

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

January 9, 2017

Lincoln

PRESENT: Caldwell, Conyers, Jacobsen, Leon, Pattacini, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT: Hagenow, Scappaticci

A. **OPENING**

A.1. & 2. **Meeting Called to Order**

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini. Mr. Pattacini acknowledged that this was a sad week in Manchester, with the loss of two MPS employees: Cheryl Stevenson, a teacher at Bennet, and Barry "Mitch" Mitchell, a security guard at MHS. He offered a moment of silence in their memory.

A.3. **Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of December 19, 2016. Acting Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Caldwell seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

B.1. **Personnel & Finance Committee**

Mr. Thames reported that the last meeting was held December 19, 2016. In attendance were Mr. Caldwell, Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Jacobsen, Mr. Leon, Mr. Thames, Mr. Geary and Ms. Clancy. Ms. Clancy had distributed the 2016-17 Budget Status Report to the Committee and provided an overview of the report indicating expenditure projections through the end of the fiscal year. Funds have

been encumbered to address the possible reduction of municipal aid to the town. These funds would allow the Board of Education to assist the town in managing any reductions. Ms. Clancy stated that the overall budget remained stable.

Ms. Clancy then distributed copies of the 2017-18 Budget Development Calendar and reviewed the timeframe for the budget process. The Superintendent will present his proposed budget this evening. The next meeting will be held February 27, 2017 at Lincoln Center at 5:30 p.m.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented three items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from Manchester High School Technology Education Instructional Supplies/Materials account to Manchester High School Technology Education Repairs account in the amount of \$1,342.

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 16-17 for the Parent Leadership Training/Parent Trust Fund Grant in the amount of \$27,500

The Chairman called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Leon moved and **Mr. Caldwell** seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, item C tonight's agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Conyers asked the Superintendent to elaborate on item C.3. **Mr. Geary** explained the parent leadership training program, which is a 12 week program about how to be an engaged parent.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Shania Stanton expressed her sorrow in the loss of the two staff members this past week. Regarding Mitch, he made her feel safe and was a part of our family, a counselor and a supporter. She feels like we lost a real family member. It has been a hard week working through this loss. Ms. Stanton feels Mitch wanted all of us to be strong, happy, successful and to be the best person you can be, which is what he was.

Ms. Stanton provided updates for MHS:

*8th grade elective fair is January 11th and 12th

*MHS Snowball tickets will be sold January 4th-13th for \$20 with the Ball being held January 28th

*Midterms were moved one day to January 20th-25th

*The mid-winter concert is this Wednesday, January 11th at 7pm

*8th grade open house is January 19th with the 23rd being the snowday

*Class of 2017 fundraising is underway with sales of tumblers, senior-wear and restaurant days

Ms. Stanton also implored the Board that if someone comes forward with a way to honor Mitch, that the Board approve that.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Shania for her passion and poise this evening. He told her she is representing the district and the high school quite well and the Board will certainly consider a request to memorialize Mitch.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about Pearl Harbor and some interesting articles on the topic. He recommended the movie *Hacksaw Ridge*. Mr. Stringfellow spoke about Glenn Curtiss and an article in a history magazine about him. With the Dr. King holiday coming up, Mr. Stringfellow recommended the last book Dr. King had written back in 1967 about how to deal with race relations. He also recommended a series of children's books, including one called *Who was Hillary Clinton?* Mr. Stringfellow like an article in the special edition of *National Geographic* about the gender revolution. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended a movie about President Obama as a teenager called *Barry*.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. 2017-2018 Budget Presentation

Mr. Pattacini reminded everyone that this is the first of multiple budget workshops that the Board will be conducting to develop its budget for the next fiscal year. That budget will be delivered to the General Manager sometime in February. Once the Board of Directors adopts a budget we will hold additional workshops to reconcile our budget if the figures change.

Mr. Geary presented his proposed budget for the 17-18 fiscal year, which is \$114,110,227, a 2.9% increase over the current budget.

Mr. Leon thanked Mr. Geary for the detailed proposal. Mr. Leon was glad to see the increased graduation rate, just one item that shows our progress as a district. Mr. Leon also pointed out that having one to one access to computer devices for students grades 5 through 12 makes Manchester a leader in the state. He wondered if the town had replied to the memo regarding adding the Illing parking lots to the next referendum. Mr. Geary stated he had not received a response yet and would be following up. Mr. Leon pointed out that this 2.9% increase to maintain the budget, compared to the labor index of 2.77% which is just for labor and health benefits, shows this proposal is really just maintaining.

Mr. Thames appreciated the easy to understand presentation. He wondered of, out of the 2.9% increase, how much is due to contractual salary increases. Mr. Geary pointed out that about \$1.7 million is due to contractual salary increases. Mr. Thames wondered, with the rising cost of health care, how we negotiate those contracts. Mr. Geary pointed out we are self-insured and he will get additional information regarding that topic.

Ms. Jacobsen noted there was a lot to absorb. She wondered if Mr. Geary could describe what types of overtime are included. Mr. Geary pointed out a major cost driver is summer cleaning. With SAAM and other summer programs occupying some of our buildings most of the summer, there winds up being a short window of time available to do the deep cleaning needed. Other overtime reasons include event coverage and snow removal on weekends. Ms. Jacobson asked, under equipment/other, for the 2016-17 FY \$575,000 was budgeted and

for 2017-18 another \$675,000 is budgeted to purchase new computers, replace old ones, etc. and she would like some information about that. Mr. Geary noted when we first started with Alliance money that financed the initial purchase of chromebooks grades 5-12. We are hoping for Alliance money next year and we think about of 100,000 for chromebooks. We make sure all K classes have iPADS. A major cost driver is the replacing of three grades of chromebooks every year (they have a 2-3 year shelf life). We used to take more money from Alliance that is now being shifted to the Board budget. Mr. Geary pointed out that another huge expense is the infrastructure along with switches to provide network access. In thinking long term we need to think about how to maintain our network infrastructure. It is complicated and costly. Luckily, we have talented IT people that are working on it. The use of the network is so much more robust than it was even three years ago.

Ms. Stefanowicz thought the MHS graduation rate was amazing. She would like to see it compared to the state, surrounding areas, and on a national average as well. Mr. Geary will provide those statistics.

Mr. Conyers wondered when the last time the schools or the district as a whole had an energy efficiency audit done for our electricity costs. Mr. Geary thought it was 5 or 6 years ago. He will look into having another one done.

Mr. Leon pointed out that in looking at using solar panels about 2 ½ years ago a partial electrical audit was done in some of the buildings.

Mr. Pattacini noted we are headed in the right direction and doing the right things. Ninety percent of the budget increase are salaries and healthcare. When you add pension, defined contribution and social security that represents 99.95% of the budget increase. Mr. Pattacini hopes we are not cutting too much. He is concerned about the Alliance Grant and what next year will look like, especially with the state cutting costs mid-year this year. We need to think about how close to the bone the budget is. Mr. Pattacini wants us to be careful not to cut back too far. Regarding Policy 3510 in the current year we purposely did not do capital projects. Mr. Pattacini feels we should evaluate and understand that we are not creating a problem for ourselves. Mr. Geary will look into that.

Mr. Pattacini asked Mr. Geary to describe the budget process. Mr. Geary noted the process begins in November, when Central Office sends budget development handbooks to schools and department chairs. They submit proposed budgets, (schools are given \$150 per pupil in elementary school, \$225 per student in middle school, and \$375 per student, including athletics, at the high school). The principals craft how they want to spend that money. We encourage principals to be thoughtful about their budgets. They have the opportunity to ask for additional items as well. The Central Office team then sits and goes through the requests. This year we knew the health costs had risen, which was a problem, along with the state economic situation. There are unpredictable factors, such as the Alliance grant and ECS monies.

Mr. Pattacini is worried we will not be getting the Alliance Grant money next year.

Mr. Pattacini noted that this Wednesday the 11th is not working for some Board members for a Budget Workshop and he proposed moving the meeting to the following Wednesday the 18th. The workshop for the 11th is cancelled and moved to January 18th at 6:00 p.m.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Ms. Rebecca Thereault, 103 Diane Drive, thanked Mr. Geary for a thorough presentation. She appreciated the emphasis on equity for all students and wanted to talk about the climate of equity and education in the state. Ms. Thereault is concerned about the ruling in CCJAF vs Rell regarding profoundly disabled student's educational needs. She noted that there is a 70% graduation rate for special education students and that this is our most vulnerable population. Ms. Thereault wants us to keep in mind this is a population who is able and worthy of an education. This population is

ours to educate at this time. She pointed out if SAAM is ended many Special Education students would need alternatives to provide summer programming.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar. He thinks it is important that parents support their child's education and know what is going on. Regarding the budget, with state cutbacks every community has been effected. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Parents* magazine on how to raise a science lover and dealing with children and social media.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pattacini reminded us that the January 11th Budget workshop has been cancelled and moved to January 18th.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Leon moved and Ms. Jacobsen seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Acting Board Secretary