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EPPING SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 23, 2011

The work session was called to order at 6:04 pm in the Darryl Rice Media Center, Epping Middle/High School. In attendance were School Board Members Gregory Dodge, Sue Kimball, Dave Mylott, Jeff Harris, and Brian Reed, Business Administrator Martha Williamson, Director Special Services Cathy Zylinski, Elementary Principal Mark Vallone, Superintendent Barbara Munsey, and Epping Residents. The meeting was taped by Glen Fredericks of ETV.

Chairman Dodge informed the audience that the work session was not a public hearing, but he would allow input. The Superintendent presented the following questions that the Board needed to address:

1. How do we address unanticipated expenditure increase due to state downshifting state retirement contribution to district? (Budget impact \$280,000)
2. How do we address unanticipated revenue decrease due to state reducing school building aid from 100% to 40% and special education catastrophic aid by raising student cost thresholds from 3x to 10x? (Revenue impact \$115,353 for school building aid and \$51,535 for catastrophic aid – total \$166,888)
3. How do we address requests to keep Home-to-School Coordinator position? (Budget impact \$48,371)
4. What concerns/issues do we want to bring to attention of our legislators? (Impact on Seacoast School of Technology of \$400,000 resulting in elimination of four programs)

Gregory Dodge shared that this was not an issue Epping was dealing with alone, that the *NH Union Leader* was full of articles on how other towns and school districts were dealing with these financial issues. The Superintendent reviewed the March 16, 2011 legal memorandum regarding legislation and the 2011-2012 Budget in which it was explained that the expenditure impact would need to be made up within the budget since school districts are not authorized to over-expend the appropriation voted, but that the revenue impact could be either made up in the budget or passed onto the tax rate. She also explained the options for changing the voted appropriation including special meeting requested by voters, budget committee approval, and possible legislative action for a special meeting.

Superintendent Munsey also shared that she had talked to the NH School Boards Association and as of 4:30 pm today the legislators were looking to put school building aid back in. The committee vote was tomorrow with the full house vote thereafter. There was also talk of putting part of catastrophic aid back and trying to contribute a portion to retirement. State support for vocational tuition seemed to be getting worse. Jeff Harris commented that the overall situation could get worse instead of better and it was acknowledged that the State's intentions could change tomorrow.

There was a lot of discussion with the following comments noted. The general consensus was that nobody was happy about this.

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1. Shanna McTague stated that the district has made gains in full day kindergarten and that eliminating the third full day kindergarten was appropriate due to the financial situation.
2. Principal Vallone commented that early education works and students in partial kindergarten did not make the gains of students in full day kindergarten. However, he understood that it was a lot of money to make up. He also commented that the state was making substantial cuts in the Department of Health and Human Services which would be impacting students and families.
3. Andrea Meyer stated that she didn't believe that the kindergarten model presented in the budget would have worked.
4. Superintendent Munsey commented that legislators were not hearing us and that it was important for citizens to get involved.
5. Dave Mylott commented that he thought that the revenue shortfall should be placed on the tax rate.
6. Stephanie Arsenault asked if the Board would consider splitting the revenue with half on the tax rate and half made up in the budget.
7. Shanna McTague commented that this was an impossible job, nobody was happy about it, and that she did not want the funding to be made up by cuts to the elementary school.
8. Bob Sutherland asked if sports had been considered. He was not for it, but inquired.

The Superintendent recommended that it would be helpful to answer Question 2 on revenue to determine how much funding the district had to make up. ***Dave Mylott made a motion to pass on the unanticipated revenue decrease to the tax rate next October, seconded by Sue Kimball.*** Jeff Harris questioned if the motion should include a number not to exceed statement. Dave Mylott commented that they don't know what the number will be at this time and recommended that the Board could look at next year's budget to help with the financial impact. Brian Reed asked if the retirement would be rolled onto the tax rate. It was explained that the retirement expenditure would need to be made up in the budget. ***The motion passed 5-0.***

Chairman Dodge directed the Board to Question 3 regarding the Home-to-School Coordinator position. Dave Mylott commented that at the deliberative session it was stated that this was a critical position and that its elimination would be painful to those in need. Brian Reed stated that this position has helped the elementary school and recreation, and would also be helpful with dropouts. Jeff Harris commented that this position would add \$48,000 to the \$280,000 which had to be found and that this position had been discussed by the Board. It was commented that the decision to cut the position was made by the previous Board. Sue Kimball commented that that is why the Board should be looking at the \$280,000 first. Dave Mylott stated that this position was in the budget that was rejected; however, the budget was a bottom line budget. The default budget was calculated by the state, not the Board. Jeff Harris stated that the budget voted is bottom line figure that does not include predetermined personnel. Superintendent Munsey commented that they were both right in that the budget is a dollar figure and that the Board has always had the authority to move money around.

The following comments were made in support of the Home-to-School Coordinator position:

1. Gregory Dodge asked Cathy Zylinski about the Home-to-School and Case Manager positions. She stated that she supported the Case Manager as it was required to meet instruction identified in student IEPs.

2. Principal Vallone stated he was not in support of this position being cut. The cost of the position could be covered in the staff hiring process and that the rest could be gotten from here and there. Gregory Dodge asked how many students were serviced by this position. Principal Vallone replied 40 to 60 students are serviced with this position as the school has 26 to 28% poverty. The school had accountability responsibilities and this position supported these students.
3. Anthony Toto commented that this position has been proven to help children. His grandchild did not want to go to school and this position took care of everything and he thinks it is necessary.
4. Pam Tyler commented that believe it or not Epping now has one of the best school districts. This position solves problems and her granddaughter has benefited.
5. Kerstin Rossel stated that she is a supporter and asked who was going to pick up these responsibilities if the position is cut.
6. Superintendent Munsey stated that the decision to cut this position was difficult. In addition there was a financial reality and that there were positions on the list which meant remaining staff plates would have to become bigger. She did not envy the position the Board was in having to make these decisions. She also commented that Principal Vallone was correct that there was a retirement request today that would save about \$25,000 and that the balance could be taken from improvement of instruction in the area of teacher mentoring and curriculum study (professional development).
7. Shanna McTague stated that she would like to hit somewhere else beside the elementary school to fund this position.
8. Sue Kimball commented that everyone was passionate about something and that the Board's responsibility was to advocate for all children. The Board's task was to look at the entire big picture and take a little here and there and that in good times put back in.
9. Shanna McTague asked if curriculum and consultants could be looked at.
10. Superintendent Munsey stated that the district had invested in literacy and math initiatives and that cutting consultants would impact those initiatives.
11. Dave Mylott responded to the comment that plates get bigger. Grade 4 would mean bigger class sizes. He disagreed that plates gets bigger. He felt that the PD Director position should be cut. It was added with Race to the Top and the district did not get the money. He felt that the position did not directly impact students.
12. Andrea Myer stated that she was on the principal search and told that two principals were leaving and that we were hiring one principal. She questions one of these principals being placed in the PD Director position. She stated that this is not personal and feels it is a nicety.
13. Gregory Dodge commented that he thought that curriculum was a high priority.
14. Shanna McTague stated that curriculum coordinators come with much bigger salaries and that this position could be cut.
15. Superintendent Munsey commented that the PD Director position was downsized to part time in the recommendations made to the Board. As to professional development this function would need to be passed onto herself and Cathy Zylinski. She could attempt to do some of the curriculum work, but it would halt the curriculum alignment PK to 12.
16. Susan Kimball stated that the PD Director position serviced the entire school district and that coordinating curriculum from beginning to end was important.
17. Stephanie Arsenault recommended cutting professional development as staff could pay for their own. She thought that the cuts should come from areas that did not directly affect kids and not

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adults. Special education costs could go up due to the loss of the Home-to-School. There are students with no coats and boots. As a result students could not end up in school.

18. Daphne Chevalier recognized that the economy is bad, but this position is a necessity and a priority. She also recommended cutting professional development. Students needed to be warm and fed to learn.
19. Gregory Dodge asked if there is not social assistance outside the district. Daphne Chevalier responded "that is if they can find them."
20. Principal Vallone commented that not all this position does is included in the job description. This position keeps track of kids at risk and reports out on families losing their home, parents breaking up, or losing job. This position tracks students down as well as helping parents be parents offering parent training and contacting social agencies.
21. Sue Kimball questioned the job description given to the Board as it stated the position serviced preschool to grade 2. Cathy Zylinski explained that this position has changed over the years to at one time servicing the entire district. The job description had not been updated since 2004.

The Superintendent questioned if the Board wished to address the \$280,000 or the reinstatement of the Home-to-School position recommending that perhaps we should look at the cuts suggested by the administration and determine if there was something on the list that the Board did not agree with. The Board decided to review the list item by item.

1. Health insurance credit – Gregory Dodge commented that this was due to a 1% rate adjustment in the health insurance premium
2. 40% Director Professional Development – Dave Mylott recommended that this position be cut altogether. Sue Kimball stated that no one would be doing the job if the position was cut and that curriculum would not be cohesive. Dave Mylott commented that professional development in his opinion was less value at this time. Superintendent Munsey stated that it was not the professional development part that was of concern, rather the curriculum part. Brian Reed asked if the district has had this in the past. It was explained that this position had been in district and had been cut in bad times and added back in at other times. Susan Kimball stressed that curriculum work be continued. Dave Mylott commented that the professional development plate will need to get bigger.
3. New grade 4 teacher – Mark Vallone stated that the number of teachers has fluctuated with the enrollment and that the Board should go for it. Dave Mylott and Brian Reed questioned the student enrollment and impact on students.
4. 40% math specialist – Dave Mylott questioned this position and suggested that it be removed altogether. Mark Vallone commented that the school was in need of improvement in math. Dave Mylott questioned why we should it cut at all. Mark Vallone commented that the school could make it work at 60% and advocated against cutting it altogether. The data analysis piece would be picked up by someone else. Gregory Dodge commented that a teacher was retiring. Dave Mylott questioned why the district would be giving two checks in light of the retirement issue. Superintendent Munsey stated that we were a small district and in some positions the district is unable to hire full time and that this worked out for the district and also the staff member.
5. New full time kindergarten – It was clarified that elimination of this position also included the reinstatement of the special education case manager position.
6. Novanet and guided study paraprofessionals – Dave Mylott referred to a staffing analysis and questioned the number of grade 6 to 12 paraprofessionals due to the addition of four

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paraprofessionals with a drop of 60 students from 0809 to 1112. Martha Williamson explained that paraprofessionals followed the child. Cathy Zylinski confirmed that paraprofessionals follow a cohort of students. Brian Reed commented that if it is an IEP then a paraprofessional is needed. He would like to see more paraprofessionals due to the great work they do. Jeff Harris stated that the analysis showed that paraprofessionals were shifting from the elementary to the middle school.

7. 50% technology facilitator – Superintendent Munsey stated that this was a new position for the elementary school and that the library paraprofessional position would be changed to include library and media/technology responsibilities.
8. 50% nursing assistant – Superintendent Munsey explained that positions had been looked at and a cut to the middle/high school nursing assistant was recommended.

Dave Mylott asked why no athletics or extracurricular activities had been recommended to be cut. He thought that we needed to look at athletics. He was a huge fan, but not a fan of cutting in other places without considering this. Superintendent Munsey commented that it was briefly discussed, but that our students had little and that putting a fee structure in place added more administrative responsibilities. Also athletics and extracurricular activities were part of the curriculum. Gregory Dodge commented that he would consider cutting athletics. Brian Reed also agreed that the Board should look at it. The Superintendent read out loud the sports in the middle and high school and the funding amounts for extracurricular activities and athletics in the elementary, middle, and high schools. It was explained that the cost of a sport included coaches, equipment, transportation, officials, etc. Jeff Harris commented that there was an attempt to get competitions closer to Epping; however, the schedule is determined by NHIAA two years out. Dave Mylott felt that the Board needed to consider a fee based system for sports. The following other comments were made:

1. Shanna McTague commented that parents are used to paying for sports through EYAA and it was not too much to ask. Families in need could apply for a waiver.
2. Kerstin Rossel commented that parents pay for preschool and kindergarten tuition and if the district was taking tuition money they should take it for sports.
3. Bob Sutherland asked if there was a charge for games and noted that there were concessions. It was noted that the Boosters run the concessions to help out with sports.

Gregory Dodge asked if the Board was under a deadline to make a decision. Superintendent Munsey commented that decisions needed to be made the first week in April due to legal deadlines. Dave Mylott stated that there was enough with the recommended plan to cover the \$280,000 and the Home-to-School Coordinator. He recommended that the Superintendent meet with the Athletic Director and talk about pay to play. With extra money the Board could put positions back in.

Dave Mylott made a motion to keep the Home-to-School position, seconded by Brian Reed. The motion passed 3-2 with Jeff Harris and Gregory Dodge voting no.

Dave Mylott made a motion to approve the cuts proposed by the Superintendent and discussed at the meeting adding up to \$322,653, seconded by Sue Kimball. It was clarified that this number included the \$272,653 in cuts as presented plus the \$50,000 - \$25,000 from one teacher retiring and \$25,000 from the professional development lines above and beyond the PD Director's position. ***The motion passed 5-0.***

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Gregory Dodge directed the Board to the last question on legislative concerns. It was explained that the Board had difficulty getting the various legislators together and some did not respond. Dave Mylott recommended that a letter be sent on behalf of the Board and suggested that the Superintendent do that. A list of potential ideas was briefly discussed. Jeff Harris recommended also including the Governor. It was also recommended that Chris Sununu of the Executive Counsel be included in addition to representatives and the senator.

Andrea Meyer asked if the financial issues and legislative contacts could be included in the school newsletters. The consensus of the Board was no as it was political. Kerstin Rossel stated that parents could handle on a grassroots level. It was noted that these contacts are available on ETV and district website.

The Board thanked the audience for coming and participating in the process.

Dave Mylott made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Brian Reed. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara D. Munsey