

Legislative Liaison Updates
May 26, 2010

State Budget Shortfalls – Part III

SB450 and HB1128

With a deficit approaching \$300 Million for the biennium the Senate and House have agreed to request committees of conference on the two bills representing their respective views. Although there are similarities and differences to both of these bills, clearly the approach is from opposite sides in closing this budget gap. The House proposes larger budget cuts along with tax increases, while the Senate relies on gaming revenues and one-time income from the monetization of state assets. As reported to the Council last time regarding SB450, the House Finance Committee made recommendations to significantly cut the Meals and Rooms tax distribution but supported a measure for a local option at the discretion of the local communities. Also, they approved a further reduction in the state retirement contributions down to 20%. The House agreed to these recommendations. Regarding HB1128, the Senate added a new gambling/gaming plan to generate more revenues and restore the proposed cuts in the Meals and Rooms tax (although not restore the deficiency last year) as well as hold the retirement contributions to 25% vs decreasing to 20%. These committees of conference have been selected on both sides and they have scheduled meetings to draft a report that is supposed to be finalized by May 27, 2010 for a final vote by the full House and Senate by June 2nd.

HB1393

As reported to the Council last time, this bill, an act relative to pooled risk management programs (PRMP's), was tabled in the afternoon on Wednesday 5/12/2010 by the chair of the Senate Commerce Committee. Later in that meeting the bill was removed from the table and again brought up for discussion. Some amendments were offered up and the bill passed the Committee with an amendment that removes the cap on reserves, but leaves the regulatory oversight with the Secretary of State. There is concern for this decision as the SOS does not have experience in the insurance industry and many feel the oversight should be done by the Insurance Department as is typically done in other states that regulate PRMP's. The bill went back to the House on Thursday the 20th where a committee of conference was established. The Senate acceded to the House request and appointed their members as well. This committee has met and will present a report to the House on Wednesday, June 2nd, for discussion.

Councilor Bill Garrison

School Board Meeting

10/24/10

The Dover School Board meeting began with an update on the hazardous street list. Several streets have been deemed safe now. About 50 students would be walking if the board approved this update. The new list was approved.

Relating to busing of students within the 1 mile limit, day care centers on Back River Road requested a waiver to allow students enrolled in pre-school and after school programs to be bused. This waiver was approved by the board.

Superintendent John O'Connor advised members of the Dover School Board to attend the Wednesday council meeting to support a modest override for the school budget. He reported that the council, in its discussion of a possible override, had not mentioned the schools. An override by the council would not automatically address the school issue. When asked to establish some priorities by the council, the Superintendent declined to do so stating that all of the list attached to the budget were priorities.

Board members, however, did begin to mention some of their personal priorities which included the late bus, the fire/EMT program at the Career Technical Center, and technology.

Sandra Crosson reported on expenditures of grant monies for special education services.

Paula Glynn reported on Title I funds.

Jean Badger-Briggs gave a NEACAP report. Dover has become a DINI (District in need of Improvement) in both reading and math. The high school is showing growth with the exception of the Special Education sub-group. Upper grades in the middle school are showing growth. Science scores are not good nor are our grade 3 scores.

Linda Smart reported on a technology plan that we are submitting to the state. The report covers technology accessibility, integration into teaching, and promoting communication with parents. The board approved the report.

Business Manager, Laurie Verville asked board approval on a series of bids on technology equipment

Under items of interest, Dr. O'Connor reported that with the resignation of a teacher and the hire of one at less salary, money would be found in the CTC budget to fund the firefighters program.

He also reported that since Mrs. Briggs-Badger has been selected to be the next superintendent of schools, all of her federal funds duties would be given to the Title I Director who would become a full time position. This leaves an opening for a Director of Curriculum and Assessment which has already been advertised.