

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2005
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT**

SPECIAL MEETING TO APPROVE 2005-2006 PROPOSED BUDGET

Chairwomen Whelan called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. Board of Education members present were William Bloss, Keith Bishop, William Dwyer, Kathleen Nolan, Greg Muccilli, James Ralls, and Sandra Whelan. Administrators present were Barbara Truex, Anne Keene, and Andy Potochney.

The Board discussed the Pre-K program at Guilford Lakes School. Mr. Bloss stated that the current market fee for a three-day program is \$1,800 annually. Mr. Bloss stated that the program at Guilford Lakes is a terrific program and currently has a fee of \$400 for a four-day program. He suggested raising the fee for Guilford's program to \$1,500.

Mr. Bishop suggested that the fee should be raised to \$1,000 with a sliding scale based on need. He stated that other programs, such as Guilford Center for Children, use a sliding scale.

Mrs. Truex stated that Joseph Onofrio surveyed towns regarding the fees for Pre-K programs. Most of the fees were \$1,000, some were \$900 and Madison's was \$15 per day. Mr. Bloss noted that in New Haven the fee for Pre-K programs could be as high as \$4,000. Chairwomen Whelan agreed that \$400 is low but she did not think the fee should be raised to the market rate of \$1,800. She added that using a sliding scale would allow for a more diversified group of students that would be eligible to attend. Mr. Dwyer noted that the same scale used to determine the free and reduced lunches could be used for the Pre-K program. He stated that he felt a fee of 50% of the market rate with a sliding scale would be appropriate. Mr. Muccilli suggested a fee of \$1,200 with a sliding scale. Mr. Ralls suggested not setting a rate tonight but to come back with a plan to increase the fees.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Board voted six in favor and one (Bloss) opposed to increase the fees in order to generate an additional \$20,000 of revenue for a total of \$32,000 in revenue from the Pre-K program.

Chairwomen Whelan stated that the Board had received two scenarios for the 2005-2006 proposed budget from Mr. Potochney. Mr. Ralls discussed the staff positions that would be eliminated from the proposed budget. Mr. Bishop stated that the proposed budget would provide a good educational system and that any further reductions would take away from the quality of education provided to the students of Guilford Public Schools.

Mrs. Nolan discussed the reduction to the pension line and asked Mr. Potochney if he was comfortable with this reduction. Mr. Potochney stated that he was. Mr. Dwyer stated that the reduction to the pension line for the 2005-06 budget is acceptable but that this should not be done in future budgets. Mr. Ralls agreed that the reduction should be a one-time occurrence.

Mr. Ralls asked Dr. Keene if she had any feed back on the World Language Program. Mrs. Keene replied that she had received a recommendation that afternoon and had just started to review the plan. She added that the plan recommends not adding staff to the 2005-2006 budget and that the current curriculum should be reviewed and upgraded for both the 5th and 6th grades.

Mr. Ralls discussed items that were suggested as possible reductions to the 2005-06 Budget. He stated that increasing the estimate for the Excess Cost Grant would be to risky based on the discussion with the State Representatives at the last meeting. He added that reducing both the legal line item and the budget for interns would not be wise choices. Mrs. Nolan added that the Board should look for ways to reduce special education costs. Mr. Ralls stated that one possible way to reduce special education costs would be to pursue litigation of these matters, which is why he would not recommend reducing the legal fees line item.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mr. Muccilli, the Board voted one (Bishop) in favor and six opposed to reducing 2005-06 proposed budget by \$608,000. which would result in a budget of \$41,271,106.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted to approve the 2005-06 Proposed Budget of \$41,171,106. Mr. Bloss proposed an amendment to reflect the additional \$20,000 of revenue from the Pre-K program. Mr. Dwyer accepted the amendment.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion as amended for the proposed 2005-2006 budget of \$41,151,106. which is an increase of 5.34% over the 2004-05 Approved Budget.

Mr. Bloss discussed the revenue received from the athletic receipts. Mrs. Truex discussed the fees for building use.

Upon an motion made by Mr. Dwyer and seconded by Mr. Ralls, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Trudeau
Accounting Manager