

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

***MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.***

**Administrative Center – 63 Beaver Brook Road**

Present: Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper, Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley, Kathleen Molinaro, Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, Phyllis Tranzillo, Board Members; Drs. William Glass and Sal Pascarella, Kim Thompson, Ed Arum from Administration

Absent: E. Alberts, R. Jannelli,

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Gladys Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Cooper asked K. Molinaro to do the roll call.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ellen Calle, nurse at Great Plain Elementary School, and President of the nurses' union, spoke about her concern that the nursing staff is not sufficient to provide for the staff and students of the Danbury Public Schools. She is asking the Board not to cut the half nurse position that is part of the budget for the coming year.

Joan Mandzuk, DHS nurse, has a concern on the lack of adequate nursing staff for Danbury High School students and staff. She read a comment from Mary Reisert, nurse at Broadview Middle School, who could not be here tonight. She asks for Board support of the nursing team.

Sharon D'Ascensio, parent of two children in the Danbury Public School system, has a concern about the cuts especially at the Danbury High School and the middle schools. She feels that teachers should not be accepting raises in their salaries based on the cuts that are being proposed

**ACTION ITEM**

**MOTION:** K. Molinaro moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2012-2013 budget as recommended by the Superintendent for submission to the Mayor as required by City Charter.

Dr. Pascarella is submitting a budget that at all costs, will maintain support for reading, writing and mathematics instruction. He distributed to the Board members a packet of information that spoke to the impact of the 2011-2012 budget reduction on students, families and staff. The handout also included the preliminary budget cost drivers, maintenance budget, enrollment increase/state mandates, value added items, and his proposed budget for the 2012-2013 school year, including a list of state, federal, and other programs from which we receive or have received funds. The maintenance budget on Page 6 of the packet is what he is recommending to the Board at 5.03%. He would expect that amount to go down because we are still negotiating contracts, but in light of this morning's meeting with the Finance Committee, we have a different lens in terms of how we are looking at it. He explains the enrollment increase and state mandates listed on Page 7 of the packet and the items listed as value added on Page 8 and proposes a total budget of 5.09%, but at the committee meeting this morning, they talked about a 4% budget for him to look at. This budget is

outlined on Page 9 of the Board packet. Page 10 of the packet outlines a 3.0% budget. If we had to reduce further, it shows how we would reduce to a 1.9% budget and finally down to a 1% budget. R. Hawley, co chair of the Finance Committee, comments that everyone needs some time to review what Dr. Pascarella just said, and he would like to call a recess to review the packet. Clarifying questions were asked by the Board members and discussion ensued to answer them. Ed Arum went through each item listed under “Other Programs” to clarify the funds we receive. P. Tranzillo believes that her job is to help insure that we provide a quality education for our students. She thinks at this point what we need to do is to go the City Council and say that this is a bare bones budget. She said it is our job to tell them what we need to provide our kids with the type of education that they deserve. She would support the Superintendent’s budget, and then when the City Council gives us the money, then we need to come back and take a look at it. R. Taborsak agrees saying that we are supposed to be advocates for all the children in Danbury. He feels it is the Board’s duty to come up with a realistic program that meets the needs of the children and provides for a substantial quality education with equal opportunities for all kids in Danbury. He believes the Superintendent’s budget keeps us moving slowly in the right direction. S. Chilian reiterated what was said by R. Taborsak. She further stated that the Finance Committee this morning tried to compromise and come together as a group, but it involved her having to back out of that compromise because she did not feel comfortable with it. She feels the 5.09% is what the Superintendent has said we need, and we owe it to our people to send forward a budget that the Superintendent and his staff have come up with that does not contain any frills. She supports the Superintendent’s budget at 5.09%. Chairperson Cooper concurs with all of the sentiments of P. Tranzillo, S. Chilian, and R. Taborsak, and she will support the Superintendent’s recommendation of a 5.09% budget. G. Falkenthal said he is pushing a 2% budget, and he is having trouble understanding why we need a 5.2% budget when we only have a 1% increase in the number of students. R. Hawley said he cannot support a 5.09% increase. He feels that as a committee co-chair, we worked diligently to propose 4%. He has a concern about the moving numbers within the existing budget, and for that reason, he would vote against the 5.09% and recommend the 4.0% that was put forward this morning at the Finance Committee meeting. S. Steichen asked Dr. Pascarella for clarification on what actually happens with the 5.09% recommendation. He responded by saying that whatever the Board approves tonight is a tentative budget until it becomes the final allocation. At that point, we have to finalize those cuts. S. Steichen goes on record to say she cannot support a 5.09% budget because she feels there are funds spent on things other than K-12. A. Fluskey-Lattin feels we should ask for as much as we can get and she tends to lean towards a 5.09% budget. That is her rationale. She also feels, as S. Steichen does, that in the 5.09% budget, there are some other cuts that can be made immediately that could reduce the 5.09%. Chairperson Cooper states if we are working at a 5.09% budget, we will have to come back to the full Board, and really look at some items that we will have to cut. Dr. Pascarella agreed assuming we receive a different allocation from the City, and secondly, that will be reduced because of some areas that we are still negotiating. Without doing anything, this 5.09 may be 4.7, when we look at it again. G. Falkenthal asked what the chances would be if we went back to the various people who have just received raises and ask them to voluntarily give them back and settle for nothing so that we can balance the budget. Dr. Pascarella said if everyone received zero, that would reduce the budget by \$400,000. That is one of the reasons why the Board thought that because of the way arbitration goes, it made no sense to go with something different because we stood to lose a lot more. K. Thompson said to Mr. Hawley’s point, she understands being uncomfortable with some of the moving targets, but it is the nature of the timing of the budget. R. Hawley would like clarification of the item listed as Salary increase on Page 5 of the packet. K. Thompson explained and a discussion ensued.

In Favor: S. Chilian, G. Cooper, A. Fluskey-Lattin, K. Molinaro, R. Taborsak, P. Tranzillo  
Opposed: G. Falkenthal, R. Hawley, S. Steichen  
Abstained: None

Absent: E. Alberts, R. Jannelli

**The motion carried at 8:08 p.m.**

Dr. Pascarella thanked the Board. As for the new members, he knows it is confusing. He would suggest is that the Finance Committee look at the numbers in more depth for clarity.

**ADJOURNMENT**

S. Chilian moved, seconded by S. Steichen that the Board of Education convene its February 13 Special Meeting.

**The motion carried unanimously at 8:10 p.m.**

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Richard Hawley, Secretary