



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop
Meeting Location: City Council Chambers
Meeting Date: **Monday, March 1, 2010**
Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Carolyn Mebert on Monday, March 1, 2010, at 6:35 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the fiscal year 2011 budget.

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Carolyn Mebert, Audra Lurvey, Beth Setear, Doris Grady, Matt Mayberry, Kenneth Appel, and Robert McCrory.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor, Laurie Verville, Business Administrator; Jean Briggs, CIA Director; Deb Migneault, Principal DHS; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Sandi Crosson, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Christine Boston and Kim Lyndes, Co-Principals DMS; Malcolm Forsman, Principal HSS; Peter Wotton, Athletic Director; Dustin Gray, GES Principal; Chris Roberge, Technical Support Services Manager; and David Tromba, Music Director.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Beth Setear led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM:

Maybeth Anderson, 16 Monroe Street and Librarian at Dover High School – Asked Board members to reconsider cutting both high school and middle school library aides. Ms. Anderson outlined for the Board the kinds of activities that would no longer be available to the students if those positions are eliminated. Additionally hours of library operation would be reduced before and after school. This is due to the fact that the Dover Teachers' Union agreement specifies the length of the teacher's day as well as identifies a prep time and lunch time for the librarian equal to 120 minutes at the high school. Additionally, audio/video services will no longer be available to assist teachers in many ways, e.g. setting up LCD projectors and televisions and working lights and equipment in the auditorium.

Tiffany Grant, 2 Lisa Beth Drive – Asked the Board to preserve instrumental music at the elementary schools in the budget.

Linda Smart, 46 Fieldstone Drive and Librarian at Horne Street School – Ms. Smart provided an overview of the activities that take place in Dover school libraries, including the vast number resources available in the library media centers. She ended her presentation stating that the school 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, or to use a computer for research and reports. Ms. Smart also noted the importance of books, magazines, and newspapers, stating not everything can be found on the Internet and there is also a disadvantage if the computers are not working for any reason.



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Michelle Holt-Shannon, 14 Florence Street – She is the DMS PTA President and stated the five PTA's are coming together tomorrow evening to discuss a strategy for all of the PTA's for to take action with the City Council to seek an override for the school budget.

Amanda Russell, 20 Cranbrook Lane Street – Reiterated her desire to retain busing at all levels without charging fees that would create economic hardships. Additionally, she asked Board members to be as equitable as possible when making budget cuts and to chose those items that least affect students.

Christa Willey, 24 Evergreen Drive – Asked the Board to retain fourth grade instrumental music. Students of that age group are very interested to learn and enjoy playing an instrument.

Students: Morgan Wentworth-Chalue, Vanessa Calabrese, and Mysia Dye – All spoke in support of retaining all of the music programs. They extolled the virtues of the programs from teaching responsibility to making lasting friendships.

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Dr. O'Connor provided a brief recap of budget discussions up until this point. The growth in our budget this year, based on the tax cap formula represents \$180,900. He stated, "That's basically a level funded budget. That's less than 1/2%, 1/4%." The Superintendent's proposed budget was \$45,450,693 which means the Board is looking to reduce \$1,076,572. During the last meeting, the Board eliminated \$586,443 from the budget, 50% towards meeting its goal.

Administrator & Superintendent Updated List of Recommended Cuts
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The Superintendent then explained that an additional \$142,000 would need to be cut from the budget as a result of additional debt and needs to be added to the \$1,076,572. The Superintendent then asked Ms. Verville to expound upon the rescheduled debt service.

	Amount
Curriculum Adoption	\$200,000
DHS Summer School	\$17,000
Elementary Teacher	\$75,000
Career Technical Center	\$50,000
DMS Family & Consumer Sci.	\$20,000
Facilities Management	\$20,000
Supplies	\$28,000
Non-Union Salary Reduction	\$20,000
UNICCO Contract Reduction	\$29,500
DHS A/V Aide	\$30,568
DMS Library Aide	\$21,375
Special Education Placements	\$75,000
Total	\$586,443

Amount Required to Be Reduced

2009/2010 Budget
 \$44,283,221
 Tax Cap Growth
\$180,900
 Total 2010/2011 Budget
 \$44,464,121

Superintendent's



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Presentation Budget	\$45,540,693
To Be Reduced	\$1,076,572
Rescheduled Debt Service	<u>\$142,000</u>
New Total to be Reduced	\$1,218,572

Ms. Verville explained she was recently notified by the City’s Finance Director, Daniel Lynch, the District’s debt service payment schedule will increase by \$142,019.50 in FY: 2010-2011.

In an email dated December 8, 2009, from Mr. Lynch, a payment schedule was used to prepare the Superintendent’s Proposed Budget. Email correspondence dated February 16, 2010 reported an increase primary in the principal portion of the payment. The bonds were officially sold this month. Therefore, the changes to our debt service payment schedule are demonstrated in the chart below necessitating another \$142,019 cut from the proposed budget

Correspondence Date	Principal	Interest	Total
12/2/09	\$2,435,498.46	\$1,667,703.82	\$4,103,202.28
2/16/10	\$2,555,498.46	\$1,689,723.32	\$4,245,221.78
Difference:	\$120,000.00	\$22,019.50	\$142,019.50

Mr. Mayberry asked, “If we retired \$7,000,000 of debt, did we decrease the ratio of our debt income, and would that have allowed us to get a better interest rate and thus probably reduce this \$140,000? Or did we incur more debt once we retired the \$7 million?” Ms. Verville explained the Woodman Park School \$12 million renovation and addition was completed and, “those bond payments are now coming in and coming on line. You’ve got a \$12 million debt incurred’ retired \$6 million for Horne, but you’re still adding the difference.” We actually increased our income to debt ratio rather than decreased it.

Mr. Appel asked if the tax cap remains in effect next year, assuming the cost of living does not change much, how much more will the District need to cut next year? He estimated a half million dollars at lease, but he wanted a more “educated” guess. He noted, “Anything we defer in this budget, we’ll have to face it next year.” Dr. O’Connor reminded Board members that there was growth in the budget under the tax cap (3.2% and 3.8% that the City Council directed be cut to 2%) during the previous two years. He then conceded with the \$350,000 “manipulation” made by City Council from this year’s budget, and if the cost of living is less than 1%, it will be extremely difficult to maintain the District budget next year.

Dr. Mebert reminded everyone that the tax cap was voted in by a majority of 17% of Dover. She added that one way we can work to change things is to get rid of the tax cap, and that will be



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based on the will of the voters in this City. She concluded by stating, “If folks don’t want to be paying personal taxes as fees for playing sports, for buses, things like that...we need to do something as a City to change the system.”

Dr. O’Connor introduced Chris Roberge, Technical Support Services Manager to answer some questions brought up by Board members during the last meeting. Mr. Roberge provided the following information to answer Board member questions regarding the effects of a budget cut to technology, including the following:

- The cut will most-heavily impact the “Desktop Equipment” line. This is the line used to purchase PC’s and Laptops for student, teacher, and administrator use.
- The District has a little over 1500 PC’s on the network at this time. The average lifespan of a desktop PC is 3 to 5 years. Currently, over 625 of our systems are more than 5 years old.
- A rotation schedule needs to be established to ensure old, decrepit systems are replaced regularly. Mr. Roberge set an arbitrary and ‘not-so-ambitious target’ of six years. This would be done by replacing 1/6th of our systems annually each year. This would ensure that (eventually) no system on our network is older than 6 years.
- At the current funding level, a 6-year rotation cycle is possible, though not until the year 2016.
- Cutting the already-cut \$64,000 will result in an 11-year rotation cycle, not starting until the year 2021.
- Cutting by \$100,000 results in less than half the District systems being less than 6-years old by 2013, and only 35% of them being that young by 2014.
- This assumes NO network growth in the coming years.
- This assumes NO significant technical innovations.



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Mr. Roberge ended his presentation stating, “Technology is one of the things that touches everybody. It touches students, it touches faculty, it touches staff. We require teachers to do a lot of things online and yet, we’re not giving them the tools to effectively get the job done. I see this point somewhere between 2010 and 2020 where the network reaches a bottleneck where the systems are just too slow to work. It’s not a good way to be bringing students into the 21st Century, providing them with a room full of PC’s that nobody wants to touch because they don’t work.”

Dr. Mebert noted that Mr. Roberge’s presentation was somewhat pessimistic. “It seems like you’re assuming the technology is going to stay somewhat stagnant. That the PC that’s built next year is going to be obsolete in six years where, maybe it’s not going to be. Maybe the technology will be advanced to such an extent that the PC’s of the future will last longer. If everything gets faster every year, there’s got to be some point where we start going backwards or something – it can’t keep getting faster, right? I’m just trying to figure whether at some point technology will be somewhat stable. Stable and usable over an extended period of time rather than the 5 or 6 years that you’re projecting now.”

Mr. Roberge stated it is possible, but his spreadsheet does not assume technical innovations. “Maybe they’ll come up with a \$100 PC. They’ve tried before, the \$100 laptop. There are Netbooks out there but Netbooks do not perform nearly as fast as a desktop system.”

Dr. Mebert asked whether there were grants available for technology. Mr. Roberge stated he has not gotten into the grant writing business because it requires there be an educational plan to go along with the technology. He added, “I don’t feel like I have the educational background to write a grant that talks about how this technology is going to be used in a classroom.”

Matt Mayberry asked if private partnerships, such as Dell or Microsoft have been pursued. Dr. O’Connor stated that this was not pursued on an overt level, but past experience has been companies wanting to donate their antiquated systems. He asked any Board member who knows of any organization willing to do this, he would certainly pursue it. Mr. Mayberry stated he believes there may be an opportunity with Staples or Office Max and he will pursue that.

Mr. Mayberry suggested technology be cut in lieu of personnel and his belief the economy will improve in 2 to 3 years and the technology budget can be increased at that time. “The pessimistic, doomsday, do it now or do it never, I do disagree with you on. I think we need to prioritize where we are. I’m looking at the budget, between the technology to support curriculum



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and equipment is \$304,000. That's a lot of money, Sir." Mr. Roberge stated it is something close to .7% of the actual operating budget. "It is a lot of money, I'm not arguing that...As the technology manager for this district, I can't ignore the fact that there are dozens of teachers out there who aren't touching their PC's because they don't work and this is going to directly impact them."

Ken Appel added, "Let's be realistic. I've been involved with computers since 1956 and I have not seen a year in which things have not moved to a point where you needed something new. As computers are made faster, the software that is written for computers is written to take advantage of the faster computer and there's not a thing we can do about it. When I see in our schools we have a computer lab that several classes have to use, in Maine, a much poorer state, I see the classrooms have collections of laptops; one for every student. We're at a tremendously disadvantaged position right now and cutting anything out of the computer budget sets us further into the back. Secondly, the economic predictions I've seen make it unreasonable to expect that the unemployment rate will drop significantly in the next few years. The idea of looking forward to a recovery may feel good, but economists are not predicting it. We're in a situation where we're looking at a group of kids who will not get anything like a reasonable education over the next several years unless, somehow, we can get to the point where we have a reasonable budget. There is no hope of providing the citizens of Dover with an education for their children unless somehow we can overcome this tax cap. The only way we can overcome the tax cap is have those citizens individually approach the School Board and City Council - organize themselves and their neighbors - to make sure the City Council knows it is likely that a majority of the citizens of Dover will vote to overcome this tax cap."

Doris Grady requested a total of the amount of money spent on technology throughout the budget. Ms. Verville referenced a memo that had been provided to Board members showing the current technology budget is \$686,175.14 and the Superintendent's proposed technology budget for 2011 is \$614,510.88.

Responding to the point that every child in the state of Maine receives a laptop, Ms. Grady noted that the state of Maine pays for this for every child within the classroom. She added, "In that program, at this point, it's been proven that their scores have all jumped by fairly large sums. So when it comes to spending money on technology, I think what's going to happen is each year we're going to be looking at heavier and heavier numbers in technology for the simple reason – when we're looking at libraries of the future – when you're looking at all the technological instruments that people have to have, books are going to be available at the touch of a finger - It's not going to be a book on the wall. That's not too far away from here." Mr. Roberge added there is currently a lot of technology "out there" that can be had for free these days that can replace a lot of those items being cut from the budget.

Dr. Mebert suggested it might be wise for Mr. Roberge to work with someone in curriculum development to coordinate efforts to see where the curriculum is going and what kind of technology is best suited to use the materials required by the curriculum. Matt Mayberry asked



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if the Board or District had looked into buying laptops, as an example, for all incoming freshmen. Dr. Mebert stated they had not as long as she has been on the Board and suggested we look into how it is Roberge stated probably buy 200 O'Connor advised freshman enrollment students.

Ms. Grady look at the updated reductions being administrators and

Dr. O'Connor then Board review the cuts proposed by the

These recommendations, along with the \$586,443 cut made during the last meeting, brings the Board close to their target:

**Administrator & Superintendent Recommended Reductions
March 1, 2010**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Budget at Cap \$1.1M</u>
Music Teacher (District Wide)	\$65,000
Business Teacher (CTC)	\$65,000
Reading Teacher (DMS)	\$75,000
2 Teachers (DHS)	\$150,000
Athletic Programs	\$100,000
Secretary (District Wide)	\$45,000
Remaining Amount	\$500,000

done in Maine. Mr. \$100,000 would “decent” laptops. Dr. the incoming is usually about 450

suggested the Board list of recommended presented by the the Superintendent.

recommended the following additional Administrators.

Dr. O'Connor then provided rationale/explanations for each of the proposed cuts:

- Music Teacher is not necessarily an instrumental teacher or an elementary music specialist within the schools. Rather, it will be accomplished by reconfiguring schedules at the middle and high schools. There may be an opportunity to reduce by a teacher and still provide the same level of service.
- Business Teacher CTC – Mr. Amara has talked about the reduction of a business teacher at the CTC and he can reschedule students into the other business program and other programs as well.
- Reading Teacher DMS – There is a possibility that there will be a resignation or retirement from one of the two teacher positions currently at the school. Dr. Mebert asked, “If Dover Middle School is a School in Need of Improvement in reading, this seems like not a good idea.” Dr. O'Connor agreed, but because it is a potential opening, the District could save by simply not filling that position.
- 2 Teachers at DHS – Looking at enrollments in March and April, there will be a better estimate, but the administration believes they may be able to schedule students at Dover High School, allowing them to take the courses that are necessary to keep them on track for graduation with the elimination of two teaching positions.
- Athletic Programs – This money represents \$20,000 in supplies that cut across all of the athletic programs and approximately \$80,000 earmarked for transportation. Each team would then be required to raise funds for their transportation to and from games.



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- District wide Secretary – No position has been identified. However, the administrators would look at where they may be able to make some reductions – it could be a full time position; a school year position; or several part time positions to come up to the \$45,000 target.

Audra Lurvey asked if the reading teachers at Dover Middle School are acting as models or liaisons as part of the implementation of the new curriculum. Dr. O'Connor stated they certainly provide support for classroom teachers, but we do have a federally funded literacy facilitator position in next year's budget, above and beyond the two reading teachers. Ms. Lurvey added, if \$80,000 was cut from transportation for athletics, would it be in opposition to the athletic policy that requires your child travel with the team. Dr. O'Connor stated it would not because it would be expected that the teams raise money for transportation to travel together.

Doris Grady stated the instrumental music program ran for years starting in grade five with grade four having been added only recently. She stated the total program could still remain intact in grades 5 thorough 12 and eliminate instrumental music in grade 4 only which she believes would have the least impact. This would enable an \$85,000 cut instead of the \$65,000 and still leave approximately \$700,000 to run the music program. Ms. Grady expressed her concern that athletics seems to be hit more than any other activity. She stated her belief that the total amount of money should be taken from every one of the extracurricular activities, not only athletics. Additionally, she stated her belief that if fees are implemented they also should apply to every extracurricular activity. She ended by stating, "Looking at athletics, it could be a possibility that we finance junior varsity and varsity teams like a lot of schools do in the state, and freshman program being run pretty much as part of the city recreational department. The kids who are in our freshman teams would be totally under the city recreation and we would only be responsible for junior varsity and varsity."

Matt Mayberry moved, Robert McCrory seconded, to reduce line item 1100-640 Textbooks by \$50,000.

Ken Appel asked for an explanation of which textbooks would be eliminated by making this reduction. Dr. O'Connor stated that figure includes replacement of worn out, damaged or lost texts. It also includes a large amount for the three elementary schools to replace consumables used in math, vocabulary, science workbooks that are a part of the curriculum and every year there is a recurring cost. The Superintendent then gave an example of another problem that occurs at the high school. "Take math for example. I wouldn't be surprised if we have a dozen or more different math books, depending upon classes that we're teaching. You have calculus, trigonometry, advanced placement, geometry at different levels; a dozen or more different texts. Each text costs between \$50 to \$75 each. In my mind, if a student loses a text, that student should be responsible for paying for that text. The high school collects fees for kids who do that. The problem is, when you keep a textbook 7, 8, 9, 10 years, you run into problems with them. They just start to wear out. You can't charge someone for a worn out text if 6 other people had that text before them. That's the problem. Some of these books just begin to wear out and they



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have to be replaced.” Mr. Mayberry asked if they wouldn’t be replaced by the new curriculum. Dr. O’Connor stated that was not necessarily true. “When we did our math adoption, it was just a K-8 adoption. We didn’t put a lot of money into the high school at that time because they were satisfied with the textbooks that they were using. Those textbooks begin to lengthen their lifecycles. That becomes a problem and that’s why you see a much higher figure at the high school, because they replace books that are \$50 to \$75. We try to buy them used...we look for companies that go out and buy (no longer published) those books and then resell them at a lesser rate than what a brand new book would cost.”

Mr. Mayberry stated that \$1 million has been spent on curriculum in the past five years. There is another \$200,000 in this budget that brings it to \$1.2 million over six years. A lot of money! Dr. O’Connor agreed but stated, “But that’s our business.” Mr. Mayberry asked the percentage of the \$200,000 would be for textbooks under new curriculum. Dr. O’Connor gave examples of recent curriculum adoptions – science where a majority of the money purchased kits and teacher and student consumables. “We probably run \$75,000 a year in replacing science supplies, materials, workbooks, and so forth on a regular basis...Reading at the elementary level, all of the books, the writing, the vocabulary, spelling, are all consumable. They are repurchased every year...That is the way the publishing companies have gone. Very rarely do you see a hardcover reading, spelling, vocabulary (book). They are all soft cover. Yes, they only cost \$5.95 or \$8.95, but if you have to buy them for seven years in a row, you’re paying more money than if they had a hardcover text, but they don’t produce them that way anymore.”

Beth Setear stated, “Again, I want to say that I appreciate the work that the administrators do in coming up with these cuts and I know that not one of these is a cut they favor; they are all painful; but they are the people that do the job day-in and day-out. If they’re going to say they can make do with one less music teacher, one less business teacher, and a couple less teachers at the high school, I believe them. We can nickel and dime the budget to death, or we can make some pretty substantial cuts that administrators feel that they can live with. So, I am in favor of the cuts that they’ve proposed tonight to bring us much closer much more quickly to the amount that we need to reduce. On a second note, I do want to address the play to pay discussion that has been going on. Through discussions with other people (the only email that I received from any constituent who had a suggestion of what we could do) was pay to play. Not just for athletics but for every extracurricular activity that happens in the schools. I do want to remark that I am in favor of that. I would like to direct the Superintendent, along with other Board members, to investigate the possibility of that happening - and for this reason...I realized that any parent whose child plays Dover Youth Sports, pays to play. From the age of 7 to the age of 14, if your child plays football, baseball, recreation basketball, or lacrosse or is part of the seacoast swim team, you pay for that opportunity. All of a sudden at the high school, students no longer have to pay for it who have been paying for it all along. Because, there are very few students who do not play youth sports who show up as a freshman to play high school sports. All the youth sports do offer scholarships, so for those students who couldn’t afford to do it, they would scholarship them in. I think we could attempt to do the same thing and recoup some of the money we need to save some positions, by instituting that pay to play. I appreciate



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the information we got in our packets that shows the districts in New Hampshire who actually are already doing that.”

Mr. McCrory stated he would not vote in favor for pay to play because he considers it a back door tax on families. On the possibility of textbooks being deferred or not bought, he mentioned he read a recent article that said Manchester was buying sturdier textbooks and students share. They are left in the classroom at a desk for the next student. Dr. Mebert added that Manchester has also instituted a fee of \$8.50 per ten ride bus ticket and that may be something we might want to consider as well.

Mr. Appel agreed with Mr. McCrory and stated, on the other hand, everything that the Board is being asked to do is a back door tax. “By not educating their children as well as we can; by not providing texts that are current; by not providing technology; we are taxing these kids. They’re not going to get the jobs they could have gotten. What we’re deciding is which disastrous things we have to do and I don’t think we can single out any one of these things as not being a tax on families.”

Audra Lurvey agreed with Ms. Setear on the pay to play concept, but noted her concern is this may create a “sheer volume of paperwork and human work that it will take for some person to document all the students that need to pay, who has paid and who hasn’t, which form has been filled out for a scholarship, tracking the money, and all of those things. That’s my concern with that because that could potentially take a lot of man-hours.” Dr. Mebert noted one of the nice things about the fact we have not done it yet is that there is a whole history in other school districts from whom we can get advice.

Mr. Mayberry called the motion on the floor to reduce line item 1100-640 currently at \$99,470, by \$50,000 to \$49,470. An oral **VOTE FAILED 2/5 (Mebert, Lurvey, Setear, Grady, Appel opposed)**.

Mr. Mayberry moved, Robert McCrory seconded, a reduction in the curriculum adoption line item from \$200,000 to \$100,000 (for a total reduction of \$300,000).

Doris Grady stated, “Whereas we’re still a District in Need of Improvement, I think we really need to take a look at why we are and whether or not we need to put that much into curriculum adoption until we know where we are going to get ourselves out of the position we’re in. I might be inclined to agree with that. Mainly because we’re not succeeding with what we have, so until we know exactly the direction we’re going in, and we eliminate some of what’s not being successful, we may not need that much money.”

Mr. Appel stated he would like to know specifically what the \$300,000 this will add up to will do to our curriculum. Jean Briggs-Badger came to the podium to address the question. Ms. Briggs Badger stated, “I want to just put out there that curriculum is the heart and soul of what we do. What we provide our children and what we do every day in the classroom depends on having



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up-to-date and effective delivery of curriculum and materials that help the teacher be succinct and direct in what their instruction provides. Ms. Grady pointed out, we are indeed a School in Need of Improvement. With Dover Growing Readers (DGR) started this fall, we firmly believe we are on the right track for getting our scores, according to the NECAP, to rise in a positive direction. The results that came back in January indeed did point out that are scores are headed upward – the trajectory look good. We are feeling very confident about DGR.”

Ms. Briggs-Badger reminded Board members, “We have already sustained a 50% cut of our curriculum budget and I would plead with you not to take anything more away from the children and the teachers...We want to be the best. We want Dover to be the place that people want to move to and bring their students to because we provide the best, well-researched, up-to-date curriculum. If you cut the heart out of that, what’s the point of doing anything else?”

Dr. O’Connor asked Ms. Briggs-Badger to list what is being cut with the \$200,000 out of the budget. Ms. Briggs-Badger provided the following list:

- \$11,250 – Trait Crates
- \$10,000 – K-4 Guided Reading Materials
- \$18,000 - Benchmark Assessment Kits
- \$20,000 – Intervention Materials
- \$50,000 – Freshman and Sophomore Reading and Writing Curriculum
- \$9,000 - K-6 Science Consumables
- \$15,000 – Everyday Math K-4 Consumables
- \$66,750 – Technology (20 interactive white boards)

Ms. Grady agreed, “Whereas you started at \$400,000 and have already been cut by \$200,000, I have the same attitude at this point I have with athletics. I think you’ve taken your share of the cuts – one of the biggest cuts there. I still have a question about those innovative things that we started that are not working. Are you planning on removing those which would save a bit of cash for you?” Ms. Grady then referred to “Leslie and Tufts” programs. Ms. Briggs-Badger assured Ms. Grady that those professional development frameworks dealing with best practices in teaching reading are no longer being used. When DGR was adopted, it equalized all three elementary schools so that the reading experience, the materials, and teacher training is equitable across the District.

Mr. McCrory reminded Board members that they were provided with a 5-year history of money spent on curriculum development and it came out to roughly \$200,000 a year, so over \$1 million has been spent over the past 5 years. “It’s not as if we haven’t provided it some attention, The original comment was, if we’re still a District in Need of Improvement, in fact we keep adding schools- start off with one, now they’re all on there - the idea was not to fund things that weren’t working. It sounds like we have a great one and I bet you five years ago, we had a great one as well. I would rather support cutting things and the technology that’s supporting curriculum development more than cutting basic services to children and the extra services of the teachers.”



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Mr. Appel added, "It is my understanding...one could improve significantly and still be a District in Need of Improvement because of the moving target." Ms. Briggs Badger stated that is correct and also, the point that any sub-group not making adequate yearly progress, then you are also a District in Need of Improvement, even though your overall scores may be going up. If a sub-group does not make substantial progress, you can be designated as a District in Need of Improvement. Mr. Appel then asked rhetorically, "Suppose a student is minimally proficient throughout his or her career...what chance does that student have to get into a good college? I wonder whether minimally proficient is all we want of our kids. Will they have a reasonable shot of getting admitted to a decent college if they just satisfy proficiency?"

Mr. Mayberry stated his concern that 10 years ago, the District budget was \$22 million; 5 years ago, \$35 million; the proposed budget is \$45 million. "At what point in time do we hold ourselves, as citizens and administration, accountable for performance of these students? We keep talking about putting more and more money in, but we still have that sub-set. No matter what we do, I am of the opinion we are still going to have Schools in Need of Improvement...I want new curriculum, I want every child to play, I want a music program. Ladies and gentlemen, even if we take this \$500,000 additional cut, we still have to find another \$200,000 somewhere. Something is going to be cut." He added his desire is to cut "things" instead of "people" from the budget, and added, "\$100,000 for a delay is hard, but I think still manageable because we're always going to be in need."

Ms. Briggs-Badger stated, "I agree, it may appear on the surface that the budget ballooned over a 10-year period, but if you remember...85 to 87% of the total budget is a miniscule piece of the total \$45 million package. That miniscule piece, as the Curriculum Director and I speak for the students who are not here to speak for themselves, it's the heart and soul of the quality of what they get everyday in the classroom. It's already 50% cut. To cut it 75% sends the absolute wrong message to our students, to our teachers, and I think to the community, that we're not able to provide the basic, essential, science consumable, math books, texts for the high school. I don't think curriculum is a luxury item."

Dr. O'Connor stated the average spent over the past 10 years in curriculum was \$300,000 to \$350,000 on an average. He noted that "curriculum is the core of our business. These are our tools." He added that he and the administrators would go back and look very carefully at the numbers in the budget for textbooks and if they can find areas for reduction, that will be first on the list at the next meeting.

Dr. Mebert called the vote for a reduction in the curriculum adoption line item from \$200,000 to \$100,000 (for a total reduction of \$300,000).

An oral **VOTE FAILED 2/5 (Mebert, Lurvey, Setear, Grady, Appel opposed).**



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

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Doris Grady moved, Audra Lurvey seconded, to revise the Administrator and Superintendent March 1, 2010 list of recommended cuts to change the music from \$65,000 to the cost of the 4th grade instrumental teacher at \$84,914 and change the cut from athletics from \$100,000 to \$80,000.

Ms. Grady added that the Board spends countless hours every year in developing the budget when in the end, the City Council tells the Board how much money they can spend and it is left to the Superintendent to run the District the best way he can. Ms. Setear countered that, "In my mind, if I voted for the reduction of a reading teacher at the Dover Middle School, and I voted in good conscience that the administrators felt that was a good...thing to do and they could live with that, and Dr. O'Connor maintained that reading position at the middle school, I would not be very happy with him. Although we hand him the money in the end and say 'make it work,' if I don't vote for a van, I don't want to see a van. If I vote to reduce a reading teacher, I don't want to walk into the middle school and see two reading teachers and I would be really unhappy if I did. So I don't think that we give (the Superintendent) carte blanche to go ahead and make reductions we have not approved or add things we don't know about."

Robert McCrory asked what happened to the item on the original Dover Middle School team reduction that had been on the original list of recommended cuts. Dr. O'Connor explained during review of the original list, the administrators prioritized their list of cuts and the team reduction was an item they did not feel they could easily do without. The reading teacher position was placed on the list and it is still a very difficult reduction, but because it is a retirement or resignation, they could simply not fill the position. Mr. McCrory noted he is a "big fan of a hiring freeze" because one is able to see what their "trading space is" and might be able to "make it up later." He pointed out if the team reduction had been kept on the list, that was an additional \$150,000 cut and "there would not be a requirement to hit something again, like athletics."

Mr. Mayberry asked if the music teacher cut for \$65,000 was for the instrumental K-12 program. Dr. O'Connor stated it would not be that specific position, the program would stay in district-wide. There would still be general music in the elementary and middle schools. This would be a cut made by more carefully rescheduling the existing programs with less staff.

Mr. Mayberry made a friendly amendment to take each item in the administrator and Superintendent's list dated March 1, 2010 one by one for discussion and vote. Ms. Grady accepted the friendly amendment. A oral vote to accept the friendly amendment passed 7/0.

Item 1: Cut \$84,914 from the music program. An oral **VOTE PASSED 4/3 (Setear, Mayberry, Appel opposed).**

Item 2: Cut CTC Business Teacher for \$65,000. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Item 3: Reading Teacher at Dover Middle School for \$75,000. An oral **VOTE PASSED 5/2 (Mebert and Mayberry opposed).**

Item 4: Two teachers at Dover High School for \$150,000. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**



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Item 5: Athletic Programs for \$80,000. An oral **VOTE FAILED 2/5 (Mebert, McCrory, Appel, Setear, and Lurvey opposed).**

Item 6: Secretary position district wide. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Mr. Appel moved, Audra Lurvey seconded, to cut the original amount of \$100,000 from the athletic budget.

Mr. Mayberry stated he will vote against the motion but would probably come forward with a new motion to cut only \$50,000 to provide some transportation for the teams.

Dr. Mebert asked, if the cut were made, the total athletic budget would remain at \$147,705. Dr. O'Connor replied it would be more than that. The total budget would be \$487,000 and includes salaries.

Mr. McCrory stated he would not vote for the cut. He reminded Board members the value of providing athletics or other programs because for some students, that is their only motivation to stay in school. Mr. Appel agreed but added, "We are being forced to vote for a disaster...the only question is what kind of disaster we are being forced to vote for. Are we going to vote for the kind of disaster that makes our kids unemployable because they aren't educated? Or are we going to cut, painfully it may be, the athletic program? It's not as if we have a choice of doing something good or doing something bad. It's a choice of what horrible to do – that's what it comes down to."

Ms. Grady noted, "We haven't made it (District in Need of Improvement) for five years so we have to look for something that will help us make it in the next two years. Being a disaster, in my past experience with the budgets, whatever we end up with, we've always improved the best we can with the money we've had. I have a little trouble that having to make some cuts in spending is not going to put our system in disaster. It hasn't before in the last 15 years...I can't see it happening again."

Mr. Appel replied to Ms Grady stating, School in Need of Improvement business is very difficult. It does apply to a relatively small part of the population. The middle school, as far as I can see and I've been volunteering there for a number of years, is improving. Various other things are improving. That doesn't show up in a School in Need of Improvement because we're not being hit on the total population in those schools. So, what we're going to be doing in making some of these cuts is to reverse the kind of improvement we've been having. School in Need of Improvement is something we need to face. But it does not affect the majority of our students. The majority of our students are getting a better education than they were getting in previous years. I think we have to separate those."

Ms. Grady noted, however, student standings in relationship to the state show 2% of our kids are proficient with distinction. "These middle kids need something. They always have and we



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miss them all the time. The other three areas we were from 5% to 10% below the state average. At 5% to 10% below, we're not making it, so we need some change somewhere."

Robert McCrory would impact the IX.

Dr. O'Connor stated

Music Teacher (District Wide)	\$84,914
Business Teacher (CTC)	\$65,000
Reading Teacher (DMS)	\$75,000
2 Teachers (DHS)	\$150,000
Athletic Programs	\$50,000
Secretary (District Wide)	\$45,000

asked if this cut requirements of Title

it would not.

Audra Lurvey called for the vote to reduce athletics by \$100,000. An oral **VOTE FAILED 3/4 (Grady, McCrory, Lurvey, Setear opposed)**.

Matt Mayberry moved, Audra Lurvey seconded, to reduce the athletic budget by \$50,000. An oral **VOTE PASSED 4/3 (Appel, McCrory, and Grady opposed)**.

Ms. Grady moved, Audra Lurvey seconded, to have the \$50,000 cut in athletics split by an even percentage for all extra curricular activities (clubs, music, cheering, etc.) Dr. O'Connor suggested the Board retain the current vote and he will bring back to the Board a list of all extracurricular activities and how much is being spent and for what. This would allow the cuts to be shared by all so everyone can pay equally. Ms. Grady then withdrew her motion until the next meeting.

The following additional cuts were approved during the budget workshop:

Dr. Mebert asked the Superintendent to provide more information on what we could charge for transportation services. "Manchester is implementing a fee for the bus now. \$8.50 for a 10-ride ticket...I've been thinking that if maybe we charged \$200 a year for the high school bus, then we can generate about \$45,000 from the ridership figures that (the Superintendent) gave us. That works out to be \$.55 per bus ride." Dr. O'Connor agreed and added charging a fee might also result in cut in the number of buses for the high school. "We could have a double savings. One a revenue generating fee, and second, a possible savings in the bus. I shared with you ridership numbers and several of you commented we're averaging 35 to 40 students on these buses when seating capacity is 75 to 80. However, all of the routes have the potential for 50 to 60 students; we just have a number who choose not to ride the bus. But we have to plan for every student. If we implement a fee, we may see ridership drop as students look at ways and we may be able to consolidate. So there could be a double savings for the district."

Dr. Mebert added she would also like the Superintendent to look seriously at the pay to play. "We did get a lot of information about that in our packets this week. We've seen an amazing range of fees charged. The maximum we saw was for football in Winthrop, Massachusetts, \$940 a season students are paying... What I'd like to think about is how much we could reasonably charge without losing players, because I do think this is important for students who are vested in school primarily for athletics still have an opportunity to play. A cap for families,



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because we know there are families with multiple children and we don't want to be charging them...so that nobody can play any more; and then, waivers for scholarships for students who meet certain financial requirements. We've seen that in most of the districts we've looked at who have fees."

Dr. O'Connor stated he will bring that information back for the next meeting. Ms. Grady asked what the total of this evening's cuts was. Ms. Verville agreed the total cut this evening \$469,914 and added to the previous approved cuts the total amount is \$1,056,357.00.

Ms. Grady noted she still has an issue with the cost of the annual rent adjustment at the McConnell Center. "I had difficulty in that when we did this with the City, it was kind of a fair deal. I'm not sure how fair that deal is right now. In one year...our rent has increased \$8,343.00. We're sitting here tonight trying to cut figures for kids. In two years time, the rent in the McConnell center, the SAU, is now \$11,291.00 increased within two years...What if we did this for ten more years? I took the \$11,291 and multiply it by 5 and we're looking at over ten years, increasing that rent by \$54,000. Later, I will be asking some questions as to who pays what over there. How much are their increases? Why did that increase come about?"

Mr. McCrory asked the Superintendent to follow up on Ms. Lurvey's comments regarding the administration of the user fees and bring it back to the Board. His hope was it would not take a person's entire day.

Audra Lurvey moved, Matt Mayberry seconded, to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**