

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF

January 13, 2009

1. Call to Order

At 8:25 p.m., Ms. O'Gara called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present were Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford.

2. Comments from the Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix announced the following items:

Leave of Absence:

Melina Rosecan	.6 Social Studies Teacher	High School
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Resignations:

Jennifer Sinapius	Reading Teacher	Davis School
Kelly Cantu	Science Teacher	Middle School
Lisa Lodi	Cafeteria Worker	Lane School

Appointments:

Barbara Ferri	Replacement Science Teacher	Middle School
Julie Sutton	Replacement Reading Teacher	Davis School
Danielle Forest	Teaching Assistant	Lane School

4. FY'10 Budget Discussion

Dr. LaCroix reported that she has continued to work on the FY'10 budget. As a result, she will now present a FY'10 budget that is lower than the original budget presented to the School Committee. Dr. LaCroix noted that there was a significant reduction in the utilities number. Mr. Jones, Director of Facilities, was able to comfortably reduce the cost of utilities for FY'10 by 4.22% from FY'09.

The budget is as follows:

Salaries	\$22,005,720
Operating Exp	\$ 1,770,043
SPED ODD	\$ 4,608,096
SPED ODD Transportation.	\$ 1,053,679
Transportation	\$ 728,794
Utilities	\$ 1,071,429
Total	\$31,237,761 (which is a 3.97% increase over last year's final budget number.)

Dr. LaCroix also presented the numbers in a different view.

Core Services	\$24,361,000
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Out-of-district	\$5,661,775
Utilities	\$1,071,429

Dr. LaCroix pointed out that Special Education costs represents 29.17% of the entire budget. Last year, it was 24.22% of the total.

She also reminded the School Committee that Bedford Public Schools will be negotiating a new transportation contract and that the placeholder for this expense is \$728,794. However the final amount will not be agreed upon until May or June.

Dr. LaCroix explained that state “pothole” funds and circuit breaker reimbursement funds should be received from the State. However, she is concerned that building rental income may decline due to the poor economy. Again, she clarified that special education costs is based on known students and that there is no placeholder for any future students.

Mr. Kenney, a member of the Finance Committee, thanked the School Committee for their hard work on developing this budget. He is pleased that it is well within the range of the Finance Committee’s expectations.

Ms. Bickford said that the School Committee originally came up with a budget that was \$275,000 over the Finance Committee guideline. Now however, the revised budget is actually \$110,305 below the guideline. Therefore, she recommends that the School Committee vote on this budget request tonight.

Ms. Bickford did ask if the utility reduction was a high-risk assumption. Dr. LaCroix said no, it was a medium risk and that Mr. Jones was very confident with the revised, lower number.

Mr. Hafer asked why the Special Education salary line increased slightly. Dr. LaCroix and Mr. Coelho explained that this did not happen as a result of adding staff. But in fact, half of the Assistant Director of Special Education position was moved to the operating budget. They did not want to wait until there was a deficit in the grant funds because these grant funds may be needed for various specialized services that may arise such as psychological counseling, home tutoring etc.

Mr. Pierce said it was nice to be in a position to meet the Finance Committee guidelines.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee recommend approval of the FY’10 budget request of \$31,237,761 which is a 3.97% increase over FY’09.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

All members of the School Committee were pleased that they were able to vote on a budget recommendation that was under the Finance Committee guidelines and that they were able to vote on it so early in the budget process.

5. Appointment of School Committee Member to Charter Review

The School Committee appointed a member to serve on the Charter Review Committee. Ms. O’Gara said that she would like to be this member.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee appoint Ms. O’Gara to serve on behalf of School Committee to serve on the town wide Charter Review Committee.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. O’Gara accepted.

6. Strategic Communications Contract

David Coelho explained that the Strategic Communication Task Force has been working with a consultant for many years to help the Town advocate for an increase in federal and state funding for education of federal employee dependents attending Bedford Public Schools.

Funding for this consultant is settled through June. In order to continue, Bedford Public Schools had to issue an RFP. The sole respondent was Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications, the current consultant.

The new contract is broken out in four 6-month phases. Phase 1 will be for January – June 2009, Phase 2 is July 2009-December 2009, Phase 3 is for January 2010 – June 2010 and Phase 4 July 2010 – December 2010.

Each phase will cost \$60,000 paid on a monthly rate of \$10,000. The total contract is worth \$240,000. The scope of the services and activities will include working with Congressional allies in support of Bedford’s existing proposal before the US Department of Defense Educational Activity; seeking federal funding for providing education to military dependents attending BPS; seeking a long-term solution for Bedford through re-authorization of Impact Aid Law; advocating for greater reimbursement from the MSBA.

Dr. LaCroix and Mr. Coelho are requesting that we seek Town Meeting approval to enter into this contract with Rasky Baerlein.

Dr. LaCroix explained that the efforts of the Strategic Communications Task Force really helped get state pothole funding and MSBA approval and funding in July. However, there is still a lot of work to do with federal fundings.

Mr. Pierce said that the town and the schools have really “poured gas” on the situation where state and federal funding for education has not been adequate for educating federal employee dependents since the 1950’s. He thinks that this new Democratic Administration may be receptive to helping us.

Ms. Bickford thinks things on a federal level have been stalled and will eventually have to move forward.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee authorize Dr. LaCroix to be signatory for the Bedford Public Schools on the Strategic Communications Task Force with Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications, Inc. subject to approval by Town Meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

7. Liaison Updates

The Youth Task Force's Youth Center proposal was presented to the Selectmen. It was positively received and Selectmen have indicated support for initial funding in FY'10.

Capital Expenditure Committee has held a few meetings discussing preliminary project rankings. However, the School's top request for a space planning project did not make it to the top of the CEC priorities. Dr. LaCroix said that she has met with the CEC to try to educate them on the importance of this project. She said that this topic might need to go to Town Meeting so that residents understand the importance of it.

Finance Committee meetings have focused on guideline projections and models. Also a timeline was discussed with January 31st as the targeted Saturday meeting. The Finance Committee will use the School Committee's new budget number when they update the financial models.

8. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix reminded everyone that January 15 is an early release day and that Friday, January 16th is a full professional day (no school for students)

Dr. LaCroix also reported that the Davis School Principal Search Committee will meet to review resumes and hope to begin interviews in February. She commented that there are a lot of openings for elementary school principals in the area so the process will be very competitive.

Dr. LaCroix said that she expects that there will be a delay in the administration of the MCAS social studies exam by the state education department.

Dr. LaCroix mentioned that Bedford Charter has been working to find a way to reduce bus delays that have been happening lately due to in town construction. They have added two new drivers to alleviate the problem. Parents were notified of these changes and it is expected that students will arrive home about 15 minutes earlier.

Dr. LaCroix is also proud to announce the opening of the new High School store, "The Buc Stop".

Dr. LaCroix congratulated the Bedford team in the Women in Science competition. Bedford was the champion!

Dr. LaCroix thanked the Bedford Education Foundation for funding a Future City competition at the middle school and for funding the purchase of Study Island software for Lane School.

9. Future Agenda

January 20th meeting will include approving the High School's 2009-2010 Program of Studies.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

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

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**EXECUTIVE SEESION
MINUTES OF**

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