

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Meeting

April 14, 2015

Called for 6:00 PM in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of a decision on and adoption of the FY15-16 School Department Budget.

Members Present: Ms. Cronin, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Osborne, and Mayor Maher (~~ABSENT~~)

Also Present: Dr. Jeff Young, Superintendent
Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
Ms. Maryann MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools
Dr. Victoria Greer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
Dr. Jessica Huizenga, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
Mr. James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources
Ms. Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Lori Likis, Chief Planning Officer
Mr. Damon Smith, Principal of CRLS

Mr. Fantini, Vice-Chair, in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, Mr. Fantini called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

Mr. Fantini turned the meeting over to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent explained the usual format for adoption of the FY2016 budget which falls into four statutory categories.

The Chair entertained questions and comments from the Members.

Ms. Cronin shared her concerns regarding the budget which included: .5 social worker positions; the need for upper school family liaisons; the elimination of the second grade 4 teacher at Kennedy/Longfellow; funding expectations for Title 1 and DESC; clarity for the introduction of phonics; and the social and emotional learning initiative. She expressed her desire to hire an outside vendor to support the schools in the area of social and emotional learning until we evaluate and assess our needs.

Ms. Kelly noted that she has spoken to her position on social and emotional learning over the last few months and doesn't feel she needs to repeat it. There's a point in the budget process where she feels she just needs to let go. There is still a lot she would like to see in the budget but she feels the district staff has done a wonderful job answering questions. She is feeling comfortable about the process and the input received from teachers and parents as well as the discussion among the Members.

Ms. Nolan asked that Principal Smith be recognized to answer questions on the issue of restoring the high school coaching positions. Dr. Young explained that these coaching positions weren't restored in this proposed budget because no one had proposed it. Ms. Nolan clarified that the Members did not know that these coaching positions had been eliminated.

Principal Smith gave a brief history of the CRLS coaching model and the decision to change the model. He explained that this coaching model was developed during Mr. Saheed's tenure as content based to support Math, Science, History, English and World Language teachers. This model included a technology support coach for all staff to utilize. At that time, the instructional coaches were classroom teachers who taught one course per semester and coached staff for two blocks per day. In SY2012/13, Mr. Smith changed the model to increase the teaching requirements to two courses per semester and to reduce the coaching block to one per day. He also noted that this coaching program was volunteer driven, the coaches were hired internally and an impact on student achievement was not seen. In SY2013/14, with increase in student enrollment and the coaching model time not being adequate, Principal Smith removed the instructional coaching model and placed the teachers back into the classroom with the students. Principal Smith informed the Committee that he will work with the district to establish whatever instructional coaching support the district recommends.

Ms. Nolan reminded the Members that many of them advocated for social workers when the Innovation Agenda first passed, but is pleased that social workers are being added now. It's hard for her to think about going another year without family liaisons in the upper schools and another year without a K-5 world language program. She supported the opportunity of doing world language at the Baldwin School. She asked how our existing programs will be evaluated. How can we ensure that we will get comprehensive evaluations by outside consultants? Dr. Young responded that there are two ways: through outside consultants and by building internal capacity such as the curriculum review cycle. He noted that comprehensive written reports have been done this year on coaching and co-teaching. Ms. Nolan noted that she doesn't support some practices that led us to a situation where we are not confident that this will improve student achievement across the board.

Mr. Harding asked Principal Smith who was involved in the decision of eliminating the instructional coaches. Principal Smith answered that conversations happened with the leadership team, with the deans and program leaders at CRLS and the coaches, but he ultimately made the final decision.

Mr. Fantini invited the Budget Co-Chairs to speak. Mr. Osborne thanked his colleagues, the Superintendent and his staff. He feels this is a very important cycle for us. He thanked the members of the public and the educational professionals who came to speak before them and pushed them to look harder and with more scrutiny. He specifically thanked Ms. Preval, an upper school teacher, for her previous testimony which forced them to focus on the students.

Mr. Harding thanked Mr. Osborne for his level of depth in conversations in this process and noted that budgets are never easy. We are not here for maintenance of effort. He would have preferred to keep the 2nd teacher in the 4th grade at the K/Lo but understands it didn't make sense financially due to the enrollment. He wants the Putnam Ave. Upper School to be the focus of our intention. His stance on the world language question is that the Committee should take this up in a non-budget process and have the conversation of having an extra hour of school to be committed for world language. He wants us to be relentless and have a laser focus on the middle schools. He suggested that we think about things that we aren't able to do now, but look at them in the future for the next Superintendent. He gave credit to Dr. Young for setting us up well for the next Superintendent.

Mayor Maher appreciated Mr. Harding's remarks. He acknowledged the hard work of the Budget Co-Chairs and the fine work by the Superintendent and his team, specifically Ms. Spinner. He noted that we do listen to what is said here and that the district is in the process of figuring out how to help these teachers. He hopes that there will be a renewed conversation about a longer school day. It will help us to meet the changing and evolving needs of students in the CPS. He hopes we are moving forward with the middle schools and will gain from our experience over the last 3 years. He looks forward to helping to defend the budget before the City Council. He acknowledged that we owe a great deal of gratitude to the City Manager and his team.

Mr. Fantini thanked the Budget Co-Chairs and indicated that this budget process has brought us closer as a team. He expressed his happiness that we are supporting the Visual and Performing Arts Program with

the Kodaly program. He acknowledged Ms. Spinner for being relentless in responding to the Members concerns and questions.

Dr. Young made some final comments and thanked the Budget Co-Chairs, the Members, Ms. Spinner and his Cabinet. He echoed the Mayor's words in thanking the City Manager and also thanked Mr. DePasquale.

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Mr. Osborne, the adoption of **#15-82**, Recommendation: Fiscal Year 2016 Recommended Budget: that the School Committee receive and approve the FY2016 General Fund Budget of the Cambridge Public Schools in the following Statutory Categories:

Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits	\$ 136,528,236.00
Other Ordinary Maintenance:	\$ 25,447,265.00
Travel & Training	\$ 1,212,604.00
Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>\$ 752,315.00</u>
Total	\$ 163,940,420.00

On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt Superintendent's recommendation **#15-82, Fiscal Year 2016 Recommended Budget**: Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mr. Osborne YEA; Ms. Cronin YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mayor Maher YEA. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing vote on item **#15-82**. The Rules having been suspended, a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, failed of adoption.

On a motion by Ms. Cronin, seconded by Ms. Kelly, it was voted to adjourn (7:05 PM).

Judith T. Martin
Executive Secretary to the School Committee