

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
NOVEMBER 24, 2009**

**School Board Members Present:**

Peter Mello  
Christopher Book  
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
Wayne Cooke  
Richard Courcelle  
Roberta Dress  
Peter Fagan  
Collin Fingon  
Peter Forshay  
Cindy Kilic-Murray  
Rob Towle  
Daniel Wigmore

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
Peter Amons  
Wil Cunningham  
Lyle Jepson  
Patricia Aigner  
Bill Olsen  
Jay Slenker  
John Rice  
Ted Guilmette  
Cathy Farman

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted all Commissioners were present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Motion by Towle / Book to accept the minutes of the Nov. 10, 2009 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**ROLL CALL**

**MOTION:  
MINUTES  
11/10/09  
MEETING**

Written Communication - None

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Oral Communication - None

**ORAL COMMUNICATION**

Stafford Technical Center Budget Presentation - Mr. Jepson said Stafford's Regional Advisory Board (RAB) is very involved in the budget preparation. The RAB is made up of superintendents and board members from sending schools and business leaders in the community. Commissioner Cooke is the Rutland City School Board representative to the RAB. The budget is largely made up based upon past history. He presented a year to year comparison from 2009 to this year to the proposed budget. If the proposed budget is approved and the forecast is accurate, the budget increase is .4%.

**EDUCATION REPORT**

**STC BUDGET PRESENTATION**

There is also a capital improvement fund in proposed FY11, using funds being carried forward. Mr. Jepson said this budget represents a \$202 or 5.6% increase per student from this year to next year. He said Stafford's enrollment is decreasing slightly. Capacity has basically been reached at each program so there will be a leveling off. Stafford bills on a six semester rolling average which enables schools to budget accurately. The proposed budget contains a page called Perkins, which represents about \$306,000 in federal funds the school receives. Perkins grant monies need to be spent in certain categories and they were outlined. Mr. Jepson also presented a comparison of costs between technical centers and said Stafford stacks up favorably comparatively. Mr. Jepson said at the Board's next meeting, they will be asking for several action items to be approved:

- Accept equipment money legislators have helped obtain, about \$36,000.
- Approve accepting the Perkins funds

- Approve the tuition figure
- Approve the proposed bond

Mr. Jepson said the bond proposal which must go before the public is almost \$1.4 million to continue renovations projects. So far, they have been able to carry out projects using money in the regular budget that has been carried forward. The next stages of renovation are more costly and we need total transparency. Voter approval is needed. Besides some building renovations, the bond would pay for renovations to start a cosmetology program and to upgrade heating units. The project has been in discussion for quite a long time.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- Is the \$1.4 million bond repaid solely by Rutland City taxpayers? Mr. Jepson said the entire budget and bond are spread out around the entire county. He and Mr. Amons looked at the impact to Rutland City taxpayers spread out over 15 years. It does not create a difficult impact to Rutland City taxpayers.
- A couple of the expense categories have large percent increases. Mr. Jepson explained those categories and said the assessments are percentages of central office expenses. Some of the categories can jump around significantly from year to year and small dollar figures can have large percent increases. Some numbers are based upon enrollment.
- Why is the Perkins funding shown as \$325,000 on one page and then a smaller number in another place? Mr. Jepson said the \$325,000 is overall what we are allocated but monies are then taken out of that for a variety of reasons.
- There are different numbers: 0.4% increase total in expenditure; tuition going up 1.8%; assessment going up 5.6%. The GSSE is at 87%. This is the the basic education amount the state sends us and can change from year to year. For each student who comes to STC, we get 87% of the basic money and the sending school retains 13%. The overhead assistance is another allotment because the legislature recognizes that technical education costs more. If that had increased, that would have reduced the level of increase in the assessment.
- Mr. Mello said there is \$72,000 allocated for capital improvement. There was no capital improvement in the past two years. Mr. Jepson said the RAB feels there will be \$72,000 left over at the end of the year and they want to establish a fund for this purpose.
- Have you projected numbers for the cosmetology program? Mr. Jepson said to start, they project 16 students plus an adult program in the evening. It will be a 2-1/2 year program which would require either junior, senior and a senior summer or a senior year plus 1.5 as an adult. There will be revenue. Is the program reflected in the budget? Mr. Jepson said about \$145,000 of the bond proposal is to renovate the building for the program. They will apply for a state grant to get the program going.
- If the Board were to ask for a decrease somewhere in the budget, have you given thought as to where? Mr. Jepson said they would have to look at it all and it would take time.
- The bond repayment is spread throughout the county. Who votes to approve it? Rutland City owns the technical center. The authority to vote for construction bonds are the voters of Rutland City. The members of the RAB are representatives from around the county and support this.

Budget: Technology Plans - Ms. Aigner said she has correlated items in this plan to the Technology Plan. She reflected on the accomplishments in the past 15 months. There has been a lot of growth. She then reviewed some of the goals and work load for the future. She requested the Board to continue to support technology in the district as outlined in the Technology Plan. Mr. Mello said it was an excellent presentation of what was accomplished, ongoing, and next steps.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- The state has been talking about a student information system and possibly mandating a statewide system within two years. What if it is not Infinite Campus? Ms. Aigner said she has not increased the cost to Infinite Campus. We have made a commitment that there will be a parent portal. It is a normal implementation plan. If the Department chooses this or another vendor, our data will be clean and we will be able to transition it.
- Are we moving toward open source? Ms. Aigner said our web software is an open source product. Primarily, to transition to using open source and looking at Linux, it requires professional development for technical staff. It would be an investment. We will continue to grow open source as feasible.
- What kind of security is there, especially with using more laptops and some of them going home? Ms. Aigner said as we grow the acceptable use policy, we need to grow data guidelines. Our software is web based. Users are logging on to a site.
- School laptops are going home? Ms. Aigner said educators are bringing laptops home and she explained the work they are doing.
- What is cloud computing? Ms. Aigner said we have invested funds in storing data locally. Other software is stored elsewhere, off site and that is called cloud computing.

Budget: Draft FY11 Presentation - Mr. Amons said board members have a budget book. The state has not announced the base educational tax rate, homestead tax rate schedule, common level of appraisal, nor revenue numbers for special education. This proposal is only about expenses. We are projecting a budget up 2.6% from this year to next. The budget is defined as total expending. All the dollars for all the programs are included except for enterprise funds or activity accounts. What is the difference between surplus and carry forward? Mr. Amons said a carry forward can be positive or negative. If there is a positive number, it is carried forward as a surplus. If there is a negative amount, it is carried forward as a deficit.

Mr. Amons said for the past five years, we include grant revenue and expenses in the budget. ARRA stimulus funds are not represented in the budget because of the timing and crossing a multitude of years. He has asked the state how to handle it. Mr. Amons reviewed the FY11 Budget Metrics. With a budget of \$44,180,000, 1% equals \$445,000. He looks at 10ths of a percent (.1%) or \$44,518 when looking for savings. Mr. Amons said the proposed budget has no new head count and the two ARRA jobs are not in there. Mr. Amons presented a list of all expense categories which have increased more than \$20,000 from the current budget. He reviewed those line items and some of the specifics. He also reviewed the expense categories which have decreased more than \$20,000 from the current budget. The Board asked questions on some of the categories. Mr. Amons explained the Rutland Public Schools debt service and the FY11 Budget

Maintenance and Capital Expenditures, which includes the replacement of the two oil tanks discussed at the last meeting.

**BUDGET:  
DRAFT FY11  
PRESENTA-  
TION, cont.**

Commissioner Courcelle said the Board has talked about public expectation. People want to know how it affects them. The way we fund schools, the school board sets the level of expenditure, but not the tax rate. It is difficult for the Board to know what the tax implication is. The State needs to look at moving town meeting to a later time. We are making decisions about resource allocations before we know the impact on taxes. The legislature has forced this on us and need to find a different way of timing the development of school budgets. Mr. Mello said our budget could be flatlined and our taxes would still increase. He would like to see us strive to preserve as much as possible that impacts students. Commissioner Cooke said some of the things he had looked for in the past are here, such as a comparison between last year's budget to this year's. Ms. Moran complimented the special education staff to create a budget that has virtually no increase in costs. Ms. Moran reviewed the schools' adult to student and teacher to student ratios. Ms. Moran asked for Board input.

**PERSONNEL**

Motion by Dress / Fagan to approve the Licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 414 dated Nov. 20, 2009, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

**MOTION:  
PERSONNEL  
MEMO #414**

The appointment and resignation were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ratification of the AFSCME Contract - Mr. Mello said this year, the staff relations committee has been working diligently with four bargaining units. This is the third unit we have come to closure on.

**MOTION:  
RATIFICA-  
TION OF  
AFSCME  
CONTRACT**

Motion by Fingon / Towle to ratify the AFSCME contract as presented.

Mr. Forshay said the Board prematurely ratified the AFSCME contract a few months ago. At that point, the unit had not agreed with the contract the Board was ratifying. There has been more negotiating and the bargaining unit has agreed to the settlement. The AFSCME bargaining unit did ratify this contract as presented. Mr. Forshay said this is a four year contract. Either side may choose to terminate based upon a number of conditions after two years. Bus drivers who had been working six hours a day were brought to full time – there has been a significant restructuring of job categories to provide better efficiency and effectiveness. Over four years, the contract represents a total incremental increase of 4.38% per year in all compensation; that includes salary, health insurance, benefits and FICA – all monetary forms of compensation. That is the total new money and costs to the district. The pension commitment is increased both by union membership and the school system's increase of ½% per year. Health insurance continues at a 10% employee / 90% employer split. That did not change. Mr. Forshay said Mr. Fingon, Ms. Dress and Mr. Towle are the Board member representatives. Ms. Dress said she will be voting no on contract ratification due to the unwillingness of AFSCME to compromise on workmen's compensation. It did not have to do with money but with timing.

Motion passed with two no votes (Dress, Cavacas) .

Business Report - None

**BUSINESS  
REPORT**

Announcements - Superintendent Moran thanked everyone who took part in holiday celebrations.

**SUPERIN-  
TENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Flu Clinic Update - Ms. Moran thanked everyone who helped make the first two clinics go very well at Northeast, Northwest, Success and Howe Center students. There are upcoming clinics at the other schools and dates were announced.

**ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS**

**FLU CLINIC  
UPDATE**

Class of 1959 Gift - Dan Wigmore said the class of 1959 has donated a new marble bench to the school. He showed a photo of students helping move it in. It is in front of the main office. The Student Senate wrote a letter of thanks to the class of 1959 and he read it to the Board. It is a generous and permanent gift. Ms. Moran said this class has donated in the past in other ways and thanked them.

**CLASS OF  
1959 GIFT**

**COMM.  
REPORTS**

Policy Committee

Motion by Towle / Cooke to approve for first reading: Policy #3510 Community Relations. Motion passed unanimously.

**POLICY  
COMM.**

**MOTION:  
APPROVE  
POLICY  
#3510 FOR  
FIRST  
READING**

New Business - None

**NEW  
BUSINESS**

Old Business

Three District Meeting - Mr. Mello said a meeting was held between the three districts with a focus on what things could be done collectively to make them better. They discussed priorities and challenges. Another meeting will be held in January and will include teachers and representation from the VT NEA.

**OLD  
BUSINESS**

**THREE  
DISTRICT  
MEETING**

December Board meetings: December 8 and 15.

**DEC. BOARD  
MEETINGS**

Motion by Towle / Cavacas at 8:43 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing a contractual matter, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

**MOTION:  
EXECUTIVE  
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:55 pm.

**PUBLIC  
SESSION**

Motion by Kilic-Murray / Cavacas to adjourn at 8:56 pm. Passed.

**ADJOURN**

Respectfully submitted

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Janet Mondlak  
Recording Secretary