

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
Budget Workshop
March 12, 2015

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 12, 2015 in the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School Media Center. Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman, called the meeting to order at 9:09 PM.

Members Present: *Amy Jacques-Purdy, Susan Dean, Kathy Brown, Becky Valenti, Jeannie Young, Dan Chase, Joel D'Angelo, Michele Amendola, Karen Perry and Sue Twachtman.*

Members Absent: *Brian Gamache*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Fiscal Operations, Martha Vaughn, and Board Clerk Larissa Johnson*

Visitors: *1*

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman called the meeting to order at 9:09 PM.

Discussion on the Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2015-2016

The Board discussed the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2015-2016.

Becky Valenti suggested that a different insurance plan or additional insurance plan option be considered and offered, possibly after budget season. The Board also briefly discussed offering an alternate insurance plan to future retirees.

The Board also briefly discussed the idea of having parents provide supplies for their students, such as pens, paper and notebooks, however the Board discussed that this often becomes disproportionate between classes and does not result in big savings to the District. The Board also briefly discussed the changes to the current supply funding for the elementary schools and Superintendent Thiery explained that the elementary school principals brought the suggestion to the table that they could reduce and equalize their spending levels with the middle school.

The Board then discussed dropping the late bus at the Middle School as well as the High School. The savings for eliminating the late bus at the High School would be approximately \$47,000 and \$56,000 at the Middle School. Superintendent Thiery provided a 3-month snapshot of ridership for the late bus at the Middle School level. The Board proposed that the PM Monitor's hours at the Middle School be extended to 5:30 or 6:00 PM to accommodate the elimination of the late bus and so that middle school students would not be left unattended at the middle school without supervision. The Board decided that the PM Monitor's hours should be extended to 6:00 PM to allow ample time for parents to pick up their kids. The additional cost for the extension of the PM Monitor's hours would be approximately \$12,500.

The Board then discussed the elimination of the In-School Suspension Monitor at the High School. This would represent a cost savings of approximately \$12,000. Superintendent Thiery explained that there isn't a great

need for an In-School Suspension Monitor and that the high school principal would like to develop a tiered disciplinary plan.

Karen Perry suggested that the Board not invest in a demographic study at this time because she felt that it would become too outdated too quickly and would not provide enough data to justify the \$15,000 cost. Michele Amendola suggested that the Board also consider doing more to educate the community about the normal range of enrollment fluctuation.

Kathy Brown also asked about the HK Cubs and how the program is doing in terms of covering its costs. Director of Fiscal Operations Martha Vaughn explained that the HK Cubs program is expected to close-out its year in the black.

Amy Jacques-Purdy mentioned that she would like to know more about the plan for changes in Special Education. The Board talked about paraeducators at some length and what the current needs are related to current staffing levels. The Board also discussed the paraeducator positions at the Kindergarten level. Kindergraten paras were hired when the Kindergarten enrollment figures were 22-25 kids per class. The Board discussed only having a paraeducator assigned to a class when the enrollment was 16 students or greater, but reducing the number of paraeducators from one per class to one per grade level in each school, representing an additional reduction of six paraeducators in the District and savings of \$60,000.

The Board discussed eliminating the In-School Suspension Monitor at the High School, eliminating the late bus service at the Middle School in addition to the High School, as proposed in the Superintendent's preliminary budget, and extending the PM Monitor's hours to 6:00 PM at the Middle School, reducing the number of paraeducators in Kindergarten classes from 1 per class to 1 per grade level and to forgo the demographic study.

Adjournment

Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman called for the meeting to adjourn at 9:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Larissa Johnson
Board Clerk

Approval:  Date: 4-7-15
Becky Valenti, Secretary