

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Wednesday, January 21, 2015

6:00 p.m.

Manchester High School – Room 293

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Stafford

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Thames

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Michael Crockett, who reminded us that this is a meeting of the Personnel & Finance Committee held in workshop format.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Crockett.

C. OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Crockett explained that this is the first in a series of meetings held to approve the budget. Tonight we will hear the Superintendent's proposed budget, sort of a wish list. Next Monday at the regular Board of Education meeting, and possibly next Wednesday at a Budget workshop, and then possibly the next Board meeting, the budget will be discussed and approved. Mrs. Brooks confirmed the budget has to be presented to the Town Manager by February 14th. The town then incorporates the requested number into the town budget and eventually comes back to the Board of Education with the final, approved figure. We then hold more budget workshops to determine how to allocate the funds and approve that new budget by June 30th.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Geary noted the administration has been working hard over the previous months to produce a reasonable budget. He reviewed the mission of Manchester Public Schools.

Mr. Geary reviewed the increase in the percent of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch over the last ten years, which rose from 31.56% in 2004 to

54.7% in 2014. He also noted that in 2004 approximately \$549,000 was spent on magnet school tuition and in 2014 that number rose to \$2,085,028. His full presentation is available on the website.

The Superintendent's proposed budget for 2015-2016 School Year is \$109,147,246. The 14-15 adopted budget was \$106,506,279. The difference of \$2,640,967 is an increase of 2.48% over the last budget.

New certified positions include one elementary school teacher, 1.4 Pre-K teachers, 2 Special Education teachers, and 1 ELL teacher. Mr. Crockett wondered what step was budgeted for the teachers. Mrs. Brooks stated it is budgeted for a Masters Step 3 and Mr. Geary added it is standard practice to budget for that step, but the actual hire may fall above or below that number.

Mr. Geary noted that the Alliance Grant budget is not due until April and will not be confirmed until July 30th. He reviewed some of the items covered in the Alliance Grant budget, which includes the Family Resource Centers, three administrators, a Substance Abuse Counselor, two ELL teachers, the SAAM program, and the high school academy program. A new addition to the Alliance Grant budget will be 18 Science Specialists at the elementary schools, which will help free up teachers to work collaboratively with their peers. He noted the uncertain funding of the Alliance Grant is difficult.

Mr. Crockett thanked Mr. Geary and his staff for a simple presentation of a reasonable amount. He notes the Board will need to look closer at the budget and will email any questions to Mr. Geary for a discussion at the Board Meeting on Monday.

Ms. Cruz added that it was a job well done and she appreciated the good visuals used.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt it was a good presentation. He feels Manchester is a progressive town. Mr. Stringfellow noted that many towns, including New Britain, Avon, and Granby, were asking for a 3+% increase in their budget this year and every town is struggling with funds. He is glad to see the request for better training for paraprofessionals. He feels knowing where the money is going for Special Education and ELL is important and he feels the Fed's need to increase funding.

F. CLOSING COMMENTS

None.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Crockett adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next budget workshop will be Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 293 at Manchester High School.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary