

**NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Budget Workshop**

June 18, 2009

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:** Brian Burke, Monica CampoBasso, Lynn Colletti, Nancy Federspiel, George Babich, Mel Govindan, Richard Fly and Maureen Busch

**ADMINISTRATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Michael Wood, Superintendent of Schools, George King, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Burke opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and stated this meeting is a budget reworkshop. Mr. Burke explained what the structure of the meeting will be, and that a new plan will be presented by the administration. Mr. Burke stated that we need to keep in mind that although the budget is approved by the School Committee it is the Superintendent that has to manage the budget.

Mr. Wood reviewed the new state budget information, the good news we did receive our final check for transportation, which means we will be in a better position next year. Mr. Wood stated that we have been advised by our bank that we will not be receiving interest next year and will look to move to a new bank. Mr. Wood also advised that Unemployed has been greatly reduced due to the reduced layoffs with new recommended plan and that Chapter 70 figures have still not been released from the state.

Mr. Wood stated that whatever plan we do approve has meet what we refer to as the three S's, sustainability, strategic, and sellable. Plan A clearly was not sellable to the community, it was sustainable. Plan B was sustainable but was also not sellable to the union leadership, so we needed to at another plan that would meet all three S's.

Ms. CampoBasso asked why the interest revenue was not posted on the original budget. Mr. King stated it was posted but we were just recently notified we would no longer get interest.

Mr. Wood reviewed the spreadsheet, explaining each line item. Mr. Wood stated that this plan does meet the criteria and the good thing about this plan is that we would not be looking at the middle school model. The committee will be looking in the fall at ways the budget can be built to be sustainable.

Mr. Burke asked the Committee if they had any questions on the new plan.

Ms. CampoBasso asked what positions are remaining in Teaching and Learning Dept. and what would remain of the secretary? Mr. Wood replied it would only be the Tech Coordinator, STEM Coordinator and ELA Coordinator. The secretary will be a .7 and that position would also be covering the Facilities and HR admin. duties that would be cut with the layoff of that position.

Ms. Federspiel asked if all vacant position would be filled? Mr. Wood replied yes.

Mr. Babich asked with the loss of the Math position at the HS impact class size? Mr. Wood replied they will be slightly larger but still approx. 21.

Mr. Fly questioned the Library supplied cut, stating I thought we were already short there? Mr. Wood replied that Mr. Roche is working with all the departments at the high school so it will not all be the library.

Mr. Fly stated he is disappointed with the cut of the foreign language and would like the committee to work hard to find a way to sacrifice some other items to keep foreign language at the middle schools.

Mr. King advised that Blue Cross is suggesting that we raise the co pays, the idea is the more that participate in the plan the lower the premiums.

Mr. Govindan stated he feels that we need to find savings in the athletics programs.

Mr. Burke asked for a comparison of athletics in the budget over the last few years. Mr. King provided the comparison, stated that it increased approx. 7% each year with additional sports being added.

Ms. CampoBasso asked if gate sales are included in the budget. Mr. King replied they are not, they are wiped out with the cost of the sport, hockey, basketball and football are the only sports who collect gates sales and are the most expensive to run. Mr. King provided an explanation of how the revolving account for gate sales works and will provide an account of how much is current in the account.

Ms. CampoBasso stated that the association suggested they had made an insurance proposal is the copay proposal you discussed that was proposed. Mr. King replied he would not say it was "proposed" and provided an explanation of what is being worked on with the Insurance Advisory Council.

Mr. Burke stated the NREA has provided some ideas of how to cut the budget but as of last evening as still declined to meet with administration.

Ms. Federspiel asked to discuss the impact of not replacing the two high school teachers that were slated to not be replaced in plan D (social studies and math). This sparked a discussion about the class sizes in the high school that involved the input of Social Studies chair Tim Castner explaining that social studies already had the highest class sizes of all the departments.

Mr. Fly stated that the discussion of the class size at the high school brings up the point that there is going to be pain somewhere, every plan involves pain, and it is important to understand that no plan is painless.

Mr. Burke stated that the Professional Development days are contractual and those days will still be met but will be met more cost effectively. Mr. Burke advised there is a pie chart handout detailing the budget and adjustments for FY09, voted budget for FY10 and FY10 cuts. Mr. Wood reviewed the handout explaining each chart.

Ms. CampoBasso asked about eliminating the secretary in Facilities and Human Recourses and who will handle those duties. Mr. Wood replied that these would be delegated between the remaining support staff in the central office.

Mr. Burke complimented Mr. Spratt on his great work and cost saving efforts in the district.

Mr. Burke then invited the public to voice their concerns and questions and asked the public to limit their questions to the proposed plan.

Bob Czekanski, Bolton, - commended the administration and the School Committee for the new plan, but urged the School Committee to keep working on further cuts.

Deb Kotlarz, Bolton, - stated June 3<sup>rd</sup> there was a letter on website, June 4<sup>th</sup> they were given letters. Amazing work has been done, could we have done this work early and could this have been done before moving to Plan A. Mr. Wood replied that budget planning is a process and nothing starts until it is brought to the table, he still believes that Plan A is the best plan, "what I heard last week from community that plan A was not sellable and I responded which is what the process is".

Deb Kotlarz, Bolton - "What is the total cost of health insurance to our district". Mr. King replied 4.1million, Deb Kotlarz what is the percentage, Mr. King replied it is 3%.

Jason Lovinger, Bolton - thanked the school committee, and questioned why there was a deadline and asked if it could be pushed back to be able to look further to see what other cuts to save the foreign language and social studies positions. Mr. Wood replied that by July 1 we must have a budget, and we do, it is just out of balanced. Mr. Lovinger asked if savings were to come in where would they be allocated. Mr. Burke stated when the savings do come in they will be reviewed at that time.

Cathy Thier, Lancaster – asked for the spreadsheet to be prioritized so if money does come in it will be allocated according to priority. Ms. Thier asked if the NREA has been asked to a freeze in salary raise. Mr. Wood replied they have been asked but have declined to discuss, and explained that we are one year into a three year contract and they do not have to talk to us until that time.

Chris Gibson, Stow – asked if the suggestions that were presented by the NREA will be posted. Mr. Burke replied he will be reviewing those tonight, but stated the changes are not sufficiently different than what is presently on Plan C. Mr. Gibson asked if there will be a chance for the community to review before the vote on the 25<sup>th</sup> and asked if that was an open meeting. Mr. Burke replied as stated before, all School Committee Meetings are open meetings.

Mr. Govindan stated we had a budget workshop on January 24<sup>th</sup> and had been cutting the budget until it was voted on in March, and if we had the community interest at that time it would have been helpful during the process and not at the end.

Mr. Fly stated given that we still have some time before we hear from the state on the budget, but believes the committee should be given the opportunity to not make a decision next week. Mr. King replied that we can adopt a budget and amend the budget when we receive new information.

Mr. Govindan stated we need to remember that this economic downturn is not over.

Jason Lovinger, Bolton – stated that business often approve an interim budget and advised the School Committee to do this. Mr. Lovinger asked what ranks in comparison to the departments the money spent on athletics. Mr. Govindan stated when you look at the budget you need to offset the expense with the user fees. Mr. Lovinger asked how are insurance copays average to other districts. Mr. King replied we are in the middle to other districts.

Dave Thombs, Bolton – applauds the School Committee and stated the leadership needs to step up to the table 1% would save teachers. Mr. Wood stated we have offered that and they refused to meet. Mr. Thombs stated he is very disappointed to hear that teachers will not talk to save other teachers. Mr. Burke stated to keep in mind that it is not the teachers it is the leadership, we cannot talk to the teachers, conversations must be done with leadership.

Kathy Thier, Lancaster - asked if there were costs associated with adding new freshman sports and is that comparable to a teacher. Mr. King replied no, a new sport cost is approx. \$5000.

Matt, Bolton – thanked the sc for hearing the communities voice and coming back with a new plan and asked has communication been made to the teachers that were pink slipped that we are move away from that plan. Mr. Burke replied and he feels it is premature at this point to have those communications.

Bob Czekanski, Bolton– stated, regarding the sustainability issue, he thinks the School Committee should address this year's budget this year and next year's next year.

Jason Lovinger, Bolton stated he wants to be notified when sc meetings are. Mr. Burke replied once again that the schedule, agenda and minutes are listed on the website and all meeting are open to the public.

Deb Kotlarz, Bolton, stated two action items from last week were not done, post Professional Development calendar, and asked for the connect ed call for this meeting and did not get it.

Mr. Burke asked the committee for comments or thoughts for next week's meeting.

Mr. Govindan stated he would like to see possible savings in technology and instate travel.

Ms. CampoBasso questioned the late bus, stating it was brought on as a pilot, that was going to run through a full cycle and then would be charged by the user, she would like to see that revisited. Ms. CampoBasso also asked about the two tier busing. Mr. Wood replied we have looked into that and the challenge is we are bringing on a new carrier, Mr. Wood replied we could look at it but it would be a big impact to our family's daily schedules.

Ms. CampoBasso asked if the foreign language teacher from the high school was supposed to go to middle school, what would happen to that teacher, Mr. Wood replied they would remain in the high school, therefore going forward the model we would have an additional staff position.

Ms. CampoBasso stated there are several new science classes at the high school is there any room for consolidation there and the possibility of electives for social studies

Tim Castner stated there are 60 students that have signed for next year and students need three years of social studies over their 4 year program. Mr. Wood replied that social studies are not where we would want to cut.

Adjourned at 9:12.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Aleta Masterson  
Executive Assistant

**NOTES**