

The Regional District 13 Board of Education held a District Meeting on Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Coginchaug High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currilin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Laurie Stevens, second Rick Parmelee to elect David Montgomery as moderator. No other nominations were made. Mr. Montgomery was unanimously elected as moderator.

Mr. Hicks read the call of the meeting and also read the return of the call. It was noted that the dates in the return of the call were incorrect. The dates were corrected and Mr. Hicks read the corrected return of the call.

On a motion by Laurie Stevens, second Mr. Parmelee, the call of the meeting and the corrected return of the call were unanimously accepted as read.

Mr. Melnik gave a very brief presentation on the changes in the budget from the last budget submission to this one. The reductions in the budget total \$228,000. They consist of \$10,000 in administrative salary for the new hiring of a Strong School principal, \$4,000 in band instruments, \$25,000 in stipends, \$40,000 in transportation costs, \$15,000 in electricity savings due to the solar panels and other energy cost saving measures, \$12,500 due to a reduction in hours for an art teacher, \$3,000 for athletic uniforms, \$12,000 in technology support, \$92,000 from the capital plan, \$4,000 in athletic supplies, \$6,750 in supplies at CRHS, and an increase in the parking fees at CRHS will generate an additional \$3,750. The increase in expenses totals .27% and the net budget increase is 3.45%.

Rick Parmelee of Durham said the expense total does not matter; it is the net increase, the 3.45% that matters. The State doesn't have the money so it is coming out of the taxpayer's pocket. Mr. Parmelee also questioned if the fact that the Devil's Advocate is paid for is noted in the Town Times. He wanted to know why there was no public hearing for this referendum. Mr. Parmelee does not support increasing the fee for student parking and he is not in favor of charging any activity fees. Mr. Parmelee feels there should be more of a reduction in staffing to reflect the declining student enrollment.

Michael Boyle of Durham thanked the Board for the hard work they did bringing in a very tight budget.

Bob Poliner of Durham asked what part of the total decrease is in administrative costs. Mr. Melnik said the \$10,000 reduction in the administrative salary account for the new Strong School principal is the only direct administrative reduction.

Chris Morganti of Durham questioned the changes made to the stipend account. He said he understood that they were contractual items and asked if they were just going to be eliminated. Mr. Melnik said the stipend rates are set in the contract. The Board and the administration can decide whether to fund an activity for the year.

Dr. Ochterski said that during contract negotiations with teachers a wage freeze was agreed to for next year. The stipends were never discussed. An assumption was made when creating the budget that the stipend rates would increase as usual. The Board discussed this at the last

meeting and determined that they should not have increased as the contract was intended to have a zero base increase.

Mr. Morganti questioned the electricity savings. He said last year \$10,000 was cut from the budget due to the addition of the solar panels. Now the District is cutting an additional \$15,000, also due to the addition of the solar panels. Mr. Melnik explained that the solar panels were installed much later in the year than anticipated and the District does not really have any history to go on. The reduction is still a best guess at this point. Mrs. Flanagan said the estimate of the savings for this year was based on a partial year; the savings for next year are based on an entire year's usage.

Mr. Morganti asked how the minimum budget requirement applies to the District. Mr. Melnik said it relates to the ECS funding. The District is required to increase the budget proportionately to the ECS funding increase. As we expect that the ECS funding will remain flat this year, it will not be an issue.

Mr. Morganti questioned if declining enrollment is taken into consideration. If the District chooses to close a school are we still required to spend as much? Mr. Melnik said that there is currently legislation pending regarding this question, but the law currently on the books says that we do.

Michael Doyle is concerned that we may not be able to attract the best candidates for the middle school principal position by reducing the amount by \$10,000. Mr. Hennick said there is some concern, but it is a risk the Board was willing to take.

Mr. Parmelee would like to know how many applicants are applying for positions. He feels it is important for people to know. Mrs. Viccaro said we do not usually have difficulty attracting applicants; occasionally we will have an applicant withdraw because of the rate of pay.

Mr. Montgomery explained the rules for voting in the referendum.

On a motion by Mr. Parmelee, second Mr. Felton, the District Meeting adjourned at 8:35p.m.