

The Regional District 13 Board of Education held a District Meeting on Monday, June 1, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Coginchaug Regional High School. Board members present: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currilin, Mrs. Flanagan, Mrs. Golschneider, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Member absent: Ms. Gara. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Hicks read the call of the meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to elect Jim Finley as moderator. No other nominations were made. Jim Finley was unanimously elected as moderator.

A very brief presentation was made by the Business Manager, Ron Melnik, showing the reductions that have been made to the budget since the last referendum. The total budget increase is now at 1.26%.

Mr. Finley opened the floor to questions.

Donia Viola of Durham said she went over the percentage increase with the finance directors in both Durham and Middlefield and they came up with different figures. She said the District spent \$7,800 on a consultant to review the bus contract. They suggested the District should consider going out to bid. She doesn't understand why all this money would be spent and then the advice not followed. She asked why the information on the students leaving the ID program was shared at the last minute. There have been many times that last minute changes seem to happen that impact the budget after the fact. Mrs. Viola asked for information on whether District town employees are voting in the referendum. Mrs. Viola thanked the employees that agreed to concessions, she said something is better than nothing, but she is still disappointed in the teachers. They are responsible for the major increases in the budget over the years. She also feels that taxpayers should not have to pay for teacher involvement in professional organizations. Mrs. Viola said although the cut of three interns is saving the District \$27,000 next year; she suggested that cutting the permanent substitutes would save the District much more money. She feels the cuts are too little and too late; more expenses can be shaved off.

Mrs. Viccaro responded regarding the information about the ID students leaving the program. She said she received the information from Mrs. Brimecombe and shared it with the Board at the next Board of Education meeting. It was shared in a very timely fashion. Mrs. Viccaro said she does not know if employees are voting unless she requests to see the voter information and she has not done that.

Mr. Currilin said the bus consultant evaluated all of the bus routes and the contract. He had many recommendations that were brought into the negotiations with DATTCO. He felt that DATTCO was a good company. The District has pushed back several times to get better rates before signing the final contract. The contract is currently being reviewed by the District's attorney.

Mr. Melnik agreed with Mr. Currilin and said they also negotiated with DATTCO to provide cameras on all of the busses for free. The increase in the bus contract for next year will be 2%. Mr. Melnik could not explain why Mrs. Viola was given a different percentage increase from the town business managers until he talks directly to them.

Lisa Davenport of Durham asked about the letter in the Town Times written by Candy Brickley. She questioned the use of the stimulus money and if the District will be receiving it.

Mrs. Viccaro said she has received preliminary figures that indicate the District will be receiving approximately \$440,000 in stimulus money. This money must all be allocated for special education and its use is very restricted.

Mrs. Emory said the money cannot be used to supplant the budget.

Mrs. Davenport asked if Mrs. Brickley's statement about the stimulus money is incorrect. She was told that it was incorrect.

Rick Parmelee of Durham said in the past they have been told that the budget goes up because the student population is increasing. This year the enrollment is going down and the budget is still going up. The District never returns money to the two towns like other schools do in neighboring towns. The District should not act as its own board of finance. He doesn't think there has been enough information out to the public. The year end transfers are all done in-house and that leaves the taxpayers at a disadvantage. Mr. Parmelee would like student activity fees removed from the budget. He does not support opening the contracts with the teachers or the administrators; the District has to live by the binding arbitration rules. Mr. Parmelee does not support this budget.

Bill Lintz of Durham thanked the Board for their work. He said someone his age helped to support his taxes when his kids were in school and he feels that it is his responsibility to support the budget now as payback. He does agree with Mr. Parmelee that there should not be an activity fee but he would not vote against this budget because of it.

Mr. Lintz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded and the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.