

## **Hampton Board of Education Meeting Minutes**

August 22, 2013

Note taker: Elise Guari

In attendance:

Board of Ed. Members: Mrs. Joan Fox, Mrs. Carol Misak, Dr. Ann Gruenberg, Dr. Catharine Wade, Mrs. Rose Bisson, Mr. John Burnham, Mr. Doug Stewart, Mrs. Maryellen Donnelly

Also in attendance; Mrs. Sally Lehoux, Business Coordinator, Dr. Paul Graseck, Superintendent, Ms. Elise Guari, Principal

Meeting called to order at 6:34Pm by Mr. John Burnham, Chair

### **1. Citizen comments:**

- Ms. Deb Leavens read a letter to the BOE from HEA praising the BOE, Superintendent and Principal for creating a reasonable budget and urging the BOE to make no additional cuts.
- Mark Becker, a parent, spoke about funding the needs of the students.
- Phoebe Huang asked what the Board's vision and goals were and spoke about the research on class size.
- Nick Brown made reference to his child in a class size of 19 students.
- Tom Gaines complimented the school officials for school improvement this year and recommended a higher budget be approved than the one the Board of Finance is sending to referendum.
- Mitch Beauregard spoke about the class sizes as being good for students and his son's great experiences at HES.
- Dayna McDermott spoke to the Board about a social media message she received about Board of Education cuts and wanted the Board to clarify the cuts as well as the number of meetings they held this summer. She also noted the study the local Boards of Selectmen are doing to look at the feasibility of working with the towns of Chaplin and Scotland to provide education to our children.
- Kathy Donahue wanted to provide the board with a list of suggested cuts and the dollar amounts. She compared our instructional hours for specials to those of other local districts. She suggested that if the Board of Education made cuts to be consistent with the specials offerings in these other towns, the reduction in staffing would total over \$86,000.
- Joanne Lowney read a statement to the Board of Ed. About the need to support technology initiatives in the school and how we need to promote and develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. –
- Susan Beauregard thanked the Board for the preschool experience her son has had here. She noted his growth throughout this school year.

### **2. Budget Discussion –**

John Burnham wanted to respond to some of the comments that were made earlier.

MBR- John Burnam stated that the BOE has not put together budgets based on the MBR but on what is reasonable and necessary. He indicated that the State has given conflicting information on MBR at times. The BOE has stated that there are several options for reducing MBR for which we do not qualify.

It has also become apparent that the HES budget may decrease because our share of the RD#11 budget increased.

Dr Graseck was asked by John Burnham to speak to class sizes here in HES. Graseck explained the following:

- 14 FTE certified staff, their roles are not all classroom teachers and therefore the calculation can be done in a variety of ways. He said it is essential to have certified teachers in various roles that are not the grade-level, classroom teacher role, but the existence of these additional certified teachers drives down the certified staff/student ratio.
- Technology progress is important given the state testing and requirements for the children's futures to be technologically able.
- Admin is 1.5 FTE and the work that needs to be done is often far greater than the 1.5 FTE. He explained that when he arrived the infrastructure needed much work. He also noted that there is no secretary to the superintendent, no facilities manager and no business manager, so much work in those categories falls to him.
- Dr. Graseck wanted the community to know that the Board's first budget was sound and appropriate. He said the budget should be restored to the 1.82% increase that was originally sent to the Board of Finance.

John Burnham asked Mrs. Bisson to provide Board members with a document that reflects areas that could be used to reduce the budget should the town vote require us to do that on September 4, 2013.

Mrs. Rose Bisson moved and Doug Stewart seconded the following: **The BOE resolves that the budget of \$2,215,079 is the lowest possible budget which will provide an appropriate education for students.**

The Chair called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

John Burnham also asked Dr. Graseck if we had any other anticipated savings over this summer. His response was that it was not very much, in part because we had to replace the well pump, an expense that could have been more costly if the pump had fallen into the well, which it was close to doing.

Dr. Ann Gruenberg wanted to comment on the letter to the editor in the *Willimantic Chronicle* that we were not directed to cut our budget by the state and it is not a mandate.

Joan Fox asked if there could be a way that the town could use the fund balance to cover the 83,000 in cuts they are putting to a referendum. John Burnham responded that the town could but that it has chosen not to do that at this time. He also added that if the referendum is defeated then we can go back to the drawing board and create a new budget with the same requests.

There is a chance that we can have a community conversation to discuss ways to address the budget.

Carol Misak spoke about the solid administration and the work that has been done this year. Doug Stewart spoke about the changes that have been made this year and continues to support the work in the school.

John Burnham asked Dr. Graseck about the cafeteria savings being only about \$3,952.00 if the cafeteria is closed. He explained that the current cafeteria fund balance would be used to pay unemployment but that the BOE may have to pay the balance, further reducing any potential savings.

The Chair re-opened the meeting to citizen and teacher comments.

-Mark Becker commented on a statement made at a Board of Finance meeting and they indicated that we don't need to lower the MBR but it is possible. He also said that the Board of Education goals are in the policy manual and on the website.

-Kathy Donahue asked the Board if there was more consideration given to the bus savings. If a bus waiver will be considered.

- Linda Ricci (parent) spoke about the need to take any specials cuts off the table.

- Doug Stewart talked to the community about using false information and using flyers in mailboxes to out untruths about the budget and school.

- Kathy Donahue asked the board to consider taping all meetings and posting them on the website. John Burnham said the board would consider this idea.

**Joan Fox made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm**

**Doug Stewart seconded and it passed unanimously.**