

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF FINANCE – 2018 / 2019 BUDGET REVIEW
OXFORD TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2018 – 6:00 P.M.**

Present: Chairman Jack Kiley; Jeff Grant; Robert DeBisschop; Paula Jensen; Sue Arpin; Dana Flach. Also present: James Hliva, Finance Director.

Also in attendance for the Board of Education: Ana Ortiz, Superintendent of Schools; Olga Simoes, Finance Director; Susan O'Brien, Acting BOE Chairman; Diane Soracco, BOE Secretary; Steve Brown, BOE member.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kiley at 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the FY 2018-2019 budget requests for the following department:

BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Mr. Kiley introduced the Board of Finance members to the Board of Education members. He also explained the purpose of the budget discussion, which is not to make decisions at this time, merely to be advised of BOE requests.

The discussion of the overall budget began with salaries. Ms. Soracco presented the BOF members with a 2018/2019 chart of projections and walked through the items. The 2018/2019 BOE budget is increased 4.4%. There is a decrease in transportation.

Mr. Kiley asked how much of the \$841,359 in Salary/Benefits is new additions. Ms. Ortiz explained that the amount is contractual and some new additions. The only contracts not yet negotiated are for the custodians and paraprofessionals.

Ms. Ortiz gave an explanation of the supposed decrease in enrollment. She said that the high school was projected to lose 50 students but did not lose the students and instead gained 25 students.

Mr. DeBisschop asked Ms. Ortiz if she had an idea what generated the increase in population. She said that are two families that have come from Colombia and one from Ecuador. Other families have come from other countries as well as other areas of Connecticut. Overall enrollment has remained stable.

Ms. Ortiz began a discussion regarding five (5) proposed staffing changes, beginning with a District IT Director. The System Tech position was requested last year but is being eliminated to acquire a District IT Director, who will oversee the entire IT infrastructure. Ms. O'Brien also discussed the importance of IT with regard to school security.

The discussion continued regarding the request for a Math Coach for Quaker and Center Elementary Schools in order to increase the math scores to bring the students more in line with other towns. There needs to be an increase in teaching rigor and support in the elementary and middle schools. Ms. Soracco added that the State of Connecticut has implemented a new math program and Oxford is still in the implementation stage. Additionally, Mr. Brown described a new testing standard that will be a process for both teachers and students. The process needs to be guided.

The next position is the Great Oak Teacher-Interventionist which will replace two tutors. This is a certified Math/Literacy teacher to support the teachers.

The Great Oak Administrator works 10 months (16 additional days). This will assist in master scheduling during the summer and will basically provide coverage during the summer months. There will be more responsibility overseeing staff.

There is a request for a Dean of Students at the high school level. Originally it was a 12-month position, reduced to 10 months. The Athletic Director is being eliminated. The Dean of Students position will encompass the Athletic Director position as well as overseeing discipline and other programs in the school. A lengthy detailed discussion ensued among the BOE and BOF members regarding the responsibility and need for the Dean of Students. Mr. DeBisschop inquired as to whether this Dean of Students will have to be certified.

Ms. Ortiz presented the last requested new position of a Social Worker. There are currently four social workers. This requested position would bring a full-time Social Worker to Oxford Center and full time to Quaker Farms. This would be an additional position.

Mr., Kiley noted the significant reduction/savings in medical benefits costs.

Mr. Kiley began a discussion regarding the increase in Professional/Technical Services. These included Legal Services, Special Education services and technical services/software. He asked Ms. Ortiz for a breakdown of the increase. Ms. Ortiz and Ms. Soracco discussed due process with regard to the legal services. Increased need is the reason for the increase in professional services.

A discussion was held regarding text books, updating and replacement of computers by school. Mr. Kiley asked if some of the increased numbers are firm numbers. He also warned against putting capital items into the Operating Budget.

Mr. Grant asked for an explanation of Tuition which was provided by Ms. Ortiz.

Mr. Kiley asked for an explanation of the increase in Instructional Equipment (Districtwide). Ms. Simoes responded that this is the cost of the replacement equipment (laptops, iPads,

computers, Smartboards, outdated technology). These are all new purchases. Mr. Kiley asked if this was capital versus operating.

The members of the BOE described the new equipment for the new school is included in the building budget, not in this budget.

Mr. Grant had a question regarding the cost of transportation. The cost is based on a new contract received prior to preparation of the budget. Ms. Soracco gave a detailed explanation. Ms. Simoes also contributed to the explanation. Mr. Brown noted that the contract could have gone out to bid but the offer received from the current contractor was less expensive than other options. The length of the contract is five years in answer to Mr. DeBisschop's question. He asked if there was an option of backing out of the contract. Ms. Simoes said there is a clause allowing 30 days' notice to back out of the contract. Ms. Simoes said that if enrollment goes down and there is a need for fewer buses, the cost will decrease.

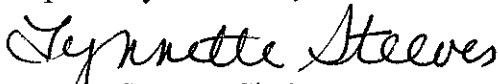
Mr. Grant had a question regarding tuition. Ms. O'Brien responded that this is for additional training for teachers.

If there are any further questions, or requests for more information, Mr. Kiley can contact Ms. Ortiz.

ADJOURN

Ms. Arpin made a Motion to adjourn. Ms. Flach seconded the Motion. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Lynnette Steeves, Clerk

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TOWN OF OXFORD, CT
TOWN CLERK