

Attendance:

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson	Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent
Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson	Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent
Dana Levin, Secretary/Treasurer	Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Ops.
Nina Daniel	
Denise Harvey	<i>Absent:</i> Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources
Elise Major	Jackson Marvin, Student Representative
Sara Spaulding	Jack Seigenthaler, Student Representative

CALL TO ORDER, VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. FACILITIES

Mr. Olenik, Director of School Facilities, presented the FY 2016 budget request of \$4,898,965, which is a 5.46% increase over FY 2015. Budget priorities are reflective of the mission of the facilities department, which is to provide a safe and secure, comfortable, clean, functional, and efficient environment for teaching and learning. Increases are \$229,847 for non-salary accounts, primarily as funding for service contracts, maintenance projects, and energy, and \$19,382 for salary accounts. Mr. Olenik also discussed capital projects. The request totals \$583,900 in the first tier, including \$260,000 to replace two oil tanks at Hurlbutt Elementary School. In the second tier, \$878,475 is requested. Discussion by the Board followed.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Ms. Pernice, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, presented the key budget drivers of the \$7,038,343 proposed special education budget as staffing, outplacements, contracted services, mediation requests, increased student needs, and grant reimbursement decreases. The proposed budget for FY 2016 is a 2.58% increase over the FY 2015 adopted budget, and a 2.56% increase over the FY 2015 expected budget. Cost containment strategies include working with Effective School Solutions to provide more in-district services for students with emotional and behavioral concerns as opposed to looking at therapeutic day schools and outplacements, and continued expansion of the 18-21 year old program for students with developmental disabilities. Ms. Pernice noted that the ESS program is just coming to Connecticut but is in 32 schools in New Jersey. She noted that the district is continuing to look at this and will have additional discussions. No number has been put in the budget at this time. Students in special education represent 9.79% of the total student population, and are aged pre-kindergarten through 21 years old. Discussion by the Board followed.

Michele Tivey, Godfrey Road. Ms. Tivey spoke positively of our special education services, and spoke in support of the Effective School Solutions program. She asked about offering ABA services in-house.

IV. PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

The pupil personnel services cost center, with a proposed budget of \$2,561,099 for FY 2016, includes services for student counseling, class scheduling, college and career planning, nursing, and occupational and physical therapy to support regular and special needs students. The budget reflects a 1.02% decrease over the FY 2015 adopted budget, and a 0.66% decrease over the FY 2015 expected budget. Ms. Pernice discussed three budget drivers, which are staffing, increased occupational and physical therapy services due to student needs, and nursing services. Cost containment measures include continued expansion of the Center for Academic Support and Enhancement (CASE) and the middle school OST program, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Effective School Solutions. Discussion by the Board followed.

Michele Tivey, Godfrey Road. Encouraged holding a PD day for staff on awareness of disabilities.

V. SUPERINTENDENT CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, asked that Board members forward additional questions to her. She added that she is impressed with preliminary feedback regarding Effective School Solutions and has recommended the district continue to explore this option for the upcoming fiscal year. Dr. Palmer reported that if we find ourselves in a position to move forward and it is appropriate this year, there probably would be some additional costs. Dr. Palmer also announced new areas of savings within the budget: (1) MERS retirement obligation has decreased by .5%, which translates to a \$55,576 savings, and (2) as Westport will no longer be offering adult education, Weston will work with Norwalk, reducing the amount needed by \$12,000. Dr. Palmer recommended that the budget she brings back to the Board on Monday night reflects a transfer of those funds, \$67,576, to Special Education Purchased Services. Adding \$67,576 to that line item would increase it to \$783,546. Dr. Palmer also stated that it would bring forth some resources so we can seriously consider whether it is possible for us to implement the program this year.

VI. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

There were no additional questions or comments beyond what was discussed previously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Markov, Board of Education Clerk.

Minutes reviewed/approved by Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent.