

A budget workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, February 27, 2006, at 7:05 p.m. in Council Chambers.

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Brandon Foye, Carolyn Mebert, Dorothea Hooper, Audra Lurvey, Marjorie Fisher, Kara Winton, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Garrison School Principal, Anna Parrill; Dover High School Principal, Chris George; Woodman Park School Principal, Anne Watson; Dover Middle School Principal, Larry DeYoung; Horne Street School Principal, Barbara Szabunka; Curriculum Director, Dr. Murray Ingraham; Network Manager, Bailey Rigg; Athletic Director, Peter Wotton; Dover High School Dean, Patrick Boodey; Facilities and Operations Manager, Joanne Eaton; Federal Projects Director, Jean Briggs; Director of Special Education, Jackie Adams; DTU President, Richard Barrett; Dover Teachers (J. Hennessey, M. Buese), Paraprofessional (Diana Pettis), Custodian (Robert Hillyard); and Librarians (Linda Smart, Elsie Domingo, and Laura Horan); Dover Citizens; and Marcus Weisgerber, *Foster's*.

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

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM:

Jan Hennessey, World Language Curriculum Advisor, asked the Board to reconsider cutting a .5 World Language Teacher position at Dover Middle School. She provided an outline of the history of the position and encouraged the Board to support the full-time position at DMS to maintain the current program at the 5th, 6th, and 8th grade levels.

Linda Smart, Horne Street School Librarian spoke on behalf of all district librarians asking Board members to reconsider the elimination of Library Books, References, and Supplies funds from the budget. Ms. Smart provided an overview of the items the library budget supports and noted her concern that once a line item is eliminated, it is very difficult to put money back in future budgets. She also noted that the library is the only place many students have an opportunity to read a newspaper or magazine, or to find "that next title in a series," or "that new book everyone is reading." She ended by stating, "Not everything can be found on the internet."

Susan Moniz, Elementary Band Director, shared her thoughts on the positive effects of learning music and the "real-time" effects she has experienced over the years. She ended by stating, "By putting off the start of band until fifth grade, I am afraid many students will be too inhibited to give it a try. There are also more pressures and changes, plus more activities in which they will want to participate. I feel they will miss an important chance to try something they might love for a lifetime, and from which they will certainly benefit. I think it would be a shame to take the opportunity away from the fourth grade students, especially with so many of them interested in participating." Elementary Band Memberships (GES, HSS, & WPS Combined) as of June 1st each year: 2002 – 115; 2003 – 101; 2004 – 109; 2005 – 116; Current 2006 enrollment – 156.

Lynne Musacato, parent of two students at Horne Street School and two students at Dover Middle School, stated she thought it would be a shame to cut the elementary

band program. She viewed music as an essential program and stated her belief that 4th grade is the best time to introduce the program. She asked the Board to make their best effort to keep the elementary band program.

Anne Bean, parent of two students at Horne Street School and two Dover Middle School students, stated she would be greatly disappointed to see the music program compromised. She recounted the successes her children have experienced under the expert teaching of Susan Moniz whom she described as an "inspiration." She also stated her feeling that musical success would not be realized without the program at the elementary level where fourth grade students are excited, confident, and eager to participate.

Edward Mitchell, resident of Dover and a music educator, stated his belief that the elementary band program is a "feeder" program and, without it, the whole program would be affected. "Music is not just a simple subject, it affects the whole community." It builds self-confidence, social skills, and a way for physically challenged students to "compete." He also stated that studies have shown students do better academically when they have access to a music program.

Susan Hodgson, Music Curriculum Advisor, stated her belief there would be a significant decline in enrollments for middle school band if the fourth grade program is cut. She felt it would be difficult for students to "start something new at Dover Middle School" while at the same time, they are acclimating themselves to a new school and social environment. Ms. Hodgson also expressed her concern about the possibility of cutting the DMS late buses. She noted that many students depend on that bus to enable them to stay for afterschool practices and events, and, if eliminated, many children will not be able to participate.

Sheila Madsen, Elementary School Teacher, asked Board members to reconsider cutting two 2nd grade and 1 third grade teacher positions. She stated these cuts would have a negative impact and increase class sizes.

Mr. Cheney, Snows Court, Dover, stated his opinion that the School Board should start looking at the "big" numbers in the budget to figure how to save money on those items. Noting that teacher salaries make up over ½ of the total school budget, he suggested that Dover could do with less and still have a great program. He added that the proposed DTU budget recently rejected by City Council contained a 19% increase in salaries over the three year life of the contract and he felt that was too large of an increase.

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Superintendent O'Connor recapped previous changes to the Superintendent's proposed budget submission. He warned that some of the proposed cuts being introduced this evening may impact the high school accreditation process. He stated that, " as we eliminate, we tread on the road to mediocrity."

Superintendent Recommended Budget	\$37,530,111.00 - 9% increase over Fiscal Year 05/06 (\$34,263,966.00)
January 30, Eliminated	(\$258,814.00)
February 6, Eliminated	(\$276,255.00)
February 13, Superintendent Recommended	(\$589,124.00) (Less new

money that was contained in the DTU contract which was **not** approved by the City Council)

The total amount of money cut so far from the Superintendent's original proposed budget is \$1,124,193.00.

At the Joint Fiscal Meeting held two weeks ago, the Superintendent was informed the City Council recommended a cap of 3% over the current year's budget.

FY 05/06 - \$34,363,966.00
 FY 06/07 - \$35,393,966.00 would be a 3% increase

The current proposed budget is at \$36,405,918.00. Subtracting \$35,393,966.00 (representing a 3% increase) means there is \$1,011,952.00 left to eliminate from the 2006/2007 fiscal year budget.

Dr. O'Connor went on to say, with that in mind, administrators got together and compiled a list of proposed cuts totaling \$1,257,832, more than the \$1,011,952 required to reduce the budget to a 3% increase. That will give the school Board the opportunity to remove some of the cuts. He added that this list has been prioritized with items marked as "1" being highly needed that administrators would like to add back into the budget.

Proposed Cuts in Order of Needs Priority
 1= High Need
 2= Medium Need
 3= Low Need

Description	Pri	Estimated	Actual	Notes
Health Care	3	\$100,000	\$100,000	Estimated savings
World Drumming Class & Equipment	3	\$5,000	\$6,650	Eliminate HS level course
Health Position (New) .20	3	\$6,900	\$6,555	Withdraw request
Custodial Position	3	\$54,861	\$54,861	Withdraw request
Officials (Scrimmage)	3	\$2,500	\$2,500	Cut funds
Curriculum	3	\$35,000	\$35,000	Adoption-Reduce funds
Curriculum	3	\$50,000	\$50,000	Adoption-Reduce funds
Summer School Transportation	3	\$3,500	\$3,415	Eliminate program
Late Bus Runs at Middle School	3	\$25,000	\$25,000	School year - 2 buses
Ice Time	3	\$3,000	\$3,000	Cut funds
Library Books/Reference/Supplies	3	\$45,850	\$45,979	Eliminate funds
Conference - Athletic Director	3	\$1,500	\$1,500	Cut funds
Library Magazines	3	\$5,000	\$6,068	Eliminate funds
Classroom Magazines	3	\$3,400	\$3,910	Eliminate funds
New furniture/equipment	3	\$85,000	\$79,300	Eliminate funds.
ROTC Salaries	2	\$104,000	\$65,724	Eliminate positions (2)
ROTC Cleaning &Supplies	2	\$650	\$1,000	Eliminate program
ROTC Transportation	2	\$3,000	\$3,500	Eliminate program

Athletic Transportation	2	\$84,000	\$84,200 All transport
Art Animation Course (Curriculum)	2	\$8,000	\$8,830 Eliminate HS level course
Project MORE	2	\$4,000	\$5,510 Cut back to 3 reading tutors
ESOL (.5)	1	\$13,500	\$11,256 Eliminate position
School-year secretary	1	\$33,000	\$21,932 Eliminate position at DMS
Gr. 5 Teacher	1	\$69,649	\$69,649 Eliminate position
Gr. 6 Teacher	1	\$69,649	\$69,649 Withdraw request
Summer School-DMS	1	\$16,000	\$17,816 Eliminate program
Staff Development-District Wide	1	\$15,000	\$14,000 Cut funds
WPS Gr.2 School Teacher	1	\$68,000	\$70,875 Class size from 16.8 to 21
WPS Gr. 3 School Teacher	1	\$68,000	\$46,790 Class size from 17.4 to 21.7
HSS Gr. 2 School Teacher	1	\$68,000	\$56,429 Class size from 17.6 to 22
Technology-New Equipment	1	\$40,000	\$40,000 Cut from \$100,000.
Instrumental Music Teacher-Elementary	1	\$68,000	\$86,400 Eliminate position
World Language Teacher-DMS (.5)	1	\$28,000	\$30,885 Eliminate position
Sped Teacher	1		\$69,649 Eliminate position
District Administrator	1		\$60,000 Eliminate or reduce pos'n.
Total Cuts to Achieve 3% Growth:			\$1,257,832

Dorothea Hooper stated that everything the Board cuts will affect a child one way or the other. She added her belief that none of the Board members enjoy this part of the process. Ms. Hooper also noted in order to get good teachers to come and stay in Dover, we need to pay them. She added that she did not want to see a battle between serving senior citizens and serving the children of the city, and encouraged people who want to see quality public schools in Dover to contact their City Councilors to let them know.

Ms. Grady stated that she would prefer to look closely at those cuts involving students. She noted that in past budgets, the Board spent night after night in chambers and found they "cut something today and add it back tomorrow." She added that "things change and we have to constantly look at priorities." Ms. Grady then addressed some of the items contained on the list of proposed cuts. In athletics transportation, she felt the Board might be able to cut a bit, but stated her belief that parents are already burdened with "boosters clubs and whatever they have to pay for". Additionally, looking at the teacher contract, maybe there could be some savings in the area of coaches. She ended by stating that she would rather keep instrumental programs that involved a lot of students and eliminate an administrative position instead.

Ms. Hooper agreed the Board should consider cutting things that effect less youngsters than others. Examples she gave were the ROTC program that services a few children but would save a "large chunk of change." She also recommended the elimination of the District Administrator for one full year to double the savings.

Chairperson Fisher agreed that she would prefer to cut items that would least effect the children. "Let's cut what we all can agree on then go back."

Board members then addressed each item separately. The following comments were made and oral votes were taken:

1. Health Care \$100,000 **7/0 cut passed**
The Superintendent stated that Ms. Verville was able to more closely refine health care costs based on on-going negotiations with two health care providers and estimates an additional savings of \$100,000.
 2. World Drumming Class & Equipment \$ 6,650 **7/0 cut passed**
This was a new course to be offered at Dover High School.
 3. Health Position .20 \$ 6,555 **6/1 cut passed (Foye opposed)**
This was an adjustment to an existing part time position to increase to full time.
 4. Custodial Position \$ 54,861 **7/0 cut passed**
This was a new position request due to the addition of spaces in the elementary schools. Ms. Winton noted she has originally been in favor of adding this position to lessen the burden on the custodial staff but would rather cut this than a teacher position that would increase class sizes.
 5. Officials (Scrimmage) \$ 2,500 **7/0 cut passed**
An option would be to ask booster clubs to cover these fees, or implement student user fees to cover officials for scrimmages.
 6. Curriculum Adoption Soc Studies \$ 35,000 **7/0 cut passed**
This would scale back on the technology component of the curriculum adoption. Only the text will be available for the adoption. No extra resource materials would be purchased.
 7. Curriculum Adoption Health \$ 50,000 **7/0 cut passed**
This would scale back on the technology component of the curriculum adoption. Only the text will be available for the adoption. No extra resource materials would be purchased. The high school will still be able to comply with the new state guidelines.
- Dr. Mebert raised questions about possible cuts in the PE Curriculum Adoption as well. "If we want to save money on books, we can do it. The kids have books now. They may be outdated. We may not be meeting the adoption criteria that we had set for ourselves, but there is a lot of money in this budget for new curriculum adoptions. I think one of the questions that we can ask is whether we absolutely have to adopt all of this stuff for next year. And, maybe not." Superintendent O'Connor stated he would provide a list of what the \$85,000 cut entails at the next budget workshop. He will also have Dr. Ingraham prepare a report of what is left in the curriculum budget and break it out by the adoption so we can show how much money is for health, PE, guidance, and social studies. The Board could review at the next meeting so Board members will have the opportunity to revise areas in which cuts are being made.
8. DMS Summer School Transportation \$ 3,415 **7/0 cut passed**
Ms. Fisher stated her belief that there had been a discussion about asking students to pay for summer school. Dr. O'Connor stated that had been discussed but there

was a significant difference between middle and high school summer school. High school awards credits. You can charge students who need to earn those credits. No credits are offered at middle school. "I think we would have a difficult time generating the number of students required to run and fund a program if we operated that type of a summer initiative. Our recommendation is to just completely withdraw the program."

Ms. Winton noted the current promotion policy would need to be reviewed and revised. Ms. Grady shared her belief the previous years' programs were not successful and she would vote to eliminate summer school or come up with a different way for students to make up those courses. Ms. Fisher stated that she did not like the idea of just eliminating summer school. She would rather develop a new curriculum for the following school year to improve the success of the program. The Superintendent stated he would work with the administrative staff to see if they can generate new ideas and find other schools that run successful summer school programs.

Dr. O'Connor then reminded the Board that the first three years of the program were funded by grant monies and he felt that the program was very successful. As the federal money evaporated, the Board was unable to fund the programs at the level that the grant funded. Therefore, there were cutbacks in staff and focus. "We went from an enrichment summer school to basically a high school summer school program."

Ms. Hooper stated that a child who fails 5th grade math and goes to summer school, he goes on to 6th grade. She then asked if he fails 5th grade math and does not go to summer school, is he still promoted? Dr. O'Connor stated the current policy states there need to be 2 or more failures before looking at an automatic retention. A single failure would require you look at many other factors – attendance, grades in other subjects, teacher and guidance counselor recommendation, parent recommendation, and ultimately it will be up to the building principal to make the decision. Ms. Hooper agreed it does not justify the expense under the current positions.

9. Late Bus Run DMS \$ 25,000 **Reduce to half (\$12,500 cut passed 7/0)**

This is the cost for 2 buses from Dover Middle School. Ms. Hooper asked how many students use the bus. Mr. DeYoung stated approximately 200 students participating in middle school athletics, enrichment classes, homework help, play rehearsals, intramurals, and other activities use the late buses. Ms. Hooper recommended holding off on this cut since it affects so many students. Dr. O'Connor reminded the Board that the 21st Century Grant money is gone and a lot of that programming will be curtailed. That will mean fewer students using the late buses. Ms. Fisher suggested cutting just one bus at \$12,500.

10. Ice Time \$ 3,000 **2/5 cut failed (leave in budget) (Fisher, Lurvey, Hooper, Foye, and Grady opposed)**

Mr. Wotton explained how much ice time will cost next year and that the Booster Club currently raises \$10,000 each year to cover the cost of ice. Ms. Winton noted that there is a committee currently looking at raising facilities fees. Perhaps those increases could cover more ice time. Mr. Wotton noted that the city is unable to give

a substantial break in rental fees to the district because they are an enterprise fund and must be self sufficient. Ms. Lurvey added there will be a full sized gym at Garrison School that we will be renting to the city and the district will probably offer very little break in fees.

11. Library Books/Reference Supplies \$ 45,979 3/4 cut failed (leave in budget) (Hooper, Winton, Lurvey, Fisher opposed)

Ms. Hooper suggested that at least some money be given to the library. Ms. Winton added that the librarian summer hours were already cut previously. Ms. Grady stated she was looking at cutting half of the suggested amount.

12. Conference – Athletic Director \$ 1,500 5/2 cut passed (Hooper, Grady opposed)

Ms. Grady suggested cutting all conferences.

13. Library Magazines \$ 6,068 Reduced to half (\$3,034 cut passed 5/2) (Winton, Foye opposed)

Ms. Hooper proposed cutting for half the amount. Ms. Fisher asked the difference between library and classroom magazines. Dr. O'Connor stated classroom magazines included *Scholastic*, *Time for Kids*, and *Weekly Reader*.

14. Classroom magazines \$ 3,910 6/1 cut passed (Grady opposed)

Ms. Grady stated her opinion that for a lot of kids, these magazines were the beginning of reading. "It isn't only academics, there's a lot of social, family, and life learning in those magazines." Ms. Hooper said she viewed these as supplementary materials. "We are putting a heck of a lot of money into curriculum, textbook, and support materials. I think we can cut this." Ms. Fisher suggested the librarians purchase these periodicals for the library.

15. Furniture and Equipment \$ 79,300 7/0 cut passed
Board members agreed they would rather use the money for books and teachers.

16. ROTC Salaries, Cleaning & Supplies, Trans. \$ 70,224 4/3 cut passed (Grady, Lurvey, Fisher opposed)

There are approximately 50 students involved. Ms. Lurvey stated she always supported ROTC and questioned what would be done with these 50 kids if the ROTC program were cut. She asked whether the district would be spending the same amount of money anyways finding somewhere else to go. Mr. George stated the students would have to choose a different elective. He felt there were openings in elective programs and the high school would not be looking to add additional personnel in the budget.

Ms. Hooper stated she was an original supporter of ROTC but does not think it warrants the expense now. Ms. Grady recalled that Mr. George stated at an earlier meeting that he felt this program was important to a lot of the students who are taking it and he favored keeping it at that time. Ms. Grady stated she would not vote to cut ROTC unless someone provided a list of courses at the high school that have a difficult time getting enough students to run the course. "When we have 60 or 70 kids who are involved in one subject, I can't see cutting that and paying staff to keep

an area in when they're combining three subjects to make a course for one staff member."

Superintendent O'Connor stated he would bring a list of high school classes that are being combined to create one course to the Board in early April when sign-ups are complete. Additionally, he will provide a list of classes that were combined and did not require a waiver. Until sign-ups are complete, he will bring this years enrollments for those programs for which waivers were requested. Ms. Winton asked Board members to keep in mind that cutting a program usually means cutting a teacher, and that teacher may be servicing 100 students throughout the day and not just the number in one course.

17. Athletic Transportation \$ 84,200 **0/7 cut failed (leave in budget) (all opposed)**

If athletic transportation funds were cut, Mr. Wotton explained there would need to be a transportation fee assessed - \$100 to \$125 - paid by each athlete for each sport. He added that there is a potential of losing 25% or more of the student athletes who will not be able to afford the fees. Ms. Hooper stated she had misgivings about cutting any one department so much and since, the district already depends upon boosters to do an awful lot, she would like to hold off cutting this item. Ms. Lurvey agreed, she could not support cutting this much. "I could possibly support a \$25 per student assessment where it would be a small enough amount of money so it wouldn't be prohibitive for someone to participate and maybe offset some of our costs as well." Ms. Grady stated she did not want to see this cut made and her belief that "...if you cut athletic transportation, you might as well cut the whole athletic program. Some of our kids only stay in school because they have the opportunity to participate and I will vote to keep it in."

18. Art Animation Course Curriculum \$ 8,830 **7/0 cut passed**

This would be a new course at Dover High School, not currently offered in the school.

19. Project MORE \$ 11,256 **7/0 cut passed**

This would cut several teachers, a tutor, and an aide, leaving three tutors for the summer program. This would not limit the number of children who could participate, it would increase the student to tutor ratio. Ms. Mebert asked if students did so much better when they had the one on one attention. Dr. Ingraham stated the past two summers had such high employee turnover, the gains were not entirely measurable.

At 8:45 P.M., Audra Lurvey moved, Kara Winton seconded, to suspend the rules for a 5 minute break An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0**. At 8:55 P.M., the meeting resumed.

20. ESOL (.5) \$ 11,256 **6/1 cut passed (Mebert opposed)**

This position was added after the start of this school year and is being withdrawn for next school year..

21. School-Year Secretary at DMS \$ 21,932 **6/1 cut passed (Mebert opposed)**

This is an existing position and Superintendent O'Connor stated his belief that this cut will have a serious impact on the operation of school during the school year. Ms. Fisher asked where the secretary that is cut would be from. Mr. DeYoung stated this cut will impact students, but secretarial has the least impact in terms of direct instruction, He would discuss exactly which position with Dr. O'Connor and the person to leave would be chosen by seniority.

22. Grade 5 Teacher \$ 69,649 **1/6 cut failed(leave in budget) (Foye, Mebert, Grady, Fisher, Lurvey, Winton opposed)**

This is currently a position but is not in the budget. This and a sixth grade position were recommended for next year. The Superintendent reviewed current enrollments in 4th and 5th grade. This cut would place class loads up in the 27 to 28 students. Ms. Winton stated 27, 28 students in a class were too many in a class and "...that is way too big for a 5th grade class. We need to keep that in there." Ms. Hooper agreed and stated, "We really do have evidence that classes that large at the elementary level is the law of diminishing returns. You're definitely going to affect the success of the kids in a class like that with that many youngsters." She stated you need to keep the grade 5 teacher. Ms. Fisher stated the Board should keep in the grade 5 teacher for now.

23. Grade 6 Teacher \$ 69,649 **7/0 cut passed**
 This would be a new teacher based on the numbers of students moving from 5th to 6th grade, puts class size in the 27 to 28 range. Ms. Fisher stated she would agree to withdraw this position now, and see where enrollments go.

24. Summer School – DMS \$ 17,816 **7/0 cut passed**

25. Staff Development District Wide \$ 14,000 **3/4 cut failed (leave in budget) (Foye, Winton, Mebert, Hooper opposed)**

Ms. Fisher asked for a total of district wide staff development. Superintendent O'Connor stated this was all of the funds budgeted professional development except for SES and contractual requirements. Dr. O'Connor stated he would provide the Board additional information on this next week.

26. WPS Gr. 2 Teacher \$ 70,875 **0/6 cut failed (leave in budget) (Hooper recused herself from vote due to conflict of interest)**

27. WPS Gr. 3 Teacher \$ 46,790 **0/6 cut failed (leave in budget) (Hooper recused herself from vote due to conflict of interest)**

28. HSS Gr. 2 Teacher \$ 56,429 **0/6 cut failed (leave in budget) (Hooper recused herself from vote due to conflict of interest)**

Superintendent O'Connor reviewed class size numbers for these 3 grades with the Board. All agreed the class sizes would be too large for these lower elementary grades levels and recommended the positions be kept in the budget for now.

