

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

REGULAR SESSION

Minutes

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Voted and approved April 9, 2009

Present: Chairman Dalton Athey; committee members: Greg Aubin, Maryelen Calderwood, Doris Doyle, Donovan Eastman, Mayor Forgey, John Lunt. Also present, Interim Superintendent Susan Hollins, members of the public including business manager Mark McLaughlin, GHS principal Donna Woodcock, City Councillors , and City Collector/Treasurer M. Lane Kelly, and the press.

- I. Call to Order: With a quorum present, Chairman Athey called the school committee to order at 6:20 p.m.
  
- II. Budget discussion and motions:
  - A. Chairman Athey moved, John Lunt 2<sup>nd</sup>: **To put before the committee the Superintendent's recommended budget of \$14,997,992.**
  - B. Maryelen Calderwood made an amendment, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Greg Aubin: **To add to the Superintendent's budget \$248,000** to cover one principal at approximately \$80,000; one secretarial staff person for Four Corners School, \$28,000; one full-time nurse for \$60,000; one full-time librarian for \$80,000. Discussion of administration currently in place, adequacy of funding, and affordability. Aubin discussed "making whole" the system and questioned the effectiveness of multi-tasking. Chairman: the School Committee has to put forward the real costs the system needs, despite the likelihood all funds will not be available. Mayor: In this economic climate decisions need to be based not on wants or needs, but affordability. **Motion carried 4 to 3.** Yes: Athey, Aubin, Calderwood and Eastman. No: Doyle, Forgey and Lunt.
  - C. Aubin moved, Calderwood 2<sup>nd</sup>: **To add \$118,200 to the request.** Stimulus funding will mostly come through typical channels. Lacking a grantwriter, the system may not be able to take advantage of extra grant funds being made available. There is an opportunity cost to having staff cover for missing positions. A motion to add three items was voted one item at a time as follows:

	\$75,000 grantwriter	\$3,200 HEC dues	\$40,000 sped ass't.
DA	Yes	Yes	Yes
GA	Yes	Yes	Yes
MC	Yes	Yes	Yes
DD	No	Yes	No
DE	Yes	Yes	Yes
CF	No	No	No
JL	No	Yes	No

Each motion passed as noted above.

Total being added is **\$366,200**, bringing the total appropriation request to **\$15,364,192**. The Mayor clarified discussion of a choice-in initiative & objected on the grounds that this figure is not sustainable. Chairman Athey stated that contract negotiations are ongoing with outcomes unknown. This budget contains no cost of living increases. Hollins clarified that a wage adjustment was included only for school bus drivers given they have had no wage adjustment in 4-5 years. Lunt said a long-term vision with a true long-term plan was needed. Aubin: The plan is to request more money. Eastman: If the objective is to inspire families to choice in to Greenfield, more money is needed although not available. The majority of the committee felt it was important to request what they felt was the actual costs needed, regardless of whether that amount would be approved.

Chairman Athey moved to support the new amended total of **\$15,364,192**.

**Motion carried 4 to 3:** Yes. Athey, Aubin, Calderwood, Eastman. No. Doyle, Forgey, Lunt.

Following the budget vote, Superintendent Hollins thanked the school committee for finalizing a budget vote at this time. The Superintendent stated her goal was to propose the budget early and have decisions made early so planning for next year could be done early. There has been chaos and sacrifice but every month schools are improving—in student achievement, school culture, and communication. She felt that any parent should feel confident to have their children go to school here. A dialogue with the city has begun about a “choice-back initiative” related to parents returning to Greenfield and reinvesting in Greenfield schools. John Lunt congratulated the superintendent for her hard work to structure and create the new budget.

III. Motion to adjourn, by Aubin; 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimous. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.