

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting

Wednesday, January 30, 2013

Immediately Following Budget Workshop
MHS Freshman Center, Room 293

PRESENT: Atwater, Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Luxenberg,
Pattacini, Scappaticci, Walton

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the
Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant
Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

ABSENT: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr.
Richardson

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:52 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini.

B. ACTION ON 2013-2014 BUDGET

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt a recommended budget that reflects the Superintendent's budget plus an addition of \$985,842 to include the items identified by Dr. Kisiel on January 23rd, plus \$170,000 addition to the 3510 account to cover the additional repairs as identified by the administration in tonight's budget meeting, and \$400,000 for security upgrades. The total budget is \$106,232,293. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Crockett questioned adding \$400,000 for security. What if the police report recommends more or less money?

Mr. Leon states the thinking is that at that point the Board of Education would have a discussion with the Board of Directors prior to the Board of Directors adopting their final budget and we will adjust the numbers accordingly.

Mr. Crockett wonders if that is the case, why even include it at this stage? Why not recommend a budget with an asterisk noting an additional amount for security will be added at a later date?

Ms. Walton thinks this is something the Board has to struggle with due to the timing of the security issues not aligning well with the budget cycle. This is an attempt to respond to the security measures and \$400,000 attempts to respond to preliminary items such as door locks, entryway security, cameras, etc. We have a responsibility to make an estimation on this. This is a joint effort with the Board of Directors, and while it is too soon to have an accurate figure, this is a first step and the best we can do given the time frame.

Ms. Luxenberg agreed with Ms. Walton and added that she felt it would be irresponsible of the Board to not put something in to accommodate for security issues. She feels the most important job as a Board is to ensure the safety of our children. She appreciates the district's efforts in trying to identify the needs and she feels this is a reasonable number to work with. She feels we need something there.

Ms. Walton stated that adding the additional five items outlined by the Superintendent tie directly into the district goals to close the achievement gap, specifically a K-5 curriculum administrator. As we are in the process of searching for a new Superintendent, she feels it is the Board's responsibility to set attainable goals and set up any new Superintendent with the ability to be successful.

Mr. Crockett asked what the new figures represent as a percentage increase of the budget? Mrs. Brooks reported it is about 5.5%.

Mr. Leon noted that the additional funds earmarked for the 3510 account do not represent all the money needed and requested, but he feels it is important to not just give the minimum percentage to the 3510 account as the Board has done for years. He feels we cannot continue to just give the minimum and the Board has taken criticism in the past for not addressing issues sooner, the response to that is to increase the 3510 account. Mr. Leon notes that in the future he would like to work with the Board to raise that minimum number of funding.

As far as the security issue that has been touched upon, Mr. Leon agrees with Ms. Luxenberg and Ms. Walton.

Mr. Leon feels that a 5.5% increase is aggressive, but that the last two years the increases received from the Board of Directors have been approximately 1.3% and 1.5%. Mr. Leon feels that had we received more monies the past two years

we would have less of a need tonight. Mr. Leon believes that we can make a case to the public that this makes sense and has logic.

Mr. Scappaticci added that last year we had one of the smallest increases of any school in the state, and is one reason we need 5.5% this year to maintain and improve the level of teaching in our schools.

Ms. Luxenberg reiterated that the administration has done a good job of creating efficiencies over the years but that at some point you cannot continue create the same level of efficiencies. We need to have foresight, which previous Boards have been criticized for not having, and with two years of a small percentage increase it is even more reason to look ahead to propel the students forward and not just maintain the same levels.

Mr. Crockett appreciates what everyone is saying and he tends to agree. To go back to a comment from last week, that we are advocates for children, we are but the parents that elected us want an adoptable budget. We cannot through enough money at education or facilities, but will that raise test scores? Mr. Crockett is not 100% convinced that it looks good to add 1% to the Superintendent's budget. He further states that the number is ultimately somewhat meaningless because the Board of Directors will drop that number and in April/May we will have the hard work to determine what we can keep and what we cannot keep. He won't be supporting tonight's recommended budget as he feels it sends a bad message to add money that the Superintendent didn't originally identify, which he feels is micromanaging. While he does feel we need everything stated, he will not be supporting it.

Ms. Cruz thanked the administration for their diligence in putting together the budget. In the three budget meetings, we have disputed, gone back and forth, and asked for administration to look at security for a guestimate. She understands that this is still pending, but they included a piece of the pie into the budget. Ms. Cruz apologized for missing part of the budget meeting last week and she understands there were presentations regarding the additions to the budget. In response to Mr. Crockett's comments, she feels we are knocking at the door of what are the bare essentials. She feels we are still at the bare essentials even with adding these additions to the budget. Ms. Cruz supports this budget and looks forward to Spring budget battles and feels the security number will increase by then.

Mr. Leon wants to be clear to the Administration, this motion of increasing the budget is not in any way undermining their expertise. They were trying to be fiscally responsible. The addition represents a host of items the administration wished they could add to the original number.

Ms. Walton also clarified that the Superintendent's budget regarding the facilities account was in response to a Board policy on the bare minimum, not what they feel is needed. That is how the budget was built. The additional \$400,000 not in the original budget was simply due to timing, but we still have a responsibility to respond to security needs. This should be an open dialogue, and will take the effort of the administration, the town and both Boards to ensure the security of our schools.

Mr. Crockett asked if the budget reflects the increase in the 3510/3511 accounts based on the new numbers? Dr. Kisiel stated it does.

Mr. Pattacini stated that the Board's responsibility is to provide an adequate education for our students. Given that Manchester is a district in need of improvement it is important to do all that we can as advocates for public education to provide funding where the administration feels they need it. The Board had asked for a list of priority items in addition to the original budget. The 3510 account increase was based on Board policy. The security recommendation acknowledges work needs to be done and we do not know the actual dollar amount and under further review that number will be refined. The focus is on student achievement, improvement of our facilities, and security of our students.

Ms. Walton requested a roll call vote.

Mr. Leon moved for a 5 minute recess. Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor, Mr. Crockett abstained.

In recess 8:14 p.m.

Back in session 8:21 p.m.

A roll call vote was called.

**Scappaticci – Aye
Hagenow – Aye
Luxenberg – Aye
Leon – Aye
Crockett – Ney**

**Cruz – Aye
Walton – Aye
Atwater – Aye
Pattacini - Aye**

8/1/0 - Voted in favor.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary