase a used vehicle and proposed to put the truck back into this budget.

Mr. Kehoe noted the Board has a difficult task ahead of them. He suggested a joint meeting with the Town be held to discuss issues relating to the Board and the Town. He further stated we are trying to make both operations work more closely together. He noted the possibility of looking at trying to combine data processing and legal services with the Board.

Mr. Kehoe also stated he deliberately has not been at budget meetings for the Board. He stated there is a long way to go in this process. He stated we will set up a joint meeting with the Board and Town Council once Chairperson Mayranen-O'Brien has made recommendations to the Council. He further stated the Board needs to make a budget recommendation to the Mayor that considers what is right for the taxpayers as well as the Board. He noted that a 9% increase will equate to a 4 mil increase for the Town. He went on to say that if residents do not have confidences in our public schools, we, as a Town will fail.

Chairperson Mayranen-O'Brien indicated that we are doing our best but we have not met the Town Charter timeframe to submit our proposed budget.

Mr. Aberasturia thanked the Superintendent for putting this budget together, but he cannot support the proposed increases.

Ms. Howe asked the Superintendent if this budget could support all initiatives. Dr. Martinez stated she brought forth a budget that is a little over 12%. Many of the initiatives were not listed in priority order and all initiatives could not be funded. She further stated that all the initiatives on the table for discussion and it's up to the Board to prioritize the initiatives and to make choices.

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JANUARY 30, 2006**

Ms. Reik suggested that the smartboards (\$10,000) be funded through grants. Dr. Martinez stated that she is seeking grants from SBC and the School/Business Partnerships.

Dr. Martinez stated she is more committed to Staff Development. She noted that a percentage of certain grants must be mandated for professional development.

Ms. Yamamoto asked how will the third year fee for CAFE be affected by us not belonging to CAFE. Dr. Martinez stated that funds are still set aside in the proposed budget for policy updates and support but will have staff review the impact of not renewing membership to CAFE. Dr. Martinez also stated that we could consider going back into the budget to restore some of these cuts.

Ms. Lebanowski stated she believes the Board of Education are the experts in this area and empowers the Board to deliver the best education to our Town. She is hoping the budget is delivered to the Town Council this year with passion.

MOTION By Hank Pawlowski, Jr.
Seconded by Karen Howe
To approve the proposed budget with a 7.65 percent increase, as a basis.
Motion carried. Nay: Ram Aberasturia

MOTION By Prescille Yamamoto
Seconded by Robert Damaschi
To restore \$15,000 for a new vehicle.
Motion carried. Nay: Hank Pawlowski, Jr., Jason Rojas,
Ram Aberasturia

MOTION Prescille Yamamoto
Seconded by Robert Damaschi
To restore \$9,000 for board of education expenses
Motion carried. Nay: Hank Pawlowski, Jr., Jason Rojas,
Ram Aberasturia

MOTION By Cynthia Reik
Seconded by Robert Damaschi
To restore \$20,000 for a new math curriculum
Motion carried. Nay: Ram Aberasturia, Jason Rojas

MOTION By Robert Damaschi
Seconded by Prescille Yamamoto

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To accept, as amended, the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2006-07 at \$79,941,430 (7.77% increase) and move forward to the Mayor.

Motion carried. Nay: Ram Aberasturia

MOTION

By Prescille Yamamoto

Seconded by Hank Pawlowski, Jr.

To adjourn the Special Meeting (6:55 P.M.)

Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by:
Donna Fitzgerald