

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
DEC 9, 2008**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Wayne Cooke
Richard Courcelle
Roberta Dress
Peter Forshay
Cindy Kilic-Murray
Nicholas Ouelette

Members Absent

Christopher Book
Peter Fagan
Collin Fingon
Gina Fucci
Karen Gartner

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Ellie McGarry
Peter Amons
Lyle Jepson
Ted Guilmette
Andrea McQuade

Motion by Kilic-Murray / Forshay to convene to executive session at 6:15 pm for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

ROLL CALL

The Board came out of executive session at 6:50 pm.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Book, Fingon, Gartner, Fucci, Fagan.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
11/25/08
MEETING**

Motion by Kilic-Murray/Forshay to accept the minutes of the Nov. 25, 2008 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**WRITTEN
COMMUN-
ICATION**

Written Communication - Commissioner Courcelle read a letter from Madeline Sherman. Mrs. Sherman is concerned about the social studies curriculum K-6. Ms. Moran has discussed this with Mrs. Sherman and there will be further discussions after the first of the year. Mrs. Sherman expressed her dissatisfaction with a recent assembly at Rutland High called the Power Team. Mrs. Sherman wrote that the group had an evangelical mission, even if the assembly was not religious based. Students were invited to an evening meeting which was evangelical. Mrs. Sherman wanted assurance that no public funds paid for this group. Ms. Moran said she spoke with Mrs. Sherman about the assembly and assured her that the school assembly was not religious. She said the high school administrators researched the group but possibly not enough. She and Mr. Bliss met with the sponsors and shared their displeasure. She said the group will not be welcomed back and she takes responsibility. The assembly was paid for with tobacco funds.

**LETTER RE:
SOCIAL
STUDIES
CIRR. & RHS
ASSEMBLY**

**ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATION**

Oral Communication - None

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

Stratton Road House - Ms. McQuade and two students gave an overview of the Stratton Road house. Ms. McQuade said they are excited about using the house. She reviewed the preparation

**STRATTON
ROAD
HOUSE**

work including assigning students the task of deciding how to furnish the house, soliciting help and donations, and setting up furniture once they had some. On November 20, there was an open house and about 85 visitors stopped by. The students cooked for the celebration. Two students, Nick and Kelly, explained to the Board how the rooms in the house are being used and some of the skills students are using such as measuring, cleaning, making beds, and cooking. They learn leisure activities and there will be an arts and crafts space. Kelly explained skills she uses in baking. Ms. McQuade said students wrote thank you notes, which is a good life skill and writing skill. Students are learning transition skills which is a part of many IEP requirements – helping students get ready for life beyond high school. They also work on independent living skills and learning about the community and activities, organizations and services available.

Ms. McQuade said there are about 90 students who can potentially use the house for different needs. They have been going there in small groups of eight to ten students at a time but two different groups can be there at one time using different spaces. In the future, students will use the yard for learning gardening. Ms. McQuade said they are still looking for more furniture and items for leisure activities. She said the business office sends them rental and electric bills so the older students can learn how to read them and how to set up a budget. Ms. Mello said on behalf of the Board, they are pleased with the ability to provide the opportunity and he thinks this type of learning is great – students being engaged in authentic settings. Ms. McQuade said there is coordination with area agencies and organizations which will help students when they graduate. Ms. Moran said one of the goals was to establish collaborative agreements with other school districts and that is starting to happen.

Stafford Technical Center Presentation - Mr. Jepson said the Board has the budget packet. The bottom line percentage increase is 2.3%, which is the total proposed increase in expenditure from this year to next year. The figure represents that every student will cost \$106 more next year than this year. The total tuition rate is \$11,047 per student, of which \$3614 per student gets billed to the sending school. The difference is paid for from grants and other revenues collected by STC. Mr. Jepson reviewed some of the line items which have shifted or changed. He distributed marketing materials and praised the student work in creating these. There are also adult educational opportunities at the school Mr. Jepson reviewed the Perkins funding, which is federal money in support of technical education. Perkins funds are an extremely important source of revenue for Stafford and they appreciate the support from our legislators to keep this funding intact. He reviewed how the Perkins funds are allocated. Mr. Jepson explained the chart showing the sending towns which send students to Stafford. This budget will be part of the total Rutland City school budget voted in March.

Mr. Jepson explained the budget process, which starts with Mr. Guilmette, goes to the Finance Committee, and then the Regional Advisory Board, which is a 30 member board comprised of students, business leaders, and educator representatives from all sending schools. They approved the budget unanimously. Ms. Moran said the STC budget is part of the district's overall budget although some elements need to be approved separately. Those elements will be brought to the Board for action at next week's meeting. Mr. Jepson said overhead assistance, which is based upon the numbers of students attending on a six semester average. The population in most schools in the region have leveled off or dipped and Stafford's is also decreasing slightly. That factor is multiplied in to the formula. Mr. Jepson reviewed the action items which will be requested for next week.

FY10 Budget Presentation - Mr. Mello said there are three Board meetings scheduled on the budget. Ms. Moran said the Board has asked the administration to bring the first budget draft showing a reasonable level that they think is necessary to run the programs. She said that all the discretionary areas, except one, has been level-funded. The only discretionary item is the addition of a computer technician. This is an area which is understaffed. Ms. Moran said there is also an increase in special education because we are receiving more students with special needs and there will be a need for more para-educators, largely in the younger grades. Ms. Moran said we continue to be a below average spender. She said that while other area schools are experiencing significant declining enrollments, Rutland is not seeing that. High school enrollment next year is projected at the same as it is now.

Mr. Amons said the state has not yet published base education rates and so tonight's presentation is just about gross expenses. He presented the proposal, which has a 4.90% increase over the revised FY09 budget. We have level-funded items that we were able to. There are some that cannot be level-funded, such as contracted items and services. He said they did not make cuts to services nor did they set an arbitrary budget target. This is a considered a level-funded service budget except for the differences Ms. Moran explained. Mr. Amons said 1% of the budget is \$430,995. Each .1% change represents \$43,099. He showed an analysis of the proposal and Mr. Amons said that if they subtracted the additional computer technician and special education services, the budget would have a 3.39% increase over this year. That is the percentage increase needed to sustain the current level of services.

Assistant Superintendent Bliss reviewed items that the budget covers: the schools / buildings, and services and programs beyond our core curriculum. He said that except for the libraries, there is some corresponding revenue with services and many of the programs. He said the school board and taxpayers support a quality education for our community.

Mr. Amons reviewed the 11 categories which show a \$50,000 or more increase from FY09 to FY10. He said many of the items net "zero" because they have a corresponding decrease or revenues. He discussed the items. One example is the increase in Other Professional Services, which is mostly payable to Rutland Mental Health and is mostly comprised of the special education increases outlined earlier. Another example is in Teachers Salaries, which is only about 2.5%. There is a large number of teachers who are retiring and replacement teachers cost less. He explained all the other changes and the Board discussed some of them. They also discussed which items they have discretion over and which are fixed. The Board will discuss the budget again at the next meeting.

MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #395

Motion by Courcelle/Fagan to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 395 dated Dec. 5, 2008, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

The appointments and retirements were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

BUSINESS
REPORT

Business Report - None

Announcements

- Ms. Moran gave a reminder about upcoming holiday concerts: Dec. 10 at RMS; Dec. 16 RHS at the Paramount and Dec. 17 at RIS.
- Northeast School held their winter craft fair on Dec. 5 and it was terrific. Second graders will be visiting Billings Farm this week and Friday is “Stuffed Animal Day.” The annual holiday dinner, for all students and staff, will be held on Dec. 16.
- At Northwest, the next PTC meeting is on Wed.. PEG-TV is taping this Friday featuring upcoming events and school activities. Northwest and Pierpoint are studying diversity throughout the month of December. Next Friday, students will be reading to Therapy Dogs, who visit with their handlers.
- The RMS Student Council is continuing its holiday tradition of providing food baskets for RMS families experiencing need. This year, they are added families from the Rutland Regional Medical Center's Adopt-A-Family Program.
- The RHS Encore Talent show will be Dec. 11. Four RHS students performed an original piece they developed at the Northeastern Educational Theatre Festival this weekend.
- Alumni track and field is now being used by community members. The Marble Valley Runners are using it on Wednesday evenings and the Rutland County Soccer Program will be playing at the same time. As long as it is snow and ice free, they will continue. The Marble Valley Runners will be holding a 5K marathon at Alumni Track on New Year’s Eve and the high school will be open for bathroom use.
- Board members have a homework assignment for next week – read the intro and chapter 1 of Ahead of the Curve.

**SUPERIN-
TENDENT’S
REPORT**

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

Information Task Force - Ms. Kilic-Murray said information booths about the budget will be set up at basketball and hockey events. There will be a general budget meeting and four people have been asked to be ward captains to represent different parts of the city. The website is being created. Ms. Kilic-Murray thanked Ms. Aigner for her work on establishing the email address for the public to use to send in questions – budgetbuddiesrcps@gmail.com

**COMM.
REPORT**

**INFORMA-
TION TASK
FORCE**

New Business - None

**NEW
BUSINESS**

Old Business - None

**OLD
BUSINESS**

Motion by Courcelle/Kilic-Murray to adjourn at 8:36 pm

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary