

The Regional District 13 Board of Education held a special meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mr. Currin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons, Mr. Raczka, Dr. Shoemaker. Members absent: Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Raczka called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Public Comment: Renee Primus Edwards stated the Durham Board of Selectmen met and prepared a letter they have given to the Board of Education requesting they delay the referendum as long as statutorily possible to hopefully get more clarity on the funding from the State. The Board of Selectmen has contacted the state legislators about the need for help to fund education.

Mr. Raczka stated the Board of Education has also contacted the state legislators and they have made progress but despite their best efforts the legislature is discussing having a special session. The ECS money goes to the towns. The towns can lower the mil rate after they receive the money and there is an increase.

Mrs. Boord stated the Board of Selectmen is responding to their constituents that say the taxes are too high. They would like to see the bottom line reduced so they can fairly tax the people.

Mrs. Viccaro said there is legislation being discussed that would state some of the ECS money can be used for tax relief but that has not been approved yet.

A couple of parents suggested the Board not wait to have the referendum. The cost for educating the students will be the same. The towns can lower the mil rate if they receive additional ECS money.

2007-08 Budget: Mrs. Viccaro reported with maternity leaves, resignations, and people retiring there are 20 positions that need to be hired next year. By hiring new staff at the lower salary scale, \$94,500 can be reduced from the budget. By not hiring a reading consultant, a position that would have the least impact on students, the budget can be reduced by \$91,500. These two items would reduce the budget by \$186,000.

Other reductions discussed: elimination of two buses (\$72,000) which would mean longer bus runs; 2 portables (\$25,580 each) needed at Brewster for a special education room and reading room, and for a special education room and a technology lab at Memorial; and the high school course offerings: a .2 in history can possibly be reduced (\$15,300).

The Board discussed the State's expulsion policy to have students receive in-school suspensions rather than being expelled. This will most likely be an unfunded mandate. It would include having room in the middle and high schools for these students as well as staffing. This will not affect next year's budget but may need to be included in the 2008-09 budget.

The Board discussed putting in half the money for a reading consultant to be hired in January. They decided it will be difficult to hire a qualified person at mid-year and kept the reading consultant position out of the budget.

The Board agreed to reduce the budget by \$186,000 to cut the salary account by \$94,500 and to eliminate the reading consultant position for \$91,500.

The Board discussed the date for the next District Meeting and Referendum. They discussed having them on May 29 and 30 or June 4 and 5. There were some scheduling conflicts at Korn School with having the referendum on June 5. June 5 is a day of transition for second grade students going to Korn next year. There is a day of activities planned. The Board felt there would be too much going on with all the students and voters there at the same time. It may be possible to reschedule the day but the calendar is already very full with all the end of the year activities. It was also mentioned that the legislation session does not end until June 6.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously approved to hold a referendum on May 30, 2007 on the 2007-08 Regional District 13 education budget for a total of \$31,579,362 preceded by a District Meeting to be held on May 29, 2007.

The Board said they hoped the selectmen can come out and support their budget this time.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mr. Currin, the Board of Education unanimously moved to go into executive session to discuss the Superintendent's Performance Evaluation.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the Board of Education unanimously approved to adjourn.