

The Regional District 13 Board of Education held a District Meeting on Monday, June 22, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Coginchaug Regional High School. Board members present: Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Currilin (8:10 p.m.), Mrs. Flanagan, Ms. Gara, Mr. Hennick, Mr. Hicks, Dr. Ochterski, Ms. Parsons. Members absent: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Golschneider. Also present: Mrs. Viccaro, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Hennick called the meeting to order at 8:00 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.

Mr. Melnik made a brief presentation on the state of the current budget. At it stands the current budget increase will be .68%. To date \$694,144 has been cut by the Board of Education. The last round of cuts totaled \$181,596. Mr. Melnik discussed the debt service and showed the long range plan for debt service. In the 2009-10 school year there will be a decrease of approximately \$50,058 in debt service payments as older debts are retired. The only year that shows an increase in debt service is the 2010-11 year, with an increase of approximately \$10,822.

Mr. Finley opened the floor to questions.

Lisa Davenport of Durham thanked the Board for their recent effort at transparency. It is what the public has asked for. She has had to spend a great deal of her own time trying to find answers to her questions. The article in the Town Times showed her that the Board has the ability to get the word out. After reviewing the teacher's contract she feels they are deserving of what they get. Although she feels they should have agreed to the furlough day, she said there comes a point when you have to agree to disagree.

Jeremy Renninghoff of Middlefield asked about a revenue line in the budget of \$150,000 that is being transferred from the Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund. He asked where the Board gets the authority to make this transfer. Mr. Melnik explained that the Capital Reserve Fund can be used to pay down the debt service and that is what it is being used for.

Rick Parmelee of Durham said the \$600,000 in cuts could have been \$1,000,000 in cuts if the budget started higher. The budget now reflects the economic time we are in. Enrollment is down but taxes keep going up. He did not favor going to the teachers to open their contract before and he still thinks it would be wrong. He suggested cutting administrators; it will not affect the students. The District can not expect to keep spending at the rate it has. He doesn't feel the Board takes time for their constituents and people shouldn't be cut off. He doesn't think we need things like a four-wheel drive pickup and expensive plows when we pay a contractor for this service anyway. He is not in favor of the student activity fees; it is a tax on the students and families.

David Montgomery of Durham asked that the Mission Statement of the District be shown on the screen. He said he was a part of the first group that formed this statement. The group worked hard and believed in the process and in the mission statement. Mr. Montgomery has been reading the blogs and is concerned. He feels people are giving up their principles. People have been complaining that whether or not they vote should be private. He said how you vote is private but the fact that you show up or not is public information by Connecticut law. Voter lists are a public document. He has seen themes in the blogs of unhappiness with the

teacher's reluctance to open their contract and a lot of backlash about the athletic complex being tied in with building improvements. Mr. Montgomery wants people to move on and "not lose their heads over this".

Chet Raczka of Durham, once sat on this Board and is now a retired citizen on a fixed income. He is upset that people are taking advantage of the right to freedom of speech and disparaging our teachers and our Board of Education. He feels this is wrong and he doesn't know why the Town Times would even allow it in their paper. While his children were in school and while he was on the Board he never knew one teacher that didn't have the kid's best interest at heart. He thanked teachers past and present and apologized for what has been going on. He also said he has known the administrators in this District for many years and they are the hardest working group he ever met. He feels this budget is too low and we are doing a disservice to our kids. Cutting things like a reading consultant are dangerous. We can't afford to lose even one kid. We need the best educated kids we can produce so they can take care of us when we are old. He thanked the Board for the untold hours of service they spend. He said eyes would be opened if people compared the teacher's contract with other area towns. He wants to pass this budget now, it is already too low.

On a motion by Mr. Lintz, second Mr. Montgomery the meeting unanimously adjourned at 8:35 p.m.