

**SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
EAST HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 5, 2013**

A Special Budget Meeting of the East Hartford Board of Education was held on Thursday, December 5, 2013 at the Board of Education Administrative Offices, 1110 Main Street, East Hartford, CT. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM by Chairman Jeffrey Currey.

PRESENT Chairman Jeffrey Currey, Secretary Bryan Hall, Dorese Roberts, Christopher Gentile, Marilyn Pet, Stephanie Watkins, Tom Rup

ABSENT Tyron Harris

ALSO PRESENT Nathan D. Quesnel, Superintendent of Schools
Paul Mainuli, Director of Business Services
Christopher Wethje, Director of Human Resources
Al Costa, Director of Facilities

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

Business Needing Board Action

Special Meeting for budgetary purposes with possible action on the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Superintendent Quesnel stated our number one priority is to provide quality instruction to the kids. We are proposing a budget for FY 2014-15 of \$92,231,079, an increase of 5.7% over our Adopted Budget for FY 2013-14. Further, while this proposed budget does represent over a five percent increase, East Hartford Public Schools currently ranks as number 152 of 169 schools in the state based on dollars spent per child according to information released by the Office of Policy and Management (2012). Superintendent Quesnel also noted currently our budget is supported by over \$20 million in grant funds. We continue to compete for grant opportunities and alternate revenue sources to allow us to provide innovative enrichment opportunities for our town's children. We will continue to work with our Town Council, parents and taxpayers.

Thank you to Mr. Mainuli and staff for doing a great job in preparing the proposed budget.

Superintendent Quesnel provided a PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of the budget, including a review of programs, revenue and cost drivers to the 2014-15 budget. Our FY 2014-15 proposed budget request of \$92,231,079 maintains current service levels and preserves the existing educational initiatives critical to improving student achievement within the district. The Superintendent's Proposed Budget is aligned to our Strategic Plan.

Mr. Wethje will be presenting a detailed overview of contractual salaries/benefits and the impact on the 2014-15 budget. Mr. Mainuli will give a detailed overview of financial drivers within the overall proposed budget. Mr. Costa will give a detailed overview of drivers of Facilities operations and plant operations.

Human Resources – Mr. Wethje gave a detailed overview of contractual salaries/benefits and its impact on the proposed budget. He noted that the district has 1,250 employees.

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Key budget drivers are salaries and benefits – 80% of the proposed operating budget. There are no new positions in the Superintendent's Proposed Budget. Also, the contractual costs for Kelly Services, (substitute teachers), was moved to Human Resources in the proposed budget. Overall, the Human Resources budget reflects a modest increase for advertising costs.

Contractual health benefits account for 9.8% of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget. Workers' Compensation shows an increase of 10% as required by the town.

Mr. Wethje noted new Human Resources initiatives: (1) to develop a leadership academy in conjunction with the Connecticut Association of Schools for approximately 12 East Hartford educators selected through a competitive application and interview process. This will be funded by the District's Alliance grant; (2) Staff Recognition – quarterly recognition of a certified and non-certified staff member who embodies the core beliefs of the district; (3) MUNIS system – full implementation of the MUNIS HR project will be completed.

Benefits/Fixed Charges -- \$14,471,555.00 – This reflects increases for employee health benefits, Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), Property & Liability insurance and Worker's Compensation.

Business Services

Mr. Mainuli stated that the major budget drivers in the proposed budget for FY 2014-15 are teacher salaries, health benefits, building maintenance and supplies, IDEA Special education grant subsidy, textbooks and instructional supplies for the Common Core State Standards and Debt Service.

- **Teacher Salaries** – \$1.6 million for contractual increases ;
- **Health Benefits/Insurance** – \$1.1 million for health benefits;
- **Building Maintenance** - \$319,000 for repairs & maintenance and construction;
- **IDEA Special Education Grant** - \$400,000 added to the proposed budget to cover staff and program services no longer covered by the state grant for special education students;
- **Textbooks and Instructional Materials** - \$535,000 to support the Common Core State Standards at the elementary grades;
- **Debt Service** - \$743,702 payment for energy improvement projects conducted in all school building by Johnson Controls

Fiscal Services – The proposed budget in a subsidy for school uniforms of \$15,000. School Business Partnership is considering a donation to the district for a portion of the uniform subsidy cost. Also, in the proposed budget is \$20,000 to reimburse the school lunch account for unpaid meals. A projected shortfall is paid meals is expected based on prior and current year experience. School principals and food service staff make an on-going effort to collect funds from families.

Board of Education Services – reflects an increase for a CAFE membership and student recognition and school volunteer awards. CAFE may offer some evening workshops in the future to accommodate those who are working during the day.

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Facilities - Mr. Costa noted that Facilities represents 6% of the overall budget. He gave an overview of our school buildings, noting there are 19 buildings totaling over 1.3million square feet within 210 acres of land. The existing age of infrastructure contributes to higher operational costs. Also, several of our buildings are widely used after hours by town or or civic organizations which also contribute to operational expenditures.

Mr. Costa noted there are budget increases in custodial supplies in Plant Operations, repair and maintenance in Plant Maintenance and budget increase in Security Services for security uniforms.

Capital Improvements - Facilities other considerations were the aging of the fleet and budget increases needed for major building projects. Mr. Costa noted we have completed many major projects with the small Facilities staff.

Chairman Currey once again thanked Mr. Mainuli and Joanne Zatarain for assisting in putting this budget together. Superintendent Quesnel stated this is a very conservative budget and thanked the Board and administration for their input this evening. We are expecting to submit a Proposed Superintendent's Budget to the Mayor on January 2, 2014.

MOTION By Bryan Hall
Seconded by Dorese Roberts
To adjourn the Special Budget Meeting of the Board (9:35 PM)
Motion unanimously carried.

Recorded by: Donna Fitzgerald