

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING

February 15, 2007

School Committee in Attendance: Don Adams, Ellen Sturgis, Brian Burke, Cathy Giunta, Mel Govindan, Tricia Kelly

Absent: Monica CampoBasso, David Horne

Administration in Attendance: Michael Wood, Superintendent of Schools, George King, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Sally Sullivan, Director of Teaching & Learning

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Don Adams called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. in the Media Center, Nashoba Regional High School.

II TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

Turf Field Capital Campaign

Mr. Wood reported to the committee that he had a meeting with some of the District administration to discuss capital campaigns. He said another meeting is planned where they will discuss specific amounts, what is reasonable regarding amounts, and a timeline. He said they may want to look at this as an endowment campaign and that he would keep the committee informed as of the date and development of the next meeting. Mr. King told the committee he had a meeting with engineers to discuss this project. He said they thought it would be most cost effective and that the best design would result if the district replaced the field and the track at the same time. This would allow the district to go to bid on both projects together. Mr. King said that with this information there seemed to be three options for pursuing the turf field campaign. The options he listed are as follows:

1. Option 1: proceed with the addition of the new field for the 2007
2. Option2: postpone the addition of the turf field and do \$2,000 in repairs needed now
3. Option 3: postpone the field but proceed with the addition of the track

Mr. King told the committee that these projects were not luxury items, but rather they were items which would need to be addressed eventually. Discussion ensued. Mr. Govindan inquired about the cost of the track and why the estimate had risen so much. Mr. King replied that it actually was originally estimated at \$150,000 but was up to \$300,000 by the end of last year's discussion and investigation into the expense and details of this project. Mr. King said the first step would be to look at having a feasibility study done. Ms. Sturgis asked how much was spent on the track last year. Mr. King responded this cost was approximately \$30,000, and another \$15,000 in maintenance. Mr. Adams asked if Mr. Spratt was keeping the plans for the original track design and if he was taking steps to ensure the committee would have this information for future reference. Mr. King responded that he was indeed doing this, and that all plans are now also recorded on CD Rom which helps to preserve facilities records. Mr. Burke asked who the original firm for the track design was. Mr. Burke asked if they could be a resource. Mr. King responded that they could be hired to do a conceptual design. Mr. Wood said he just wanted to bring the committee up to date and that he would get recommendations and then bring them back to the full committee.

Technology: Fiber Project Return on Investment

Ms. Sturgis said that this information was provided in response to Mr. Horne's inquiry. Mr. Adams asked that since Mr. Horne was unable to be at this meeting, if the superintendent could send him this correspondence and offer to meet with him to go over what the committee had discussed during this meeting. Mr. Wood agreed.

FY 08 Revenue Information

Mr. Wood addressed the committee regarding this agenda topic and updated the committee on FY 08 Chapter 70 information. He said that in a recent meeting and conversation with Mr. David Tobin the most recent projection show that we are not likely to see a huge relief via Chapter 70. He also reported to the committee that he met with Senator Antonioni and Superintendent Shelly Berman of Hudson regarding the Circuit Breaker and Special Education. He said it is estimated that it would take \$9 million dollars to make the current percentages real time reimbursements for this year's students. Mr. Wood also said another option was to network the circuit breaker and add Special Education to it. He told the committee the House I will be release their budget information on February 28TH and that they would know the Chapter 70 amounts by February 28th. Mr. Wood said he would have firm data regarding this information for the march 8th School Committee meeting.

Projected Assessment Information

Mr. King distributed information regarding the assessment formula, which he said was very preliminary and based on estimates. He gave an explanation of the FY 08 revenue by source. The preliminary percentage increase for FY 08 for each town was listed as follows:

1. Bolton- 7.21%
2. Lancaster- 9.90%
3. Stow- 7.55%

Mr. Govindan said that the Town of Lancaster requested that the committee work to bring the increase for Lancaster down to 4-5% as the town is looking at level funding for their FY 08 budget.

Kindergarten Staffing Costs

The committee discussed the ratio of teachers to students per kindergarten class. Mr. Wood told the committee the NEAYC recommendation is a ratio of 1 teacher (or staff member) per 12 students. He said that if the District did not choose to abide by their recommendation it could lose NEAYC accreditation. Discussion ensued regarding class size. Ms. Sturgis asked if the issue of sharing an aide between two classrooms had been discussed with Ms. Cindy Maxfield, Director of Early Childhood Education and Care for the District. Mr. Wood said that this had been discussed and that it could be a possibility. Mr. Burke raised the option of parents choosing to send their child to a district school outside their home town, where the class size may be smaller. Mr. Wood indicated this also could be an option, but that it was offered last year and no one opted for to do this. Ms. Giunta inquired about the inter-district policy. She said that it sounded different than a child being allowed to attend a district school outside their home town because they "wanted to". Mr. Wood said the policy is vague enough that it could be if a child "wants to". Ms, Giunta said that did not seem to meet the Regional Agreement.

II PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Sullivan addressed the committee and called their attention to information regarding professional development which was included in the evening's committee packet. This information included a Tentative Professional Development Schedule for the 2007-2008 school year. Ms. Sullivan told the committee that as the district approaches the fourth year of their sustained professional development initiative, they are excited about the next phase of this initiative. She told the committee that "effective professional development provides a climate for both personal and professional growth." Ms. Sullivan also stated that "research has shown that effective professional development is job-embedded, ongoing, reflective, aligned to state standards and expectations, tied to district goals, and is a long-term commitment." Discussion ensued. Mr. Govindan commented on the increase in this professional development budget from last fiscal year and asked why this was so. Ms. Sullivan gave a breakdown of the increase, which included the following in part.

1. \$35,000 for Instructional Coaches
2. \$10,000 for ELL training (required)
3. \$12,000 for Enrichment training
4. \$5,000 for At Risk Task Force initiative
5. \$5,000 for speakers

6. \$2,000 for professional development committee to use for early release day trainings
7. \$6,000 for Healthy Relationships Task Force initiative

III Composite Budget Conversation

Ms. Kelly asked the committee for feedback regarding looking at the budget without the superintendent's 1's and 2's or a 2.5 % cut in the proposed budget which she estimated to be just under 1 million dollars. She asked Mr. Wood if this could be done. Mr. Wood responded that this would be forwarded to the committee. Mr. Adams said that it would be helpful if committee members decided on topics they would like to discuss. Ms. Sturgis asked if questions should be forwarded to Mr. Wood. Mr. Wood said that if questions could be forwarded to him by Tuesday they could be included in the next budget workshop agenda as topics to discuss. Mr. Adams asked that committee members forward items to be discussed to Mr. Wood by Tuesday.

CITIZEN INPUT

Ms. Sturgis told the committee that the Robotics Team's robot was complete and offered a personal tour for anyone interested in seeing a demonstration.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda DeStasi
Executive Assistant