

**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 St. Helens Middle School cafeteria on May 20, 2009.

Present Were:

Benita Saatvedt, Budget Committee Chair
Nathan Helwig, Budget Committee Vice-Chair
Jana Mann, Budget Committee Member
Rebecca Wallace, Budget Committee Member
Dennis Minsent, Budget Committee Member
David Morrisson, Budget Committee Member
Carol Ford, Budget Committee Member
Alan King, Budget Committee Member
Bill Crist, Budget Committee Member
Patricia Adams, Superintendent
Terri Burns, Director of Operations & Finance
Amanda Stuber, Executive Assistant

Benita Saatvedt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the flag salute.

MINUTES APPROVAL

David Morrisson entered a motion to approve the May 6, 2009 meeting minutes. Patrick Loupin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF 2009-10 BUDGET INFORMATION

Superintendent Adams provided updated information on the Governor's budget and the recent \$6.0 billion budget projected by the Co-Chairs. Of the \$6.0 billion, \$5.6 has been allocated to K-12 education. The \$6.0 is contingent on passing the legislature, no further drops in future forecasts, \$800 million in new revenues from corporate and personal income tax increases, the passing of additional revenue sources by legislature without it being referred to the voters, and that other public agencies don't put up a fight for their share.

Based on these recent figures, Superintendent Adams announced that the proposed budget is now based on \$5.6 billion which will reduce the projected deficit from \$3.4 million to \$3.2. The committee was strongly cautioned against not continuing to budget conservatively and to maintain the currently proposed level of staffing. There was also a noted fear of a December adjustment that could result in a reduction of school days from the 2009-10 school year calendar.

Terri Burns provided a \$5.6 billion budget expenditure summary. In addition to the items addressed by Superintendent Adams, Mrs. Burns explained that \$5.6 will ensure a \$1.4 million cash carryover for the protection of salaries, benefits, and other expenditures in the budget. There is also a projected enrollment decrease of \$155,000 that is based on relocation of Boise Cascade families. The property tax recovery rate will also reduce revenue by \$73,000 for every 1% not collected.

Superintendent Adams also brought attention to the general fund budget resources sheet that reflects the district's proposed 2009-10 budget operating on less than the actual 2006-2007 budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON 2009-10 PROPOSED BUDGET

Jamie Meadows addressed the committee on libraries in the schools. Research on the importance of libraries in the schools was provided and Mrs. Meadows advocated for adequate funding of library staff support.

Catherine Contreras provided comments on the reduction of Outdoor Science School. She shared recent experiences from last week's 6th grade class trip to Outdoor School, remembered when Superintendent Adams implemented the participation in Outdoor School, and provided examples of valuable lessons the students received during the week.

Jacob Redding spoke on the move of the former lead high school secretary, the staff reduction in the area of Spanish, and the credit recovery course not being taught by a licensed teacher instead of a non-licensed teacher when teachers are being reduced.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Carol Ford questioned the cost of Outdoor School.

Superintendent Adams explained the cost out of ESD credits is \$48,000 plus what the students fundraise. Outdoor School has not added to next year's ESD credit budget and is on hold while the credits are being closely watched. There is the possibility that some ESD credits could be carried into the general fund and the ESD has recently provided the district with other avenues to funding Outdoor School. At this time the reduction to next year's ESD credits is also unknown.

In response to Jake Redding's concern regarding the reduction of Spanish, BG Aguirre explained that the original 1.0 reduction to Spanish has been revised to a .5 FTE reduction to Spanish and a .5 FTE reduction to French. Based on the currently projected course enrollment figures and the new adjustment to the FTE reduction, it will result in 15 students not getting into a French class during their freshman year versus the original 50.

Alan King questioned the library comments by Jamie Meadows and questioned if there was a reduction in the budget.

Superintendent Adams explained there is a reduction in the library budgets and agreed with Mrs. Meadows comments.

Alan King questioned the reserve fund and recommended the district put some of the fund into education.

The ending fund balance use and need was reviewed and Mrs. Burns explained the budget is built on a very slim budget that others are not comfortable with. She is not comfortable with reducing the reserve even further.

Superintendent Adams also added that she will not carry the district into the next year without an ending fund balance.

Mrs. Saatvedt recommended Mrs. Burns develop a response to the ending fund balance question and to seek additional input from the committee.

Mr. Loupin questioned what each instructional day costs the district.

It was explained that the approximate daily salary cost to the district is \$85,000.

Mrs. Saatvedt questioned the employee group salary increases.

Mrs. Burns explained the certified association has a 3.5% increase plus a 2% step increase and the classified association has a 2.5% increase plus a 2% step increase.

Mrs. Wallace recommended another area for budget reduction consideration is in the area of transportation. The frustration with the multiple buses on the same route to keep the elementary students separate from the upper grade levels was expressed.

Superintendent Adams explained there is already a \$150,000 reduction to the transportation budget. The intent to meet that reduction is to combine those routes.

Mr. Loupin questioned how the district would see accommodating further reductions and what the priority is should additional funding available.

Superintendent Adams explained that should there need to be further reductions the district would have to reduce days and if additional funding should come in, it would be applied to the classroom. The top priority is class size.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Mr. King recommended adding another meeting before the scheduled June 3rd meeting.

It was noted that the June 3rd date conflicts with Baccalaureate and the meeting was moved to June 1st at 6:00 p.m. with the location to be determined.

Mrs. Saatvedt recommended the committee again forward thoughts and concerns to Mrs. Burns prior to the June 1st meeting for answering at that meeting.

The budget committee tentatively set the next meeting for June 1st at 6:00 p.m. with the location to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Benita Saatvedt adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Budget Committee Chair

Budget Committee Secretary