

**CITY OF NORWALK
SPECIAL FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE MEETING
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Gregory Burnett, Chair; John Kydes; Douglas Hempstead; John Igneri; Nick Sacchinelli

OTHERS: Mike Barbis, Bryan Meek, Bruce Kimmel, Barbara Meyer-Mitchell, Board of Education;
Steven Adamowski, Superintendent NPS; Tom Hamilton, CFO of NPS

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:30 p. m.

1. BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Mike Barbis came forward. He gave an overview of the Board of Education's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2018-19. He stated that the proposed budget was approved unanimously by the Board. He stated that as part of the 2016-2019 Strategic Operating Plan, we plan on raising the bar and closing the gaps. He stated that raising the bar means that academic expectations for all students increase and additional opportunities are provided for students and their families. He stated that closing the gaps means identifying struggling students and providing them appropriate interventions and supports. We hope that students that start the year behind will make more than one academic year of growth each year.

Mr. Barbis stated that the achievement gap has been reduced by 1/3rd. He stated that graduation rates have gone up. He stated that the Middle School Redesign is ongoing and getting positive results.

Mr. Meek came forward and reviewed the FY 2018-19 Budget categories. He stated that the total increases over the 17/18 approved budget are \$9,931,227 or 5.39%.

Dr. Adamowski presented the budget goals. He stated that he was not presenting them in order of importance. He stated the first goal is to provide program support for additional students enrolled in choice programs. He stated that we have 346 new students and the choice programs have been popular.

Dr. Adamowski stated that the second budget goal is to eliminate High School study halls. He stated that we have had a 20 credit minimum requirement for graduation. We would like to increase that to 26 credits in 2022.

Dr. Adamowski stated that currently, no student has more than one study hall. In this installment of the plan, we would eliminate study halls. He stated that offering more courses and higher level courses have a direct correlation with SAT scores.

Dr. Adamowski stated that the third budget goal would transfer the remaining portion of K-3 classroom teacher salaries and other salary adjustments from State and Federal Grants to the Local Budget.

Dr. Adamowski stated that the fourth goal is to add a fourth Specials teacher at six elementary schools. Adding a fourth Specials teacher at six of the elementary schools in 18-19 will allow the District to phase-in implementation of the contractual agreement regarding a normal elementary school day and eventually make thing change to all 12 elementary schools over the next two years.

Dr. Adamowski stated that the fifth goal is to add thirty additional minutes to the Elementary School day.

Dr. Adamowski stated that the sixth goal is to fund a pilot program at three elementary schools to begin band instrument lessons in 4th grade, rather than the present District practice of waiting until the 6th grade. He stated that by starting instrument instruction earlier, we will be able to reduce the number of pull outs which occur at the middle school level and lessen the impact on academic instruction. It will also increase the opportunity for more students to participate in Band. He stated that currently, Strings instrument lessons begin in the 3rd grade.

Dr. Adamowski stated that the seventh goal is for a special enrollment appropriation for ELL population growth. He stated that last year we had 100 new ELL students. Some of them were unaccompanied minors who had not been to school in years. He stated that we teach them English as rapidly as we possibly can.

Mr. Hamilton came forward and reviewed the 2018-19 Budget Summary. He gave the 2017-18 approved budget numbers and the 2018-19 recommended budget numbers for salaries, employee benefits, professional and technical services, property services, other services, supplies and materials, equipment, and other objects.

Mr. Hamilton stated that we were spending more per pupil at the middle school level than at the high school level. He stated that next year, we hope to change that to a more typical pattern of higher spending at the high school level over the middle school level.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the 2018-19 grants budget, which is projected at \$17.5 million. He stated that State grants are subject to recession if revenues do not come in.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the Arts budget will be taken from the Central Office line and be given to the schools themselves. This will give the schools more autonomy on how to spend the money, while ensuring equality across the schools. While there is some flexibility, the funds must be spent on Arts programs.

Mr. Kimmel stated that the SAT exam is much different now than it had previously been. Inequalities are much more complex than they were. The budgeted items are necessary and we must bight the bullet this year and possibly one more year.

Mr. Barbis stated that high school enrollment is up and we face challenges with existing contracts.

Ms. Meyer-Mitchell stated that waiting two or three years to phase in funding is a long period of time. It would mean that another cohort would not receive funding that they need.

Mr. Meek stated that he saw all of the goals as vital. They are non-negotiable items.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR.IGNERI MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. HEMPSTEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney
Telesco Secretarial Services