DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type:	Special Session #3
Meeting Location:	Media Center (Rm 306), McConnell Center
Meeting Date:	**Monday, January 30, 2017**
Meeting Time:	**6:00 P.M.**

A. A special session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chair Amanda Russell on Monday, January 30, 2017 at 6:04 P.M. in the Media Center of the McConnell Center.

B. **ROLL CALL**: Present were Amanda Russell, Betsey Andrews Parker, Keith Holt, Kathy Morrison, Michelle Muffett-Lipinski, Matt Lahr, and Carolyn Mebert.
Also present was: Superintendent Elaine Arbour and Business Administrator Libby Simmons, Patrick Boodey, Peter Driscoll, Patty Driscoll, Kim Lyndes, Beth Dunton, Jeffrey Myers, Louise Paradis, Paula Glynn, Kathy Moaratty, Greg Brown, DTU President Lisa Dillingham, citizens, and Fosters.

C. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Michelle Muffett-Lipinski led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. **PUBLIC FORUM ON SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH:** Tim Granfield, 75 Hidden Valley Dr. addressed the Board thanked the Board and Dr. Arbour for their service. He continued to say that the Board's most important job is to select a superintendent. He stressed that they shouldn't limit the search with financial restraints or time. If a qualified leader isn't found, an interim superintendent should be considered. He recommended offering incentive pay and added that the candidate should have an investment in the community and experience in tough economic and political environment.

Jerod Neilson, Hillcrest Dr., recommended that the superintendent contract have a certain number of years specified and not be year to year. He also supported a broad search, rather than limiting the search with additional criteria.

Dave Balcar, 16 Cassily Lane, spoke in support of an internal search in addition to an outside search.

E. **CITIZEN'S FORUM:** Tim Granfield, 75 Hidden Valley Dr, spoke in support of an adequately funded budget since Dover is a family friendly community. He also recommended looking at the budgets of surrounding communities.

F. **SELECTION OF A SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMPANY:** Dr. Mebert summarized her conversations with the 4 search firms. She emailed them the same questions and heard from 3 of the 4 companies. She asked for quotes for a search for a permanent superintendent and for an interim search. Michelle Muffett-Lipinski moved, Matt Lahr seconded to approved Ray and Associates to complete the superintendent search and authorizes the Business Administrator or Board appointee to enter negotiations for a contract. A roll call **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**

Dr. Mebert was authorized to be the Board representative.

G. **BUDGET DISCUSSION:** Dr. Arbour presented a PowerPoint with data as requested by the School Board. Dr. Mebert asked for the possible reason for discrepancy in scores between Smarter Balanced and Star. Ms. Glynn responded that it could be due to the writing component in Smarter Balanced. Students who are good guessers may be more successful in the Star test. They are trying to review trends over time.

Dr. Arbour clarified that 22 new positions are not included in the FY18 budget. A citizen had questioned the number at the JFC meeting. Dr. Arbour speculated that the person may have looked at the wrong slide.

Ms. Simmons discussed the budget calculator and noted changes to the budget in the calculator. She used column 5 from the previous presentation in the calculator.

Ms. Russell stated that the City Charter doesn't dictate that the tax cap is applied to the school department and other departments independently. The overall tax cap for the city is $1.168 million

She continued to say that it seems illogical to put money into capital reserves if positions and services may be lost due to lack of funding. She realizes this isn't a best practice.

Dr. Arbour summarized that positions included in the proposed budget are:
Float Nurse, Legal Fees, Nurse Admin Asst (2), Special Educator, LADC (to FT), Asst. CIA Director, Ed Tech Integrator, Elementary Teacher, K-8 Dean of Instruction, ESL, Add'l technology. The total budget with this list is $58,262,925.

Tuition students and revenue were discussed. Typically, the estimates are somewhat accurate and we will have more solid numbers within a few weeks.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated that everyone would like the positions included in column 6, but all agree that it is too costly. She continued to say that it is abominable to ask the school to be adequate, when they should be compliant. Other community services are allocated more resources. She will vote for a compliant and good practice budget (column 6).

Dr. Mebert agrees that it is a good practice to take care of facilities, but some could say that facilities are not good practice for education. She stated that she would need to hear about items in column 6 to advocate for them. Dr. Arbour explained items including contingency funding, additional teacher, and facilities costs.

Dr. Mebert added that language is important and someone could ask if column 5 provides best practices for educating students. Dr. Arbour responded that instructional best practice is beyond column 6.

Dr. Mebert suggested focusing on how to advance professional development.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski commented that it is difficult to determine important budget items without a strategic plan. Dr. Mebert noted that the goal is to give students the best education and an elaborate strategic plan is not needed. She continued to say that the District needs teacher buy-in and professional development is needed for that.

Ms. Andrews Parker noted that there is nothing left as a school district to sell. At this point, the District should be moving forward or maintaining. She feels the priorities of the District are being shifted.

Dr. Mebert noted that the City just purchased 2 parcels of land for $500,000 and she agrees with Ms. Andrews Parker on all accounts regarding the additional positions.

Mr. Holt also stated his agreement but is not sure of the return on investment for some of the new positions. The impact of additional positions needs to be quantified.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated that a Human Resource Director and Assistant Superintendent be added to the District. The City currently has these positions and adding the HR position may reduce legal costs.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski agreed with Mr. Holt stating that she doesn't know their return on investment, but agrees on additional professional development.

Ms. Russell worries about the sustainability of adding new positions and the possibility of needing to cut positions in April or May after the City Council approves a budget. She agrees that a strategic plan would have been beneficial, but funding wasn't allocated for it prior to this year

The Board took a straw vote on items discussed:

Float Nurse	yes
Legal fees	yes
Increased Nurse Admin Asst support	yes
Special Educator	yes
LDAC (To FT)	yes
3% Increase for Non-Union added back	yes
Asst CIA Director	no
Ed Tech Integrator	yes
Elementary Teacher	no
Technology (additional for equip)	yes
K-8 Dean of Instruction	no
ESL	yes

It was determined that Mr. Parker be contacted to determine the status of new housing developments.

Mr. Myers justified costs of new laptops to the Board.

Funds were added back into the budget for nonunion pay increases.

Ms. Andrews Parker suggested budgeting money for a study on impact fees and possibly splitting the cost with the City. It would be in the best interest of the school district for the planning board to not waive these fees for the large companies.

Mr. Holt requested a specific dollar amount added for professional development. Ms. Muffett-Lipinski requested an air quality assessment to ensure that the District is OSHA compliant. There is currently $19,555 budgeted plus PD for special education.

Dr. Mebert requested that the District pay professional development that SEED had been paying. The current amount is $80 per person.

Most districts budget a minimum of $50,000 for professional development. The Board asked the administrators to determine an appropriate figure for adequate professional development.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked the status of SRO funding. Ms. Russell responded that it was discussed at the JFC. She stated that she was told last year that the DPD would be able to sustain funding the positions. She believes that if the Council would like to shift the funding to the School District, they should also shift funding. Ms. Andrews Parker requested that the Council inform the Board of when they were told it was a one-time funding.

Ms. Andrews Parker requested that the HR position be addressed in next year's budget and understands that it's not a priority for this year.

Mr. Holt asked if grant funding is remaining consistent to which Dr. Arbour responded that we don't have a grant writer so private grants are not submitted. Entitlement grants are decreasing.

With the 3 reductions at this meeting, the budget is 3.1% over the current fiscal year and $1,960,097 over the tax cap.

Ms. Andrews Parker requested an additional column for percentage increase.

Dr. Arbour reviewed the budgeting processing timeline reiterating that the budget needs to go to the City Manager by February 15.

Dr. Mebert asked for the amount of adequacy to which Dr. Arbour responded that they wouldn't know until the first payment is received on September 1. Ms. Simmons stated that 100% is in the budget.

It was noted that there are still labor contracts that aren't settled.

Ms. Morrison recommended defining positions for the public who may not know their purpose when presented to the City Council.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski commented that it would be helpful to compare positions in comparable districts.

Dr. Mebert stated her interest in meeting with other tax cap communities to discuss how to deal with budgeting.

H. SCHOOL BOARD MATTERS OF INTEREST: Dr. Mebert reminded the Board that DOE Director Virginia Barry is leaving the DOE and stated that she will be missed.

Ms. Russell attended Coffee with the Counselor with Deb Thibodeau. Mayor Weston also attended and asked Ms. Russell to ask the School Board for topics to discuss with Representative Carol Shea-Porter. Ms. Russell asked for funding for IDEA. Any questions or concerns should be sent to Mayor Weston or Ms. Russell.

Ms. Russell informed the Board that she received a draft from the attorney on the football complaint. The Board will meet next week in nonpublic session to discuss the counsel provided and will provide the response to the Boosters after the Board votes on the response.

Ms. Muffett-Lipinski asked if any of the coaches are working with students to which Dr. Arbour responded that one is working with students in some capacity. The consequence was limited to coaching.

I. ADJOURNMENT:

Michelle Muffett-Lipinski moved, Matt Lahr seconded to adjourn the special session at 8:25 pm. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**