**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**D.H.S. Auditorium**

**February 26, 2009**

**6:30 P.M.**

**Opening Ceremonies:** all rose and pledged allegiance

**Roll Call:**

***Present:*** Ken Marcucio, Sheila Parizo,Brad Tobin, Rebecca O’Hara, Jodi Chevarella, Jim Stadt, Kim Kreiger. There is a quorum.

***Excused:*** Margo Bondi

***Also present:***, Superintendent Dr. Stephen Tracy and Business Manager Nancy O’Dea-Wyrick

Dr. Tracy addressed the board. This process has been the most challenging for him. The budget before the board tonight that has a lot of money in it, and a lot of people and things that should be in it, that are not. The public can address the board after Dr. Tracy’s remarks. Then a motion will be made to adopt the operating budget for the school system for the coming year as recommended by Dr. Tracy. Then there will be a series of amendments and discussions see to change the recommendation. After that the board will vote to adopt. A second motion will be made regarding the budget for the new middle school. Then amendments and discussion will follow that motion. After that there will be a second public portion. There will then be an Executive Session to deal with some contract matters related to the budget. The board will then come back to the public session after that. Dr. Tracy does not anticipate any further voting.

Two significant things that have changed are the world language program at the middle school has been restored. Secondly, they went from 14 to 12 para-professional positions to be eliminated.

This year’s budget was 16.6 million dollars. There are a number of mandatory increases that the board has no discretion about. There are contracted raises, increases in health insurance, significant increase in special education; increases in physical and medical needs for students, there are anticipated cut backs from the state and federal level. When these increases are added to the current 16.6 million dollars you get 18.2 million dollars.

There is room for improvement in the school system, accountability assessments, curriculum development, motivating and engaging students and professional development. Adding these costs brings the budget to 18.3 million.

There is a 10% in staff reductions - a significant sacrifice, program reductions including athletics and computer instruction at the middle school level, and the internship program. If the board were to adopt the budget the way it is now, it would mean looking for an additional 848,000.00 or a 5% increase of the current year.

**Public Portion**

Tara Hyder – 51 Franklin Avenue. She is a wife, mom and a teacher for the past twelve years. She thanked Dr. Tracy for proposing a draft budget with a 5% increase over last years budget, where other towns are proposing or requiring a 0% increase. However, she has some grave concerns. What stands out to her as the most troublesome of allocation of funds is the reduction of teachers at the elementary level. Dr. Tracy proposes that the elementary schools can operate at high standards with four less teachers, which means large class sizes. Small class sizes improve the educational performance of our children. Large class sizes will place a tremendous burden on our teachers that despite their amazing efforts will prohibit them from meeting the individual needs of all of our children. Furthermore, Dr. Tracy proposes that the reduction of these four teachers should happen even though the projected enrollment in the elementary schools is 67 new students. This is not educationally sound. A class size of 26 students as opposed to 17 is not as effective. A classroom teacher will not be able to meet with small groups of children as often. The result is our students need’s will not be met. Further, there is a proposal for new spending on the on-line budget in the amount of 249,000.00. As a teacher, she does support new initiatives, but not at the expense of losing teachers. There is no professional development, no student achievement system and no curriculum initiatives that is better than a teacher. She understands that the need for data collection for progress monitoring would be great in a different economic climate. We cannot allow this budget to be approved because that would mean we value new initiatives over small class sizes. If we lose these teachers now, it will take too many years to get them back. We should not lower our standards. She is asking the board to not pass this budget and have Dr. Tracy prioritize small class sizes, our teachers, learning and our children.

Mrs. De’Andrea – 112 Cook Lane, Beacon Falls. She is a seventh grade teacher at Derby Middle School. She is here tonight to speak on behalf of the para professionals. There work is like unsung heroes. Without them the children both with and without special needs would suffer from the lack of emotional and academic support. Without this care many students would not achieve an acceptable level of success. During a typical day, Ms. Romano a para professional has six students in that class who needs a para professional. If you are a parent of a child with special needs you understand how crucial every moment of time your child is trying to learn.

Katherine ? (barely audible) She is a special ed teacher in seventh grade. She has been asked to speak on behalf of the library. The library has been vital to the students and the teachers. Before Linda Green arrival in 2001, the library was virtually a ghost town. Linda has gone beyond her role at the H.S./M.S. When teachers seek additional information to supplement their study, Linda works continuously to provide these much needed materials. Linda Greene is an asset to both the H.S. and M.S.

Virginia ? – 157 Chestnut Tree Hill Road. She works at the Derby Middle School. She wanted to thank the Derby Board of Education for the hard work, dedication and concern. She comes to plea tonight to revise their proposal for the budget. Please do not break up the successful education community by laying off teachers, librarians and support staff. That should be the last resort. There are other alternatives. Put off non-emergency initiatives until the economy strengthens.

? Elise Campbell - 38 Cutlers Farm Road, Monroe. She is a para professional at DMS. If they propose cutting jobs like teachers, par professionals and librarians you will set things back. If you propose cutting the people who work one on one with the children, the children who struggle will fall behind and will not be able to catch up. Is there a contingency plan for the children who will fall behind? There is a great concern where those who are working with the children are working with special needs. Those children will continue to grow year after year. We are seeing more and more numbers of autistic children and others coming into the public system. We are struggling as it is to do a good job. Librarians are teaching positions. Regarding the para professionals, we are the people moving among the children, finding the ones who are struggling. This is a tremendous support structure.

Lou Coppola – Hamden CT, represents the Derby Education Association. Our students will not know if we cut a professional development budget, a self esteem budget. They will know every day that there are fewer teachers and para professionals there to help.

Karen Clark – 38 Prairie Avenue. She has two children who went through the Derby public schools and currently a para at Bradley and President of the para professional union. She has been following Derby’s budget for a long, long time. Historically, the Derby school system has been funding below the minimum. The first thing the Tax Board would ask is what is the minimum? She would say is that what you want for your child? Derby just started to make strides. They implemented all-day kindergarten. The last administration, Dr. Robinson recognized the need for support in the kindergartens and implemented para professionals. Children don’t all learn at the same speed. She is surprised she is not hearing more passion from the board of education. She agrees with Mr. Marcucio, if you’re laying off 12 para professionals, 5 teachers, 4 librarians, etc. why do we have new initiatives? Children coming in have a lot more needs than in the past. She also worked at Irving School, a lot of needs there too. The sense from Dr. Tracy is this could get worse, we could have more lay-offs. We have a brand new middle school. If we can’t afford staff, where is the money coming from for the new school? It is a very sad state of affairs for Derby schools. The board’s task is to provide the children of Derby the best education possible. This type of slashing is not meeting that challenge.

Colleen Ezzo – 14 Lakeview Terrace. She works in the Derby school district for ten years, beginning as a para professional and worked with several teachers at Irving School. She was always proud in working hand in hand with the teachers delivering the best possible instruction to the students. The cutting the 14 para professionals and 6 teachers without the support staff will involve large class sizes, and bringing back into district students who have been out placed, she doesn’t understand how the board of education really expects any advancement in education of our students. Over the last several years, there have been great strides, para professional support in the kindergarten and first grades. She now works for the union. What concerns her is, she hasn’t seen the superintendent go to the unions and specifically ask for help. Let’s look at other ways. Most states are implementing new initiatives and it is not new expenditures, it is asking for furloughs, concessions etc. There are shared work programs where instead of a lay off you could look at shortening the work day by 20%. She doesn’t feel they have looked at all the avenues available to us. The elimination of 21 professionals is not good public policy. Those people are going to be unemployed, unable to pay their taxes, with no health insurance, mortgage payments, foreclosure etc. She is asking the board to vote no and look at other ways to cut spending instead of eliminating 20 professionals.

Linda Romano – 304 Hawthorne Avenue. An educator of Derby HS. She wanted to thank the administration for restoring the world language program. She said her para professionals are tremendous, they help the struggling students. She also would like the board to look at the librarian situation. The librarian at the high school teaches, helps with student research. Students need to know how to navigate a library and how to navigate a data system. Ms. Romano said she as well as the students would be lost without the librarian. The librarian at the HS also oversees the virtual high school.

Chantal Gerckens – 65 Hillcrest Avenue. Mother of three with two as students. She wanted to stand up for the teaching staff. Please don’t cut back on the education of our children by cutting back on teachers. We are finally climbing up the ladder and this will put us at a standstill. She believes we need to work with what we have now, before implementing new costly developmental systems. She hopes with any money that does come from the economic stimulus package for education would go to getting back our teachers first. She noticed a 10,000.00 line item for cell phones, is that for black berries, maybe there are other alternatives for some of the personnel who have these cell phones.

Anita Corpio – Newtown CT. She works at Irving School. She wanted to give an article from the NY Times about the importance of the school’s librarians. Librarians are CT certified and have to go to the same training that teachers do. She keeps hearing the division of teachers and librarians. We are librarians, but we are teachers too. She gave the article to the board members.

Public Portion closed.

Dr. Tracy said some of the people here tonight might want to stay close to the process as it moves forward from weeks to months. He passed a notepad to the audience for anyone who would like to be kept informed by phone or e-mail of subsequent meetings and other events between now and June. Keep in mind you are talking tonight to the folks who are asking for money and looking to spend money on the schools and programs. After tonight the district will be talking to the people who have to come up with the money and that will be a very different conversation. The board’s budget to be adopted will be on the website.

**FY 2010 Operating Budget:**

***Motion*** *that the Board of Education approve to submit the operating budget for the Derby Public Schools as recommended by the superintendent for the period of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010 by Ken Marcucio, second by Kim Kreiger* **Discussion:** Ms. Kreiger said when they met on Saturday there was a lengthy list given to Nancy of recommendations from the board as far as looking at new figures with new ideas and she wanted to know if Nancy had that information for them this evening.

Ms. O’Dea-Wyrick went through the information. There is the superintendent’s proposed budget and the list of budget changes from Saturday’s budget workshop. The first was to add back money for interns to help with substituting at the schools at 24,000.00. The next was to add back a librarian with salary and benefits, the next add back .5 librarian to be shared. Then she priced out putting back one, two, three or four elementary teachers, price back the tech ed teacher that covers the high school/middle school. She was asked to price out putting back middle school sports. Mr. Orazietti spent a lot of time doing a bare bones minimum to put the middle school sports back. Reducing legal services was another thought, taking out department heads and take all of the initiatives except for the initiatives related to NEASC and take that back down to current level, in essence zero them out. The Bradley School professional development would be reduced by 8,000.00, Irving by 10,000.00, the Middle School by 6,000.00, the high school by 7,000.00, special ed by 10,000.00, centralized by 20,000.00, the alternative education curriculum development monies would have to be found elsewhere, and the benchmark testing. Another recommendation was no need for the I.T. Squad, also priced out was contracted cost I.T. support for removing the I.T. Squad. The clerical support for Human Resources was taken out, taken out was the I.T. Manager’s adjustment for the change in job responsibilities and also contract out speech services. The final piece was to get rid of the cell phones/blackberries. This list Nancy has documentation for. The changes came to a net add to the budget. It is adding back all the cuts that had been made. Nancy recommends starting back at the top of the list.

Mr. Marcucio will not vote on this tonight. He feels very uncomfortable voting on this when something may not be on this list. He feels very uncomfortable doing it this way. He thought the board was to receive an updated draft. It was Dr. Tracy’s decision to not revise and publish a new book until the board as a board voted to do or not to do this budget. Mr. Marcucio asked at the Saturday meeting if they would get a copy of that before the meeting and was told yes.

Ms. Kreiger feels there is a sense of urgency here and obviously it is an extremely difficult and challenging budget that we are faced with. They want to make sure everyone is clear on what the impact of additions and deletions means for the bottom line as they move forward. If they can get a timeframe for when they can need to submit and move this forward would be helpful. When exactly does the Tax Board need us to come forward with the budget? Dr. Tracy said the date was March 1st. He also understands the boards don’t intend to take up the budget for sometime after that. Dr. Tracy encourages the board, as expeditiously as they can, without feeling rushed, to get this sooner to the City rather than the end of March.

Dr. Tracy said the resulting class sizes from this budget based on the enrollment that they project of 1512 studentsare within the contractual limits as the teacher’s contract has certain limits with respect to class sizes. The class sizes on average will be higher, because of fewer teachers, but they would be within contractual limits.

Dr. Tracy said this recommended budget assumes that we operate on the basis of all existing contracts. Any deviation from that would require a discussion in Executive Session and negotiation with the bargaining units involved. Since that has not happened, this budget presumes all current contract provisions would be lived up to. That topic will be talked about in Executive Session at the end of the meeting tonight.

The board went line by line of the budget. The first was to add back some **intern money.** The schools had 6,000.00 added back to each school to be pooled with the substitute money and then it would be the principals discretion as to how much they wanted to put for a substitute and how much they wanted to put for an intern on campus. Dr. Tracy recommends making this change. ***A*** ***Motion*** *to add .5 FTE intern substitutes per school to the current proposed budget by Kim Kreiger, second by Jodi Chevarella, all in favor.* ***Motion carries.*** An impact of $24,000.00.

The next item is the **librarians**. Dr. Tracy said the current concept is to eliminate the librarian positions and replace them with a library clerk. The board will add back a librarian position at the high school and taking out two of the three library clerks

Dr. Tracy said **alternate ed** needs to be removed from the cut list, because that's the money with which we will bring back youngsters that we could serve better in town and save significant dollars on the out of district placement. That would be a modest investment in a program improvement and a dollar savings for Derby. The other 10,000.00 that is not to be cut is for curriculum development related to NEASC.

There is a line item for curriculum and **professional development** for approximately 58,000.00 which is a zero percent increase.

Nancy did research on the **cell phones and blackberries**. There are 15 cell phones and 10 blackberries. Two of the cell phones are for 24 hour facilities employees. Four are additional phones to deploy to the elementary schools to supplement their minimal phone land line coverage they have there. The remaining phones are with the custodians. The blackberries are used by the principals, the director of special education, the assistant principal, the business manager, the I.T. manager and this is for 24 hour - seven day a week communication as well. Mr. Tobin asked why they can't use a portal system, you don't need a cell phone or blackberry. Ms. Parizo felt the facilities employees could use walkie-talkies.

The **I.T Squad** is a force of one with a student who helps out sometimes. They handle trouble shooting for hardware and software, assisting with software installation and updates and imaging servers. There is a part time person who works 20 hours a week who does routine maintenance.

**Legal services**: Back in 2004 Derby spent 117,000.00, in 2005 Derby spent 39,000.00, in 2006 Derby spent 86,000.00, in 2007 Derby spent 79,000.00. Nancy increased the legal services to 60,000.00 in anticipation of contractual negotiations and legal work to be done. By decreasing it by 10,000.00, it is still increases it year by year from 40,000.00 from this year to 50,000.00 for next year. The board will take out 10,000.00.

**Middle School Sports** Mr. Orazietti addressed the board. He is looking for an additional 25,900.00 at the Middle School. Mr. Orzietti thanked the board for revisiting his budget. He looked at what would be the minimal costs to bring back middle school sports. There are 8 middle school sports now. He also discussed with Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick about help to reduce the cost for soccer for boys and girls, along with cross country, in the winter you would have girls and boys basketball, baseball and softball and cheerleading. The biggest expense is transportation. This board should consider transportation. The City should buy a van and hire someone to transport the athletes. The second cost is the salaries for coaches and officials and supplies. Mr. Orazieti would do the best he can with the zero supplies and get that money from the ticket sales. The bottom line for middle school sports is 25,900.00. The board suggests using the athletic fund to help with this budget.

**Special Education** There is one special ed student at St. Mary's. The school psychologist and the speech person from Irving need to go there. The school psychologist at Irving is also the person who runs the after school program. There will be no cuts to lines 32 and 33 in this budget.

**Elementary School Teachers** To add back 1 teacher(with benefits) it would be a 4.93% increase, 2 teachers would be 5.35%, 3 teachers would be 5.74 %, and 4 teachers would be 6.11%.

**Middle School Teachers** Dr. Tracy' s recommended budget the faculty would go from 16.7 teachers to 15.4 teachers for a difference of 1.3.

***A MOTION*** *to accept the amendments made to the proposed budget for the 2009-2010:*

*Add: $44,000.00 additional monies to interns/substitutes*

*Add: a librarian to be shared in the district*

*Out: $62,000.00 for two library clerks*

*Add: $269,000.00 four elementary teachers*

*Add: $9,400.00 for coaching salaries for middle school sports, the rest will be funded from the Athletic Account*

*Out: $10,000.00 from legal services*

*Add: Professional Development dollars to the current year budget level*

*Out: Reducing system wide student testing bringing it back to the current year budget*

*level.*

*Out: clerical support for Human Resources*

*Out: cell phones and blackberries*

*bringing an increase of $1,015,892.00 or 6.11% increases by Brad Tobin, second by Jim Stadt, all in favor.* **Motion carries.**

***A MOTION*** *by Ken Marcucio with a second by Kim Kreiger that the Board of Education approve the operating budget for the Derby Public Schools as recommended by the Superintendent and amended by the Derby Board of Education for the period of July 1 2009 to June 30 2010 in the amount of $17,633,941.00, all in favor.* **Motion carries.**

**Middle School Budget**

Ms. O'Dea-Wyrick presented the middle school budget with incremental expenses, and additonal costs as to what is in the current middle school budget with the assumption that occupancy will be taken midyear. The budget is $230,676.00. ***A MOTION*** to adopt the projected middle school budget by Rebecca O'Hara, second by Jodi Chevarella,

**Discussion:**

**Custodial and Maintenance**

there was discussion about custodial care. Even though the middle school students will be relocated, all the rooms in the high school will still be utilized, so there will be no change in the needs for custodial care. However there is a reduction of a .5 custodian.

The turbine maintenance is a contracted service recommended by the Derby Middle School Building Committee. David Nardone said there are 3 buildings with 1 person for each building. The person they have has a hard time to complete these older buildings. With the new building we would need the extra help. Mr. Tobin questioned the need for 4 people to maintain the new building. Mr. Nardone said the maintenance person would not be just for the middle school, it is an addition to this budget because it's going to happen when the school gets on line. The maintenance people work in all the schools.

The cut to the custodial services is a reduction of 1.5 to 1, which would reduce the bottom line by $16,340.00. The new bottom line is $212,501.00.

**Assistant Principal**

The high school and the middle school should have a full time assistant principal. With the middle school opening midyear they need a half at each the high school and the middle school.

***A MOTION*** to adopt the middle school budget as amended for July 1 2009- June 30 2010 in the amount of $212,501.00 by Rebecca O'Hara, second by Jodi Chevarella, all in favor. **Motion carries.**

**Executive Session**

**A MOTION** *to go into Executive Session at 10:07 p.m. by Brad Tobin, second by Jim Stadt, all in favor.* **Motion carries.**

When the tape was brought back on, it was in fast speed. Do not know the outcome of Executive Sesssion.

**Adjournment:**

*Motion by Ken Marcucio to adjourn, second by Kim Kreiger, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at p.m.*

*Respectfully Submitted*

*Denise Cesaroni*

*Recording Secretary*