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MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2025

6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Mrs. Kulesa, Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Tilton, Mr. Foote, Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani and Mr. Perugino

Absent: Mr. Zbuska

Also Present: Mr. Falcone, Superintendent, Mr. Tencza, Business Manager, and Mrs. Melillo, Assistant, Assistant Superintendent

1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mrs. Kulesa called the meeting of the Special Board of Education Budget Workshop #1 for the 2025 – 2026 Budget to order at 6:08 p.m. The group joined in the pledge to the flag.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Perugino second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

3. **Budget Workshop #1 for 2025 - 2026 Budget**

Introduction – Mr. Falcone, Superintendent – The Superintendent's Proposed Budget was presented to the Board at the January 15, 2025, Special Board of Education Meeting. This first Budget Meeting is to discuss the proposed 3.25% increase, positions which were proposed to be eliminated or added, discussions regarding any line item the Board has reviewed, any questions the Board may have and to hear from the Board if they want to make any changes to the budget moving forward. The Board of Education presents its budget to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance then presents the entire budget to

the public. Following the presentation, there is a tri meeting between the Board of Finance, the Town Council, and the Plymouth Board of Education. However, the Town Council makes the final decision to either increase or decrease the Board's budget proposal. The decision of the Town Council may totally shift tonight's conversation.

Comments
The impact on the budget if the Town Council approves 3%. The elimination of a grade level teacher. Department Coordinators, Secondary Level Coaches, Instructional Coaches, and Interventionist positions were discussed. The elimination of a teacher vs the elimination of an interventionist. Importance and understanding of the concept of coaches. Reducing the number of buses.

Mr. Seaman proposed to adjust the superintendent's recommended budget by adding back the following positions: Math Interventionist Position at Plymouth Center School, an elementary teaching position at Plymouth Center School and a full-time custodian/maintenance position. Due to these adjustments the superintendent's overall proposed budget increase was revised to 4.18% or $1.12 million increase over the current 2024 – 2025 budget.

No further budget meetings are scheduled.

4. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street – Suggested waiting until later in the budget process to bring the budget forward.

Robin Palmer, 13 Holt Street #20 – Question: What positions are being brought in to reach the 4.18%?

Mr. Falcone: Math Interventionist at Plymouth Center School
Elementary Teacher at Plymouth Center School
Full Time Custodian/Maintenance Position

Robin Palmer – Questioned the busing for magnet school children and the impact it would have on the teachers should those students return to the district, expressed how pleased she was about bringing back the Math Interventionist. If the Board wants the support and vote of the parents when it comes to an increase in the budget, they may want to consider giving back to parents, i.e., Kindergarten graduation, a music program. Give parents something to celebrate when it comes to their children.

Mr. Falcone – With regard to Magnet School Transportation and the reduction of $112,000 from the Board's budget and what this will mean if all seventy-four students return to the district. The class size will probably advance one or two students depending on the grade level. Most problematic would be in the second-grade class where there would be an increase from 23 to 25. This would not have a huge impact on the middle school.

Point on Plymouth Center School is noted.

Katelyn Riggs, 87 Fall Mountain Lake Road – Comments – Interventionist is most crucial, agrees with Mr. Seaman about the coaches; and to explore every option and that every possibility has been examined.

Mr. Falcone – The district does not have grade level leads in the schools. The high school has department heads. There are no department heads in the middle or elementary schools or grade level leaders. Instead, the district has coaches. Their responsibilities are quite different regarding the reading and math programs the district is utilizing. The district, in the past, did not have a specific reading program that was followed as structured and complex as this nor did the district have a math program in the past that was consistent. These were things we brought in recently that are extra for teachers which they are taking on. So, this is what the coaches do. Therefore, we really do not have those leads.

Regarding PreK, (volunteer), the district's PreK has a requirement with respect to special education. Currently, it is a three-based ratio. The district is offering the minimum requirement at this point in time.

Katelyn Riggs, Comment: She feels implementation is when the coach is key and then possibly a checkback. However, she does not understand the necessity of keeping coaches once the program is in place and has been monitored for that school year and one can see the growth. Unless there is a fluctuation of new educators, you should not have to play the game of keeping coaches on for so long. It is the same program.

Mr. Falcone - In looking at the district's teacher hire and seniority list, there is a big fluctuation. It is pretty significant the number of teachers that have less than five years of experience in our district.

Comments

Magnet School Transportation

Mr. Seaman suggested the Board consider adding back the magnet school transportation to the budget bringing the percentage to 4.6%.

If the Board decides to eliminate the magnet school transportation, the parents would be responsible for transporting their child to and from the magnet school should they decide to have their child remain.

When the state provided significant reimbursement to the districts, many districts originally had the costs of magnet school transportation in their budgets. However, as time went on, year after year the amount of reimbursement the districts would receive decreased. Originally, it started out at 100%. On transportation the figure went from approximately $203,000 to a reimbursement of $91,000. Therefore, the district pays $112,625 just for the magnet schools. This figure equates to two teachers.

The Board unanimously agreed to cancel the 2nd and 3rd Budget Workshops. The majority of the Board Members agreed to bring the budget forward for a vote during the February 12, 2025, Board of Education Meeting with a percentage of 4.18%. This percentage now includes reinstating the following positions: 2 certified staff positions (an elementary teacher, a Math Interventionist) and a full-time custodial/maintenance position.

Mr. Falcone was requested to: (a) Send an email to the public and parents regarding the **cancellation of the two budget workshops (in bold print)**, (b) Show the adjustments the Board made to the original budget that was submitted by the superintendent which is shows 4.18%, (c) Inform the public of the next Board Meeting on February 12, 2025 and that the public is more than welcome to attend and there will be public comment on the agenda.

5. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, all in favor, motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted

Patricia Piskorski

Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
For the Plymouth Board of Education