

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
February 23, 2010**

5:30 PM Regular Meeting

**Hopkins Academy Music Room**

**PRESENT:** Chair: Mrs. Tracy Kelley, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak.  
School Committee Members: Ms. Linda Dunlavy, Ms. Robie Grant and Mr. Tom Waskiewicz (5:40PM)  
Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Nicholas Young, Board of Trustees' President, William Dwyer, Finance  
Committee Member, Howard Koski, Carol Trane, Administrative Assistant, Gazette Reporter, Nick Grabbe  
and Walter from TV5.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair, Tracy Kelley, called the meeting to order at 5:34 P.M.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**MOTION: (Grant/Michalak) move to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2010, meetings as presented. VOTE: In favor: Kelley, Michalak, Waskiewicz and Grant. Abstention: Dunlavy.**

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

**1. School Facilities Update**

Dr. Young reported that the Hopkins Academy window replacement project is very close to completion, noting there are some screens that have to be installed when received, but this should put us out of the renovation business for this academic year. Dr. Young said at this point in time it is difficult to track what the efficiency will be in terms of budget figures for next year. While there have been many cost saving figures bantered around, Dr. Young used Paul Schroeder's of the Pioneer Valley Collaborative estimate of a 20% savings, adding Mr. Schroeder has been bidding the fuel futures for area schools for many, many years.

**2. Trustee Land-Playing Fields**

Dr. Young introduced Mr. Bill Dwyer, President of the Hopkins Academy Board of Trustees and thanked him and his fellow Trustee members for their long-standing service, generosity and on-going collaboration on so many issues for the benefit of the schools.

Mr. Dwyer started his presentation by noting that the Trustees are an independent organization that supports the work of Hopkins Academy.

He said the Trustees have been on a twenty-year journey, starting in 1990 when the Trustees purchased a house and parcel to the west of the Hopkins gym. The school had wanted to purchase this parcel and use the house for a preschool; however that did not work out and the property was on the verge of foreclosure. At that point, quick action was necessary and the Trustees pulled together the purchase of the property in three weeks, realizing that the town could not act that quickly. The Trustees realized that it was the only piece of property abutting the school that was on the market.

At this same time, there was a long-standing interest in the Zygmunt parcel, noting it's the cornfield beyond the Hopkins soccer field. Mr. Zygmunt had been talking with a member of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Norm Barstow, for years about his desire to see this property eventually go to the Trustees and then go toward the expansion of the school fields. Mr. Zygmunt deeded the property to his nephew and upon his death in the summer of 2009 at age 93 or 94, the nephew and the Trustees reached an agreement to purchase the property.

Mr. Dwyer, using a sketch of the properties involved, related how the Rex family and the Trustees in a series of pending transfers will reconfigure the land allowing for a more conducive configuration to support the expansion of the playing fields at Hopkins Academy with an additional 7.9815 acres.

Mr. Dwyer said this meeting was to touch base with the School Committee to begin a dialogue to have the town purchase of this property for the school, again noting that the added acreage would allow for substantial reconfiguration of the soccer fields, plus the added benefit of having all teams playing in one

location. Mr. Dwyer also wanted to get this into the mix since the School Committee has been presented with major repairs to the existing soccer fields.

Mr. Dwyer hoped the SC and the BOS would look favorably on this opportunity to almost double the playing fields.

In response to taking the next step, Mr. Dwyer agreed that the town must approve the money to purchase the land. He estimated that the Trustees invested \$571,000; then sold two dwellings for a total of \$467,000, leaving a balance of \$104,000; survey costs of \$3,000 and twenty years worth of paying taxes, came to an out of pocket amount of approx. \$125,000. That amount is more than the Trustees can gift; however, he felt perhaps the boards could meet somewhere acceptable to both sides, noting the Trustees are not out looking to squeeze a profit out of the town.

Chairman Kelley said she'd been approached by Lisa Sanderson of the Planning Board and member of the CPA, who said there might be a possibility of securing CPA funds to purchase this land, and the added advantage to using these funds, if available, is that the SC can go back and ask for money from the CPA to improve the land; however, if the land is not purchased with CPA funds, then the SC cannot go back and ask for money to make improvements.

Dr. Young said he did not want to get ahead of the process, so if the Committee is comfortable with the available land as presented by Mr. Dwyer, then he would begin to discuss this with the town, perhaps getting it on the warrant for the fall Town Meeting.

In response to Ms. Dunlavy's question as to whether any of the land was in 61A, Mr. Dwyer said the Trustees did not put theirs in 61A even though they qualified, Mr. Zygmunt did not avail himself either and the Rexes could not qualify for a 61A exemption because they did not have 5 contiguous acres. Also in response to Ms. Dunlavy's inquiry about the timing of the purchase, Mr. Dwyer said the Trustees would lease the land to the Rexes for the farming season, therefore ideally if everyone is ready the SC could present this at the fall town meeting.

Dr. Young noted that even if the town proceeds to acquire the land, it is a long process to build and redesign the fields. Mr. Dwyer said he and someone from the SC should go to the Selectmen to brief them at an upcoming meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Unit C Contract Negotiations**

Dr. Young reminded the Committee that there are two unions that are part of the school system personnel. One is Unit A covering the teachers union, the other union is Unit C which represents the secretaries. Both contracts are due to expire and will have to be renegotiated. The teachers union has requested a delay in negotiations until April. Dr. Young recommended responding to the Unit C request and then discuss the process by which a timeline can be put together at the next school committee meeting.

### **2. FY'11 SCHOOL BUDGET**

First, Dr. Young distributed a copy of the Preliminary Report on Current Fiscal Conditions in Massachusetts School Districts, January 2008, saying consider this a cliff note. Referring to page 3, he pointed out that on average, districts spent 18% more than their foundation budgets; adding, that over time we are seeing district spending higher and higher percentages over the foundation budget.

Dr. Young proceeded to review the initial Net School Spending formula, how it related to the foundation budget and why districts cannot live within the confines of the original formula, noting that back when the formula was created the assumption was that health insurance would average no more than 3% in 1992 and as we know each year this has increased around 12% on average. Also back in 1992 when they developed a hypothetical school district model they were not assuming technology. It was in 1996 when Hadley was wired, to put things in perspective. It was also assumed at the time that nurses didn't have to be RN's, Hadley used to have an LPN that worked district-wide, now we have two fulltime nurses and a nurse leader. There was also an assumption around special education which for us meant having half as many special needs teachers as we have now and for the sake of discussion this evening is the need for an adjustment counselor, yet the state says we should have only a half-time school psychologist district-wide and all classes will have a minimum of 25 students.

The DESE says the formula does not work, we know it does not work that's why so many districts are above Net School Spending. For the last five years the DESE has said the foundation formula has got to be revamped; however they have not taken this on because the state does not have the resources to pay their portion of the increase.

Another interesting factor, Dr. Young said back in 1992 the economist came together and said it will cost, on average, \$7,200 per student to educate in 1993; however they only had \$5,400 available per

student, so they voided the assumption and went with the resources that they had. When asked why the formula doesn't work, he points out that it was premised on a series of data assumptions that are no longer applicable to the contemporary educational environment. That said, Hadley is a district that is much closer to that Net School Spending Formula than most of our peers and to back that up he had another document that showed the Per Pupil Expenditures in 2000 and 2009, adding 2000 was a highpoint for us having a full staff and sufficient resources to run the schools. Over a nine-year period our district budget has averaged a 1.42% increase over a nine-year period, believing that shows fiscal conservatism and frugality. Dr. Young said we are one of the most cost effective districts in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In response to Ms. Grant, Dr. Young said most districts are substantially above Net School Spending, believing Amherst is about 75%, Northampton 25% and Hatfield is substantially above, estimating that Hadley for this year could be 5-6% or 4 to 5-1/2 when costs are finally calculated.

Dr. Young began reviewing the proposed FY11 Budget by saying what's instructive about the budget is what's not in it, noting he has never said that in all the years he's been presenting budgets. The proposed FY11 budget has nothing in it other than the current positions and programs, with the exception of one less elementary teaching position that currently a long-term substitute position. Taking this a step further, Dr. Young explained the need to watch class sizes as we go forward so that the Committee is comfortable with the student/teacher ratios.

This budget will fall short in the area of technology, short in maintenance, falls short in instructional supplies and does not address COLAs.

The starting budget, as presented on the handout, entitled FY11 School Department Budget Proposal has a starting budget figure of:	\$5,680,530.00
*Add in (1) P/T Adj. Counselor for HES(.5FTE)	27,000.00
**Add in (1) P/T Science/Health Teacher-HA(.67FTE)	30,000.00
Total Proposed FY'11 Starting Budget	\$5,737,680.00

\*The part-time Adjustment Counselor is being recommended because of more concerns in the emotional and mental health domain now than ever before. This will help insure that we are addressing these issues with the student body and trying to make sure we are promoting healthy, social interactions with our students, i.e. anti-bullying. Dr. Young reported there are more children that come from circumstances that would warrant some degree of support in school. This service is common practice in most schools and said we would be very hard pressed to find a school that didn't have this type service.

\*\*The second item is less of a choice point because the Hopkins schedule is affected by the increase in enrollment. Dr. Young reminded the Committee that as our numbers increased at Hopkins, no teachers were added, and in fact, over the years we have faded out a couple of periods with the elimination of the Dean of Students and Head Teacher positions. The master schedule will not work without a .67FTE science/health teacher at Hopkins. Without this position some class sizes would run 32, 33 or 34 which he believed the Committee would not be comfortable with, plus the space really does not accommodate large class sizes either. To keep this within the reasonable parameters that have already been established by the School Committee, this position needs to be added; adding, we have increased enrollment by 30-40 students over the last five years and have not added another teacher, but now our needs are greater.

If the Committee agrees with the recommendation to add these positions, then the FY11 Budget would be \$5,737,680. While admitting he did not have a crystal ball, possible funding could encompass a level-services contribution from the Town of \$5.3 million, and the gap could be narrowed by using a combination of school choice funds and grant resource offsets.

Dr. Young said he did not see a scenario, given the current state of the economy, that money won't be spent out of all coffers, all pockets to make it all work. Again, saying this is a starting point and he'd be happy to talk about specifics as he reviewed the proposed budget page-by-page.

In the interest of transparency, on page 1, Dr. Young clarified that his salary is broken out in a combination of page 1 and then again on the professional development line.

Dr. Young, in addressing his salary line on Page 1, said the state says we're slightly over on central office administration, but slightly under in curriculum and professional development administrative costs, and maintenance. Therefore in areas where the superintendent wears multiple hats, he should be dividing his salary out in multiple places and then we would see we are cost effective in administration, but because of the way we are budgeting the superintendent's salary in order to show transparency, it makes us look like we are higher in administrative costs, but in fact we are not.

Dr. Young also noted on the handout sheet that COLAs were not included in the budget, however, step increases that are contractually required are in this budget. Also included in the budget is a vacation payout for the elementary principal who is retiring next year.

In response to Mr. Howard Koski's question on "Step" increases, Dr. Young explained that even though the contract expires, those teachers who can move as a matter of years of experience, (i.e. a person on Masters 10 will move to Masters 11 even if there is not COLA). Dr. Young said it is his understanding that even if you do not settle a contract, the teachers who are eligible will get a Step increase, adding he will again revisit this with the school attorney.

Small increases on Page 2 and 3 are related to the Steps mentioned above. Page 5 shows and increase in Salaries for Professional Development. This account covers five (5) days of our teachers' salaries. These days are counted toward meeting our professional development obligations with the state, an area where we should probably be spending more money. Page 6 shows a substantial decrease in Technology vs. FY10 where this budget was increased with grant offset money. Again, Dr. Young stated the need for money in Technology, figuring near the \$80,000 range to keep up with FY10 levels. Also, mentioning the possibility of revisiting the laptop lease program that he believes will elevate classroom learning and secondly, would reduce our technology costs over time, plus it's where the new curriculum and instruction work is going. We have started to purchase Promethians, which are the next step above whiteboards, that allows for interactive participation with the students. More Promethians are needed; adding, technology is a substantial investment and is ongoing.

Page 7 Nurses are out of grants and he is still hoping to get a competitive grant to reconfigure the budgeted nurses salary figures. Dr. Young shared with the Committee the difficulty with maintaining nurses, and the fact that we've had a revolving door with hires leaving for offers that are \$20,000 to \$25,000 more than we can offer.

Page 8-Point of interest, Dr. Young said our Athletic and Student Activity programs would all be less than half of what they currently are if we were forced to live within Foundation Budget. When asked why we don't charge User Fees, his response is we have calculated the potential income, however, the Boosters Club has consistently made sure that they cover those costs to avoid students having to pay a User Fee. Page 9 The Custodial Budget, does not have anything new other than making an adjustment up in the secondary custodial salaries to reflect what was spent in FY09. Reductions were made in Electricity and Fuel, hoping to realize a savings with the new boilers at Hopkins. Budgeting in the Maintenance area leaves Dr. Young feeling we are too lean, noting that just to maintain our heating units, air conditioning, steam traps, etc. could use the entire budgeted amount. This Maintenance area is also targeted to be revisited, just like Technology.

Page 12 Special Education is budgeted for what we believe we have to spend. It is close to the figure we have been spending in years past but have been able to offset with grants which then allows us to put some money elsewhere.

Page 13 Vocational Tuition shows a budget of \$201,010. In years past, we averaged in the \$200,000 range; however, we had less students attending in the last couple of year but now we are facing a large cohort of students projected to enroll for FY11. The spike downward is now showing as a spike upward and returning to more level figures for vocational tuition.

Noted: Dr. Young noted that school districts that had vocational tuition in their town budgets prior to Ed Reform, those numbers were not being counted against schools in the Net School Spending Formula. Hadley just happened to have Voc tuition in their budget and therefore we could say we're disadvantaged in this way.

Dr. Young explained the difference between the FY09 and expenditures for elementary and secondary supplies, saying roughly \$30,000-\$35,000 was spent on requests from teachers at the elementary school; about \$40,000-\$45,000 at Hopkins and roughly \$15,000 in the special ed student services area including the Library. This comes to about a \$100,000 figure for instructional supplies.

Dr. Young said this budget is boring but supposed in this economic climate it's good to have a boring budget; but he purposefully singled out the area that were additions. The two new positions are necessary and said he would like to advertise the Science/Health position in March in order to lock that position in, again stating, this position is necessary to make the schedule work at Hopkins.

Dr. Young offered some general comments on curriculum, saying we often hear that it would be great to expand or improve our curriculum. A huge delimiting factor for us is twofold. One is we have a space problem at Hopkins and therefore there are not many more programs we can add. And after attending the ASA conference working the issue of where we are going with technology nationally and in the state, the advances in curriculum instruction are technologically driven and there are some very interesting things he would like to discuss with the Committee at another meeting, but he wanted to plant the seed of where we are going in education.

Dr. Young offered this proposed budget as a starting place for discussion with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee around funding.

Dr. Young asked the School Committee for a public vote of support around hiring an Adjustment Counselor and the Secondary Science/Health Teacher.

**MOTION: (Grant/Michalak) move to allow Dr. Young to advertise for two new positions: A part-time .5FTE Elementary Adjustment Counselor and a .67FTE Secondary Science/Health Teacher.**

**VOTE: Unanimous.**

#### **OTHER (Reports, and/or Information Items, etc.)**

- Dr. Young informed the Committee that he's been asked to present at a forum at Wheelock College on policy debate on where we are going with the latest version of education reform where he will represent superintendents across the state on the evening of March 4 in Brookline, MA.
- **Balance Sheet dated July 1, 2009 to February 23, 2010**

Prior to the closing the meeting, Finance Committee Member, Howard Koski, asked for clarification on where funds would come from if the current proposed school budget did not include any COLAs nor any money for capital purchases. Dr. Young said while he is not sure what will be raised in School Choice funds, but those would have to be used to close the gap, and we don't know what will be available in grants, but he would assume those two buckets, if you will, will combine with the barrel from the town to produce enough to fund the budget.

- Chairman Kelley announced that Dr. Young received the Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year Award at the ASA Conference in Phoenix, AZ. Ms. Kelley passed out a list of the 50 top high-performing superintendents across the country.
- Mr. Waskiewicz congratulated the Hopkins Academy Basketball teams and acknowledged that the girl's team made tournament and invited everyone to come out to the game on Thursday night at 7PM. Mr. Waskiewicz also wanted to publicly acknowledge and thank the Athletic Booster Club for their continued efforts and support for our teams. Their presence at each and every event is most appreciated. Interested parties are encouraged to become a part of the Club.
- 

#### **NEXT MEETING**

March 30, 2010, at 5:30 PM, Hopkins Academy Music Room.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: (Waskiewicz/Michalak) move to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 PM. VOTE: Unanimous.**