

Attleboro, Massachusetts
School Committee Public Hearing
Monday, May 20, 2013
School Committee Conference Room - Attleboro High School
Minutes

Present: Michael Tyler, (At Large), Chairman, Brenda Furtado (Ward IV), Vice Chairperson, Barbara Crow, (At-Large), Secretary, William Larson, (Ward II), Christopher O'Neil, (Ward III), Frances Zito, (Ward V), Kenneth Parent, (Ward VI), and David Murphy, (At Large)

Absent: Teri Enegren;

Also Present: Pia Durkin, Ph.D., Superintendent, Dave Sawyer, Assistant Superintendent, Tom Rose, Business Manager, Marisa McCarthy, Director of Special Education and Student Support Services, and Judy Nelson, Recording Secretary.

The Public Hearing was called to Order at 6:35 p.m.

The purpose of the Public Hearing was to provide the public the opportunity to speak either in support of or against the proposed preliminary FY14 school budget for the next fiscal year. This hearing was not designed as question and answer session, but an opportunity for the Committee to collect public comment prior to their vote to approve the preliminary FY14 school budget

Open Forum:

Christine Wentz: James Street – Ms. Wentz thanked the committee for including the network upgrade in the budget requests. Ms. Wentz noted Thacher Elementary currently has 150 computers and is in the process of replacing and upgrading to prepare the school for the upcoming PARCC testing. The upgrade to the infrastructure is important in allowing the district to prepare for the upcoming requirements of the PARCC testing.

The Business Manager was available for questions and broke down the budget priorities.

Of note at 6:40 p.m. Mr. Larson entered the Public Hearing.

Mr. Rose explained the budgetary process that has occurred beginning at the April 8th Meeting. The total budget request for FY14 is \$66,600,749 (Net School Spending: \$63,517,402; Transportation: \$3,083,347) (see the attached FY14 Preliminary Budget Power Point).

The Committee explained a large portion of the increase from FY13 stems from the contractual obligations and increase to the healthcare costs. The remainder is necessary to educate the 6000 Attleboro students.

Mr. Rose explained the process of the budget: preliminary; state; senate; governor; and city administration process. This is an ongoing process that

The committee has an obligation to inform the public of what the district needs to move continue to move the district forward.

The Superintendent stated Attleboro has done well during challenging budgetary times which can be attributed to the focused decisions. The staff has remained constant. Data shows the brilliance of Attleboro. There will be challenges ahead to keep up with the standards. Attleboro has always supported and stretched its students. There is a strong need for better technology and resources. The positions in the budget allow for the appropriate staff needs to control class size and the quality of instruction.

Of note, at 6:50 Barbara Crow and Brenda Furtado entered the Public Hearing.

The Chairman voiced concern over the lack of public participation. There is a need for funding to keep the district moving forward. Attleboro has done well to this point. One can only stretch so far before something gives. The community needs to be aware of the importance of this process.

Catherine Zinni – Principal – Thacher Elementary: Ms. Zinni asked if the district has seen any financial benefit to the Full-Day Kindergarten program.

Mr. Rose elaborated on the financial benefits since the installation of the Full Day Kindergarten program. This has allowed for an increase in net school spending and provided educational benefits to our students.

Ms. Zinni inquired about safety item requests and if they were included in the FY14 Budget proposed.

Mr. Rose noted these items were included and broken down by line.

Ms. Zinni noted concern about this year being the last year for the Race to the Top Grant and the importance of sustaining those priorities.

The committee stressed the importance of keeping students in Attleboro to avoid the loss in funds when a student goes to a charter school or to Tri County. The CTE program is expanding and in the process of finalizing a plumbing program in Attleboro.

The committee emphasized the benefits from ½ Day Kindergarten versus Full Day Kindergarten.

Representative Paul Heroux – Mechanic Street – Representative Heroux summarized the internet project in process. PARCC testing will be online. It is the hope that this bond amendment will provide funding to districts to prepare their infrastructures for the requirements of the PARCC testing. On May 30th Commissioner Chester will visit Attleboro at 7:00 p.m. in the Bray Auditorium to present a Power Point on the upcoming PARCC testing. Representative Heroux will continue to work toward getting this amendment passed and funds available for districts.

The Committee acknowledged this funding would be helpful. Attleboro must continue to pursue the money on a local level to ensure the infrastructure is prepared for the PARCC testing.

Representative Heroux stated his intentions were to allow for reimbursements to districts. He encouraged the committee to pursue the monies locally as well. He will speak on May 30th about this process in more detail.

The committee thanked Representative Heroux.

Chairperson Tyler declared the Public Hearing on the School Department's Preliminary Budget for FY14 closed at 7:20 p.m.

The Committee will take a ten minute recess and then return to Open Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crow,
Secretary

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. APS FY14 Superintendent's Preliminary Budget