

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS
May 25, 2010**

6:30 PM Regular Meeting

Hopkins Academy Music Room

PRESENT: Chair, Mr. Thomas Waskiewicz, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak. Members: Ms. Linda Dunlavy, Mrs. Tracey Kelley, and Ms. Robie Grant.
Dr. Nicholas Young, Superintendent of Schools. Finance Committee Member, Ms. Molly Keegan, Carol Trane, Administrative Assistant, Gazette Reporter, Nick Grabbe and TV5's Walter Montani. Rene Hembrough, Kent Haake, John Silvestro and Linda Hannum.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Waskiewicz, called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: (Michalak/Dunlavy) move to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2010 Regular Session Meeting, February 4, 2010 Executive Session Meeting and April 26, 2010 Regular Session Meeting as presented. **VOTE: Unanimous.**

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY'11 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Dr. Young, for the record, notified the School Committee publicly and formally that the MGL requires there be a 10-day notification in the local paper prior to a public hearing and unfortunately our legal notice was only in seven days before the meeting; therefore the Public Hearing was re-advertised and rescheduled and presented at this meeting.

Dr. Young said the proposed budget figure of \$5.3 million is the request from the town, noting this is a level services budget with two exceptions. There is a .5 FTE Elementary School Adjustment Counselor position and a .67 FTE Secondary Science/ Health Teacher position for Hopkins Academy. The Science/Health teaching position is necessary because the schedule does not work with the increased number of students.

Dr. Young said parents are most concerned about class sizes. Again emphasizing that he continues to monitor Grade 4. While he doesn't want to react too early, he will continue to monitor the numbers and report back to the School Committee.

As reported in the first public hearing, currently the student/teacher ratio under this budget plan at the elementary schools is approx. 21 students per teacher. There are 49 students slated for 4th grade; one class of 24 and one of 25, acknowledging this is our highest. Noted also, there is one long-term elementary substitute teacher that will not be replaced in this budget. In simple terms, he is changing a 1FTE teacher for a .67 Sci/Health teacher and a .5 Adj. Counselor.

Dr. Young said since the budget was already passed at the Town Meeting at 5.3M in money coming from the Town, additional resources will be needed to get to 5.7M. This will require using grant resources and possibly School Choice money.

Dr. Young said there is one item further down on the agenda but feels it's appropriate to include in the public hearing. The unexpected Special Education costs are estimated to be in the range of \$30,000. Dr. Young warned that something entirely different could happen and go in our favor; however, it has been made known that we are expecting one preschooler who will require, because of his specific medical happenstance, close monitoring with an LPN.

Chairman Waskiewicz took this time to share a letter from a parent expressing appreciation to Mr. Forman for his years of service to the schools, citing how their children have benefited and how their son, who is a senior grading in June, will go on in music at the college level because of the influence of Mr. Forman.

The Girls' Softball Team clinched a post-season birth and the Boys' Baseball Team has also won. Mr. Waskiewicz expressed pride and appreciation for the students' hard work, spirit, enthusiasm and the

coaching efforts, along with community support. Noted that Garrison B. pitched a perfect game, the first anyone can recall at Hopkins since the days of Mr. Rick Berger.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

1. MSBA Needs Survey Update

Dr. Young did meet with a Mass. School Building Authority architect on May 5, 2010, for approx. 4-1/2 to 5 hours to do a thorough review of our schools from a facilities perspective. At the end of the review, Dr. Young learned that there were two areas that the architect was going to submit to MSBA as needing attention sooner rather than later. One area is the roof at Hopkins Academy and the other is the Boys and Girls Locker Rooms. Dr. Young said the question is what happens in the process. The architect is alerting MSBA of these particular needs, his recommendation that these needs must be prioritized and then it is up to MSBA to decide where we fall on their priority list of other projects across the state. The architect said it would take him a few months to work through the system, but we can follow up with them and see where we stand and perhaps file another application for funding, adding, the entire MSBA program is a competitive grant process requiring applications, etc. and are then awarded at a specific percentage of reimbursement to the cities and towns. The 1.7million-dollar core repairs to Hopkins were in the form of a competitive grant from MSBA. Dr. Young pointed out the grant comes with a specific percentage reimbursement at 49.74%, with additional points awarded for buildings that are well maintained, if the community has made an investment in their schools, etc. which garnered Hadley 2 additional points because of our efforts in taking care of the building. Dr. Young said MSBA felt very strongly that Hopkins be put on the priority list in the last go-around because the building had been well maintained and it wouldn't surprise him if we get put on the list again for funding in the next year or two to address the roof and locker rooms. At that time the Committee will have to decide whether to apply for grant funds.

2. Second Reading - Policy KDB and KDB-R

Member reviewed the referenced Policy and Exhibit at their last meeting and agreed with the added wording to comply with the recommended language from Secretary Galvin's Office and the advice of School Attorney Fred Dupere to add a \$.50 charge for computer printouts when documents are requested.

MOTION: (Kelley/Grant) move to adopt revised Policy KDB and KDB- R. VOTE: Unanimous.

3. HES Enrollment Update – Item addressed under the Public Hearing of the Budget

4. Anti-Bullying Law

Members received a copy of the newly adopted anti-bullying law. Dr. Young said he spent a great deal of time addressing and reviewing potential plans for an Anti-Bullying program mentioning the law has a series of things, like training for employees, a policy for identification and consequences, etc. He said Hadley has a lot of things in place to address bullying, like a policy in the student handbook at each level. Dr. Young said the law calls for a social curriculum to be identified by the state sometime in the fall. They are also going to ask for a plan by December of 2010 for how all of this will be implemented.

Dr. Young said the administrative team has been working closely with the Chief of Police who is involved with programming at the schools. He said as the Superintendent he believes it's critical to include the three main groups, the parents, the employees and a program for our students. The administrative team met with Dr. Arthur Friedman who has expertise with anti-bullying. Copies of his bio were made available, along with copies of his power point slides that he used to review bullying with the parents in Ludlow. Dr. Young said there are a lot of definitions to define bullying and offered the Committee a three-page list of guidelines to identify bullying behaviors. Dr. Young said he would like to see Dr. Friedman used for the Opening Day presentation for the teachers on their first day back, adding he takes this as a very serious issue.

The Open Houses scheduled for Sept. 21 and 23 would have a forty-five minute program for parents as part of Open House because he feels this is the best chance of getting the largest number of parents involved in this critical conversation. Dr. Young said Chief Hukowicz said the police can now issue a "stay-away order" to be placed on a student for a short period of time in cases where families feel this is necessary. Again, Dr. Young said he feels it's imperative to involve all the stakeholders in this very serious conversation. The schools administration is exploring a follow-on peer program for students in October after parents have had a chance to talk to their children about this important topic. Dr. Young said he wants to send a strong message that we are serious about this topic and we are serious about involving everyone in the school community in this important conversation. He is envisioning opening next year in a pretty significant way in the month of September and October addressing all of the groups in a broad conversation.

There was general discussion on how this could work during an Open House, childcare issues and other concerns. Dr. Young again expressed how critical it is to communicate with the families and ask them to make the effort to give an extra 45 minutes prior to visiting classrooms at Open House. The Chief of Police will be part of this, explaining law enforcement's role. Dr. Young said the same presenter would be used for all three groups and would assist in working with the schools around a student program to promote prevention rather than mediation as is common with peer groups. There are also curriculum implications. Dr. Young noted we do have some of this subject in our health program now, but the state is trying to refine what they mean and we will most likely see more added to our health curriculum which will be brought up for review next year to examine where we are with this important topic from the K through 12 and what implications it may also have for preschool. The Commissioner of Education has talked about developing a policy for the entire state and will update everyone at the end of the summer, or early fall. Dr. Young said he was ready to bring a proposed revision to our current policy to make it a little more comprehensive, mostly to overview and add the explanation or description of what bullying is, but decided not to when the Commissioner said that he was thinking about putting out statewide policy. It seems obvious that we will have some sort of addendum to our handbook put out in the fall once we receive guidance from the DESE.

In answer to Mr. John Silvestro's question on how the program would be evaluated, Dr. Young said the state has on-going tracking of all kinds of behavioral infractions by category. This should give us a good sense of trend analysis over the last three years vs. after intervention. Dr. Young did add that we will need more components, like parent involvement, etc., adding we don't have a lot of classic behavioral infractions reported to us in the course of a year. The state has questioned our low incidence for things like the number of students suspended; we don't have the weapons issues many districts face, along with drug issues. The state thinks we are under reporting when in fact we don't have a lot of those issues. With this bullying category, hopefully with a clear definition, we will be able to track even better; adding he believes parents have to be involved. Our health survey can also include questions regarding this topic, along with the other questions asked about risky behavior.

Dr. Young he is now focused on getting a program in place that involves all the stakeholders, getting the date set, starting to work through the curriculum, starting to line up the steps that need to be lined up between now and the fall, absent additional guidance from the DESE.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Preschool Program

Dr. Young noted that we have a standard budget for our preschool program that essentially looks at expenses and revenues being about \$170,000 each. Currently there are two preschool programs: A full-day program and a half-day program, with many individual arrangements within those broad categories. The requests for next year exceed our current capacity. The goal has always been to serve all of the Hadley parents who want their children in our preschool with the secondary goal to offer non-Hadley residents space was available. Twenty students is the maximum allowed in each section and may be expanded only by specialized waiver with the accrediting body on a per student basis. Dr. Young noted that preschool is a special ed program, adding that does not mean all students in preschool are special ed, but the idea behind preschool is to have role models for students who might need help to improve their behavior or performance or time on task.

The program always planned on having twenty families wanting a full-day program with two half day offerings, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, maybe offering Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday. However with more working families, parents are looking for full-day accommodations. Right now we are looking at two full days with some combination of one half day. Dr. Young reported that a half-time teacher could cost approx. \$20,000 and half-time paraprofessional about \$8,000; supplies, materials and snacks about \$1,500, plus this would have an implication for our paraprofessional staffing in our half-day program because if that becomes full-day, then we'd have to pay extra for the paraprofessional of about \$3,269; for total expenses of \$32,769. With fifteen students paying a half-day tuition rate, (\$2,866) it would generate about \$42,000 in additional revenue. Dr. Young said if the School Committee adopts this proposal, he is not sure if enough families will come forward to make it a full-day program, in which case the monies still work. He said the possible combinations are hard to explain, but wanted the parents to know there will be options that can accommodate the Hadley residents. There is no request for an increase in tuition for next year. Not knowing exactly how to address all of the various scenarios, Ms. Grant offered a motion to allow for the creation of a third class if enrollment determines the need.

MOTION: (Grant/Dunlavy) move to allow for a third class in the Preschool Program if needed.

VOTE: Unanimous

2. Medicaid Program – Mr. Waskiewicz reported that he attended the Selectmen's meeting on May 19 and discussed the Medicaid reimbursement program. Mr. Waskiewicz said he agreed that the SC would pursue and discuss it if the Selectboard agreed to a 50/50 split between the town and the school, but didn't get an answer. Mr. Waskiewicz sought his Committee's advice and/or approval to go back to the Selectmen's meeting with that same proposal and come back with an answer.

Dr. Young said there seems to be considerable confusion around this program, noting there is no March date that would prevent us from going forward again at anytime since we are a fully-approved program as verified by Mass Health. As a point of clarification, if reinstated, tracking would only go forward, understanding that we could not file for reimbursement for past months when we were not in the program.

Mr. Michalak agreed that Mr. Waskiewicz should meet again with the Selectmen, but Ms. Grant wasn't sure if Mr. Waskiewicz should go alone wondering what will be the outcome. Selectmen are meeting on June 2. School Committee will ask to be placed on their agenda.

Mr. Waskiewicz in response to Finance Committee Member, Molly Keegan's assertion that revenue has been lost, said the school's first goal is to educate the students before we become a revenue generating machine, but if we can do both it's a plus and he would like to continue to discuss an equitable split of the revenue with the Selectboard.

Dr. Young said there seems to be some confusion around somebody else being able to deal with the Medicaid for us, adding, we have always had an outside source that receives 6%, which is standard, for doing the final processing of the paperwork but noted that the amount of work that needs to go in is not aligned with work that we currently do. Dr. Young said at the time the program was being developed, FC Member Dr. Klepacki cautioned that from his experience how much work really goes into filing for Medicaid reimbursements. Dr. Young said even though we used a vendor to assist in the filings, there is a substantial amount of work that needs to be done by the service providers. The vendor makes sure everything is collected properly and organized consistent with the expectations and requirements of the insurance carrier and Umass is as inexpensive as the other options, like Lower Pioneer Valley or any of the others, it's all about the same. In response to Ms. Keegan who recalled the original estimate of reimbursement was in the \$12,000 range but actually increased to the high \$40,000 and believed Mr. Klepacki didn't see the benefit of paying out a percentage when the reimbursement was so low. Dr. Young agreed when we first took this on it was a leap of faith, but now that we are more seasoned, there is a reality in the degree of work that's necessary and the more students we have the more paperwork is required which translates to more person hours. Dr. Young said he understands this is a source of revenue, he also understands the nature of the conversation and the need to look at all sources of revenue, but emphasized, this it is not a freebie is the point he'd like to make.

3. Unexpected Special Ed Costs-(included in information provided during the Public Hearing on the Budget)

4. Request from a Community Member

Mr. Waskiewicz received an email from a community member and said he would attempt to answer the questions. One asked if the School Committee could add their contact information on the school website and ask members permission to do so. Dr. Young said any information the Committee Members are will to share would be added to the site. Secondly, there is a question on the time of the meetings and setting the meeting dates six months in advance. Chairman Waskiewicz said he responded that this was hard to do given the busy schedules of each individual member and in the nineteen years he has been a member of the Committee it has been tried and failed miserably and caused many meetings to be rescheduled due to conflicts. The current practice to schedule month-to-month has worked best. Another questions was to included a public comments section on the agenda to which Mr. Waskiewicz noted that meetings are not rigid nor formal and members of the audience are called upon when addressing the Committee on any issue and do not have to wait for a set time on the agenda. Question-who does the agenda-answer, the SC Chair in conjunction with the Superintendent. There was a question about the principals' report to which Mr. Waskiewicz acknowledged that these are the reports that are offered to the citizens of Hadley and are included in the Town's annual report, and while the SC receives a copy prior to the printing of the town reports, they are informational items only, not offered for discussion. Referring again to the preparation of the agenda, Mr. Waskiewicz said the agenda for the next meeting is worked on

almost immediately after the current meeting adjourns but more intensely as the date of the next meeting approaches. Ms. Dunlavy noted that the changes to the Open Meeting Law will require agendas to be posted 48 hours prior to the meeting. And finally, the question has come up regarding student representation on the School Committee. Over the years it seemed to work out when two students have been able to share responsibilities in attending the meetings. This has not been consistent and he said the SC will make another effort to encourage student participation by sending their elected representative. Dr. Young added that he has already made that request to Mrs. Bonneville and she reminded him that there have been student reps on and off over the past years and didn't believe anyone attended more than twice. Perhaps the students don't find this as engaging as their other activities.

In response to the information provided on the school's website, Dr. Young reminded everyone that while our website isn't that great, the problem we have is a limited amount of personnel time. Regularly the technology director says what is the priority, and the answer is student computer issues and teachers requiring assistance. Keeping our academic infrastructure is a priority and when it's comes to better website vs. student services, there is no contest. Dr. Young was asked if he considered parent volunteers and said he would look into it.

Mr. Waskiewicz was once again asked about having a public comment section on the agenda and he read a letter from the Atty. Fred Dupere discouraging the Committee from making this a part of the agenda, noting that even when there are ground rules they tend not to be followed. The attorney went on to say that individuals and/or organizations have used the public comment forum to disrupt school committee meetings and take over the agenda preventing the SC from addressing issues for which the meeting has been called. Ms. Kelley remarked that she didn't understand why there had to be a formal situation, adding that if someone wanted to discuss something in particular than the Committee should be informed and prepared, if it's just to comment on an agenda item being discussed, then they are called on to participate.

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

1. Graduation - June 4, 2010 at 6:00 PM
2. Last Day of School - Half Day on June 18th
3. Copy of MCAS State Report - Information item that was mailed to all families from the high school.
4. School Updates - Reports from Elementary Principal , Phil DiPietro, Secondary Principal, Diana Bonneville and Director of Student Services, Mrs. Kathleen Boyden were reviewed aloud by Dr. Young.
5. PAC Awards-The Parent Advisory Council, made up of parents of special needs students, recognized Dr. Lord and Ms. Sue Lehman for their efforts that go above and beyond.
6. Press Release - Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Consortium. This deals with assessment that would go above and beyond the MCAS and also how to assess the readiness of students to go on to college or careers.
7. Demolition of Old Gym-June 21 to August 18 - Dr. Young heard from the Town Administrator and discussed dates that would work when students are not in attendance. Dr. Young said we are excited about the prospect of the Old Gym coming down and will be more excited if the space is used to expand the current Hopkins parking lot because there are numerous events for which we do not have adequate parking.
8. Mr. Waskiewicz noted that at the recent Grinspoon Awards Banquet, not only were Jack Horrigan and Fred Goodhue honored for their excellence in education, Dr. Young was surprised to be honored for being chosen Superintendent of the Year for Massachusetts and given an all-expense paid trip to Aspen, CO.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, June 21, 2010, at 5:30 PM, Hopkins Academy Music Room.

EXECUTIVE OF SESSION

MOTION: (Grant/Grant) Enter into Executive Session for the purpose of strategy planning with respect to Collective Bargaining with Unit A and Unit C. And further, the Committee will not reconvene in Regular Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

Chairman Waskiewicz asked for a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote: Michalak, yes; Grant, yes; Dunlavy, yes; and Kelley, yes and Waskiewicz, yes.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: (Michalak/Kelley) move to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:05 PM. VOTE: Unanimous.