



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 27, 2014**
Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Amanda Russell on Monday, January 27, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. in the media access room in the McConnell Center for the purpose of discussing the FY15 school district budget.

A. ROLL CALL: Members present were Amanda Russell, Betsey Andrews Parker, Sarah Greenshields, Doris Grady, Kathy Morrison, Michelle Muffett-Lipinski, and Carole Soule McCammon.

Also present were Antonio Fernandes, Interim Superintendent; Karen Taylor, Business Administrator; Paula Glynn, CIA Director; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Christine Boston, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Michael McKenney, Horne Street Principal, Kimberly Lyndes, DMS Principal, Beth Dunton, Principal GES, Louise Paradis, CTC Director, Deanna Strand, DALC Executive Director and *Foster's*.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Sarah Greenshields led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM: No one addressed the Board.

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Antonio Fernandes welcomed the School Board and administrators and provided a brief overview of the evening. He began his presentation with a PowerPoint presentation outlining the budget development, goals of the budget, educational drivers, new budget requests, and funding drivers. He concluded his presentation with a list of district accomplishments.

Mr. Fernandes reminded Board members that the budget is a work in progress and a beginning to the conversation. He added that the tax cap figure was recently provided to the School District, even though the City Manager has until February 1 to provide the figure.

He explained that his approach to the budget is conservative in nature. Items not included in the budget include approximately \$300,000 in curriculum, \$180,000 in technology and new personnel requests.

Included in the budget are steps for teachers, but there are no Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) for any district employees included in the budget. He is recommending that the District utilize uncommitted funds from FY14 to support curriculum and technology. He believes that the District may be in a favorable position for this and by doing this, some of the burden on the FY15 budget would be relieved.

Mr. Fernandes added that even though there are almost \$2 million in new personnel requests, they may not all be approved this year. He believes that an Assistant Principal at WPS would be a priority since the school has been out of compliance for several years due to high enrollment.

Mr. Fernandes commented that even though he has only been in Dover for 5 months, he is impressed with the school district and employees.



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Mr. Fernandes questioned the Board asking them:

1. Would you consider allocating some uncommitted funds into Capital Reserves?
2. Do you want to use Capital Reserve Funds for the FY15 budget?
3. What are staffing priorities?
4. Do you want to use uncommitted funds for technology and curriculum?

After the presentation, Board members asked questions regarding the process and budget.

Ms. Andrews Parker inquired about the process for future meetings. Mr. Fernandes responded that one of the first priorities is to determine if uncommitted FY14 funds should be used for curriculum and technology. In addition, funding capital reserve funds should be discussed early in the process.

Mr. Fernandes added that the first priority for technology would be the infrastructure. The technology manager is starting to obtain estimates for switches and bandwidth as step 1 and Mr. Fernandes would also like to encourage the purchase of chrome books.

Mr. Fernandes noted that he would also like to hear the Board's opinion on the new personnel requests and their priorities.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked if the staff is status quo from FY14. Mr. Fernandes responded that it is the same with the exception of a reduction of a science teacher.

Ms. Andrews Parker commented that she will need a bigger sense of the budget before being able to make any decisions regarding the questions that Mr. Fernandes asked the Board.

Ms. Russell requested that priorities be given to positions on the new personnel list so that the Board will be aware of administrator recommendations. She had hoped that many of the positions that were essential would already be included in the budget. She also agreed that items are interconnected and needs to know the big picture before making decisions.

Ms. Russell also asked if the funds for feasibility study were included in the budget. Ms. Taylor responded that the money was not included in the budget. She is waiting for information from the city, which will provide the debt information.

Ms. Russell added that she would like justifications for new personnel, as well as priorities.

Mrs. Grady stated that she viewed this evening as a "listening" night. She asked why there were some summaries in the budget book, but not for all areas.

Ms. Taylor responded that she provided summaries by location, function, and object. This preliminary budget is a high-level look at what the budget contains. There will be other information provided that can be placed in budget binders at a later time.

Mrs. Grady asked if the tax cap money is included in the budget. Ms. Taylor responded that it is included in the budget. Mrs. Grady also asked if there is a number from the City Council for



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Impact Fees. Ms. Taylor responded that she did not have that number at this point, but would look into it.

Ms. Russell added that impact fees can only be used for debt. She provided an explanation of Impact Fees—developers pay impact fees to the city to offset the cost of the new development (schools, city expenses). This money varies from year to year and can only be used for certain items.

Mrs. Grady asked if the capital reserve funds will be added for an emergency fund. Ms. Russell commented that these capital reserves are to help level funds from year to year and not just for emergencies. Mrs. Grady commented that if the money is taken out every year, it won't be available at a later date.

Mr. Fernandes clarified that he would propose adding money into the capital reserve funds. Ms. Grady asked if money is being withdrawn from capital reserves to meet the FY15 budget. Mr. Fernandes responded that no use of current capital reserve money is included in the FY15 budget.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked Mr. Fernandes for more information on what he and the administrators are advocating for at the next meeting.

Ms. Taylor asked for guidance from the School Board on what they are looking for. Ms. Andrews Parker commented that this discussion should have taken place earlier in the fall. She added that the school already has plans formulated for technology and curriculum and they should be updated so that budgeting can be tied to the plan.

Mr. Fernandes agreed that the conversation should have taken place in October and in his past 22 years doing budgets, he has always done that. With this budget, he was seeking School Board thoughts and discussion of pros and cons of budget items.

Mrs. Grady liked the presentation because it gives the Board time to study and review it. She believed it gave her direction on how to proceed.

Ms. Russell liked the presentation, but already feels behind and needs to “catch up” with the process.

Ms. Greenshields liked the presentation and agreed with Mr. Fernandes that they need a clean slate. She felt there was no preconceived notions and agreed with Ms. Andrews Parker that they she would like to know the priorities of the administrators and superintendents.

Ms. Greenshields also asked the status of the capital reserve funds. She inquired if they are being invested and is hopeful that they are in interest-bearing funds.

Ms. Russell responded that she isn't sure where they are invested, but wanted to stress that they are not rainy day accounts. She gave the example that they are similar to the purchase of a fire truck by the fire department. The money is saved annually so that the purchase can be made 10 years in the future.



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Ms. Muffett-Lipinski asked to see the 10-year technology and curriculum plans to determine how they affect student achievement.

Mrs. Grady stated that the District has never been able to follow a 10-year plan due to the lack of reserves. She added that sometimes plans are meant to be broken and the reason they have never worked in Dover due to lack of funding.

Ms. Fernandes commented that he would provide more detailed information for the next meeting.

Ms. Greenshields liked that Mr. Fernandes has a fresh perspective and is curious to see if he sees redundancies in the budget.

Ms. Taylor stated that the District was trying to focus on revenue and expense and is also critically looking at FY14 budget, along with the FY15 budget. She will provide detail during the next few weeks.

Ms. Russell confirmed that questions should be sent to the SAU by Wednesday and answers will be provided by Friday. She finds it refreshing to try a different process where items are added instead of eliminated. She added that it's also refreshing to determine what can be done to enhance student's education

E. ADJOURNMENT: Doris Grady moved, Sarah Greenshields, to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Respectfully submitted,

KATHLEEN MORRISON, Secretary
Dover School Board

KM/ral