

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
ST. HELENS SCHOOL DISTRICT #502
ST. HELENS, OREGON**

The Budget Committee of St. Helens School District #502, Columbia County, Oregon convened in the Administrative Office of the District, County and State on April 16, 2008.

Present Were:

Dennis Minsent, Budget Committee Chair
Alan King, Budget Committee Vice Chair
Bill Crist, Budget Committee Member
Jana Mann, Budget Committee Member
Rebecca Wallace, Budget Committee Member
Patrick Loupin, Budget Committee Member
Nathan Helwig, Budget Committee Member
Patricia Adams, Superintendent
Adam Stewart, Director of Operations & Facilities
Judith Custy, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Amanda Stuber, Executive Assistant

Dennis Minsent called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the flag salute.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS – NATHAN HELWIG & PATRICK LOUPIN

Nathan Helwig and Patrick Loupin were introduced and each provided a summary of why they were interested in serving on the St. Helens School District Budget Committee.

Superintendent Adams noted that both new committee members have a great deal of history with the district and thanked them for the time they are willing to dedicate to serving on the committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After the committee reviewed the revised January 23, 2008 Budget Meeting minutes, Alan King moved to approve the minutes as presented. Nathan Helwig seconded. The motion unanimously carried.

UPDATE OF LATEST 2008-2009 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Stewart reviewed the most recent 2008-2009 financial reports. The most recent figures reflect an ending cash carryover for the 2007-2008 school year in the amount of \$1.2 million and a \$900,000 shortfall to continue the current level of services.

The impacting factor of the shortfall was explained as the decrease in the District's enrollment figures and enrollment figures over the last two years was compared and reviewed. The decrease in enrollment is attributed to the Arthur Academy and not having new students enter the district as anticipated. It was also noted by Mr. Stewart that the enrollment figure reduction because of the Arthur Academy will be lower at the elementary levels than the middle and high school level.

Superintendent Adams explained that the district has a large number of retirements at the end of the school year and through administrative team discussion the idea is to absorb a majority of the shortfall through attrition. Each vacant position is being looked at and options of not filling that vacancy are being strongly and carefully being reviewed. The administrative team is also exploring collapsing smaller classes and condensing them into other classes. The administrative team feels very strongly about protecting the various programs and that is the team's top priority.

Alan King questioned why enrollment would be so low when there are so many houses going in throughout the district.

There was no specific answer as to why the district has not seen an increase in enrollment with the escalation of building throughout the district.

Mr. Stewart explained he plans to retain the contingency and capital reserve fund as is and it will be reflected in the balanced budget the Budget Committee will receive at the May 7th meeting. The committee was asked to retain that fund as well.

PRESENTATION OF 2008-2009 BUDGET ITEMS ALIGNED TO DISTRICT GOALS

Superintendent Adams reported the board, a variety of staff, parents and administration participated in a Goal Setting Work Session in February and presented the committee with the 2008-2009 District Goals.

Judith Custy reviewed the first goal that states: St. Helens School District's comprehensive, aligned and implemented K-12 balanced curriculum will result in a 5% or greater annual increase in academic achievement in math, reading, and writing for all students, as measured by state and district assessments.

An example of a program the district implemented to reach the student achievement goal was noted as the Read 180 Program. It was explained that staff recognized the need for the program and pooled together and used their resources creatively to make the Read 180 Program doable. Another example is the Reading Coach position at the middle school. This position has been asked by the middle school staff to be retained and they have solid data to back the effectiveness of the services from that position.

Mr. Minsent questioned how a 5% increase is measured.

Superintendent Adams explained that since there is no state testing at the McBride Elementary grade levels they are comparing student Dibels Scores. Mrs. Custy noted that at the other levels they are comparing Cohort Data from the State Testing results.

Mr. King, who participated in the Goal Setting Work Session and worked on goal one, commented that the intent that went along with the goal was to see an increase by all students, not just the students already meeting the state standards.

The second goal reviewed states: The school district will become increasingly engaged with the greater St. Helens community through expanded communication, collaboration, and involvement opportunities.

Superintendent Adams explained the items addressing the second goal are budgeted items for communication and technology. Communication avenues include the district newsletters and staff, parent, and student surveys and the reorganization of the district office receptionist position to a community relations secretarial position. Technology items include eSIS and grades online at all grade levels.

The third goal states: The St. Helens School District will upgrade the educational facilities through a capital reserve fund and bond.

Mr. Stewart explained a capital reserve fund was established and consisted of \$800,000 during the 2007-2008 school year and reviewed the years bond attempts and recent election postponement.

Mrs. Wallace added that the Board did not move forward with the May election due to the financial instability of funding the election and the lack of time available to launch an effective campaign. The Board was also uncomfortable with the current economy situation and hopes to move forward in the November election.

Mr. Stewart also reported that the district has implemented a Construction Excise Tax. Agreements are in place with St. Helens and Columbia City, and an agreement is underway with the county. The district now receives \$1.00 per square foot of new residential construction and \$.50 per square foot of commercial property construction for the active agreements and has received their first check. The use of the money from the tax is yet to be determined.

ADJOURN

Mr. Stewart explained that at the May 7th meeting the committee will receive the budget message, a balanced budget, and detailed discussion of the reductions will be held. Additional meetings throughout the months of May and June are

schedule as needed. There is a Budget Hearing scheduled for May 23rd with the budget submittal deadline to the County Tax Assessor of July 15th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Budget Committee Chair

Budget Committee Secretary