

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

PRESENT: MAYOR LANG, DR. FLETCHER, , MS. POLLOCK, MRS. USSACH, MR. NOBREGA

ABSENT: ATTY. CLARK, MR. POPE

IN ATTENDANCE: DR. BONNER, DR. SOUZA, D. WINN, H. LARKIN, DR. FRANCIS, L. OLIVEIRA,
G. MALITA (recording secretary)

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Dr. Fletcher to hear from City Auditor, Peter Schmidt.

Mr. Schmidt provided the Committee with a monthly breakdown of health care costs for FY'09 and what the school district owed the City (\$2,618,972.64).

Mr. Oliveira informed the Committee that as part of the Net School Spending agreement entered into with the City, it allows for the cost of health care and in FY'09 there is a difference and the City can ask for the money. It was his understanding that the School Department owed the city \$1.9 million dollars.

To the question posed by Mayor Lang as to what would happen to the remaining balance of \$700,000+, Mr. Schmidt responded that it would either go away or they would work it out.

Ms. Pollock questioned how this compared to Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Mr. Schmidt responded that he did not know as it was already established. However, when the transfer to Harvard Pilgrim took place everyone had to fill out the forms and it had a section that the City could track. Blue Cross Blue Shield did not have that breakdown.

Mayor Lang stated that they have seen a savings of over 20% over the past three years by switching to Harvard Pilgrim.

Mrs. Ussach requested to be furnished with the costs incurred for each plan under Harvard Pilgrim to which Mr. Schmidt responded that he could do provide that by their next meeting.

To a question by Ms. Pollock as to the benefits of GIC, Mayor Lang responded that it gave far less benefits. Initially when the City had put out bids for a new health care provider, four (4) companies had responded: Tufts, United Health, BC-BS & Harvard Pilgrim. Harvard Pilgrim came in with the best plan for the money.

Mr. Oliveira pointed out that the School Committee would need to take a vote to move money which would allow him to pay the health care bill. He recommended moving \$50,000 from General Expense; \$250,000 from Professional Development - Title IIA; \$600,000 from Circuit Breaker funds and \$1 million dollars from the Food Service Revolving Account.

In answer to a question posed by Mayor Lang as to how much would be left in the Food Service Revolving Account, Mr. Oliveira responded that with the \$750,000 earmarked for FY'10, there would be a balance of \$1.1 million dollars.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Fletcher and seconded by Mrs. Ussach to authorize the payment of \$1.9 million dollars to cover health care costs to the City of New Bedford.

Mayor Lang noted that the remainder balance of \$700,000+ would be absorbed by the City.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to authorize the transfer of \$1 million dollars from the Food Service Revolving Account into the School Department's general operating budget.

Mr. Oliveira advised the Committee that in terms of the FY'10 budget, they were experiencing the worse case scenario as the final figures were the senate's version to which the School Department was faced with a \$4,473,030 shortfall.

Mayor Lang questioned the cost of salary increases to which Mr. Oliveira responded that the cost would be \$2.3 million dollars (exclusive of step increases) which would be another \$1.2 million dollars.

Mrs. Pollock raised concern over class size to which Dr. Souza responded that they could see class size of up to 35 in a class and that would be the cut-off figure.

Mayor Lang questioned why it was imperative for them to balance the budget this evening to which Dr. Bonner responded that it helps them prepare for the coming school year. Teachers need to know what classes they have and the administration needs the time to do that.

Dr. Souza also advised the Committee that in order to adjust the elimination of 27 Unit A positions, if approved this evening, the process could take 5-7 weeks.

Mayor Lang then recommended, for the Committee's consideration, the following to be cut from the FY'10 budget:

(1) PD Day (paid out of Title I)	\$ 300,000
All new positions (including ASA @ NBHS)	\$1,400,000
Cut (21) Paraprofessionals	\$ 357,000
Cut (14) Maintenance positions	\$ 467,000
Cut Maintenance/General Expense	\$ 491,000
Cut General Expense (all depts. – 1.5% cut)	\$ 225,036
Cut (3) Dropout Specialists (move to grant)	\$ 150,000
Cut (22) Unit A positions	<u>\$1,083,000</u>
	\$4,473,036

Mayor Lang also requested that a meeting be set up with the three unions in order to explain to them what the effect will be if a freeze doesn't make sense.

Dr. Bonner pointed out that her office would once again communicate in writing with the three union presidents informing them of this evening's action and its impact on class size.

Mrs. Ussach questioned how this will affect the maintenance of school buildings to which Mayor Lang responded that it would save teacher positions. He pointed out that he did not have teachers on the city side to give but he did have maintenance men.

A motion was made by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mrs. Ussach to authorize the elimination of the above as outlined.

A Roll Call Vote was taken as follows:

Mayor Lang	- Yes	Mrs. Ussach	- Yes
Dr. Fletcher	- Yes	Mr. Nobrega	- Yes
Atty. Clark	- Absent	Mr. Pope	- Absent
Ms. Pollock	- Yes		

YEAS – 5 NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2

At 7:40 PM a motion was made by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Mr. Nobrega, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote was taken as follows:

Mayor Lang	- Yes	Mrs. Ussach	- Yes
Dr. Fletcher	- Yes	Mr. Nobrega	- Yes
Atty. Clark	- Absent	Mr. Pope	- Absent
Ms. Pollock	- Yes		

YEAS – 5 NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2

Submitted by,

PSB/gm

Portia S. Bonner, Ph.D.
Secretary, School Committee