



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Special Session
Meeting Location: City Council Chambers
Meeting Date: **Monday, August 25, 2008**
Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A special session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, August 25, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

A. ROLL CALL: Present were, Marjorie Fisher, Dorothea Hooper, Audra Lurvey, Carolyn Mebert, Beth Setear, and Doris Grady. Absent was Britt Ulinski-Schuman.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor, Business Administrator, Laurie Verville, Athletic Director, Peter Wotton; Technology Manager, Chris Roberge and Dover Citizens.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Board led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM:

- Diane McComby, 3 Dunn's Bridge Lane, stated her child is in the Woodman Park District but has been attending Garrison School. Mother is concerned whether her child has to move back to her district school. Principal Gray advised her it may be a possibility student must return to Woodman. Mother does not want to disrupt the child.
- Debbie Hannah, 419 Old Garrison Road, addressed first grade class sizes at Garrison School. She stated her belief it would be unwise to wait until October 1st to add another first grade teacher as it would further disrupt the student's first grade experience.

D. NOMINATIONS: Audra Lurvey moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to accept the nominations.

Ms. Hooper questioned a nomination for the "Response to Intervention" position and asked if it was "like a behavior specialist." Dr. O'Connor stated it is a federally funded position and the person will work closely with student and families when intervention is required. Ms. Fisher asked if it was part of the "wrap-around" program. Superintendent O'Connor stated it was.

A roll call **VOTE PASSED 6/0.**

E. ENROLLMENTS & STAFF FOR 2008/2009: Dr. O'Connor reviewed with the Board, updated enrollments as of, August 25th, 2008 and current class sizes subsequent to the addition of new staff during the last school board meeting. He also discussed elementary out-of-district assignments and how they affected class size and enrollment numbers at individual schools.

He stated the district does have an open enrollment policy at the three elementary schools that is dictated on two premises: First is the question, "is there room" in the requested school? Second is that parents must provide transportation to and from school. After reviewing all out-of-district placements, he found the numbers were so low as not to affect staffing requirements at any of the schools. He added, however, that he has directed principals to send letters to all out-of-district students advising it is possible they will be reassigned to their "home" schools next year.



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Dr. O'Connor reviewed class sizes with the Board, noting the current largest class was Garrison School's first grade with an average of 22.8 students per class. The Superintendent added if there were any out-of-district students enrolled in the first grade class at Garrison it may be to the school's advantage to return them to their home schools. However, he recommended the Board allow the school principal's to make the decision whether or not to allow those out-of-district student's remain.

Chairperson Fisher stated the consensus of the Board was to allow the elementary school principals to make the decision whether or not to allow out-of-district students in their schools.

Ms. Hooper noted she had received feedback from concerned Garrison parents who were concerned that if an additional teacher was hired in October for first grade, it would disrupt the student's who would have already started school and settled in with their teacher. She asked the Superintendent to clarify how the process would work.

Dr. O'Connor explained the addition of an elementary teacher after the start of the school year has happened only two times in 18 years. Principals first contacted parents to ask their preference on reassignment to the new class. If after surveying parents, only 10 people volunteered and you have to move 16 to 18 children, there would be 6 to 8 parents whose parents may not want to see that change. "I think the discussion of October has arisen in the Garrison community as a result of comments I have made in the last couple of meetings where I've said Boards have taken a "wait and see" approach to enrollment and have waited until as late as October before making a decision to see what the actual enrollment was at that grade level. I can recall two occasions in 18 years where a Board has made a decision, at the elementary level, to add a teacher that late in the school year...If you look at the numbers, clearly 22.8 students is above what we generally have subscribed to as an average enrollment at first grade. We've tried over the years to keep that number down to approximately 20 students."

Ms. Grady cited Ed Rule 306.17 on class size and noted that Dover enrollments are still well below the state standards:

Ed 306.17 Class Size.

(a) Class size for instructional purposes, in each school shall:

(1) Be:

- a. Kindergarten – grade 2, 25 students or fewer per teacher, provided that each school shall strive to achieve the class size of 20 students or fewer per teacher;
- b. Grades 3 – 5, 30 students or fewer per teacher, provided that each school shall strive to achieve the class size of 25 students or fewer per teacher; and



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c. Middle and senior high school, 30 students or fewer per teacher; or

Ms. Grady stated she would not support the addition of another teacher at this time, preferring to wait until the October 1st enrollments while the class enrollments are still changing.

Ms. Hooper stated she would agree with that. “At 22.8 students, rather than disrupt students into the school year, that does not seem to me an intolerable amount. Plus, I agree with Doris, our numbers do change as we go into the school year.”

Ms. Fisher stated, “I would go along with you and have the principals make the decision whether these students stay in their school or not. I got a couple of calls from Garrison parents who were worried that we were even going to put a new teacher in now – they said their kindergarteners going into first grade already know who is going to be in their class, and they are set, and they didn’t want anything to change. Having said that, I remember about four years ago, we had to add a teacher in Horne Street, first grade, in October and the kids were absolutely fine. There was no problem with it. A lot of parents said they would go into the first grade, I don’t know if we had to move some who weren’t sure if they wanted to or not, but I know that the kids were fine, the teachers were fine, but I agree - I think we should wait. Any student in classes over 20, if they ant to move to another school, there is room. So I would rather hold off and wait.”

Chairperson Fisher stated the consensus of the Board is to wait until enrollments “settle down” before addressing the issue of adding additional staff.

F. AWARD BID FOR WIRELESS LAPTOP CARTS & BATTERIES: Business Manager, Laurie Verville requested the Board award a bid in the amount of \$45,230.98 to EarthWalk, sole source provider and only bidder, for wireless laptop carts and batteries. She noted another item on the evening’s agenda to enter into a lease/purchase for this bid.

Ms. Mebert asked if the money was already budgeted. Ms. Verville stated there is a \$30,000 line general fund budget in 08/09 to apply towards the evening’s two bid awards. The remaining funds will be discussed during the resolution to enter into lease/purchase later on the agenda.

Audra Lurvey moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to award the bid in the amount of \$45,230.98 to EarthWalk. A roll call **VOTE PASSED 6/0**.

G. AWARD BID FOR LAPTOP COMPUTER SYSTEMS: Business Manager, Laurie Verville, requested the Board award a bid in the amount of \$62,460 to Higgins Office Products for 90 Wireless Laptop Computers with a three-year warranty.

Ms. Seater asked if it would be for purchase of the laptops or a lease. Ms. Verville stated it would be for purchase and we would own the equipment at the end of three years.



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Ms. Fisher asked if the lease/purchase meant the \$62,460 is not spent in one year – it will be over three years. Ms. Verville stated that was correct.

Ms. Grady stated, “So we will have committed, next year, \$43,536 and the following year we will already have committed to that budget, \$43,000?” Ms. Verville stated that was correct. Ms. Grady asked what would be the advantage of the lease over the purchase. Ms. Verville clarified we will actually own the goods at the end of three years. She equated the word “lease” is comparable to a “loan” in this scenario. It is not a true lease. We will own the equipment with no “buy-out” at the end of three years. Ms. Hooper asked what kind of longevity the District would have with the laptops at the end of the warranty period. Mr. Roberge indicated his intent is to move these laptops to the elementary schools at the end of three years and then do another purchase at the end of three years to provide, once again, the most advanced technology at the high school. Ms. Setear asked how often the current labs are used. Mr. Roberge stated they are in constant use but the existing machines often crash and seize-up due to wear and tear. The Dover High School is down to 42 (from 60) laptops that are currently in use. Ms. Grady asked Ms. Verville, “In your expertise, you feel this is the best way to go?” Ms. Verville stated it was. She stated she did not want to lease beyond 4 years because interest would increase. This works well within the technology budget over the next three years. Ms. Grady asked if 6 ½% interest was the lowest available and Ms. Verville stated it was.

Audra Lurvey Moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to award the bid in the amount of \$62,460 to Higgins Office Products for 90 Wireless Laptop Computers. A roll call **VOTE PASSED 6/0**.

H. OTHER:

1. RESOLUTION: Ms. Verville read the resolution into the record:

RE: REQUEST TO PROCEED WITH LEASE PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS: the District solicited two public bids for Wireless Laptop Batteries and Chargers, and 90 Wireless Laptop Computers, and

WHEREAS: the equipment will be used in student labs at the Middle and High School levels, and

WHEREAS: the bids were awarded to Higgins Office Products, Inc. (90 wireless laptop computers) in the amount of \$62,460.00, and Earthlink Communications, Inc.



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(wireless laptop batteries and chargers), in the amount of \$45,230.98, for a total of \$107,690.98, and

WHEREAS: the District has investigated two leasing companies and has determined that Advantage Financial Services, LLC offered the best municipal rate, and

WHEREAS: the agreement will include “Non-Appropriation Clause” language required by the City of Dover, and

WHEREAS: the SAU business office has received a municipal lease quote from Advantage Financial Services, LLC for a 36-month loan at a rate of 6.52% and in three annual payments: September 2008 \$30,000.00; September 2009 \$43,536.88; and September 2010 \$43,536.88.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Dover School Board has received a request from the Business Administrator to secure financing from Advantage Financial Services, LLC a municipal lease/purchase agreement in the amount of \$107,690.98 to be paid for from the General Fund.

Dr. Mebert noted, “So we’re paying at 6% close to \$10,000 more than the total that is given here?” Ms. Verville agreed and that was not stated in the resolution. She added prepayment at no penalty would be allowed as an option to lower interest payments.

Ms. Grady asked if the money was within the budget for this year. Ms. Verville stated \$30,000 is available in this year’s budget and Mr. Roberge is aware of the funds that will be required over the next two years. Mr. Roberge explained, “I am investing a lot of money this year in other infrastructure areas – network and stuff like that – also software for the district, so I am expecting next year to be able to handle this.”

Dr. Mebert reiterated, “So the maximum that we’ll pay with the interest is \$117,073.76 but it could be less?” Ms. Verville stated that was correct.

Audra Lurvey moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to adopt the resolution. An oral **VOTE PASSED 6/0.**

2. FRESHMAN JV GIRLS VOLLEYBALL: Peter Dr. O’Connor explained Peter Wotton had been approached by the volleyball Booster parents who are asking the district to support their providing the funding for Freshman JV Volleyball at no cost to the district. They will pick up the costs for officiating, transportation, coaches salary, uniforms, etc. He introduced Mr. Wotton to provide more information. He noted the appreciation of the parents and students for the Board’s addition of the girls’ volleyball program. There was a large turn-out this year - 36 girls. In order



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to accommodate more students, the parents asked if they could get permission to expand the program in lieu of cutting girls from the program. Mr. Wotton wanted them to understand there was no way he would approach the Board for more funds this year or next and that was understood. The Boosters have a fundraising budget and they would like to use those funds to

Audra Lurvey moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to support Freshman JV Volleyball at no cost to the district. An oral **VOTE PASSED 6/0**.

Dr. Mebert asked if this would get us in compliance with Title IX. Mr. Wotton stated he believed that was true but he had only just received the final OCR report on compliance and was reviewing it with Dr. O'Connor. A few questions were placed to OCR for which he is awaiting answers, but he felt that "absolutely puts us in good standing with Title IX." He added that the report was based upon last year's program, but recent support by the Board should put the program in good standing.

3. STATUS OF SCHOOLS ON OPENING DAY: Dr. O'Connor stated he toured all buildings on Sunday afternoon. All elementary schools were in good shape, with some final touches occurring at Woodman Park. UNICCO worked overtime all weekend to prepare. The most problematic of the five buildings was Dover High School. Some hallways and classrooms are undergoing cleaning and waxing. Part of the delay was that after rooms had been cleaned, painters came in and created more dust and dirt and set the staff back. He noted, "All in all, I think everything will be in reasonably good shape come Wednesday morning and the arrival of students. Ms. Grady added that roof flooding may also have contributed to the set-back. Ms. Lurvey questioned whether the roof construction would exasperate the normal issues with buses, parking, and regular issues. Dr. O'Connor stated two areas (one in back towards weight room, bay areas in the rear of the school) that will be somewhat off limits. Additionally, 6 to 8 parking spaces will be impacted. There will be some noise. There will be some sealing of seams, but most of that is moving away from classrooms and towards the gym and auditorium.

I ADJOURNMENT: At 7:17 P.M., Audra Lurvey moved Carolyn Mebert seconded, to adjourn to non-public session. An oral **VOTE PASSED 6/0**.

Respectfully submitted,

BETH SETEAR, Secretary
Dover School Board