

DOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 15, 2011

Members Present: Jennifer DaSilva, Chairperson  
Dawn Fattore  
Karl Johnson  
Carolyn Ringel  
Bob Springett

Also Present: Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent  
Steven Bliss, Assistant Superintendent  
Dr. Deb Reinemann, Assistant Principal  
Dr. Denise O'Connell, Special Education Director  
Christine Tague, School Business Manager

Cheryl Chase, Librarian  
James Stuart, Warrant Committee  
Dave Stapleton, Warrant Committee  
Meg Field, PTO

**1. Call to order**

Ms. DaSilva called the meeting to order at 7:03pm in the Chickering School Library.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

a) Dover School Committee:

- Ms. DaSilva requested a motion to accept the January 25, 2011 minutes. Mr. Springett motioned, Mr. Johnson seconded. Correction: Section 3—correct spelling from Ms. DaSiliva to Ms. DaSilva **11-03 Vote: Unanimous**

b) Ms. DaSilva noted the January 11, 2011 Dover Sherborn Regional School Committee minutes.

d) Ms. DaSilva noted the January 13, 2011 Sherborn School Committee minutes.

**3. Community Comments—None**

**4. Reports**

a) **PTO Report** –Meg Field

- The check writing campaign is complete. \$46K raised with a 50% participation rate. In 2008/2009 \$37K was raised.
- January Curriculum Enrichment programs: Wing Masters (birds of prey and adaptations) for Kindergarten; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade had a visit from Dinoman; 3<sup>rd</sup> grade had Techploration (electricity and circuits); 5<sup>th</sup> graders held a mock witch trial “Cry Innocent”, had a visit from Jackie Davies author of *Lemonade Wars*, and a visit from Matt Noyes of NECN on Meteorology.
- Physical Education night was rescheduled to 1/27.
- The Books from the Heart Campaign is being held 2/14-2/16.

b) **Business Manager's Report** – Ms. Tague

- FY' 11 Budget Update:
  - The projected savings as a result of adjusting the salary account for retirements, unpaid leaves and the Curriculum Director position is now a \$220,000 savings. Slight change to substitutes account based on six month actuals/projections.
  - Used the latest fuel bill to project the year and expect a \$20K savings in Transportation. Utilities are expected to have a \$14K savings. The OOD budget is expected to have a savings of \$30K.
  - School participation rates for the lunch program are down compared to last year. This may be due in part to snow days. Ms. Ringel asked what happens to the food planned for snow days. Ms. Spriggs stated that when the day is called early enough they are able to make adjustments since the food has not been prepared. Also a program has been initiated at Chickering that sends excess food out to organizations for those in need.
  - Mr. Johnson asked at what point we can be confident in the positive variances and begin discussions with the Town to being deploying money. Ms. Tague reported they have already had meetings with the Warrant Committee and discussed with them the carpet and other items on the list. Ms. Spriggs stated those items would need to come to School Committee. Mr. Springett spoke of the meeting last week where there was a

discussion about end of year closeouts and excess funds, he discussed how we have historically used money to purchase items like books or maintenance ahead of the next cycle, and he feels that direction is clear, but it is not clear on new items. Ms. Spriggs has requested a copy of the minutes from that meeting last week. Ms. Spriggs would like to take another month to look at the variances, what requests have been withdrawn from the budget, and what we would like to go forward with and then have a conversation at the next meeting. Mr. Johnson spoke of ensuring that we have the protocols for the proper activities for the current year budget cycle.

- FY '12 Budget:
  - The primary changes to the budget are the reductions in staff and line items affected by contract negotiations.
  - The proposed budget is \$8,246,055, which represents a 1.88% increase over previous fiscal year. The budget was reduced by \$161,840 from the budget presented in December due primarily to changes in the Special Education budget.
  - FTE reductions--two special education aides and one office support staff were reduced. These changes were needed due to the elimination of grants; there will be no impact on the delivery of service. Total FTE's, including the Curriculum Director, were reduced by 4.0.
  - The original budget for the Contract Settlements was \$309K, which has now been reduced to \$47K. Salaries have increased \$138K for the Teachers Contract.
  - Other increases include \$5K as a placeholder for School Committee for the MOU's from the contract negotiations.
  - Ms. DaSilva announced that the Committee unanimously approved the Teachers Contract on 1/25 in Executive Session. Ms. Spriggs stated that all the Committees have now voted and announced publicly and the teachers have accepted the contract.
  - Mr. Johnson stated that \$5K for each district for the MOU's is not enough funding. Discussions were had about the contracts, how compensation should be managed, and having a new platform. There will be a fair amount of time and energy on the process and bridging through to a new platform. Mr. Springett stated that one memorandum covers the teacher evaluation and process, and one covers the school calendar, each will require reaching out to others. Ms. Spriggs stated that there may be resources available to us via the MTA or nationally to help us with these processes, we may also need funding to send people out to be educated on the cutting edge processes. Mr. Johnson stated that he would like to see the funding front loaded so that we can engage people, this is a great opportunity to right set compensation and how we tie it to the classroom. Ms. Spriggs will check with the resources she has to determine an appropriate funding level. Mr. Springett stated that finding funding sources should be looked at as well.
  - Ms. Tague provided the Circuit Breaker estimate of 60%; this is up from last year's 40%. The funding goes to the Town, not the school.
  - The impact of savings on healthcare for Chickering is \$209,000 which will also affect the Towns budget, not the school.
  - Ms. DaSilva asked if the \$30K for curriculum leaders is for existing teachers. Ms. Tague stated that it was. Ms. DaSilva asked if it is calculated by grade or subject, Dr. Nugent responded that it is by content.
- Class Size Policy:
  - Ms. Ringel spoke of this year's work on differentiated instruction and that we have the appropriate education at every level, if we reduce staff that won't happen well. Ms. Spriggs referred to Mr. Springett's Enrollment and Faculty data and stated that there is no other district that calculates a teacher's assistant as a teacher. The teachers are responsible for the instruction, not the aides, so they should not be included in these ratios. Mr. Springett referred to the enrollment in 2005 of 613 vs. 522 projected for 2012, that's a reduction of an entire grade. If 90 students came in we would be increasing staffing, with 90 students leaving we should be reducing and aligning the faculty with the students. Mr. Springett stated we have added over 400 instructional hours to the classes by adding aides. We increased aides and decreased the student/teacher ratios to 1.5 (teacher + assistant) for each class. Ms. Spriggs stated that the aides weren't added because of the numbers, it was to support the instruction.
  - Ms. Spriggs spoke of the new administrative team in place and that if they continue on the course they are on then this will be a leading school. They are doing the right thing to deliver the teaching and learning to the students.
  - Ms. DaSilva stated that we will be losing 106 kids this year and are projected to get 67 or less this year.
  - Mr. Springett stated that Pine Hill has low class sizes and no teacher's aides and they are able to exceed Chickering's outcomes. Mr. Johnson spoke of taking into account other support in the classrooms, and the data not capturing it, he would like to take the next meeting and bring the teachers in. Dr. Nugent stated that we are head to head on MCAS data with Pine Hill this year.

- Dr. Nugent stated that the impact of pulling a teacher out would be that you won't get through all the kids every day, the work continues, but not at the same pace as we started. We have seen significant increases in reading with children in first grade who are double dosed. There is a benefit that comes from having the sizes that we have now.
- Effective Practices on Improving Student Achievement—Dr. Nugent, Dr. O'Connell, Dr. Reinemann
  - Highlights of the presentation follow, see attachment for full presentation.
  - Using research-based practices, including: collecting and analyzing authentic work which includes common planning time and team meetings with an administrator; comparable structured tasks to look at the kids work across the class for the same task.
  - Increase Kindergarten sight words from 6 to 28.
  - Introduced Daily 5 program in first grade which provides for independent learning
- FY '12 Budget (Continued)
  - Ms. Spriggs spoke of Mr. Springett's vision and driving dedication for the school and the reality of the child getting the attention they are receiving. Mr. Springett stated that he still has a hard time with the 90 kid reduction and how we can ask the Town to continue to pay here and also pay for the bubble that is moving on. He feels you could do the work the same way matching the faculty to enrollment. We support the work; it's just getting the efficiency right.
  - Mr. Springett stated that one of the reasons we allowed the ratios to diminish is due to the implementation of ELA and Math curriculums, PLCs and RTI. It's time to step back and make sure we are using the Towns money appropriately and make sure we are getting the expected learning outcomes.
  - Ms. Fattore asked if you can sell this to a class size of 23, the ratios aren't right because you can't count the aide as a full teacher. Ms. Spriggs spoke of the research on class size and the goal we have of making sure every student's needs were being met and assessed. Ms. Spriggs in no way disrespects the contributions of our teacher's assistants but respectfully disagrees with the way Mr. Springett is looking at the breakdown. Mr. Springett spoke of the 17:1 ratio at Pine Hill. We have a teacher + here, so when we talk about expenses, we need to resolve that question.
  - Ms. Spriggs stated that the educational model is teacher to student, not based on the number of adults in a classroom. Mr. Springett stated that he would like to see a budget presentation with current enrollment and history. Ms. Fattore stated that our budget is based on the policy as written, going forward we could look at a new model.
  - Ms. Tague reported that the salary for a fulltime aide is \$24K and that we have 16 aides.
  - Mr. Springett stated that we have the responsibility of bringing forward a fiscally responsible budget. Ms. Spriggs stated she would never bring anything forward that was not a fiscally responsible budget to either Dover or Sherborn, she in no way dismisses the importance of teacher assistants, but as far as the work being done in this school, this is a fiscally responsible budget for this configuration. Mr. Springett stated that we need to make sure the Town understands how we added the teacher's aides.
  - Ms. DaSilva stated that with the ratios provided by Ms. Spriggs we are outside the policy with two grades with 16.
  - Mr. Springett stated we need to make sure we are delivering a tight budget. Ms. Fattore stated that as a committee we need to decide if we need to come back to discuss this further. Ms. Fattore and Ms. Ringel stated they do not need any additional information to support the budget.
  - Ms. DaSilva stated that 20% of kids are going to school outside of Chickering, so she doesn't understand how we are getting these projected numbers.
  - Mr. Johnson stated that he would like to go back and look at the policies at a different time; if there are significant changes, we should come back and review. At another time he would like to see some of the data on improved outcomes, if possible by grade. He would like to see trended data about how we are doing and are we making significant gains in our environment. He hasn't heard any external data about what are appropriate teacher/aide ratios so we should look at our own data and determine if it's worth the investment. He would like to see the specific systems and tools that we use.
  - Ms. DaSilva requested a motion to accept the Budget version 2. Mr. Springett motioned, Ms. DaSilva seconded. **Vote 11-04:** Yea—Ms. DaSilva, Ms. Fattore, Mr. Johnson, and Ms. Ringel. No-- Mr. Springett
- c) **Principal's Report—Dr. Nugent**
  - Basic Aide Training—5<sup>th</sup> graders are being CPR trained, Dr. Nugent will show a video presentation next month.
- d) **Superintendent's Report – Ms. Spriggs**
  - Policy on the Use of Media—A number of edits have been made to the policy, we are working to update the protocol. Ms. Spriggs will e-mail the updated policy to the Committee.

- Appointment of Assistant Principal—Ms. Spriggs is very happy to announce that Dr. Reinemann has been named Assistant Principal. It was a unanimous decision by the Interview Committee.
- Snow Day Decisions—The Commissioner of Education has sent out an explanation on waivers. Ms. Spriggs stated that students must attend 180 days and have 900 instructional hours; there is a formula to tabulate the instructional time. Ms. Spriggs stated the Calendar Committee is looking at this issue and how it impacts each school. Ms. DaSilva would like to be proactive and prepare a plan in case we run out of snow days. Ms. Spriggs stated that, if we run out of snow days, we should call a joint meeting to make an immediate decision to communicate to parents.
- The Annual Day on the Hill will be held March 29<sup>th</sup>, School Committee members are encouraged to attend.
- Teachers Contract—It was difficult to tackle the complexity of the issues. The participants were committed to respecting each other and the process. Ms. Spriggs thanked all involved for their time and expertise.
- Extra Compensatory Process—The recommendations on the proposals have been made by the Extra Compensatory Committee (ECC). Each ratio is assessed within the matrix. This extra compensation pays for additional time and responsibility that exceeds the teacher's responsibility. Mr. Springett spoke of the ratio discrepancy between the curriculum leader at 2.5 and chorus at 3.5. The recommendation by the ECC for before school chorus is 1.5. Ms. Fattore stated that they have requested \$14,000 for the curriculum leaders. Mr. Johnson spoke of extra compensation being reengineered as part of the MOU process. Ms. DaSilva asked what the process is for getting a Chickering representative on the Committee. Ms. Spriggs will check with the Committee to have a member added. Ms. DaSilva requested a motion to approve the Extra Compensatory Request for before school chorus (1.5), jazz band (1.0) and the curriculum leaders (4 @ 2.5). Mr. Springett motioned, Ms. Ringel seconded. **Vote 11-05: Unanimous**

## 5. Special Items

### a) Dover School Committee Goals – Ms. DaSilva

- Ms. Fattore stated that the goals in our packet aren't the goals we identified in the fall, which are accelerated learners, foreign language and metrics.
- Ms. Spriggs stated that she wants to have foreign language program in the school. She has asked Dr. Nugent to look at the research that was done and how we can bring it into the school. Ms. Spriggs would like Chickering to look at bringing in Chinese Mandarin so that we could have a K-12 program. At the Middle School they have approved a sabbatical to spend a year in China at a Teachers College. Ms. Spriggs stated that she has also asked Dr. Nugent to talk to the faculty about this program and where time could be made to put this program in place. She is committed to making this program happen if School Committee supports it. This will take planning, looking at current instruction, and making sure it's not a FLES\_type program. Mr. Johnson asked if there is a timeline. Ms. Spriggs responded they are just beginning the process, she hopes to have something to the Committee in the spring.
- Accelerated Learners—Mr. Johnson suggested scheduling a grade by grade review at upcoming meetings. Dr. Nugent stated that it would be helpful to have the team here and review over the course of a couple meetings. Presentations were proposed for the May agenda.
- Metrics—We have had discussions at previous meetings about what DSC is looking for to measure student performance, this will tie to the Accelerated Learners work. Mr. Johnson would like to see the data in action, not in a presentation. Dr. Nugent reported they are putting that in place now.
- Teacher Contract—Mr. Johnson reported that they spent a fair amount of time on how we manage the process and component parts including base salary, COLA adjustments, etc. Instead of negotiating each element separately we defined the Town's cash flow situation for the next three years. We agreed to the total compensation number first, and then cut up the pie. We wanted to maintain current programs, have an overall agreement the Towns could live up to without an override situation, and lastly make sure that we really took a look at healthcare as being a key driver of costs and that the program needed to be reengineered like we compensate Town staff. In the final agreement, staff currently in the salary matrix will receive matrix increases only, not any COLA. The dollar amounts in the matrix are frozen at FY11 levels. Anyone at the maximum level shall receive the following COLA: 2% in FY12, 1% in FY13, and 1.25% in FY14. Extra-Compensatory pay is frozen at FY11 levels. On the healthcare front we are moving to the West Suburban Health Rate Saver Plan which is what Sherborn uses for all employees and now Dover will as well. Projected 9% first year savings on the healthcare line, in year 2 and 3 a 4-6% savings is expected. The total compensation increase is 2.58% year over year for the life of the deal. Both groups felt it was important to get a term deal in place for a period of time.

## 6. Future Business

### a) March Dover School Committee Agenda Items – FY12 Budget

**7. New Business –**

- Ms. DaSilva asked about a School Committee representative on the SAC. Dr. Nugent asked for a recommendation for a liaison. Ms. Fattore offered to be the liaison.
- Ms. DaSilva thanked the Administration for the phenomenal job presenting black history month. Dr. Nugent reported that moving forward we are going to honor all cultures.

**8. Routine Business**

- a) Enrollments as of February 1, 2011—reports distributed.

- 9. Adjournment**—Ms. DaSilva requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Springett motioned, Ms. DaSilva seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:45p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Deb Savastano