

Minutes
Special Board of Education Meeting
February 25, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: James Chakulski, Jr., David Crim, Linette Dooley, Joanne Prague Doyle, Chairman Christopher Lent, Gary Littlefield and Kathy Tolsdorf

Others Present:

Karen Caputo, Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo, Superintendent Maria Geryk, Principal Alyssa Gwinnell, Assistant Principal Jennifer Hill, Jessica Horning, Michael Magaldi, Charlene Petrone, Christine Sposito, Bryan Tarbell, Ranz Then and Director of Student Services Barbara Wilson

I. Call to Order

Chairman Lent called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Discussion and Action

Board of Education's intent to move forward to explore contract negotiations with our current high school options of E.O. Smith and Bolton high schools beyond 2022.

Chairman Lent said tonight's special meeting is limited to the agenda. This is an opportunity for the audience to comment, pose questions and discuss the Board of Education's intent to move forward to explore contract negotiations with our current high school options at E.O. Smith and Bolton high schools.

Bryan Tarbell, 113 West Street, asked if there were any anticipated issues. Superintendent Geryk answered no. Recently it was agreed to maintain Porter as Pre-K through 8 and maintain a high school choice. The current high school contract expires June 30, 2022. By May 1, 2021 we are to discuss a successor agreement.

Christine Sposito, 62 Doubleday Road, said she supports this continuation and expressed her appreciation to the Board for their hard work.

Mr. Tarbell thanked the Board for the steps taken to reach out to the community to seek input.

Chairman Lent said a Board member had asked about potential state legislation about forced regionalization, which would be based on probate district. Language in the contract will protect us if a change in legislation occurs. There was further discussion about students who may already attend a school if this type of change happens. Additionally it was said that it would take time for such legislation to be written, adopted and then acted on.

Anticipated tuition increase is up to 4%, to which Mr. Chakulski, Jr. said this is another good reason to open negotiations now. Early bargaining allows the Board to explore other options if the tuition is considered unreasonable.

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Mr. Crim SECONDED to move forward to explore contract negotiations with our current high school options of E.O. Smith and Bolton high schools beyond 2022.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

IV. Comments from the Audience (Bylaws of the Board #9300)

No audience member wished to be heard.

V. Presentation and Review of the Superintendent's 2019-2020 Budget

Superintendent Geryk began her presentation by thanking the Board members for their tireless work. They attend hours and hours of subcommittee meetings in addition to the full Board meetings. It is a large undertaking and she appreciates their efforts. She continued by thanking the administrative team who worked collaboratively with her on this budget proposal. Superintendent Geryk expressed special gratitude to Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo, who worked closely with her as this budget was developed.

The budget process included a review of known costs and known grants available. Budget history was reviewed, including where funds were – and were not – utilized. Additionally, current student needs were considered, including placement, services, intervention services, and broader goals.

Superintendent Geryk is proposing a zero percent increase in 2019-2020, with a total request of \$12,825,826. This includes the 2018-19 additional appropriation in order to be in compliance with the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR). The budget proposal includes federal grants, which is another revenue source, are anticipated to total \$217,387 in 2019-2020.

A four-year cost comparison was provided for both high school and Porter. Of particular note, high school costs are projected to be 4.7% less than 2018-19. This is due to a reduction in student outplacement costs as well as special education services at magnet schools. Overall there is a 2.5% decrease from 2018-19.

A five-year cost comparison was provided for special education costs. Tuition, high school services, and transportation are all lower than previous years. This is due, in part, to strong special education programming and services. Superintendent Geryk reminded everyone that this projection is based on known needs. Unknown factors, including placement decisions and/or families moving will impact the budget.

The process employed for the continuous improvement of Porter School was discussed. It included a review of the mission, core values and guiding principles. The team identified program strengths and areas for improvement. They reviewed instructional minutes and how the student day flows, teacher planning and team time and staffing patterns. Finally, they adjusted current structures and staffing to attain goals.

Goal areas in Continuous Improvement are to strengthen the structures and systems to provide embedded professional development, strengthen and norm a model of high quality instruction as well as solidify an aligned curriculum and evidence-based interventions (academic and non-academic).

Embedded professional development is achieved with learning community, coaches and curriculum leaders. High quality instruction is with Tier I academic instructional practices, Tier I behavioral practices and models of instruction. Aligned curriculum and interventions are met with curriculum writing, implementing curriculum, and Tier II intervention. Superintendent Geryk expounded upon all of these areas in her presentation.

Notable increases in the 2019-2020 budget are in the areas of electric, professional development, curriculum support 5 year plan, supplies, technology plan and staffing. The electric increase reflects payments for the loan for the LED project. The technology plan increase is for iPad replacement and laptops, etc.

Notable decreases in the 2019-2020 budget are in the areas of health benefits, tuition in magnet schools, outplacement costs, high school services and capital items. Health benefits costs are anticipated to decrease because of the recently-approved move from Anthem to Cigna.

The staffing proposal includes reassigning 3.0 FTE with no financial implication, 1.0 FTE additional certified staff and 1.0 FTE additional non-certified staff. The certified staff is a social emotional behavioral counselor.

A six-year staffing comparison was reviewed. Both certified and non-certified FTE's have been relatively consistent.

A total of 37 students are projected to attend magnet schools in 2019-2020 to cost \$192,000.

Currently we are projecting Pre-K – 8 enrollment to be 426, which is more than the 384 projected in the 2016 demographic study.

Currently we are projecting high school enrollment to be 253, which is slightly more than the 248 projected in the 2016 demographic study.

The number of classroom teachers per grade level in 2019-2020 was reviewed. We have budgeted two teachers in pre-K; two or three teachers in kindergarten; three teachers in each grades one, two and three; and two teachers in grade four. Grades five and six will have a total of four 5/6 team teachers. Grades seven and eight will also have a total of four 7/8 team teachers. A team teacher will teach one content area for two grade levels.

Notable additions in the 2019-2020 budget include HVAC duct cleaning, a safety grant, and a replacement generator.

Superintendent Geryk concluded by outlining the next steps in the budget approval process. These meetings are scheduled:

March 4, 2019 – Budget subcommittee

March 4, 2019 – Board of Education anticipated vote

The Board will send the budget to FIPAC

March 13, 2019 – FIPAC special meeting – budget presentation

FIPAC budget workshops weekly thereafter

April 24, 2019 – Town public input hearing

May 14, 2019 – Town meeting

VI. Public Input Concerning the Board of Education 2019-2020 Budget

Superintendent Geryk, Principal Gwinnell and Assistant Principal Hill responded to questions posed by Ms. Sposito pertaining to embedded professional development and the difference of Tier I and II in the classrooms.

Jessica Horning, 16 Russmar Trail, asked for clarification regarding Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which was part of models of instruction. Examples of how all students will benefit from being able to demonstrate what they have learned in a format that is best for them was outlined.

VII. Anticipated Executive Session for the Purpose of Personnel Matters – Superintendent Evaluation

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Mr. Chakulski, Jr. SECONDED, to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

The Board entered executive session at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Crim declared that the Board is back in open session.

The Board returned to regular session at 8:44 p.m.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Crim MOVED, Mr. Littlefield SECONDED to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

The Board adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Prague Doyle, Board Secretary