

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson, Marjorie Fisher, on Monday, March 5, 2007, at 7:20 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2008 budget.

A. ROLL CALL: Present were, Marjorie Fisher, Dorothea Hooper, Audra Lurvey, Carolyn Mebert, Beth Setear, Brandon Foye, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Larry DeYoung, Principal, Dover Middle School; Barbara Szabunka, Principal Horne Street School; Christopher George, Principal, Dover High School; Patrick Boodey, Principal, Woodman Park School; Dustin Gray, Principal, Garrison Elementary School; Jean Briggs, Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Director; Peter Wotton, Athletic Director; Joanne Eaton, Facilities Manager; James Stopa, Career Technical Center Director; Jaclyn Adams, Special Education Director; Councilor Catherine Cheney; Dover Citizens; and Tom Kressler, *Foster's*.

B. CITIZEN'S FORUM: The following citizens address the Board on matters of the proposed FY-2008 school budget:

- a. Catherine Cheney, 9 Snow's Court, spoke on behalf of retaining NJROTC Program at Dover High School. Ms. Cheney listed the many good things the program brings to the students and to the community and asked Board members to fund NJROTC for the next school year.
- b. Betsy Anderson-Parker, 22 Maplewood Avenue, asked Board members to vote in favor of full-day kindergarten and provided many reasons she felt this would benefit students and families across the district.
- c. Amanda Russell, 20 Cranbrook Lane, echoed Ms. Andrews-Parker and asked Board members to provide full-day kindergarten in Dover. She felt there is not enough time to get through curriculum, work on social skills, and allow a child to "be a kid" with a half-day program.
- d. Lisa Martin, Hall Road, addressed the Board, asking they not cut any teaching positions. She felt class sizes were at capacity. She also spoke in favor of full-day kindergarten, allowing more time to address social skills, behavioral issues, and evaluation of academic skills.

C. BUDGET DISCUSSION: The Superintendent reminded the Board that they previously approved \$98,179.00 in cuts at the February 19, 2007 budget workshop. An additional \$314,153.21 in cuts were approved during the February 26, 2007 workshop meeting and he referred to the following list:

Sped Supply Testing/Scoring	\$2,000.00
Science supplies-High School	\$3,000.00
A/V Replace Equipment-High School	\$1,450.00
Dues and Fees-High School	\$100.00
Staff Travel-High School	\$500.00
Library Books-High School	\$1,900.00
Library Reference Books-High School	\$700.00
Staff Development - Physical Ed DHS	\$800.00
Repairs Equipment - DMS	\$500.00
Repairs Band- DMS	\$500.00
Repairs Equipment Music - DHS	\$250.00
Travel Island Program - DHS	\$1,000.00
Repairs Agriculture - RCTC	\$1,200.00
Repairs Business - RCTC	\$1,000.00

Repairs Tech Prep - RCTC	\$800.00
Repairs Automotive - RCTC	\$750.00
Repairs Autobody - RCTC	\$500.00
Repairs Engineering Technology - RCTC	\$600.00
Lease/Purchase Vehicle - RCTC	\$12,000.00
Supplies Agriculture - RCTC	\$863.00
Books Text Business	\$2,000.00
Books Text Family/Consumer Science	\$250.00
New/Addt'l Equipment - RCTC	\$10,000.00
New/Addt'l Tech Equipment - RCTC	\$5,000.00
Staff Development Coaches - DHS	\$500.00
Replace Equipment Athletics - DMS	\$3,500.00
Replace Equipment Athletics - DHS	\$4,800.00
Replace Equipment Baseball - DHS	\$300.00
Replace Equipment Basketball - DHS	\$3,050.00
Replace Equipment Field Hockey - DHS	\$7,100.00
Replace Equipment Football - DHS	\$4,500.00
Replace Equipment Golf - DHS	\$960.00
Replace Equipment Softball - DHS	\$300.00
Books Text Replacement - GES	\$4,000.00
Books Text Replacement - HSS	\$4,000.00
Books Text Replacement - WPS	\$4,000.00
Books Text Replacement - DMS	\$4,000.00
Books Text Replacement - DHS	\$6,000.00
New/Add'l Equipment - DHS	\$5,000.00
New/Add'l Equipment Social Studies - DHS	\$1,587.88
New/Add'l Equipment Music - DHS	\$2,000.00
New/Add'l Furniture Art - DHS	\$300.00
New/Add'l Furniture Music - DHS	\$1,400.00
Replace Equipment - DHS	\$3,000.00
Replace/Repair Equipment Lang. Arts - DHS	\$600.00
Replace Equipment Science - DHS	\$380.00
Replace Equipment Music - DHS	\$3,500.00
Supplies Principal Office - DMS	\$1,500.00
Repairs Carpentry - DHS	\$3,000.00
Repairs HVAC - DHS	\$5,000.00

The Superintendent also reminded that the following new positions, totaling \$215, 464.00 were retained during the last budget workshop (by a 5/1 vote) for consideration during this evening's workshop:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Notes/Comments</u>
Remaining New Personnel Requests	\$215,464.19	
Anticipated Savings from Transportation Bid	\$35,000.00	
Eliminate 1 entry-level elementary teacher	\$49,828.27	Move Literacy Collaborative Coach to classroom @ WPS
Eliminate 1 Custodial Position	\$52,855.79	Reduction in force
New/Addt'l Equipment Special Ed	\$4,700.00	Moved to IDEA grant
Eliminate 1 entry-level elementary teacher	\$49,828.27	Reduction in force (Based on current enrollments)

After cuts made during the last budget workshop, the budget total is at \$38,112,708 which is a 5.27% increase over the previous year's budget. Dr. O'Connor then referred to a list of five potential cuts to be considered for discussion during this evening's workshop:

ROTC Staff	\$63,231.31
RCTC Special Needs Coordinator to .5	\$37,775.00
RCTC Voc Assessor to .5	\$34,554.00
9 Clubs at High School Level	\$5,626.71
Balance of New Personnel Requests	\$215,464.00
<i>Total:</i>	\$356,651.00

Chairperson Fisher recommended the discussion begin with the five items listed by the Superintendent.

Discussion:

Item 1 - ROTC Staff: Dorothea Hooper stated, "this program has been absolutely marvelous for the youngsters who have participated and we have had two very, very fine instructors who are leaving. We are already on probation with the Navy, not enough students. I said last year that while I thought it was a very valuable program for the youngsters, it felt it was one that we could continue to fund without some hope of increased enrollment. For some reason, Dover High School does not appear to be interested enough in that program to get past 50 or 60 students. I think eventually, we're going to have to stop funding it, and I think this would be the time to do it. Since our instructors are leaving anyway, and since we are already under probation by the Navy, it just makes sense to me, not to continue funding something that's a losing battle."

Doris Grady stated, "I'm going to fight for it again. I can't see cutting that position and adding in \$215,000 for new staff. I'm looking at some of the new programs that are coming in. If I'm looking at Introduction to World Drumming, and we're going to keep it in there and we're going to cut ROTC that affects 60 kids – I know it's not a full program ... I also had trouble in the list of cutting out the clubs for kids. There's nine clubs in that cut and that's one of the social events that these kids go to and we're not developing just academic students – we're developing kids who need some social skills. I think the reason the numbers are down (in ROTC) is our own fault. If I were a parent I would have a hard time determining whether to select that subject because every year it's the first one we discuss and the first one we look at cutting... If we cut this tonight, I want to see a list of every class at the high school that has a number less than 60 and I want somebody to come and prove to me the benefit of that course over and above ROTC and why other courses haven't been suggested rather than this one, every time, first time. We've never once said really, truly we accept it, come in and try it, and therefore we haven't been able to build any numbers. I fought for it before; I'll fight for it again."

Carolyn Mebert stated, "We gave it another chance. And we were giving it another chance last year, and I think with the understanding to anybody who listens to any of these meetings, that we're on the edge of losing this program. If we didn't get the numbers up, we were going to lose this program. And we didn't get the numbers up under threat of losing the program. When **if** there was sufficient interest, **this** would be the time to rally round the flag. And it wasn't happening. I can't see maintaining this program at this cost of over \$1,000 per student. It's more than we're spending on athletics per student, and that's a big expense, but we have many times the number of students in the athletic program than we have in ROTC... We could have students required to do community service regardless if we have ROTC or not. There are many schools around the country that are requiring community service now.

It's a good thing for the students; it's a good thing for the community. We can have internship programs and externship programs that wouldn't cost us much of anything and I think we can meet the needs of these students in ways other than ROTC now that we have, sort of a handle, on what some of these kids need beyond the regular academic program."

Marjorie Fisher stated, "I agree with Mrs. Grady. We stated last year when we kept ROTC...we were going to keep it two years. It's only been one year. We said two years, lets give it the full two years we said." She added, "As far as community service...we had the high school mandate two or three years ago that you had to some kind of community service to graduate...and it never worked out. We said two years so I think we should give it two years and next year would be the last year. I am going to support ROTC for another year."

Beth Setear asked, "What is the implication of being placed on probation and does that effect our ability to recruit, having not had in the past, sufficient numbers to not be on probation?"

Marjorie Fisher responded, "Every single year we go though this and I agree with Mrs. Grady that if I were a parent, I would not have my child sign up for it because every year we talk about the same thing."

Carolyn Mebert asked, "Why is this year going to make a difference? We're on probation and we can say we're going to do it another two years, but we're still sending the same message to the parents that we sent last year."

Ms. Fisher stated, "Well, let's send it this way – Have your child join ROTC and then we won't cut it!" She added, "I don't know the implication of being on probation," and asked the Superintendent for information.

Dr. O'Connor stated he did not believe being probation has had any impact on ROTC enrollments. He added the program had been running for three years. The enrollments have not increased. The first year, there was a single instructor. The second year, there were two full-time instructors who worked very hard at recruiting. They also worked very hard this year, even though the specter of the Board or the Navy cutting the program was there. Guidance staff also tried to funnel students into the program. Including efforts for recruiting by the instructors as well, we have not been able to break that ceiling of 60-65 students in three years with the program. He noted we did say last year that if we decided to keep the program, we should do so for two years to give it an opportunity. However, because the two instructors are planning to resign in June, the problem becomes more complex. This would require a nationwide recruitment for new leaders and that will certainly affect the program.

Dorothea Hooper moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to remove the NJROTC program from the 2007-2008 budget. An oral **VOTE PASSED 4/3 (Grady, Lurvey, and Fisher opposed)**.

Items 2 & 3 – Regional Career Technical Center Special Needs Coordinator and Vocational Assessor positions each reduced to half-time: Mr. George stated, "To talk about lessening people who are delivering programs to our students, I do not do this as any recommendation that is coming from our building at all. But I would be pleased try and answer the questions that you have regarding the positions before you this evening." Mr. George stated the vocational assessor position is a requirement of the Special Education program. The position works closely with the community to provide opportunities for students to earn skills and credits in the workplace from areas that are consistent with their future plans after high school. The RCTC Special Needs Coordinator position is a

requirement of the Tri-City Vocational Agreement. The position coordinates with the other sending districts. Thirty-plus CTC students are Special Needs students. This position and coordinates their special needs programs and provides services within our schools for those incoming students.

Ms. Mebert asked if the two positions being discussed were covered by the line items CTC Special Services and CTC Guidance in the current budget showing. She noted that CTC Special Services shows a 15.39% increase and the line item for CTC guidance indicates a 45.87% increase in next year's proposed budget. Mr. Stopa explained the increases occurred because the positions had been partially federally funded, but those funds had now been eliminated and the positions are all locally funded. He added that was the CTC Special Services. However, the CTC Guidance position is a guidance position for all of the CTC students. Ms. Mebert asked how many students were in the program. Mr. Stopa stated the total was roughly 237 students.

Ms. Hooper requested clarification and asked if they were asking for the positions to be cut back to half time. Dr. O'Connor stated the administrators did not necessarily support these cuts and felt the positions were essential. However, this was one of the difficult choices they had to make. Ms. Hooper asked how the positions could be cut back and still meet SPED and Tri-City Vocational Agreement requirements. Mr. Stopa explained the functions would still have to be performed – they would need to be assigned to other staff. Ms. Grady discussed the difficulty School Boards face when federal grants run out. Those positions must then be locally funded if they are to remain. Ms. Briggs provided clarification that Title grants do not require the district to provide matching funds. She added that competitive grants, however, do require matching funds. Ms. Mebert questioned whether federally funded programs required the district show effectiveness of the programs in order to continue receiving funds. Mr. Stopa stated the programs are evaluated by the Department of Education to see if they meet the standards and goals stated for the positions in the grant.

Ms. Fisher asked for clarification whether cutting the positions to half time would be in violation of SPED law and the Vocational Agreement. Dr. O'Connor stated, "Technically, no." He added that the district would still need to provide the services and, if the half time positions could not accomplish the required services, others would "have to take up the slack." Ms. Fisher then recommended the Board vote to cut the positions to half time for a year and then evaluate to see how well it is working. Audra Lurvey cautioned that Principal George had advised them previously that the guidance to student ratio at Dover High School was already "at the cusp." Dr. O'Connor agreed stating the requirement was one counselor for each 300 students and there are currently six counselors working at Dover High.

Audra Lurvey moved, Doris Grady seconded, to decrease the two Regional Career Technical Center to half-time positions. An oral **VOTE FAILED 2/5 (Setear, Mebert, Hooper, Lurvey, and Foye opposed)**.

Item 4 – Nine Clubs at the High School Level: Ms. Fisher asked Principal George which clubs were included on the recommendation to cut list. Mr. George said he would NEVER recommend cutting these clubs, but those did include Marching Band, Drama, Yearbook, and Student Council, among others. Beth Setear asked if these positions were paid equal stipends or based upon time spent. Mr. George stated they were paid by stipend at three different levels (based upon the schedule contained in the Dover Teachers' Union Agreement with the Dover School Board). The discussion proceeded briefly and Mr. Foye stated he was in agreement with Mrs. Grady, not to cut these clubs. He noted they provide important social opportunities and they are "very important for the ultra-competitive college application process. I think that a lot of kids rely on these to get into schools. I think that for less than \$6,000, we need to keep these clubs."

Brandon Foye moved, Audra Lurvey seconded, to fund the high school clubs for the next school year.
An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Item 5 – Balance of New Personnel Requests: Ms. Fisher asked for an explanation of the positions included in the \$215,464.00 request and requested the Board begin with other than the to start with the cuts from Dover Middle School. Mr. DeYoung explained he was requesting \$15,679.00 to assign a half-time attendance secretary. He stated, "This is a valuable position in the school with the checks and balances of students, with the for accountability for attendance for AYP, and also for that interpersonal relationship. That person makes all the phone calls home for parents who haven't called in their students...It's a part-time position, 30 hours per week." Ms. Hooper asked if there were levels in the clerical assignments and asked if this position could be the lowest position. Dr. O'Connor stated it was a level two position for a school year secretary. Ms. Setear asked if it would be the secretary who was working those hours prior to cuts made the previous year. The Superintendent stated that was correct, but not for the same number of hours. It was a full-time, year round position and they are asking to add some hours to increase the position to a school year, 30 hour week position.

Ms. Fisher asked if the Board would like to make a motion at this time. The consensus was that Board members wanted to review the entire \$215,464.00 before making any decisions.

Dr. O'Connor stated the remaining positions included two girls' lacrosse coaches, an increase by .6 for an existing art position, a business education teacher, and an English teacher at Dover High School. The full-time business education and full-time English positions are budgeted at \$73,184 each. The .6 art position is budgeted for \$49,818.00.

Ms. Hooper asked Mr. Wotton what trouble would be caused "Title IX-wise" if the district did not budget for the two lacrosse coaches this year. Mr. Wotton stated the cost is less than \$5,000 for two coaches to work with 50 girls for ten weeks. Mr. Wotton added, "I think, just, it being the right thing to do because we do offer boys' teams. These coaches have grown this program for the last five years for no money and I think it's gotten to the point where it's time." Dr. O'Connor asked if Title IX looked at equity in the numbers of dollars spent on boys and girls sports in the school. Mr. Wotton stated that was certainly true. He went on to say, "In general we do offer the same type of money and this is where I think we fall short in terms of lacrosse. They have grown it; it is viable; the girls' went to the playoffs last year; and they're conditioning right now."

Ms. Grady asked Principal George to explain why he was requesting an additional English teacher. He stated it was not for new programs, but because of the numbers of classes in English that are between 28 and 32 students. Additionally, the school is now offering writing curriculum in the sophomore year and working in this area with 28 students in a class is very labor intensive. Teachers are also working on differentiated instruction and this is too difficult with so many students in each class. Mr. George added his opinion that, "twenty-five in a class in high school is closer to what you would want as a maximum for most of our classes unless the lab size was smaller than that. Even with this additional position, we won't be approaching that twenty-five." Ms. Grady stated, "Someone asked me a question and I gave it some thought. When we're worried about 30 or 31 in classrooms, particularly with seniors, are we really preparing them for college when they're going to step out of a class of 31 and go into a class of 200 or 150?"

Ms. Hooper asked for an explanation for the request for a business education teacher. Mr. George explained this has come about as a result of changes in the state standards. They no longer allow

middle school students to bring the half-credit for technology with them into the high school. Mr. George stated, "We did a transcript audit of our seniors this year and we found that 62% of our seniors had not taken a computer literacy class or were not signed up for one in their entire four years. And when we think about the world that they are going out into, and we're not requiring even a half credit, I think we may be short changing our students not to be requiring it. But we also need to be able to provide the staff and the labs to be able to offer that to each of our students. With our current staffing, we're not able to do it."

Brandon Foye noted for Ms. Grady, there were only 25 students in his freshman English class at the University of New Hampshire and that was a standard number for the school's classes.

Ms. Grady stated, "I thought I just heard a figure that 62% of our juniors and seniors had not acquired their technology credit – did I hear that right?" Mr. George explained they reviewed the current senior's transcripts. However, these students were grand fathered in the half credit from eighth grade and were not required to earn this credit. However, all new students must take it in the years to come, and knowing this information gives the administration an idea of the future demand in this area. The current freshmen and sophomores are no longer grand fathered in.

Ms. Grady said, "Every year I've been on the board, we have spent dollar, after dollar; after dollar. We have had them come in with committee reports as to what our technology program was. What the curriculum was from grade 1 to grade 12, and it doesn't seem after – this is what's been presented to us year, after year, after year, that we're in this position that we wouldn't already have been able to have said that these kids have been exposed to technology. It's a field of today...somewhere along the line in twelve years, we've spent some money in technology and the results aren't there in my opinion."

Ms. Lurvey speculated that theoretically these students may be using technology in different ways – it's not that they're aren't taking the classes because they are afraid of taking them, but because going home and using the Internet, using PowerPoint, Excel, and Word programs at home to do their homework because they already have those skills. Mr. George agreed "I believe that it is deeply integrated into many of our other classes and I believe that a vast majority of our students are very tech savvy. I don't know that that answers the requirements of the state regarding graduation requirements, but I believe your observation is absolutely accurate."

Dr. O'Connor added that today's seniors were allowed to bring their middle school credit with them and still, an additional 36% of the class advocated for themselves and wanted to take the credit at the high school level (the glass is half full). Ms. Mebert added that the money that was spent on technology is integrated into the classrooms - "At the elementary level, they're using math software for some of the kids and a they're using a variety of different kinds of technology in the classroom so I don't think we've been spending money for nothing." Ms. Grady clarified her concern was because, "They've given us all kinds of curriculum. I put my hands on two this afternoon that would be curriculum K-12. Where is it? What happened to it? What did we do with it? It's nice to tell us we're going to have that curriculum but it's also nice to come and tell us they followed through with it, in my opinion."

Ms. Setear asked, "Am I correct in assuming that because the state has now mandated that credit, that we are under pressure to then offer additional courses to satisfy that obligation. So that it has nothing to do with the curriculum we necessarily adopted, because we may be offering K-12, what we adopted, but tat the state's requiring we do additional?" Mr. George stated it was not different curriculum, but it would be offering additional classes of that curriculum. He also noted that Mr. Stopa is working with incoming eighth grade students to take a portfolio assessment which will allow the high school to better

assess the level of technology in which they should be placed. Ms. Hooper asked the Superintendent to advise at what percent the budget increased after the cut that had been approved. Dr. O'Connor stated the budget is at a 5.1% increase.

Ms. Hooper stated, "I can't see taking out positions that will make us less efficient than we already are when we've been cut back, so drastically. I said last week...I asked you last week what you needed to support this district and you said 6%. We're already down to 5.1% .I'd say we've done pretty well and I'm happy with that. I would suggest you keep these people. I don't know where else you can cut without really impacting seriously what we have here. If somebody can come up with an idea of where to cut without hurting the program or the kids I'm willing to listen but I think we've gotten pretty close to where we're going to get."

Carolyn Mebert stated she supported Ms. Hooper's statement. "I actually spent quite a bit of time going over this budget over the last week and I can't find one place to cut. We have so many contractual obligations and there's nothing we can do about those. This is a personnel heavy situation we're dealing with. I think that if anybody wanted to look at the details of this budget, they'd see that there's some give and take in here already and there's no place else to go. I was really looking for fat in this and I didn't see any. I so, I think we're done."

Ms. Grady asked how much had been cut from the budget so far. Ms. Verville stated the amount cut at all budget workshops totaled \$475,563.00, not including debt service.

Dorothea Hooper moved, Audra Lurvey seconded to retain the new positions in the amount of \$215,464.00. An oral **VOTE PASSED 5/2 (Grady and Fisher opposed.)**

E: ADJOURNMENT: Audra Lurvey moved, Dorothea Hooper seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Respectfully submitted,

BRANDON FOYE, Secretary

Dover School Board
BF/kgb
March 7, 2007