

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

A Special Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at the Board of Education Administrative Offices, 1110 Main Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes

PRESENT Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes, Dorese Roberts,
Ram Aberasturia, Robert Damaschi, Anita Morrison, Karen Howe,
Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien, Marcus Oladell, IV

ALSO PRESENT Debbie Kaprove, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services
Al Costa, Director of Facilities
Donna Tyrrell, Manager/Accounting, Business Services
Joanne Zatarain, CPA, Business Services

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. John Welch – re: representing Local 1933 Cust/Maint. Union, suggests Board table any cuts for custodial maintenance department until accurate information is received. He questioned the cost/benefit analysis in the Operational Survey prepared by the administration. He added that the union was willing to listen to concessions;
2. Frank Vernile, 15 Callahan Lane – also Facilities Maintenance Supervisor – stated the Operational Survey is complete and accurate;
3. Anna Smith, representing Local 2727 Secretaries/Security – asked Board to take another look at the proposed cuts – She cannot go back to her membership with proposed concessions without some guarantee from the Board that union positions can be restored; She further stated her willingness to sit down with the Board to discuss budget reduction options;
4. Karen O'Connell – representing Teachers Union – has a meeting scheduled for Thursday with her membership. She stated that it was premature to make all the budget reductions in light of the federal stimulus package. She further stated that teachers are direct link to instruction of students. Also stated that membership thought school administration is too top heavy and should be cut first. All suggestions that were made were not considered;
5. Robin Zajac, representing Local 1933 Cust./Maint. – questioned how many can be saved by eliminating ten maintenance positions. Also, stated that staff should have been notified before reading cuts in the J.I.;
6. Bernie Bombardier, head custodian at Norris School – concerned the proposed cuts may compromise the safety of the children.

SPECIAL MEETING FOR BUDGETARY PURPOSES WITH POSSIBLE ACTION

Mr. Mainuli stated we have provided an amended proposed budget of \$79,945,345 to accommodate the Mayor's recommended budget of \$79,000,000.

Mr. Mainuli reviewed the proposed elimination list that was reviewed at the last budget meeting. It was the consensus of the Board to reinstate the previously proposed eliminated position of electrician and eliminate one plumber.

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

Mr. Mainuli presented the following additional proposed reductions to those previously proposed on February 18, 2009:

- Reduce technology equipment account (25,000);
- Reduce BOE expenses account – 8910 (11,000);
- Reduce utilities based on closing most school bldgs. At 6:30 P.M. (109,900);
- Reduce BOE dues and fees account – 8100 (CABE) (22,800);
- Eliminate funding for two permanent site subs at EHHS (45,140);
- Reduce conferences and dues for Special Ed (4,000);
- 1 FTE Literacy Coordinator – District (68,282);

Mr. Mainuli noted we are awaiting the stimulus package and will then look at the proposed amended budget within the next couple of months. A portion of the revenues received from Woodland School, approximately \$500,000 will be used to cover general budget salaries in next year's budget. We don't know at this time what budget decisions the State will make. It can get worse. We will be going to the Town Council budget meeting on Thursday, February 26 to present the Board's amended Proposed Budget for FY 2009-10. The Town must adopt its budget by mid-March.

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated the timelines are dictating us to have this proposed budget to the Mayor. She suggested that everyone come to the Town Council meeting at 7:00 P.M. on Thursday. Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated if taxes were raised a little, we would not have to cut so deep. The Board can use your help in advocating for the budget.

Interim Superintendent Debbie Kaprove stated the stimulus package may have restrictions as to how we can use this money. We are trying very hard to keep programs. Our priority is providing the best education for our students. It is not an easy decision for the Board. She agreed with the board chair that a small increase in taxes may eliminate the need for further cuts. Interim Superintendent Debbie Kaprove thanked the Board for looking at everything and being thoughtful about maintaining programs.

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes asked if there were any additional comments. These comments follow:

A question was raised by Karen O'Connell regarding \$500,000 from Woodland School. Mr. Mainuli stated that the number of out-of-district students enrolled at Woodland School was expanded last year which allowed for the projected increase in revenues. Interim Superintendent Debbie Kaprove stated we are also hoping districts will continue to place their students with us.

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes noted the State is in a deficit and may cut whatever we get from the Federal government as part of the stimulus package.

**SPECIAL MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

Ms. Roberts stated she is against teachers and security positions being cut, but agreed that we have to start somewhere.

Ms. Howe asked how these budget cuts will affect our Strategic Plan. Interim Superintendent Debbie Kaprove stated it will have an impact.

Chairperson Mary Alice Dwyer Hughes stated before the vote on the amended proposed budget that she will take the proposed reductions to the Town Council even if they are not approved by the Board. Eventually, we will be looking at making cuts. She also reiterated this is not the budget we will end up with – she once again urged parents, teachers and all of the public to come to the Town Council meeting on Thursday. Remember, a small tax increase would help us tremendously.

Ms. Mayranen-O'Brien stated she thinks it is tragic what we are doing and will not be voting for these cuts. Mr. Damaschi stated he also will not be voting for these cuts.

MOTION By Ram Aberasturia
Seconded by Anita Morrison
To amend the East Hartford Board of Education adopted proposed budget and present a proposed budget of \$79,945,345, and reinstate one full time electrician and eliminate one plumber.
Motion carried. Nay: Robert Damaschi, Hilde Mayranen-O'Brien.

Ginny Lynch stated we need to change the Charter to prevent this from happening in the future; i.e., having to present a budget to the Mayor without knowing what revenues we will be receiving.

MOTION By Ram Aberasturia
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To adjourn the Special Meeting (6:55 P.M.)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by: Donna Fitzgerald