

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2009
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Mary Beeman, Barbara Dudley, Keith Bishop, Lou Iorio, Alan Meyers, Kathleen Nolan, Linda Sanacora and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella and Anne Keene, Rick Misenti. Also present were Business Administrator Andy Potochney, Operations Director Cliff Gurnham, and Accounting Manager Linda Trudeau.

2. ACT ON: FY 2009-2010 Budget

Chairman Bloss noted that the Board of Education Budget will be submitted to the Board of Finance on February 12, 2009.

Dr. Forcella stated that the Budget represents a 3.67% increase over the 2008-2009 Budget.

Chairman Bloss noted that the majority of the public input during the Budget Public Forums on January 26 and 27 related to Special Education issues and funding.

Mrs. Sanacora noted that there were also speakers advocating for technology and asking not to reduce funding for this initiative.

Mr. Zuse asked Dr. Forcella which programs he is recommending that the district scale back.

Dr. Forcella responded that the district is looking at new ways to assign paraeducators in Special Education which will reduce the need for as many positions.

The Board had some discussion about medical insurance rates. Discussion included the consideration of reimbursing employees for not subscribing to our insurance when their spouses are already insured.

Chairman Bloss questioned the \$25,000 expense for asbestos removal. Mr. Gurnham noted that the district has spent \$24,000 to date this year and has averaged over \$23,000 in recent years, adding that there is still asbestos in the schools.

Andy Potochney explained that there have been large claims resulting in an increase in Workers Compensation of 32%.

Mrs. Nolan questioned a decrease of 40% in security. Dr. Forcella explained that grant money and other money allocated in the current budget will be used to purchase video cameras and security cards.

Chairman Bloss asked about the increase in the district nurse position from .5 to 1.0 FTE. Dr. Forcella explained that the increase is needed to supervise the nursing staff and meet the demands of the position. There was discussion about possibility scaling back this position.

Chairman Bloss began a discussion regarding the Board of Education's contribution to the Town's health insurance deficit. The proposed contribution for 2009-2010 is \$166,000. Chairman Bloss suggested that this number be reduced by \$100,000 to \$66,000.

Chairman Bloss noted that it is important to consider the potential impact – both positive and negative of changes in monies received by the State.

Mr. Zuse noted that there should be enough money in the proposed budget to cover potential deficits and State funding decreases.

Dr. Iorio stated that he supports Dr. Forcella's current budget and believes that it has been scrutinized as much as possible.

Mr. Bishop stated that he is not comfortable reducing the budget.

Mr. Zuse stated that it takes many years to make up the difference when a budget is proposed with too small an increase.

Mrs. Dudley stated her belief that Dr. Forcella has done the hard work and developed an appropriate budget for our times.

Mrs. Beeman stated that she does not want to make a decision regarding the budget based on fear that the budget will not pass at referendum.

Discussion continued between the Board Chair and members regarding the appropriate budget increase to propose to the Board of Finance. Chairman Bloss stated that he must be able to present a budget to the Board of Finance that reflects the best possible efforts of the Board of Education. He restated his interest in reducing the budget by \$100,000.

Dr. Iorio stated that, in the past, the Board has advanced the Budget to the Board of Finance as a unified group. He stated that he would support Chairman Bloss's proposed reduction as it will only impact debt service and not programs or staff.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2009-2010 Budget with a \$100,000 reduction to the Board of Education's contribution to the Town's health insurance deficit.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Dudley and seconded by Mrs. Nolan, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education