

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tolland High School  
Library  
Tolland, CT 06084

SPECIAL MEETING – TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET WORKSHOP – January 29, 2015

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Kathy Gorsky, Secretary; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Steve Clark, Ms. Colleen Yudichak, Mr. Tom Frattaroli, and Mr. Robert Pagoni.

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Frank Connolly, Interim Business Manager; Mr. Jim Dineen, Principal, Tolland Intermediate School; Ms. Kathleen Raymond, Director, Pupil Services; Mr. Tom Swanson, Principal, Birch Grove; Ms. Dominique Fox, Principal, Tolland High School; Mr. Dan Uriano, Principal, Tolland Middle School; Ms. Patricia Hess, Assistant Principal, Birch Grove; Mr. Adam Sher, IT Director; Ms. Margot Martello Assistant Principal, Tolland High School; Ms. Carolyn Tyl, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Corrine Lorenzet, Director of Guidance, Tolland High School; Jonathan Cop, Assistant Principal, Tolland Intermediate School.

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 P.M.

At the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, Dr. Willett presented a proposed 4.74% budget increase and a list of staff reductions. A handout was provided to the public this evening which listed this information as well as impact statements.

B. Potential Changes – 10 minutes

C. Part I: Topics: Identify a topic you hope is raised this evening – 5 minutes

D. Part II: Questions: Write down the questions you want answered both a) clarifying questions and b) probing questions (or any question will do) – 10 minutes

E. Part III: Report out on your TOPICS and your QUESTIONS – 15 minutes

Topics (taken from group sheets)

- Group 1, Impact on the music program, issue of paraprofessionals, technology, impact of language cuts on course offerings and scheduling at THS
- Group 2, Whose budget is the SRO going to be in? What would round 2 budget cut look like? Will curriculum continue to be a primary focus?
- Group 3, When does the cutting of budgets stop and what does it get us? How do we absorb the skill sets that we lose with the cuts? Why are we eliminating unique positions rather than taking from the bigger pool? Why are some schools taking larger hits than others?
- Group 4, What is the rationale in increasing PE? What is line 791? Help us make sense of lines 178 and 179.
- Group 5, If we have extra money through retirements etc., can we bring back lost opportunities/positions/needs?

- Group 6, How can we achieve the best outcome for schools through the political process? What is the process? What is changing to cause the decrease in certified substitutes? What is the credit in line 195? What is in the increase in line 430? Request to talk through proposed deductions.
- Group 7, What will the music program look like at TMS and then at THS? What will literacy instruction and intervention look like at Birch Grove and what staff is in place? Round 2 cuts at TIS and what is not in Round 1 – save higher impact positions. What is higher impact beyond loss of personnel?

Questions (taken from group sheets)

- Group 1: Why are we cutting paraprofessionals when they are relatively inexpensive? The focus is on math and literacy and paraprofessionals support that. Will the special education program cuts at Birch Grove impact programs in other school buildings?
- Group 2, elimination of social worker, when things leave the budget they don't come back, SRO – town vs. school
- Group 3, enrollment, larger/long term impact of cuts, adding programs to enhance Tolland Public School such as early language programs and a gifted and talented program, athletics vs. academic focus, appropriation of funds such as technology, cuts to music program
- Group 4, How are we going to get the budget passed? How get more people involved in voting? What is the typical budget increase in the state and comparable districts?
- Group 5, none
- Group 6, How dollars move – federal, state, town? How little is too little? Understand how we got 4.74% - budget priorities and impact; how will we look to the future and deal with declining enrollment and how are we thinking through such a decision?
- Group 7, social worker and how it may play into accreditation; ask about prepayment

F. Part IV: Identifying the essential questions for BOE deliberation

Enrollment: handout with the data was distributed and reviewed

What will music look like at TMS and what will the effect be at THS?

Mr. Uriano explained that there are currently 3 music teachers. The offerings will be limited but chorus, jazz band, and fundamentals will remain intact.

Why eliminate unique positions?

Why a unique position rather than one English teacher?

Dr. Willett explained via the example of the math program. To lose a math teacher would affect the ability to implement Singapore Math which will have a long term positive impact now and when the students enter college. The impact of some positions is greater than the impact of others. Mr. Pagoni commented that the social worker should not be on the list and explained his position. Dr. Willett responded that each of the administrators work at the schools every day and when they have to make decisions regarding impact, the decisions are made based on what is seen every day and what provides the greatest impact. Ms. Fox noted that this does not

diminish the value of a position but it may be able to be addressed via other means. A discussion of various positions including that of the SRO took place. Mr. Adlerstein explained that they could go back and have a level budget with everything in place but this year Dr. Willett has put forth a plan to move the district forward with curriculum. This was the task given to the Superintendent. Mr. Adlerstein added that there is still time and the actuals may well come in under the estimates.

Why are we cutting paraprofessionals which are relatively inexpensive?

Mr. Swanson explained that when looking at staffing, through professional development, teachers will be able to absorb those students.

Technology

Money is available in the budget for technology as well as for materials and textbooks so that the schools can be more effective.

How are we going to get the budget passed?

Briefly, Dr. Willett explained that they need to be real and do as much as possible. Mr. Adlerstein explained that it will be tough to pass without a "Get Out to Vote" effort.

G. Part V: Planning the next steps

Another workshop is scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM at the THS Library. Dr. Willett encouraged everyone to stay engaged.

Ms. Gorsky motioned to extend the meeting past 10:00 P.M. Ms. Moran seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:11PM. Mr. Doyle seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk