

**Please Note: These minutes are pending Board approval.
Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education special meeting on February 5, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at 3 Primrose Street.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| M. Ku, Chair | L. Rodrigue |
| R. Harriman-Stites, Vice Chair | J. Evans Davila (absent) |
| D. Cruson, Secretary | R. Bienkowski |
| D. Leidlein | 13 Staff |
| J. Vouros | 8 Public |
| A. Clure | 1 Press |
| D. Delia | |

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Public Participation

Dennis Brestovansky, 11 Longview Heights Road, said there was an error on page two of the of minutes from the last Board meeting with incorrect information on a new pay-to-play proposal raising all sports fees by 50%. At the time reduction was made fees were funding nonathletic expenses. Nearly half the fees are going down \$40 for most sports. All fees are not going up by 50%.

Carolyn Mandorano, 9 Birch Rise Drive, was concerned that the budget continues to go up and enrollment continues to decline. She wondered if the Board could address background information to give the town the opportunity to get into details about things that require more thought.

Item 3 – Discussion and Possible Adoption of 2019-2020 Budget

Mrs. Ku said we were seeking a budget which will allow students to excel. She thanked the administration and staff that helped with the budget development and approval process which begins in October. The Board of Finance could start their review on February 11 with their public hearing on February 14. The Legislative Council hearing is March 20.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that this budget represents a reasonable response to the changes we feel necessary for the Newtown Public Schools related to our strategic plan goals and how we can support students in a positive way and also support social emotional learning. Cuts to the original request were more than \$1.5M. This plan centers on maintaining programs and services and continuing professional development and training for teachers in reading programs in response to our special education action steps. The world language and stem programs are moving forward. We will also have smaller class sizes in kindergarten. This budget has an increase of 2.7% over our current budget.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education adopt the Superintendent's recommended budget for \$78,108,940. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education amend the motion to accept the technical adjustments as presented for a total reduction of \$5,496. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski listed the technical adjustments which include gasoline, workers compensation, liability insurance, property insurance and out-of-district tuition and transportation.

Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to amend the motion to reduce building and maintenance by \$50,000 and reallocate it to Account 111 under curriculum. Mr. Clure seconded.

Mr. Delia felt it was important to not increase the budget. He has been very active in researching the Director of Teaching and Learning position and proposed to move the start date to September 1.

Mr. Clure agreed and felt it was extremely important to start sooner.

Mrs. Leidlein asked Dr. Rodrigue her thoughts on starting sooner.

Dr. Rodrigue said the thinking behind starting mid-year was to allow the new assistant superintendent to help find the right person for this position.

Mr. Vouros suggested the positions be staggered so the assistant superintendent can contribute to hiring the new director. He appreciated Mr. Delia's motion to find money for this position but he feels it is important not to chip away from maintenance as there are a lot of projects that get postponed that should have been funded years ago.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked the amount needed for the position to start earlier.

Mr. Bienkowski said the cost to start September 1 would be \$50,966. He feels we should not just take a number from a functional category. We have to put this budget together based on the object categories and suggested we do separate motions on each and segregate them for clarity purposes.

Mr. Delia said anything that was a medium priority could be adjusted to meet the needs.

Mr. Bienkowski referred to costs for installing air conditioning in the Middle Gate gym but we can't do just part of it. We could do a bit less at Head O'Meadow in removing the sinks. Regarding painting the halls at Reed we could do less carpet and flooring replacement but it would be difficult to split the work. Most of the prices are for specific designated projects so it's hard to identify them at this point.

Mrs. Ku was not in favor of this motion as is but was in favor of adding the \$50,000 for the director position.

Dr. Rodrigue agrees that the motion is difficult especially since we made cuts early in the maintenance budget.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites was in favor of reducing some maintenance projects but would prefer to see what ones he had in mind. It would have to be the entire projects.

Mr. Vouros said we have endeavored to move forward the maintenance projects so we are not slipping behind. He is in favor of splitting the motion.

Mr. Delia he is trying to make fiscally responsible motions and support teachers, administrators and learning. He is not going to put forth a motion to increase the budget. After a discussion and there being no objections to doing so, Mr. Delia withdrew his motion.

MOTION: Mr. Vouros moved to amend the motion to increase the budget by \$50,966 for the Director of Teaching and Learning position. Mrs. Ku seconded the motion.

Mr. Vouros said years ago this position was proposed. It is needed in this district so it makes more sense educationally to have the person start in September as opposed to the middle of the year.

Mrs. Leidlein feels it would be better for the Board to know where the money is coming from for this position and suggested that Mr. Vouros take the motion back for us to decide on that first.

MOTION: Mrs. Ku moved that we lay the motion to amend on the table. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Clure said the non-lapsing account can be used for nonrecurring expenses.

MOTION: Mr. Clure moved to amend the motion to reduce the budget by \$55,000 for the purchase of a truck in account 734. Mr. Delia seconded.

Mr. Clure said this is a one-time expense so we can still purchase the truck from the non-lapsing account.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that when we discussed using those funds we talked about the unknowns facing us in the future so we did not want to decrease the account. We have already gone to the Board of Finance to use funds but she feels we shouldn't request using more money from this account. There may be other areas we can look at.

Mr. Bienkowski said this puts the truck in jeopardy if you want to use the non-lapsing account. The risk in doing that is there is no guarantee it will be approved.

Vote: 2 ayes Mr. Delia and Mr. Clure, 5 nays (Mrs. Ku, Mrs. Harriman-Stites, Mr. Cruson, Mrs. Leidlein, Mr. Vouros) Motion fails.

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved to reduce the building and maintenance projects by \$50,000 to be made up of high school ceiling pad/tile replacement for \$25,000 and repainting classrooms and halls at Reed for \$25,000. Mr. Delia seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites feels it's very important for this position to start in September but she is not in favor of increasing the budget. It's important to prioritize teaching and learning.

Mrs. Leidlein looked at the priority levels of the maintenance projects and thought we should look at the ceiling tiles at Hawley and the high school access card readers first.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites chose them because they weren't safety items.

Mrs. Leidlein and Mr. Delia supported the motion.

Mrs. Ku said this would reduce the building and site maintenance project by \$50,000. It is so easy to take from the maintenance budget when we need money. She is not in favor of the motion.

Vote: 5 ayes, 2 nays (Mrs. Ku, Mr. Cruson) motion passes.

MOTION: Mr. Vouros moved to take off the table the motion that was on the table regarding the Director of Teaching and Learning position. Mr. Delia seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Cruson was concerned about starting this position the same time as the new assistant superintendent and having two brand new people in the district. January might even be too early. The new assistant superintendent would only have four months before the director would begin but he agrees with the importance of the new position.

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about the director starting in September. We are poised for a new team but understands what Mr. Cruson stated about staggering the start dates. The new assistant

superintendent will have time before we hire the director so that person will be part of that process. It would be wonderful to start in September.

Mrs. Leidlein was concerned with the idea of starting the position later than sooner. A concern of our principals is that they are stretched very thin with all of their responsibilities regarding State mandated changes so this position will help them. The assistant superintendent starting early summer gives time to talk to the stakeholders before school begins.

Mrs. Ku said the curriculum coordinators were reduced in the budget so we could hire this position which will benefit the entire district.

Vote on motion to increase the budget by \$50,966: 6 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Cruson) Motion passes.

MOTION: Mr. Clure moved to reduce \$1,000 for the moving up ceremony and to create a line item in the middle school sports for \$1,000 for team uniforms. Mr. Delia seconded.

Mr. Clure said there was a great response having this at the high school. He feels we could have in the auditorium so there will be no need for a stage rental. His understanding is that there are no dedicated funds for middle school sports. Each year we could have uniforms for the coming years.

Dr. Rodrigue said that in talking with Mr. Einhorn, there was still a concern for the number of seats in the auditorium so we would have to use tickets. We always had enough seats in the gym. The two programs would be tight in the auditorium so seats might be limited. Next year might be different if the enrollment changes.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked if Mr. Bienkowski could make a budget transfer to possibly have uniforms for spring sports. There's not enough information now so maybe we could do it mid-year.

Dr. Rodrigue said we can put in \$1,000 for uniforms but we don't know how much we will need. She also cautioned about using the auditorium next year.

Mr. Clure said the intent was specifically for cross country, which have no uniforms except for a white T-shirt.

Mr. Vouros and Mr. Delia were in support of providing uniforms for the cross country students. Mr. Cruson agreed but he was concerned of not knowing if the \$1,000 will cover the number of students participating.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites would support the motion if it was split. She was not in favor of taking \$1,000 from the moving-up ceremony and suggested that \$500 be used and parents could support the rest of the cost.

Mr. Vouros asked when we would know if everyone would fit in auditorium.

Dr. Rodrigue said we know from last year it would have been too tight. Seats will open up when enrollment decreases but there may not be enough to seat approximately 20 people.

Mrs. Ku would support adding \$1,000 for uniforms but doesn't support this motion.

Vote: 3 ayes, 4 nays (Mrs. Ku, Mrs. Harriman-Stites, Mrs. Leidlein, Mr. Vouros) motion fails.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to amend the motion to reduce staff and curriculum development by \$10,000 for the WIN Conference expense. Mr. Clure seconded.

Mr. Delia saw a deficiency in math and because there was only \$1,250 for math regional conferences he wants to increase it by the \$10,000.

Mrs. Leidlein said that every line doesn't have to be followed meticulously so things may be adjusted.

Mr. Delia sees a need and it's important to make it clear we support math and the math department. He is not saying this is how the money must be spent.

Dr. Rodrigue said the money is specifically for the math regional conferences. We have flexibility but the WIN conference was probably one of the best professional development days we've had.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said that possibly inviting other districts to this conference would generate revenue.

Vote: 2 ayes, 5 nays (Mrs. Ku, Mrs. Harriman-Stites, Mr. Cruson, Mrs. Leidlein, Mr. Vouros)
Motion fails.

MOTION: Mr. Clure moved to amend the motion to freeze the pay-to-participate fee from where it currently is with the addition of hockey at \$160 and reduce the overall sports budget by \$30,000. Mr. Delia seconded.

Mr. Clure spoke about his motion.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we had a group study this and she is uncomfortable with reducing the budget by \$30,000. We did the study to be sure sports were adequately funded. She can't support this motion but appreciates that Mr. Clure is trying to solve the problems of parents paying more than others.

Mr. Delia supports the motion because he is concerned we are raising fees to play that parents are concerned about.

Mr. Clure said he has grave difficulty with increasing the cost for sports so much.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that the cost to play in the youth leagues is more than to play high school sports and there is help for parents who cannot afford these costs. She cannot support this not knowing where the money will come from across the board.

Mr. Cruson's concern was the \$30,000 reduction. The task force worked so hard to come up with equity in funding. If we are going to discuss some semblance of the structure we would have to discuss the budget taking on that \$30,000.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites was frustrated that we had multiple meetings on the plan but wished she knew his idea before tonight. We need to discuss this earlier next year.

Dr. Rodrigue said we froze the pay-to-participate fees so the task force could look at all sports and landed on \$160 as fair for the entire program.

Mr. Clure stated that he valued the task force and was not trying to be disrespectful but there was no Board member on it. He felt he never had an opportunity to address the sports fees individually. If there was a way we could look at the overall cost for each sport and bring it back to the Board he would be willing to table his motion.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we can look at this again if the ice rink is built and prefers to go with the recommendation of the committee and the Athletic Director for now.

Mrs. Ku appreciated the recommendation of the task force. We are one of a few districts that have the tiered system. We should support sports and provide that experience to all children.

Vote: 1 aye, 6 nays (Mrs. Ku, Mrs. Harriman-Stites, Mr. Cruson, Mrs. Leidlein, Mr. Vouros, Mr. Delia) Motion fails.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to amend the motion to move \$39,922 from high school science to the curriculum account 611. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia feels that purchases of all curricula should be under the curriculum budget.

Mr. Cruson felt it makes sense to move it there.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites also supports this and asked if there would be any issue with purchasing.

Mrs. Vadas said we have expenses in the current budget now under science so we would move them to stay in line.

Motion passes unanimously.

Mrs. Ku stated that the amended Superintendent's budget amount is \$78,104,510.

Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education direct the business office to prepare the final budget and authorize the Director of Business to make any technical and arithmetical changes. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – Public Participation

Dennis Brestovansky, 11 Longview Heights Road, found the discussion on pay to participate very disappointing. He was on the task force and spent hours devising a structure that was fair. To compare it to last year when many families were paying huge amounts of money is unfathomable. You need to compare year over year. The minutes were wrong. About 40% of sports are going up \$10.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to adjourn. Mr. Delia seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 5 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

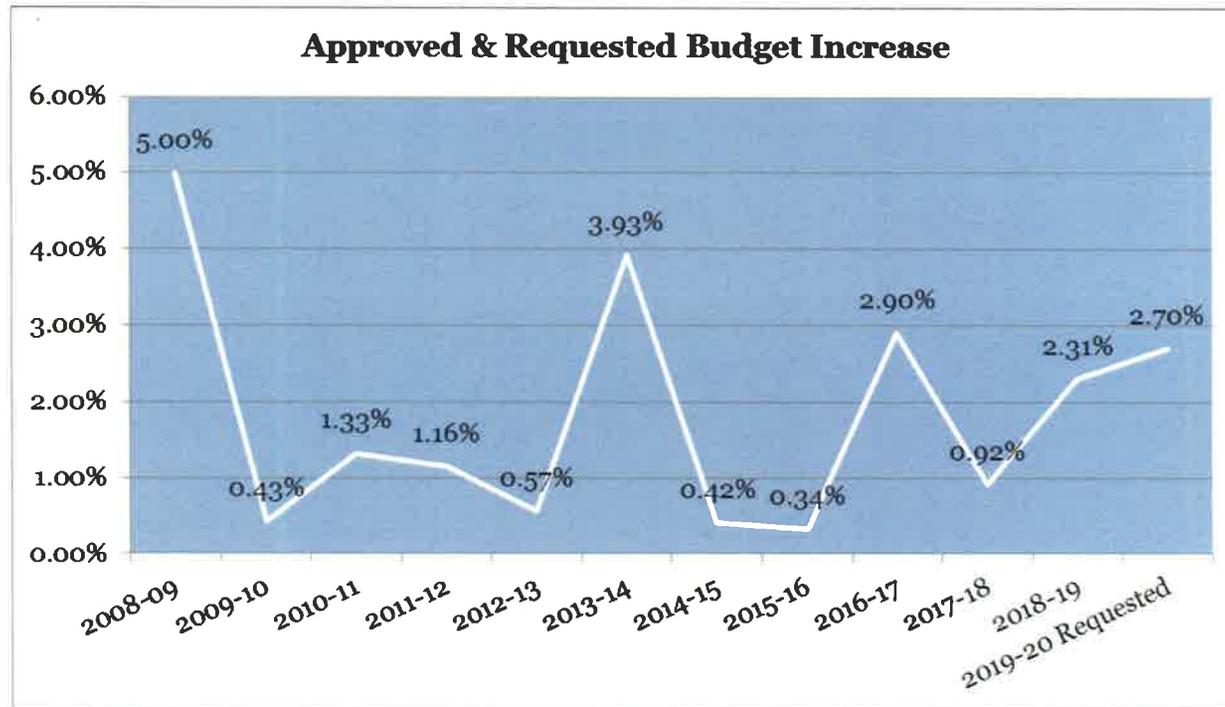
Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

Proposed Operational Plan for 2019-20

| | | Cumulative Adjustment | Percent of Decrease or Increase | Balance | Percent Change | Final \$ Increase |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2018-19 Approved Budget | 76,054,231 | | | | | |
| 2019-20 Superintendent's Request | 78,108,940 | 2,054,709 | | | 2.70% | |
| <u>BOE Adjustments to Superintendent's Plan 2/5/19</u> | | | | | | |
| <i>Technical Adjustments</i> | | | | | | |
| 1 Gasoline bid 1/14/19 | (4,008) | (4,008) | -0.01% | 78,104,932 | 2.70% | 2,050,701 |
| 2 Workers Compensation | (35,067) | (39,075) | -0.05% | 78,069,865 | 2.65% | 2,015,634 |
| 3 General Services - Liability Insurance | (2,699) | (41,774) | -0.05% | 78,067,166 | 2.65% | 2,012,935 |
| 4 Plant Operations - Property Insurance | (2,521) | (44,295) | -0.06% | 78,064,645 | 2.64% | 2,010,414 |
| 5 Tuition - Out of District (additional placement) | 28,868 | (15,427) | -0.02% | 78,093,513 | 2.68% | 2,039,282 |
| 6 Transportation - Out of District | 9,931 | (5,496) | -0.01% | 78,103,444 | 2.69% | 2,049,213 |
| BOARD OF EDUCATION'S CURRENT PROPOSED BUDGET | | | | | | |
| Total Adjustments | | (5,496) | | | | |
| Percent Reduction | | | -0.01% | | | |
| Proposed BOE Current Budget | | | | 78,103,444 | | |
| Proposed Budget % Increase | | | | | 2.69% | |
| Proposed Budget \$ Increase | | | | | | 2,049,213 |

Creating a Consistent Funding Level



Peaks & Valleys; the Repercussions of inconsistent funding levels

- 2008-09 approved budget increase 5%
- Four years (09-10 to 12-13) average increase less than 1%
- 2013-14 approved increase 3.93%
- Two year average increase less than .5%
- 2016-17 just under 3% increase; followed by 17-18, increase less than 1%
- 2018-19 & 2019-20; leveling the budget

NMS Moving Up Expenses

1025.- Stage Rental

100.- Buses

550.- Police

150.- Flowers

525.- Certificates

200.- Awards

50.- Decorations

200.- Refreshments

2,800.-