

A Special Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held Thursday, May 8, 2014, in the library of Nonnewaug High School, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present: Superintendent Jody Ian Goeler; Board members Carol Ann Brown, Charles Cosgriff, John Chapman, Janet Morgan, John Swendsen and Maryanne Van Aken; Director of Finance and Operations Wayne McAllister; Board Clerk Deb Carlton

Unavailable to attend: Board members George Bauer and Sophieazane Bartlett

Also present: about 10 members of the public, and two reporters

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

With the failure of the budget referendum, he stated the meeting's purpose to be modifying the budget as necessary to move to a second referendum, and to address the concerns of turnout and the result. He felt with a 1% increase there are not compelling reasons to make significant changes; instead, he feels voter turnout was the issue. Without a better turnout, he said, it doesn't matter what the number is.

Ms. Brown agreed that turnout was low.

Mr. Swendsen heard people felt the number was too high and want to see cuts.

Mr. Cosgriff felt the board deconstructed the budget well, made staffing changes, delved into class sizes, and looked to make things more efficient. He felt the board has made cuts, been careful, and rearranged for best use of funds.

Ms. Van Aken heard criticism of the debt service fund, but would hate to take that out. Some are not in favor of cameras but she doesn't want to jeopardize the grant either. This will be a philosophical discussion for the board, she said.

Ms. Morgan believed the board should have gone out with a 0% increase and heard that citizens felt the board had not done due diligence to get there. 1% was too high in light of what we asked for last year.

Mr. McAllister reviewed fine tuning that had been done in the business office. For the 6.5 FTE employees being eliminated, additional savings in health insurance (\$36,314) can be realized. Salary estimates had been used for these positions, so \$46,401 can be saved using the actual salaries. Non-athletic extra duty can be trimmed for another \$21,057. More than \$100,000 can be saved by delaying capital projects like asbestos abatement at MES and roof work at WMS. Savings on cameras could be \$110,000 and it may be possible to leverage what was expended last year toward security and reduce by the same amount and then prioritize where the cameras are most needed.

That would bring the number down \$213,000 to a 0.35% increase.

If the goal is 0%, he said, he would reduce the WMS roof work and then look to assign this year's surplus to capital improvements for that work. The asbestos abatement would remain in the budget.

Mr. Chapman asked what risks there would be in a budget of 0% and Mr. McAllister replied the main one would be additional costs associated with the Waterbury lawsuit which is still ongoing.

Mr. Chapman summarized the reductions previously discussed. He also expressed concern about additional kindergarten enrollment pushing a 3rd class at MES.

Feeling that the rationale had been made for a 0% increase, Mr. Chapman requested a motion.

Ms. Van Aken entered a motion to approve an operating budget for 2014-15 in the amount of \$32,055,775 (total net reduction of \$327,472) and representing a 0% increase over last year's budget. Ms. Morgan seconded the motion and the **motion carried 6-0.**

May 8, 2014

Registrars had indicated they could accommodate a referendum on May 22, 2014 which is within the 4 week requirement and which allows time to notice and have ballots printed.

Mr. Cosgriff entered a *motion to hold a District Meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 and a referendum the following day, Thursday, May 22, 2014*. Seconded by Mr. Swendsen, the **motion carried 6-0**.

Ms. Van Aken entered a *motion to adjourn*, seconded by Mr. Swendsen. The **motion carried 6-0**.

The special meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Ann Brown, Secretary
Regional School District #14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Debra W. Carlton, Board Clerk, 5/9/14