



Columbia Board of Education
Special Meeting & Public Budget Hearing Minutes
February 28, 2011

5:30 P.M.
Horace W. Porter School Library Media Center

Board Members Present: Paula Belekewicz, Lisa Jurovaty-Vice Chairman, William Mulcahy, Lauren Perrotti-Verboven-Chairman, Nelson Petrone, John Schroder, James Thorn

Administration Present: Francine Coss-Superintendent

Staff Present: Janet Stice

Citizens Present: Amy Raffa, Kate Starkey, Laurie Rogers, Scott Petrequin, Todd Shepard, Carol Albert, Maria Gratton

I. Call to Order

Mrs. Perrotti-Verboven called the February 28, 2011 Special Meeting and Public Budget Hearing to order at 5:35 p.m.

Mrs. Perrotti-Veroven explained the 2011/2012 proposed budget is a result of the Board of Education's 5 year plan. The Superintendent has worked very hard and closely with the Town to present a conservative district budget.

Mrs. Coss reviewed the proposed 2011/2012 Columbia Board of Education operating budget. It represents a 0.00% increase over the 2010/2011 budget which was approved by the Columbia Board of Education on March 8, 2010. She summarized the budget process and reviewed important dates:

- March 7 – Board of Education will approve budget
- March 15 – approved budget document must be sent to FIPAC by this date
- March 16 – Board of Selectmen and Board of Education will present their budgets to FIPAC
- May 10 – Annual Town Budget Meeting

The Superintendent explained the Two-Year History by Object Comparison, Executive Budget Summary, and Differences in 2011/2012 Funding as Compared to 2010/2011 Funding. She reviewed budget line items and the Board of Education's Budget Requests Compared to Actual Town Allocation Funding since 2007/2008.

Proposed changes in 2011/2012 staffing include:

- Retirement of one SRBI Reading Teacher;
- reduction in force of one Elementary Teacher due to low projections in student population at that grade level;
- reduction in force of a Middle School Science Teacher; reduced from 1.0 FTE to 0.6 FTE due to decrease in student population in grades 5-8;
- reduction in force (August 2010) of one full-time SRBI Reading Teacher/Elementary Computer Applications Teacher to 0.8 FTE followed by resignation of one part-time SRBI Reading Teacher/Elementary Computer Applications Teacher (0.8 FTE) in January 2011;
- resignation of one Paraeducator (formerly known as Paraprofessional and Instructional Aide) and reduction in force of one Paraeducator due to a projected change in Preschool – Grade 8 Special Education Services for the 2011-2012 school year;
- and reduction in force of part-time Health Office Nurse.

II. 2011/2012 Budget Input

- *Amy Raffa* voiced concern for class sizes and the overcrowding on buses.
- *Maria Gratton* asked if it was possible to transport high school students on vans rather than buses if enrollment numbers were low.

- *Kate Starkey* asked how many buses are currently used to transport Lyman High School students and if the district is required to transport students from their home to each designated high school or from the Porter hub to each high school. She also asked if the Board of Education still has the tuition agreement with the Town.
- *Scott Petrequin* asked if the capital improvement costs were guesstimates or actual costs.
- *Maria Gratton* commented on possible health insurance cost increases if the President's healthcare reform is approved.
- *Todd Shepard* asked what the average tuition cost is for Columbia's designated high schools.

Mrs. Perrotti-Veroven thanked the audience for coming to this evening's meeting and asked citizens to please stay involved in the budget process. She praised the Superintendent for the very nice job on the budget.

III. Adjournment

P. Belekewicz **MOVED** and N. Petrone **SECONDED** to adjourn the February 28, 2011 Special Meeting and Public Budget Hearing at 6:45 p.m.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Jurovaty
Columbia Board of Education Vice-Chairperson