

Rochester Board of Education  
Finance Committee Meeting of the Whole  
April 1, 2008  
6:00 p.m.

Minutes

**Attendance:** Chairwoman Powell, Commissioners Campos, White and Williams. Commissioner Brennan arrived at 6:13 p.m. President Evans arrived at 7:00 p.m. Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard, Chief of Staff Kim Dyce-Faucette, Chief Financial Officer Vincent Carfagna, Budget Director Vernon Connors, Board Staff Linda Dunsmoor.

Chairwoman Powell opened the meeting unofficially at 6:04 p.m. and officially convened it at 6:15 p.m. with a quorum.

Chairwoman Powell asked the Superintendent to discuss the revenue side of the 2008-09 budget, specifically pertaining to the Contract for Excellence and the Maintenance of Effort legislation. Mr. Brizard said there will be a \$9 million budget gap unless the District's efforts to have programs included in the CFE funding are approved. He also said there is a huge concern regarding repeal of the Maintenance of Effort legislation, which could result in an \$11 million loss in funding from the City of Rochester. He is working with the local delegation to find the middle ground.

Commissioner Brennan asked whether the current budget proposal will be revisited if the \$11 million in revenue is cut by the City. Chairwoman Powell said the Board would receive an amended budget. Mr. Connors elaborated that any differences between the draft budget currently being reviewed by the Board and the final version expected to be voted on by the Board will be highlighted in a summary document in mid to late April in time for final budget deliberations on April 28.

**Action item:** Budget Director will provide a summary document discussing changes from draft book to final book that reflect the super's action plan in mid to late April – in time for review prior to final deliberations on April 28.

The Board submitted questions to administration in advance of the meeting and answers were provided. (Document attached.) Commissioner Brennan asked why names of commissioners asking the questions were not included and Mr. Connors said they would be in the future. Chairwoman Powell said the format of the evening would be to walk through the questions/answers, discuss new questions, and provide follow-up if necessary.

**Action item:** Names to be added to question/answer document going forward.

Commissioner Williams asked about state aid revenue on the lease of 690 St. Paul Street and whether the reimbursement in 2008-09 will be carried over as an accounts receivable. Mr. Connors said that aid would not be included as a revenue until the 2009-10 school year, when it is to be received. Commissioner Williams asked about the probably of 90 percent reimbursement. Mr. Carfagna said the State has indicated that the reimbursement will be 90 percent. Commissioner Williams asked when the lease will begin. It starts July 1, 2008.

Commissioner Campos asked about an \$869,000 decrease in textbooks. Mr. Brizard provided her with a workplan for textbook purchases (attached) and said the onus is on principals to tell Central Office what they need for their buildings. Mr. Connors noted that \$2.47 million is budgeted for 2008-09 and \$800,000 had been added to the line in 2007-08 to accommodate a \$1.3 million elementary English Language Arts series. That \$800,000 was removed for 2008-09.

Commissioner Williams asked about Universal Pre-K. Director Shirley Jung said 1,986 students are enrolled for 2007-08 and the program is reaching about all of the children who want to attend. About 800 students attend UPK in district schools and another 1,000 at community based organizations contracted with by the District. The District oversees and monitors the programs conducted by community based organizations. Parents do have other options for pre-school, including private programs and Head Start, which provides transportation. Commissioner White said it appears that revenue is decreasing. Mr. Connors said the revenue is based on actual and conservative enrollment figures. If additional students enroll, there will be a corollary increase in aid. Commissioner Powell commented that she has heard that the district placement offices do not direct parents to the district's programs. Ms. Jung said the District uses a variety of ways to reach parents, including word of mouth, staff attendance at various events, and the media.

Commissioner Williams asked about transportation. Transportation Director Maria Mello-Dupree said the District has 100 buses of its own ranging in size from vans to full-size buses. Those buses transport elementary special education students, some general education students, and provide transportation for athletics. The buses would not typically be used for field trips. Commissioner Williams asked about RTS. Dr. Dyce-Faucette said the entire issue is being studied and additional information will be available in a week to 10 days; she added that the whole process needs to be looked at. Mr. Brizard said that will include the length of routes.

**Action item:** Transportation Director to provide trendline over last three year regarding usage/ridership of district-owned buses, including schools and activities served.

Commissioner Williams asked about whether the 690 St. Paul lease would be part of the Facilities Modernization Program. Mr. Carfagna and Mr. Connors explained that it will be once swing space is necessary because of the FMP. Shortly it will be used to house 33 school during renovations there and the construction of the Ryan Center; those projects are separate from the FMP. Mr. Connors added that expenses and revenues associated with the FMP will be carried in the District's future budgets, although there will be a separate Board overseeing the project. Commissioner Williams asked what would happen if the School Construction Board decided not to use 690 St. Paul and Mr. Carfagna said that was extremely unlikely; specifics regarding the project will be generated by the District.

Commissioner Brennan asked whether the Superintendent's strategic plan will work with developments in Albany regarding CFE, etc. Mr. Brizard said his reform agenda reflects state government initiatives.

Commissioner Campos asked increased funding for RTS and Laidlaw totaling almost \$2.7 million. Mr. Connors said the increase would have been much larger without the recent RGRTA settlement. Mr. Connors also noted that individual budget lines sometimes cut across different sections of the budget; he will provide a breakdown and summary.

**Action item:** Mr. Connors to provide a breakdown and summary of individual budget lines that cross multiple sections of the budget.

Commissioner Campos asked about the \$77,000 increase in Professional & Technical Services for the Information Technology & Management Department. Ford Greene responded that the increase is largely a result of the audit finding that the District needs a disaster recovery plan for electronic information for payroll,

personnel, student records, etc. In response to Commissioners Williams and Campos, Mr. Greene said the expertise is not available in-house, that he used an omnibus request for proposals for the vendors, that the vendors are very specialized, and that a resolution regarding the RFP had gone before the Board for approval. Commissioner Campos asked about the software licenses used in the District; Mr. Greene said there are 39 major software licenses and he will supply a list.

**Action item:** Ford Greene to provide software list.

President Evans asked for additional details on the food service contract. Mark Balfour of Chartwells gave a brief overview of how the contract is executed. Commissioner Evans also asked whether the increase in security operations resulted from the establishment of the Director of Security. Mr. Carfagna said yes, the two positions are the Director of Security and a support staff member. Sentries are included within school budgets. There is also \$1.1 million that the District pays the City of Rochester for 13 School Resource Officers.

Commissioner Williams asked for further details regarding Chartwells. Mr. Carfagna said that Chartwells administers the contract; prepares, delivers and serves food, etc. There are 246 food service employees and they are District employees. Mr. Balfour added that the contract is based on a per-meal fee of 87.3 cents, which translates into \$5.8-6 million annually. Mr. Carfagna said the goal is for the food service department to break even and he anticipates that.

Moving on, Chairwoman Powell noted that the Chief of Staff section has become something of a “catch-all.” Mr. Connors noted that some of the lines will move out of that office per the reorganization of Central Office.

Commissioner Brennan asked about the Chief of Intergovernmental Relations position. Mr. Brizard said that position is vacant and will not be filled. The District uses a lobbyist in Albany as well as other staff members to fulfill that role.

Commissioner Campos asked about Career Technical Education (CTE). Dr. Dyce-Faucette said the department is one director and two support staff members. The director is liaison to programs housed in secondary schools, among them Edison, School of the Arts, Franklin, and East.

Commissioner Williams asked about the agency clerical line. Mr. Connors said that line funds temporary workers filling in for support staff members.

Commissioner Campos said the study to provide health insurance for employees in conjunction with the City of Rochester and Monroe County is extremely timely considering the spiraling costs. Commissioner White asked whether all benefits were included and Mr. Connors said they are. In response to Commissioner Campos, he said tuition reimbursement plans are part of some employee contracts.

In response to Chairwoman Powell, Mr. Connors said the number of employees on long term leave and drawing a salary has been reduced by about 10, thanks largely to efforts by Human Resources.

Commissioner Powell asked whether there were further questions or follow-ups. Being none, she noted that there will be a public hearing on the budget at 6 p.m. on Monday, April 7 in Conference Room 3A. Questions from commissioners for Section 3 are due April 7 at 5 p.m. The next meeting of the Finance Committee of the Whole is Tuesday, April 8 from 6 to 8 p.m., when Section Two will be reviewed.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Campos. Second by Chairwoman Powell. Adopted 5-0 at 8:12 p.m.