



CITY OF DOVER

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop Session
Meeting Location: City Hall Auditorium
Meeting Date: **Monday, March 3, 2008**
Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Britt Ulinski Schuman, Carolyn Mebert, Audra Lurvey, Dorothea Hooper, Marjorie Fisher, Beth Setear, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor; Business Manager, Laurie Verville; Woodman Park School Principal, Patrick Boodey; Dover High School Principal, Christopher George; Dover Middle School Principal, Larry DeYoung; Horne Street School Principal, Dustin Gray, Garrison School Principal; Technical Support Services Manager, Christopher Roberge; Sandra Crosson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Peter Wotten, Athletic Director; Technical Support Services, Gayle Osburn; Nick Skaltsis, Rick Callaghan, City Councilor; District Librarians; District Paraprofessionals; and District teaching staff.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM: Richard Barrett, President of the DTU asked the Board to look carefully before cutting staff. The mission of the Dover School District is to educate children for the real world. We are in competition with other countries. It starts at Pre-K and continues through grade 12. He continued to say that he realizes teachers are the easiest target. Sue Hodgson, Whittier St., is concerned with reduction in the music program. The 4th-8th grade instrumental program is of key importance. Not every student is an athlete or scholar. The instrumental program is always reviewed first when budget cuts need to be made. If the elementary and Middle school instrumental program is cut, there will be no high school program. It has doubled since 1999. Sue Moniz has done a great job. She is also not in favor of adding a user fee to the music program. Students already pay a large amount in rental fees, etc. This is part of the District's curriculum. It is not an extra-curricular activity. Cherie Corbett, DMS School Nurse, spoke about her concern with the safety of DMS students. She has 11 diabetics, 8 seizures students, 89 asthmatics, and 81 with other health related issues. She currently has a secretary for 2 hours a day and 1 day a week, but feels that the school needs another full time RN in order to maintain the safety of the students. She will settle for a full time secretary if an additional nurse isn't a possibility. Margie Buckingham, a parent and nurse substitute, reiterated Ms. Corbett's concerns. She has subbed in each school's health office and DMS has the busiest. She feels that it is almost impossible and should be a top priority of the School Board. Lisa Glidden, a mother of an insulin dependent diabetic, also agreed that it is an unsafe situation for the students at DMS. She is in support of Ms. Corbett's request for a full time secretary.

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Ms. Fisher commented that with the spending amendment, we are down before we even start. Dr. O'Connor discussed the budget and said that we have an additional problem now. There is a new formula being used. We thought we had 1.4 million, but it's less now. He discussed a Powerpoint presentation that highlighted the changes and some possible reductions.



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Superintendent's Budget Under Tax Cap Charter

	February 4, 2008	March 3, 2008
One Variation of National CPI Urban:	2.8%	
Prior Fiscal Year Net Amount Raised by Taxes:	\$22,735,976	
Multiplied by National CPI Urban:	2.8%	
Subtotal	\$636,607	Subtotal: \$636,607
Net Construction/Demolition Permit Value:	\$45,000,000	\$54,000,000
Multiplied by Prior Fiscal Year Local Tax Rate:	\$8.02	\$8.02
Subtotal:	\$360,900	Subtotal: \$433,080
Net Construction/Demolition Permit Value:	\$45,000,000	\$54,000,000
Multiplied by Prior Fiscal Year State Tax Rate:	\$2.31	\$2.31
Subtotal:	\$103,950	Subtotal: \$124,740
State Property Tax 2007-2008:	\$ 6,476,696	\$ 6,476,696
Multiplied by National CPI Urban:	2.8%	2.8%
Subtotal:	\$181,347	Subtotal: \$181,347
Added to State Property Tax for 2007-2008:	\$6,658,043	
(Less State Property Tax for 2008-2009):	-\$6,292,003	
Subtotal:	\$366,040	(\$184,693)
Increase Allowed to Appropriations Under Tax Cap:	\$1,467,497	\$1,375,775

Budget Comparison FY 2008 vs FY 2009

2007-08 Budget:	\$41,602,560
New Money (Proposed Increase):	<u>\$ 1,375,775</u>
Guaranteed Maximum Budget Dollar Value:	\$42,978,335

Budget Status: March 3, 2008

2007-08 Budget:	\$41,602,560
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Allowable Increase to



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Appropriations Under Tax
 Cap (2.8% CPI Urban): \$ 1,375,775

Dollar Value: **\$42,978,335**

2008-09 Proposed Budget: \$44,657,263

Funds to be Eliminated: **\$ 1,678,928**
Approved Reductions: February 25, 2008

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Amount</u>
All Day Kindergarten Program	\$391,587
Elementary Teachers (3)	\$262,632
SPED Paras (3)	\$ 68,439
Computer Tech Para (1)	\$ 30,008
MS Specialist (2)	\$134,690
Speech/Language Teacher (1)	<u>\$ 78,510</u>
Total:	\$965,866

Superintendent's Recommendations

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Librarian (1)	\$ 53,539
Instrumental Music (Gr. 4-6)	\$ 82,622
CTC	\$ 25,000
Technology	\$ 50,000
DHS Science	<u>\$ 7,000</u>
Total:	\$218,161

Closer Look

- Technology
- CTC
- Curriculum Adoption
- NWEA
- ROTC
- Facility Outsourcing (\$185,000)
- Middle School Sports (\$31,000)
- Middle School Transportation (\$77,000)



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■ Secretarial Support

Interpretation of tax cap will be discussed over the next few weeks. Dr. O'Connor's understanding of the tax cap would be that we would be using the same base number and adjusting each year. Currently, we are \$100,000 less than what we had as of last Friday. The City Manager will be getting legal opinions on how we will handle state tax. This wasn't what was intended when the vote was taken. The School District shouldn't be penalized because we are waiting for legal interpretations.

Dr. O'Connor asked for direction. Should we get our own legal opinion or hire a financial consultant from an auditing firm?

Mrs. Grady stated that she had read and re-read tax cap language and questioned who said this is the way it should be done. The School District budget is submitted sooner and we can't wait this long. She continued, saying that we should seek some sort of advice—either a lawyer or educational auditor. We should inform the City what we are doing, letting them know that we can't wait for them to go through the process. Ms. Setear asked if it would be possible to get an opinion before the meeting on Monday, 3/10. Dr. O'Connor responded that it might be possible, but would probably be more expensive. Whoever would be giving the opinion would need to do research on tax caps. It would be more likely that we would get a response in May or June. We would then need to do an amendment to our budget. Dr. Mebert asked how Laconia was proceeding and Dr. O'Connor responded that they've changed their formula. They co-joined both taxes and "share the pain" so that they both do better.

Ms. Hooper asked if the City Manager has a target date of when we will get the report. City Councilor Callaghan was in the audience and responded that they wanted the report before the next City Council meeting, but they weren't hopeful that this would happen.

Ms. Fisher stated that we could wait until March 15th to vote on the budget. Ms. Ulinski-Schuman asked what would happen if the budget isn't done on March 15th. Dr. O'Connor responded that City Manager Joyal would use a default budget. Mrs. Grady asked for a straw vote to see interest in seeking advice as to proper placement of state tax. Ms. Hooper asked for the cost of this advice. Dr. O'Connor estimated that it would be a minimum of \$2,000. Ms. Fisher stated, "I would rather spend a little to get a lot back." Dr. Mebert questioned as to why we would even have to pay when we've been given erroneous information. She stated, "It was a finance office error; the city should pick up the tab." Dr. O'Connor said that it wasn't really an error, but an oversight.

Mrs. Grady said that she attended a Joint Fiscal Meeting and City Manager Joyal advised her to have the School Department seek advice.

Ms. Lurvey stated that she would have a difficult time justifying spending on opinions and advice. Ms. Ulinski-Schuman questioned the decrease in our baseline and Dr. O'Connor explained that the difference should be made up by the local tax levy. He continued that there is good and bad in everything. Next year, the state property tax could increase.

Ms. Setear stated she is in favor of seeking an opinion only if the advice that the City Manager receive isn't going to answer our question.



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The straw vote passed with 4 votes. Mrs. Grady reiterated that the opinion concerns state law as far as the School Board is concerned.

The budget discussion proceeded. It was questioned how many secretarial position have been eliminated in the past few years. Dr. O'Connor stated that 2 positions have been eliminated in the last five years. In addition, a 50% receptionist was eliminated at the SAU office. Mrs. Grady did a study of class assignments. The numbers indicate that it won't impact us too much. Numbers are reducing. She continued that we might not need two deans at Dover Middle School, if the enrollment continues to decline. Dr O'Connor said that two deans are needed at DMS because numbers are rising, similar to the nurse's numbers.

The School Board began discussion of the Superintendent's Recommendations. Dr. O'Connor stated that he doesn't have the full support of the administrative staff for these recommendations.

Ms. Hooper questioned the \$25,000 that Dr. O'Connor was proposing be cut out of the CTC budget. The money had been earmarked for rehab of storage area for barn. Ms. Setear had thought this had been cut at the last meeting. Dr. O'Connor responded that the School Board had requested additional information.

Ms. Hooper also questioned the reduction of the instrumental program. Would this be the entire program? Dr. O'Connor said that the administration was in favor of cutting the program. It wasn't as high on their priority list to keep as other items. Dr. Mebert stated that the instrumental program should be taken off the list. "It engages some students like nothing else can."

Chairperson Fisher asked about the effect of eliminating the DHS school year guidance secretary. Dr. O'Connor said that was a possibility, but Principal George spoke about the importance of that position for DHS. He said that having an additional secretary allows counselors to be more visible in classes. Eliminating a secretary in guidance would be taking a step backwards.

Guidance staff at the schools was discussed also. We are unable to eliminate positions in this area because of the guideline of 1 guidance counselor per 300 students.

Ms. Ulinksi-Schuman questioned whether the elimination of a librarian would affect our accreditation. Dr. O'Connor said that it would not be affected. He also reiterated that we would be increasing personnel, just not with a certified librarian.

Chairperson Fisher asked Mr. Skaltsis to attend the meeting in order to discuss full day kindergarten. He gave an overview of the Future Needs Committee Survey and discussed funding. Mr. Skaltsis stated the committee didn't believe it was feasible for all to have full day kindergarten. The lottery system was rejected in favor of screening students to determine who



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would be offered full day kindergarten. The lottery would be used only if there were additional spots.

Ms. Ulinksi-Schuman questioned why it was being discussed, when it was voted upon already. Dr. O'Connor said that it was voted on with additional staffing. With Mr. Skaltsis' proposal, a smaller number would receive all day kindergarten. Mrs. Grady stated that we can't add something new at this point. She still feels that the district would have a problem if it was determined during a student who was failing in later years wasn't offered full day kindergarten. Ms. Setear stated, "This isn't a decision that we should make tonight. We should look at the recommended cuts first."

Mr. George discussed the recommended science cut of \$7,000. This would be for new equipment. Currently, there are many teachers contributing out of their own pockets. Ms. Hooper stated that she wouldn't vote for any new programs until we could fund existing programs.

Mrs. Grady asked Mr. Wotten if we could cut coaches to make up for transportation. He responded that we are already at a minimum. Each coach has a team or if there are multiple coaches, the team is large. Some schools have participation fees such as Concord (\$35/student for any club or sport)

Mr. Wotten discussed participation costs for athletics. Comparing Dover High School to other Class L schools, you will find that others provide much more. Dover boosters and parents already contribute a great deal to athletic programs.

Mr. George also commented that there are more teachers volunteering for co-curricular activities than teachers being paid.

Mrs. Grady asked if we could talk with First Student about finding a more efficient way to transport students. Dr. O'Connor said that one of the problems with that is the area is too large to make any changes. Also, our contract calls for a minimum of busses. We have a five year contract and First Student bought new busses.

Chairperson Marjorie Fisher requested Board members provide a show of hands in support of the following recommended budget cuts:

<i>(Positions) and Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Status or Board Straw Vote</i>
Technology	\$ 50,000.00	Straw Vote—Cut 4/3
CTC Barn	\$ 25,000.00	Straw Vote – Cut 6/1



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Science Equipment at DHS	\$ 7,000.00	Straw Vote – Cut 3/4 (Failed)
Librarian	\$ 53,539.00	Straw Vote—Cut 5/2
Instrumental Music	\$ 82,262.00	Straw Vote – Cut 0/6 (Failed)
Total	\$128,539.00	

A straw vote was taken about outsourcing so that School Board members would have any idea about how much was still needed to be cut from the budget.

<i>Description</i>		<i>Status or Board Straw Vote</i>
Facility Outsourcing	\$185,000.00	5/2—Cut (Setear, Fisher opposed)

At this point \$1,528,000 was cut from the budget, with \$150,000 left to cut.

For the next meeting, Mrs. Grady requested that DMS be looked at to determine if restructuring teams might be a way to save money. Dr. O'Connor said that it would be discussed at the next morning's administrative meeting.

Mrs. Fisher also requested that secretarial support be reviewed again before the next meeting.

Ms. Setear asked that the need for NWEA's be reviewed. Is it useful for teachers? Dr. O'Connor stated that there were pros and cons by Elementary principals. Could there be a better use for the money? Dr. Mebert was concerned because we haven't heard from any teachers regarding their importance.

E: ADJOURNMENT: Audra Lurvey moved, Doris Grady seconded, to adjourn the workshop session at 8:36 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**