

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 24, 2010
Minutes

Filed subject to approval.

Present: Bobroske, Dunsby, Maiorano, Peskay, Treidel, Underberger
Administration: Cicchetti, Mas, Sullivan, Fox-Santora, LaTorre, Parker, Kaplan, Dekle
Others: more than 50 staff and community members in the audience

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the minutes of the February 9, 2010 meeting be accepted as submitted. Underberger, Peskay. Approved. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Claudia Anderson, SSES staff member: expressed a concern for staff reductions proposed on the budget schedule dated 2/24/10. Mrs. Anderson commented on the importance of staff and added that staff members have been affected by the same economic conditions as everyone else.

Lou Tiseo, Crestwood Drive: expressed his support for the education of students with special needs.

DISCUSSION OF 2010-2011 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

Dr. Cicchetti & Mrs. Sullivan reviewed the ten tiers of reductions that take the budget proposal from an increase over the current year of 5.67% down to a zero%. The items in the tiered reductions varied from those of the previous meeting.

- Tier 1: various technical edits and reductions, defers some capital items, eliminate the bleacher removal (this was done by the Easton Parks & Recreation Department), and eliminates all capital requests with the exception of the 6th grade science textbooks. Brings the increase down to 4.99%.
- Tier 2: reductions of certified staff. HKMS, reduction of 1.0 FTE in Music, 1.0 FTE in PE, and 0.3 FTE in Art; SSES, 1.0 FTE in Grade 3, 1.0 FTE in Art. Brings the increase down to 2.96%.
- Tier 3: further reduction of capital items, summer curriculum hours, supplies & substitutes and discontinuation of standardized testing at SSES. Brings the increase down to 2.7%.
- Tier 4: further reduction of professional development, defers ½ technology replacement at SSES, reduces 0.25 custodial staff at HKMS, reduction in ELL support & evaluation in Special Education. Brings the increase down to 2.27%.
- Tier 5: further reduction of 0.25 custodial staff at HKMS, defers remaining ½ technology replacement and reduction of outside professional support services in Special Education. Brings the increase down to 1.87%.
- Tier 6: elimination of extra-curricular activities at HKMS, SSES & Special Education. Brings the increase down to 1.60%.
- Tier 7: reduction of 2.0 FTE non-certified staff positions in Special Education. Brings the increase down to 1.2%.
- Tier 8: reduction of summer curriculum hours for both HKMS & SSES, and further reduction of outside professional support services in Special Education. Brings the increase to 1.02%.

- Tier 9: additional reduction of substitutes, overtime, supplies at HKMS, reduction of hours for non-certified staff. Brings the increase to 0.68%.
- Tier 10: reduction of administrative hours at SSES and reduction of non-certified staff hours, and a reduction in the health insurance contribution. Bring the increase to 0.00%.

Board members discussed the impact of the reductions on the quality of education. The importance of professional development was discussed Mrs. Mas commented that professional development this year has been done in-house. She does a great deal of the professional development herself, but cannot do it all for all the schools in the district.

Mr. Treidel noted that the reduction list was prepared at the request of the Board of Finance. The reductions are not recommendations of the administration, but what is needed to get to a zero % increase.

Board members discussed the budget, the reductions and what level of budget could be supported by the voters of Easton.

Mr. Treidel invited members of the public to comment on the deliberations.

Cathy Gombos, Maplewood Drive: expressed a concern for the staff reductions and urged the board to work with the teachers to see if any alternatives could be explored.

Carmen Brown, staff member: commented on the importance of professional development for staff members.

Christine Calvert, North Street: expressed a concern for the reduction of a section of 3rd grade. The current 2nd grade has a large number of boys compared with girls and a reduction of a section could pose problems.

Don Cooper, Sherwood Road & staff member: expressed a concern about the future of the music program.

Allen Bates, staff member: expressed a concern about the quality of the art program at SSES.

Lou Tiseo, Crestwood Drive; expressed a concern about the potential reduction in services for students with special needs as they transition from SSES to HKMS.

Amy Traggianese, Westwood Drive & staff member: expressed her concern about the reductions in the art, music and PE areas and how these areas serve children.

Betty Ustie, staff member: reported the teacher's union has scheduled a meeting with Mr. Treidel and Dr. Underberger on Monday March 1 to discuss the budget.

Board members continued their discussion of the budget proposal. Various suggestions were made to move line item reductions from one tier to another.

MOTION: move that the Easton Board of Education approve a budget increase over the current year budget of 2.9%. Maiorano, Underberger.

Discussion followed.

After a long discussion, there appeared to be consensus to begin with the Tier 3 reductions but eliminating the reduction of the 0.3 FTE in Art at HKMS, including the reduction in summer curriculum hours from Tier 3, discontinue the standardized testing at SSES, deferring half of the technology replacement at SSES in Tier 4, and a reduction in the extra-curricular activities at HKMS. These adjustments would bring the budget to a 2.79% increase over the current budget.

Mr. Maiorano amended the motion to change the 2.9% to 2.79%. Dr. Underberger was in agreement. The amended motion follows:

AMENDED MOTION: move that the Easton Board of Education approve a budget increase over the current year budget of 2.79%. Maiorano, Underberger. Approved. Unanimous.

The next BoE monthly meeting is scheduled for 3/9 with the initial budget presentation to the Board of Finance on 3/10.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Underberger, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday