

A special session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Wednesday, July 25, 2005 at 7:05 p.m. in the Office of the Superintendent.

**A. ROLL CALL:** Present were, Marjorie Fisher, Dorothea Hooper, Carolyn Mebert, Kara Winton, Heather Orion-Hindle, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Doug Conway, President, DPA; Richard Courtney, NEA NH; Paraeducators, and Marcus Weisgerber, Fosters.

**B. CITIZENS' FORUM:** Doug Conway, DPA President, outlined the lengthy process followed in the negotiation of the contract being presented to the Board this evening. He stated that the DPA "bargained in good faith" and that the benefits represented in the newly negotiated contract were still far behind those offered by any of the other city's bargaining units. He ended by noting that approval of the 3-year contract would "improve morale" and allow the paraeducators to start work on August 30<sup>th</sup> with enthusiasm.

Paraeducator Diana Pettis addressed the Board. Ms. Pettis stated that she had been a member of the negotiating team and would begin her 14<sup>th</sup> year with the district this fall. She noted that the paraeducator's job is an important one that deserves a "living wage with comparable benefits."

**C. DOVER PARAEDUCATOR ASSOCIATION CONTRACT:** Dorothea Hooper moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, a motion to accept the DPA Contract. Discussion followed:

Dorothea Hooper stated her feeling that "negotiations involve give and take" and she wanted to make it clear that the Board understood how important the paraeducator's jobs are and how valuable they are. "There is a respect for what you do in the classroom." She ended by noting that the Board might not be able to meet all of their needs because of monetary concerns.

Marjorie Fisher stated that she agreed with Ms. Hooper and added, "Whatever happens tonight, you are valued and we understand how important you are." Ms. Fisher noted, however, that the financial burden for the district was upon the Board.

Doris Grady clarified that after the Board's decision was made, the contract would still need to go before the City Council who could refuse it. Ms. Grady then asked Mr. Conway if, to his knowledge, there were any other bargaining units in the city whose employees work less than 40 hours per week. Mr. Conway noted that some secretarial union personnel were school-year employees, as were teachers, and some work less than 40-hour weeks. Mr. Conway went on to state that his negotiating team had created a spreadsheet including information from all of the city employee bargaining units and found, "We are behind every other unit in every area - benefits, seniority, and wages." He noted that one example of particular concern was health benefits. "You cannot have a family health benefit without a second job to pay for it."

After discussions were complete, a roll call **VOTE PASSED 4-3** (Orion-Hindle, Fisher, and Grady opposed).

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Superintendent O'Connor stated that the process would be to submit the signed contract to the City Council for review in time for their August meeting agenda. He noted if the City Council were to "turn it down," the contract would come back for negotiation.

**D. ADJOURNMENT:** At 7:15 p.m., Kara Winton moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, a motion to adjourn the Special Session. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7-0**.

Respectfully submitted,  
AUDRA LURVEY, SECRETARY  
Dover School Board  
AL/kgb  
July 26, 2005