

**BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF
December 7, 2010**

Bedford High School - Large Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Bickford

2. Adjourn to Executive Session

Ms Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O’Gara.

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Bickford	absent
Ms. O’Gara	Yes

3. Return to Open Session

At 7:50 p.m., Mr. Hafer re-opened the public session of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Ms. O’Gara, Mr. Pierce and Ms. Bickford. Miss Emma Currier, student representative, was also in attendance.

4. Comments From Pubic

None

5. Discussion: FY’12 School Budget

Last week, Dr. LaCroix presented a FY’12 School Department “Maintenance of Services” budget request of \$33,608,820, which is \$1,640,685 higher than Fy’11 budget. This evening, Dr. LaCroix presented a level-funded budget request.

Dr. LaCroix explained that a level-funded budget will require a \$1,640,685 reduction. However, she is unable to reduce the Special Education Out-of-District budget and the Early Retirement/Sick Leave Buy Back budget so reductions will have to come out of Core Services and Utilities.

Dr. LaCroix explained the values she and her Administrative Team used to come up with reductions. The values include:

1. Focus on the needs of children.
2. Meet needs of all the children (typical, special education, English Language Learners, and gifted).
3. Continue to move schools forward.
4. Acknowledge that reductions cannot be equal among the schools.
5. Recognize that the problem is a multi-year problem so a long-term solution is needed.

6. Try to maintain current class size. (K less than 21, grades 1&2 less than 22, Lane School less than 24 and Middle School less than 25)
7. Maintain effective programs including Response to Intervention.
8. Maintain comprehensive, continuous programming for a K-12 education.
9. Maintain support services for students recognizing the impacts of increasing class size.
10. Work with town to address larger fiscal problem.

Dr. LaCroix gave a big picture view of the budget.

	<u>FY'11 Actual</u>	<u>FY'12 Leveled</u>
Prof Staff	247.3	237.9
Para Staff	88.15	77.85
Custodian	25.05	24.05

Proposed reductions include:

Salaries

- Administrative Staff 1 ELL Director
- Teachers 7.4 positions
- Librarian 1.0 position
- Teaching Assistants 7.5 positions
- Educational Assistants 2.8 positions
- Custodians 1.0 positions (.5 at Lane, 4 lead stipends, no summer custodians)
- Total salary reductions \$1,314,694

Dr. LaCroix said these reductions would affect about 20 different employees and represent a 5.77% reduction in positions.

Non-Salary Items

- No late busses, change in start time \$32,784.
- No virtual High School \$15,000
- Reduction in custodial supplies \$3,405
- Elimination of the BHS/JGMS window washing contract \$3,380
- Reduction in contract maintenance services \$5,227
- Reduction in special education independent evaluations \$5,000
- Reduction in special education Collaboratives \$75,000
- Reduction in utilities (system-wide) \$24,217
- Reduction in BHS electricity \$8,000
- Reduction in computer replacements \$144,900 (second year in the row)

Total non-salary reductions are \$316,913.

Dr. LaCroix explained some of the details of the reductions.

Eliminations at Davis:

- .8 kindergarten teacher
- .8 Education Assistant
- 1 grade 1 teacher
- 2.5 Teaching Assistants

Eliminations at Lane:

- 1 Grade 3 teacher
- 1 Grade 5 teacher
- 2 Teaching Assistants
- .8 Educational Assistant
- .2 Educational Assistant

Eliminations at Middle:

.4 gifted teacher (consulting)
1.0 Special Education Teacher
1.0 Librarian
2.0 Teaching Assistants

Eliminations at BHS:

2.2 teachers across all departments
1 Teaching Assistant
.6 Educational Assistant
.4 Educational Assistant
1 Assistant Coach *to be determined*

Eliminations in Special Education:

\$75,000 out-of-district tuition
\$8,000 summer IEP meeting money
\$5,000 independent evaluations

Eliminations in Technology:

Eliminate the entire computer replacement budget (161 units).

Eliminations in Athletics and Extracurricular:

\$200,000 *to be determined*

Also, there will be a revision in classroom supplies and materials. The new budget of \$207,097 is 15.8% lower than it was in FY'07. The FY'12 equipment budget is 57% less than it was in FY'07.

To summarize, the level funded budget request for FY'12 is \$31,977,813.

The next steps will be to continue to work with the Fiscal Planning Committee and to respond to the Finance Committee's Guidelines.

As the budget process continues, Dr. LaCroix thought it would be important to remind everyone of the mission of the Bedford Public Schools:

"The school community will provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment in which the intellectual, social, ethical, and emotional growth of all learners will flourish."

Mr. Pierce spoke about the recent developments at the Finance Committee. He explained that the Finance Committee very recently issued their guidelines and asked the Schools to keep the FY'12 budget level from FY'11. However, the baseline of the FY'11 used by the Finance Committee is less than the actual FY'11 budget because of a one-time increase of \$225,000 and the allocation of a charge related to the town health insurance plan. Mr. Pierce explained that as a result, a leveled school budget would be \$30,879,011. This means that a level funded FY'12 budget request will be \$2,167,306 less than the budget request presented last week.

School Committee members discussed the Finance Committee memo dated 12/1/2010. A lot of questions surfaced regarding the Town's allocation of savings realized through the new alternate town health insurance plan implemented this year as the School Committee's number was a charge and not a savings. Also, there was a lot of discussion on the effect of applying the \$562,503 received for educating the students from Hanscom Air Force Base.

Ms. Bickford said that she thinks the Finance Committee calculation of the base budget is unfair because previous year's "pothole" funds were never applied this way. She challenges the application of the impact aid because it is different from years past.

Mr. Hafer agrees with Ms. Bickford's concern and feels that the base budget calculation is not fair. He also feels that the Finance Committee's reduction of \$225,000 from the base budget is inconsistent.

Ms. Bickford agreed and said that a motion passed last year by the Finance Committee never addressed the money (\$225,000) as being a one-time funding and that it will not be part of the budget base in the future.

Mr. Hafer said that this approach needs to be discussed with the Finance Committee.

Mrs. Morrow, a member of the Finance Committee in the audience, provided a lot of insight into the Finance Committee's handling of the numbers. She reminded the School Committee that the Finance Committee always tries to work with the School Committee to come to an agreement on final budget numbers.

Ms. Bickford agreed with Mrs. Morrow that the Finance and School Committees have always been willing to work together. However, she feels that some of the financial applications used this year may be an issue that the School Committee and Finance Committee cannot agree on. However, Ms. Bickford does not believe that this disagreement will hamper the normal budget development process.

Mr. Pierce stated that the budget reduction decisions were judicious but he is concerned that the cuts will erode the growth of our programs.

School Committee members reviewed some of the details that made up the proposed \$1.6 million reductions. Members asked for more information on some of the larger items. For example, Ms. Bickford asked for more information on what the financial numbers would like if the 6.2 grant-funded Special Education positions were not rolled into the operating budget.

Ms. Bickford also commented that it may be time to begin to ask what entire programs can be eliminated since it does not make sense to continue to chip away at the budget year after year. One suggestion is to look again at requirements for offering bus transportation for any students in grade 6 and above.

Mr. Pierce said he is very concerned about the risk of eliminating some Teaching Assistants. He fears the schools may not be able to support the special education students in-house and therefore, we could end up out-placing more students.

Mrs. Morrow suggested that the School Committee explain the impacts of the proposed cuts to the Finance Committee.

Ms. Bickford asked for more information on the impact of the reductions at the High School. She also asked if there would be any librarian at the Middle School. Dr. LaCroix said no, only an assistant. She explained that this was not an easy decision (none were) but the middle school has absolutely no room to cut teachers due the number of students and the team approach. She had to look outside the classroom. Ms. Bickford asked for more information on the middle school enrollment and class sizes.

Ms Seibert and Mr. Hafer asked Mr. Coelho to roughly calculate the amount of savings in benefits associated with the people who will be laid off. Mr. Pierce agreed and suggested that if health insurance savings from adopting a new plan are being cherry picked and treated differently then we should look at the increase in the pension expense since most of the school's employees are part of a separate state-run plan.

Ms. Bickford summarized the situation. She said that the bottom line is, there are funding problems so the School Committee must grapple with hard questions. School Committee members agreed.

Dr. LaCroix said that she could prepare another round of reductions for next week's meeting. However, she is very reluctant to do so. It will be very difficult for school Principals to tell people that their job is at risk before the next School Committee meeting. She does not want to present further cuts with out staff notification. Therefore, she agreed to do this on the January 4, 2011 meeting.

6. Guidelines for Acceptance of Hanscom AFB Students at BHS

Dr. LaCroix explained that last year, some of the housing on Hanscom Air force Base was privatized. Therefore, Bedford Public Schools needs to approve a motion that explains which students from Hanscom will be accepted to attend Bedford High School.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the Bedford School Committee allow students who reside on Hanscom Air Force Base to attend Bedford High School during the 2011-2012 school year if the student meets the criteria for Bedford to receive Impact Aide Category A or Category B funds while the student is in attendance.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. O'Gara

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Superintendent's Report

The BEST is holding a fundraiser at Barnes & Noble on December 9th and December 10th. They are also sponsoring a fundraiser on Amazon.com. Ten percent of your shopping dollars will go to BEST.

8. Liaison Reports

Ms. Bickford reported that preliminary results of the CEC rankings have been completed. The CEC is recommending funding \$850,000 of projects. School projects that are included in this budget are capital maintenance, space modifications and Lane School network upgrades. Items such as copier replacements, the one-to-one computer pilot, and some energy efficiency projects were not on the "go-ahead" list.

Ms. Seibert said she will be working with the Turf Design Committee to represent the schools' needs along with the Athletic Director in the design of a potential turf field at the Sabourin football field.

9. Approval of Minutes

Ms. O'Gara made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the November 9, 2010 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce
MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

10. Future Agenda
Budget discussions.

11. Adjournment

Ms Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:25 p.m..

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford.

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes
Ms. O’Gara	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 7, 2010

Exhibits/Documents

- **Bedford Public Schools 2012 Level Funded Budget Defined: System Changes presentation.**
- **Memorandum from Thomas X. Busa, Finance Committee dated 12/1/1**
- **Draft of School Committee minutes dated November 9, 2010**