



DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop #1
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 5, 2015**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Amanda Russell on Monday, January 5, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in the media access room in the McConnell Center for the purpose of discussing the FY16 school district budget.

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

Also present were Elaine Arbour, Superintendent; Karen Taylor, Business Administrator; Paula Glynn, CIA Director; Patrick Boodey, Principal WPS; Christine Boston, Pupil Personnel Services Director; Kimberly Lyndes, DMS Principal, Beth Dunton, Principal GES, Louise Paradis, CTC Director, Peter Wotton, Athletic Director, Deanna Strand, DALC Executive Director, Greg Brown, DTU President, citizens and *Foster's*.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Carole Soule McCammon led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

D. BUDGET DISCUSSION: Superintendent Arbour distributed updated documents for the School Board to include in their budget binders. These documents were similar to others provided, but had some updates. *All documents distributed will be archived with these minutes and posted on the Dover School District website.* Dr. Arbour reviewed changes to the budget that had been made since the December 9 budget presentation and noted that most of the changes were also outlined in an email sent on December 23.

Dr. Arbour asked Board members to send any questions to the Superintendent by Wednesday of each week. Answers will be compiled and sent to all Board members. Answers to questions received after December 12 were distributed to Board members at this meeting.

Mrs. Grady asked that the Board listen to the information presented by Dr. Arbour, but reserve discussion until the January 12 School Board meeting since they have not had an opportunity to review the materials.

Dr. Arbour agreed with this and added that Board members should feel free to ask any questions that they may have at any time during the presentation.

Ms. Greenshields and Ms. Muffett-Lipinski agreed that they should wait until the next meeting to ask questions.

Dr. Arbour reviewed budget documents with changes. She noted that that she met with administrators after the last meeting and determined priorities for the district with them and made some changes to the budget based on their discussion.



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop #1
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 5, 2015**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Some of the changes include:

- Increase in revenue from tuition charged for special education aides. This number is based on the rate charged to other district.
- Advertising in local revenue has been decreased to show a more accurate figure. There will be more conversation on this.
- Local property tax has been adjusted. Numbers will be finalized after December CPI figures are received.
- Catastrophic aid has been increased since it has been underestimated in the past. The district cannot recoup this if the number isn't accurate.
- Impact aid was increased to reflect current information.
- Adult Basic Education reimbursement was received due to previous under budgeting.
- Medicaid was increased to reflect what the District is actually able to recover.

Dover citizen Rick Hebbard asked for a Point of Order requesting that the public be provided with copies of documents that the School Board had received. Ms. Russell stated the budget that has been presented is on the Dover School Website and the information presented at this meeting would be available the day after this meeting.

There have been other adjustments to expenses due to some duplication. In addition, a subtotal line has been added so that a clearer comparison can be made from last year to this year.

At this time, the budget is short approximately \$449,000. Dr. Arbour and Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget line by line and after discussions with administrators, items were able to be cleaned up.

Some changes included reduction in new requests by \$218,518.00. The largest item was the reduction of contracted services. Other changes included changes in positions funded by grants, supplies, staffing (DMS aides as opposed to teachers), savings in summer IT costs, coaching costs, summer hours for other staff members, added elementary assistant principal at WPS and HSS, addition of Business Office Purchasing Agent. The current associate principal at WPS is unable to supervise teachers since they are in the same union. The Purchasing Agent would provide needed support for the understaffed business office, which in turn, would support the schools. Legal liability happens when understaffed and could also impact schools. Another added position is a nurse who would be shared between all schools. Reductions were made including ice hockey time, furniture and supplies. DTU negotiated Loan Forgiveness incentive was added into the budget.

Ms. Russell asked about tuition rates, to which Dr. Arbour responded that they would be finalized soon.

Ms. Greenshields asked if it would be helpful to have administrators share how they determined priorities.



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop #1
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 5, 2015**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Ms. Russell commented that Ms. Boston will give a special education presentation at the January 12 School Board meeting which will help with the decision-making process. She added that she is sure that all administrators have goals for their respective buildings and they are discussed at their meetings. They also discuss and determine goals that are in the best interest of the district.

Mrs. Grady agreed with Ms. Greenshields and would like to know who is making final decisions. It would be helpful for her if the administrators explained their priorities.

Ms. Russell invited administrators to address the Board on their goals.

Ms. Glynn addressed the Board stating the administrators have met as a team and individually with Dr. Arbour and Ms. Taylor. As a whole, they try to determine budget priorities that are in the best interest of the district.

Mrs. Grady commented that she would still like to hear from building administrators since they know the priorities for their building. She added that in the past the District has saved money by redistricting when enrollment increased at Garrison School to over 500. Mrs. Grady added that enrollment numbers have dropped since September and there seem to be some discrepancies so it would be beneficial for administrators to speak at a meeting.

Mrs. Grady commented that she finds the budget very overbalanced with personnel. She added that there seems to be more money going to personnel than to students and she reminded the Board that this is against the by-laws of the School Board. She commented that she would not vote for the budget that they had been presented before this meeting due to the high cost of personnel. She is more concerned with the needs of students and not the needs of the adults.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated her concern for the amount of time needed to complete the budget process. In the past, there has been a Saturday meeting to hear from administrators. She feels that if the Board wanted to hear from administrators, it should have been done earlier in the process. She commented that 2-3 meetings are needed for discussion and the budget needs to be approved by February 9.

Ms. Greenshields commented that in order to reduce the deficit, the Board will need to hear from the administrators as to where cuts should be. She would like to have the full story.

Ms. Andrews Parker responded that she is fine with asking for justifications from administrators, but does not want to ask administrators to "throw others under the bus".

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski suggested hiring a .5 FTE assistant principal to help with evaluations. She would like to see gaps making decisions.

Ms. Russell added that Horne Street School has been above 500 students for at least the past 3 years.



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop #1
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 5, 2015**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Dr. Arbour noted that the School Approval Standards require schools with more than 500 students provide services of Associate Principal or two or more persons with administrator certification who together act as a full time administrator. This would apply to both WPS and HSS.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski recommended looking at ways to reduce costs with one way being to hire 2 part time positions that could help to reduce benefit costs. She added that looking at the new positions in a different way could be helpful.

Dr. Arbour explained the budget process to the Board, stating that the administrators, business administrator and superintendent worked collaboratively to determine district priorities and what is best for students. She added that she will discuss other options suggested by the Board to the administrators.

Ms. Greenshields commented that her intent is for the Board and administrators to have a unified voice and not administrators against each other. She wants to be certain that she understands the budget if the district decides to ask for an override.

Ms. Russell stressed that decisions were made by the entire administrative team and have been united in the process.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski echoed the sentiments of Ms. Greenshields.

Ms. Taylor commented that there will be many changes between now and February. She and administrators will continue to scrub the budget on both the revenue and expense sides. She added that all questions will be discussed with administrators.

Dr. Arbour stated that there will be more conversation on positions. She added that she is anticipating that \$265,000 in curriculum and IT may be taken from the current year budget, but those funds are currently still in the FY16 budget. By taking them from FY15 budget, the goal of reducing the budget could be much easier to achieve. This may also include furniture and other one-time expenses.

Ms. Russell asked if the \$105,000 is included in that amount, to which Dr. Arbour and Ms. Taylor responded in the negative. Ms. Russell added that the Board needs to decide what to do with those funds whether it is to spend or to add to capital reserves. She added that her preference is to place in reserves. The decision had been delayed until the status of the budget for FY16 was better known.

Dr. Arbour added that there is still \$75,000 budgeted for capital reserves in the FY16 budget. She would like to have a conversation on the Capital Improvement Plan and should reserves be on an in-out basis each year or should funds be saved until a large purchase is needed.

Ms. Soule McCammon asked if it would be possible to have the major budget changes tracked on paper rather than just verbally.



DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop #1
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 5, 2015**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Dr. Arbour responded that it would be possible and asked if the summary of December 23 was helpful.

Ms. Soule McCammon stated that she like the color coding and added that a simple narrative would be helpful with rationale of what has happened. She added that a process/focus to the conversation would be helpful. She recommended an agenda within an agenda with questions and answers on each topic.

Ms. Russell reminded that Special Education would be presenting information at the next Board meeting. Results from the administrative meeting and recommendations would also be discussed, along with uses for potential uncommitted funds from FY15. It was noted that each year the amount of uncommitted funds was smaller and may be nonexistent in future years.

It was clarified that the administrative team includes Superintendent, Business Administrator, Building Principals, and Program Directors.

Ms. Russell added that all information will be posted online and the agenda materials will include budget information needed for the meeting on January 12. Budget questions should be emailed to the superintendent by noon on Wednesday.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked which budget items were non-negotiable and cannot come off the table. Dr. Arbour responded that anything can be eliminated, but she and the administrative team feel that Assistant Principals, Business Office position, and nurse are all essential positions.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked if out of the box thinking would be helpful in trying to save money. She noted that the Dover City Hall is only opened 4 days a week and asked if something like that may be a possibility as a cost saving measure. Dr. Arbour responded that all suggestions are helpful and if that suggestion isn't used, it may lead to other options.

Ms. Taylor added that the district is also looking into other savings options such as changing the time of year for bidding on utilities in order to receive better pricing. All options are being explored to save money for the district. The district is also trying to consolidate purchasing of supplies in an effort to save money. She is always open to suggestions on other ways to find savings.

Ms. Soule McCammon suggested that the original PowerPoint presentation which noted priorities of the district remain the heart of the conversation for the Board. She added that students are always the main focus of the District.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski asked that the information be projected on a screen at the next meeting so that the public is able to follow the conversation.

E. ADJOURNMENT: Michelle Muffett-Lipinski moved, Carole Soule McCammon seconded, to adjourn at 8:10p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Budget Workshop #1
Meeting Location: Media Access Room (Rm 306) McConnell Center
Meeting Date: **Monday, January 5, 2015**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Respectfully submitted,

ROBIN LAFLEUR, Recording Secretary
Dover School Board