

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
March 25, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lila Ferrillo at 6:30 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

Present: Chairman Lila Ferrillo, Jack Kiley, Bob DeBisschop, Richard Burke, Nancy Schmitt and Tom Kelly. Also present from the Board of Education: Tim Connellan, Rosemary Hanson and Paula Guillet.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the 2013/2014 budget requests.

Board of Education

Paula Guillet spoke about the work that was done to put forward a reasonable and fiscally responsible budget during difficult economic times while still meeting the needs of Oxford's children. She noted that there is an increase in the budget. Some items that have caused the increase are curriculum alignment, professional development, technology, textbooks and staff changes due to increase in school security. The increase in certified salaries was discussed. Additional part-time staff is being added in the high school. Enrollment was discussed. Paula noted that it is increasing in the high school and declining in other schools in town. Supplies instructional was discussed. Common core State standards have been adopted by Oxford which raises the expectations for students. This has changed the way teachers are engaging in instruction of students and training is needed to accomplish this goal. Also, there is a need to improve technology in classrooms. Assessment of students is done with computers. Discussion ensued as to whether or not the schools have enough computers.

It was noted that the Board of Education is on target with their current budget. Expectations for retirement of teachers were discussed. Restoration of part-time clerical staff in Quaker Farms School and Center School offices is needed so that they are not understaffed. The part-time workers receive medical and other benefits. The need for additional hours for social work was discussed. Currently the district has one full-time social worker. The request for and use of smart boards in classrooms was discussed.

Tom Kelly arrived at 7:00 p.m.

Nancy led a conversation regarding special education (pupil services) and noted that she has heard that services for students are being decreased. She noted her concern that students receive the necessary attention in this area. She was shown that an increase in funding for special education is present in the budget. Further explanation was given on the topic by Board of Education members.

Discussion of capital items including boilers and lockers was discussed. Paula explained that lockers in Great Oak Middle School need to be replaced. Lockers for one grade were replaced last year. Lockers will be replaced for one grade per year over the next two years also. Discussion ensued about the need to replace boilers in Quaker Farms School and Great Oak Middle School. Rosemary confirmed that extensive repair of the boilers would be needed if they

are not replaced which would be very costly. Replacement of the boilers is a priority. The boilers at Center School are in good shape.

Enrollment was discussed further. Paula noted that enrollment has been down in Kindergarten over the past couple years and that adjustment in staff have been made and adjustment in the number of kindergarten and first grade classes has been made. Enrollment is increasing in the high school and it is anticipated that this will continue for the next five years. The possibility of an increase in affordable housing in Town and how it could affect the school system was discussed. The committee for a new Center School was discussed. It was noted that the committee is being formed by the First Selectman.

Regarding the new Oxford High School field, reimbursement for the project was discussed. Rosemary noted that she and Jim Hliva will meet on the matter.


Jack Kiley (liaison to the Board of Education) noted that the Board did a great job on the school budget and there is a very small increase. He commented that the Business Manager is diligent in assessing the needs and creating the necessary budget for the Board of Education and that it is a tight budget. He noted that it is one of the most factual budgets that have been created by the Board of Education that he has seen.


Additional security for the schools is being assessed and the cost is not in the budget. Maintenance of the new Oxford High School field was discussed.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Jack Kiley at 7:23 p.m. This was seconded by Tom Kelly. Motion passes.

Respectfully submitted, *subject to approval*


Marni Soss, Clerk

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TOWN OF OXFORD, CT

TOWN CLERK