

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Meeting
March 31, 2010
Minutes

Present: Dunsby, Maiorano(7:55 pm), Peskay, Treidel, Underberger
Administration: Cicchetti, Mas, Sullivan, Fox-Santora, LaTorre, Parker, Kaplan, Dekle
Others: more than 30 staff and community members in the audience

Mr. Treidel called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lou Tiseo, Crestwood Drive: expressed concern about the proposed additional reductions in special education.

Heidi Armster, Judd Road: expressed concern about the loss of art & music in the school's curriculum and the extracurricular activities.

DISCUSSION OF 2010-2011 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

The Easton Board of Finance requested that the Board of Education prepare a list of additional budget reductions totaling \$190,000. The list of reductions was reviewed. Mr. Dunsby made it clear that the list was prepared at the request of the Board of Finance and that the Board of Education is not advocating these reductions to the budget.

Dr. Underberger commented that the parent support through emails, phone calls and letters was very important, and he hoped that those present at the meeting would also attend the Board of Finance meeting later in the evening. He stressed the board's obligation to fight for what is good for the kids of Easton.

Dr. Peskay expressed concern that the budget deliberation was becoming a struggle between what is needed for the Town and what is needed for education. She believes the Board of Finance is trying to arrive at a budget that will be passable. Rather than alienate a portion of the taxpayers, she suggested that the Board of Finance needs to be convinced that the residents are willing to pay more for education and that an increase in the budget was warranted.

Mr. Treidel noted that the Easton education expenditures have continuously fallen behind the Redding school expenditures. This may have a detrimental impact on the students when they reach the high school.

Mr. Maiorano arrived, 7:55 pm.

Board members discussed the proposed additional reductions and the impact on education.

Mr. Maiorano suggested the contribution to the health care reserve be reduced. Mrs. Sullivan responded that this was possible, but there is a risk factor involved if claims exceed the reserve.

Mr. Treidel asked for a consensus of the board regarding what would be presented at the Board of Finance meeting following this meeting. All board members were in agreement that the list contained

the items that would be reduced, but the board does not advocate reducing any of them. It was also noted that the list of potential cuts to reach the \$190,000 was not ranked in any order. Instead it was divided into 4 sections.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Don Cooper, Sherwood Road: comments on the Board of Finance's action to pit the town's needs against the school's needs.

Nicole Solís, on behalf of the Easton Education Association: a letter from the Association was read. The letter stated the EEA's continuing cooperation with the board to discuss ideas that have the dual goal of preserving Easton's cored education and reducing costs.

Lou Tiseo, Crestwood Drive: commented that last year the Board of Finance did not reduce the Town side of the budget, only the education side. Mr. Treidel responded that this was because the town employees agreed to a salary freeze.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Underberger, Peskay Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Underberger, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday