



**DOVER SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

## DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop  
Meeting Location: City Council Chambers  
Meeting Date: **Monday, February 28, 2011**  
Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Carolyn Mebert on Monday, February 28, 2011, at 6:45 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2012 budget.

**A. ROLL CALL:** Members present were Carolyn Mebert, Audra Lurvey, Beth Setear, Doris Grady, Ken Appel and Robert McCrory. Matt Mayberry arrived at 6:50.

Also present were Jean Briggs Badger, Superintendent; Laurie Verville, Business Administrator; Gary Tirone, CIA Director; Christopher Roberge, Technical Support Services Manager; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Sandi Crosson, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Christine Boston and Kimberly Lyndes, Co-Principals, DMS; Deborah Migneault, Principal DHS; Malcolm Forsman, Principal HSS, Peter Wotton, Athletic Director, NJROTC Instructor Bill Tower, Foster's.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Doris Grady led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. CITIZEN'S FORUM:** Danielle Holt addressed the Board. She spoke in support of the priority items and the superintendent's budget in general.

**D. BUDGET DISCUSSION:** Jean Briggs Badger provided Board members with a handout that highlighted figures related to different options for the budget including a 4.9% budget, 2.3% default budget, 1.6% spending cap budget, and a 0% growth budget. The 4.9% included the default budget and the top ten priority items that have been discussed previously. The 2.3% is the default budget that includes what the district is contractually obligated for and level funding. Also on the handout were the implications of each budget figure on the tax rate. She stated that the purpose of this budget workshop is to start the discussion as to how the Board wants to progress over the next few weeks. There is only one additional workshop on March 7 and a regular School Board meeting on March 14th, before the budget needs to be submitted to the City Manager on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Mebert asked Ms. Briggs Badger if the Board should be concerned with changes in revenue since if the Governor's budget is accepted, the School District will have considerably less money in the revenue stream.

Ms. Verville distributed a worksheet that included proposed general fund revenue and revised per the Governor's Budget. Her worksheet showed a possible decrease of \$674,368.00. The potential losses would come from School Building Aid, Catastrophic Aid, Voc Tuition Aid, and Voc Transportation Aid.

Dr. Mebert reiterated that the District could be in the negative by almost 675,000. It is something to consider, although there is nothing that can be done about it.



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Dr. Mebert asked how the tax rate would be affected by the four different budget proposals.

Ms. Briggs Badger responded with scenarios for the increase that would be realized by a family who owned a \$225,000 home in Dover for each budget. With the 4.9% budget, the tax bill would increase by \$236.00 per year. The 2.3% default budget would increase the tax bill by \$136.27 per year. The 1.6% spending cap budget impact would be \$55.36 per year and a 0% increase would cost \$49.35 per year.

Mr. Mayberry added that the state tax portion is \$2.49 on top of the increases that Ms. Briggs Badger mentioned.

Dr. Appel asked why going to 0% to 1.6% there is a \$.02 and 1.6% to 2.3% increases it by \$.30. Ms. Verville explained that because the 1.6% is not an increase, but just a spending cap and is viewed differently.

Mrs. Grady asked if we are accounting for the loss of revenue that might occur because of the Governor's budget. The District could be looking for over \$2 million if the Governor's budget is passed. She asked, "How are we going to attack the "ifs" of the Governor's Budget." Deep cuts will need to be made if the Governor's budget is cut after the School District budget is passed. There are still many unknowns in the budget process.

Mrs. Grady asked if the "big figures" that the Governor is proposing in his budget are included in any of the budgets that have been proposed to the School Board. Ms. Verville responded that they are not because this information has been recent and the budget was completed prior to the knowledge of the Governor's budget.

Ms. Briggs Badger commented that she contacted the State regarding Building Aid and was told that this is only the first cycle in the budget process of the State. There are six cycles and they are optimistic that the situation could improve. She continued that the District should work with what is known now, because the Governor's budget won't be known for quite a while. The school district, by law, must submit a budget by March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Mebert recommended a compromise regarding the budget. She spent a great deal of time reviewing the budget in hopes of funding an area that might be able to be cut. The only item she found was that the Dover Middle School phone budget was much greater than any other schools including Dover High School. Most items she found that might be able to be reduced, wouldn't save too much money. She recommended a 3.26% increase budget. This would include the



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2.3% default budget, the Math In Focus adoption, a .50 FTE Art teacher, and additional computers. This is an increase of \$435,721. She also would like the school district to ask the city for free ice time and McConnell Center rent, saving \$21,000 and \$37,000 respectively. In her opinion, the district is a city agency and should not be paying rent.

Mr. Mayberry and Ms. Lurvey agreed with Dr. Mebert's proposal. Dr. Mebert stated that it is not ideal, but she felt the math adoption was crucial and would like to see its adoption.

Mr. McCrory agreed with the Dr. Mebert's proposal, but would like to add the athletic transportation fee, peer mentoring at Dover High School, and the National Career Technical Center dues to the list. He would most likely vote for it, if the additional items were included. The cost of the additional items is \$56,300 and would increase the budget by 3.38%.

Ms. Lurvey asked what would happen if the School Board did not fund the Fire Fighter Academy in year 2. Ms. Migneault stated there would just be Fire Fighter II and Fire Fighter I would be eliminated.

Dr. Mebert stated that she just offered this as a suggestion and the Board should hear all ideas from Board members.

Ms. Lurvey stated there is a challenge in determining what should be selected from the priority items. They are all worthwhile programs and personnel.

Ms. Briggs Badger reminded the Board that six of the priority one and two items were items that had been included in the budget at one time and administrators were now asking for their reinstatement.

Dr. Mebert stated that one of the problems she has had is that she has not heard much from the community. She has received limited emails and not much other input so she doesn't have much information to work with.

Mr. Mayberry asked what direction the city is taking with their budget. Dr. Mebert responded that she believes they will have a minimal budget increase, possibly 0% or 1.6%.

Dr. Appel spoke in favor of the Math In Focus curriculum adoption. He believes it is a major decision and seems to be working in the pilot programs. It examines the problems the district has been having with exam readiness. It would be a bad thing for our students not have this program, since results with the previous curriculum were not as positive as they could be. Dr. Mebert reviewed NECAP



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results and stated that the district is not doing as poorly as some districts are, but could be better.

Mrs. Grady asked which budget the Board should be working with. Ms. Briggs Badger stated that the 4.9% included default and top ten priorities. Mrs. Grady is concerned more for the students than for the adults. There are new teachers that are asked for in the requests. She inquired if there are current positions that can be cut. She felt the district should not add positions, when current positions may need to be cut, depending on what happens with the Governor's budget. She also noted that the teacher contract will need to be funded if it is approved by the City Council. Ms. Verville proposed funding the teacher contract from lapsed prior year encumbrances for FY10 and savings generated from bond interest payments for FY11, but Mrs. Grady questioned if the district is allowed to spend this money on the teacher contract. This will need to be verified with the City Council and investigated further. She continued to say that she doesn't think the district is looking at the losses in money. She stated that it is a little bit different than she is used to. Mrs. Grady would prefer to add the math adoption and not add any new positions or eliminate positions that are not working.

Ms. Setear asked Mrs. Grady if she would like to see a clear delineation of revenues and expenditures. Mrs. Grady responded that the Board needs to know exactly what is coming in and what is going out.

Dr. Mebert stated the Board should use the past to see how they should currently budget. The past budgets can be looked at to see how closely the Governor's budget has been from early stages to the final version and possibly make changes to the budget based on that information.

Mr. McCrory stated that it looks like the Board will try to find the money for something that is considered important. It might happen when a position is vacated and then determined not to be as important as something else in the budget.

Mr. Mayberry asked if the Firefighter instructors and transportation for the Firefighter students must be bundled or if they can be viewed separately. Ms. Migneault responded that there might be a way for the students to drive themselves if a waiver for liability is received.

Mr. Mayberry stated that the Firefighter academy is important to him, but possibly without transportation.

Ms. Briggs Badger discussed the pending teacher contract that will be going to the City Council for a vote on March 9. She stated that funding would come from



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lapsed prior year encumbrances for FY10 (\$32,199) and savings generated from bond interest payments for FY11 (\$85,900). The City Council will need to approve the use of the funds for this purpose. There would be no tax impact if this funding is used.

Dr. Mebert asked if transportation funds for Special Education students and tuition for public and private LEA's will all be spent from encumbrances this year. Ms. Verville responded that all of this money will be spent.

Mr. McCrory asked Ms. Crosson to clarify the new requests in FY12 for two Speech Pathologists. She stated that the Speech Pathologist position at Horne Street School was eliminated three years ago and they are trying to get this position back.

Dr. Mebert asked if the Board wanted to digest the revenue info before proceeding. Ms. Briggs Badger stated that the Dover School District is not unlike towns who vote without knowledge of the outcome of the State budget. She reiterated that we don't have the answers and "need to take a leap into the future." "We are all faced with the same predicament and there are a lot of contingencies out there."

Dr. Mebert commented that she reviewed the budget thoroughly as she has done in previous years. She noted that it is like, "a turkey carcass several days after Thanksgiving. There is no meat left". It is difficult to know about positions also. There are requests for new positions in the budget, so it makes sense that the Board would not be able to eliminate some of the same positions within the budget.

Mrs. Grady stated that the Board can try to work with a 4.9% budget, but she didn't feel it could work with the City. She stated, "There is no money and you can't add with no money." She would rather they start with a lower amount and add what they need. "The state and the county are both in debt so we will just not be able to have what we want."

Dr. Mebert stated that two compromises had been brought up and they can work from there.

Mr. Mayberry stated that he would like to find a way to fund the Firefighter Academy positions, without the transportation piece of the request.

Dr. Mebert asked for suggestions from the community on any knowledge of grants that could subsidize the Firefighter program. Mr. Mayberry stated that he would contact the congressional to see if there is still Homeland Security money available.



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Ms. Briggs Badger asked Mr. Mayberry for clarification on his request to fund the Firefighter Academy. He responded that he would like to see both years funded. In his opinion, it would not be fair to the students already enrolled to start and stop this program.

Ms. Lurvey reminded the Board that they are under a time crunch. There is only one more workshop prior to the regular School Board meeting where a vote on the budget will need to be taken. She commented that no decisions have really been made yet.

Ms. Setear asked if all Board members are in favor of funding the 2.3% default budget at a minimum. All Board members confirmed her thoughts, with the exception of Mr. McCrory. He would vote for a 1.6% budget if he didn't see items in which he is in favor in a 2.3% budget. He feels that something might need to be eliminated from the default budget so that some of the newer items can be added.

Mr. McCrory stated that he would like to see teachers eliminated in DHS Math or Science or possibly DMS 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He has reviewed enrollment numbers and they are lower than in other areas. Mr. McCrory commented that the money saved from a vacancy in one of these areas could be used to pay bills or fund another elementary school teacher or another program.

Dr. Mebert asked Mr. McCrory to put his ideas in writing so that all Board members would be clear on his request. Mr. Mayberry asked that he be specific in his proposal.

Mr. Mayberry asked Ms. Briggs Badger if she knew of retirements or resignations occurring at the end of this year. She responded that there would be some, but most of these positions would need to be replaced.

Ms. Briggs Badger asked if budget items are voted on separately or as a group. Dr. Mebert responded that they are voted on individually.

Mrs. Grady asked Ms. Verville if the Board is looking at \$1.3M less in revenue than in the previous budget. Ms. Verville responded that the District is down approximately \$400,000 in revenue. This could be will be decreased another \$675,000. This loss of revenue is not included in the 2.3% budget. The District is looking at much less revenue. Mrs. Grady continued that if NH Retirement contributions change, the District will need to find that amount of money as well.



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The School Board discussed their next step in the budget process. They agreed to change the March 7 workshop to a Special Session. By doing this, they would be able to vote on budget items.

Mr. McCrory stated that he would be away for the March 7 meeting and would like to “call in” so that he would be able to vote.

City Councilor Karen Weston commented from the audience, that it has been done in the past and it could be set up with the videographer and Media Center Manager.

For the next meeting, Mr. McCrory asked for average class size if there is one less teacher at Dover High School Science and Math and one less teacher in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They are currently low and this information would help him to make a proposal.

Dr. Mebert reminded him that science classes usually have labs associated with them also.

Dr. Appel stated that eliminating teachers and classes at the high school and middle school level is different than eliminating positions at the elementary schools. It is all determined by sections and what the specific course is.

Ms. Migneault detailed the process for adding sections to each subject at DHS. She will not know until course registration has been completed, how many sections of each subject she will need. She noted that lab sciences have a maximum enrollment number of 24.

Ms. Setear stated that Dover Middle School configuration could be adversely affected if one teacher is eliminated.

Mr. McCrory responded that there could be possibility of one teacher being on two teams. DMS Co-principals Kim Lyndes and Christine Boston discussed the option he proposed stating that it would be difficult to share teachers with teams. It is difficult to have access to students. A team would need to be eliminated in order to do something like this. There are also unique supervision issues with this age group. They also noted that the numbers are very high in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and will progress throughout the school over the next few years. It could be more difficult to put the structure of the middle school back together later, if a major change such as this was made now.

Mr. Mayberry recognized the attendance of City Councilor Karen Weston and State Representative Peter Schmidt. On behalf of the School Board, he thanked



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them for their attendance. They are required to attend many meetings and their presence was greatly appreciated.

**E. OTHER:** none

**F. ADJOURNMENT:** Matt Mayberry moved, Audra Lurvey seconded, to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Respectfully submitted,

BETH SETEAR, Secretary  
Dover School Board  
BS/ral

DRAFT