

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2011  
ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS ROOM, GUILFORD, CT**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Barbara Dudley, Mary Beeman, John Ireland, Susan Renner, and Ted Zuse. Also present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, Andy Potochney and Linda Trudeau.

**2. Public Forum for Input on FY 2011-12 Budget**

Chairman Bloss stated that the 2011-12 represents one of the smallest proposed increases in recent years identifying the primary area of increase as health care.

Mary Bloom identified herself as a former Guilford teacher and administrator in a neighboring district. She expressed concern about the continued cuts to the supply budget noting that teachers will spend their own money to make up the difference for needed supplies.

Ms. Bloom asked for clarification in the reduction in staff and its impact on the elementary schools.

Dr. Forcella explained that overall the number of classroom teachers in the elementary schools will remain the same. He noted that the three instructional coaches are shared among the four schools. There is a place holder for the fourth coach. He explained that any inequalities in class sizes in the elementary schools due to changing enrollments will be addressed and adjusted next year.

In response to Ms. Bloom's questions about the instructional coaches and the district's contract with the Institute for Learning, Dr. Forcella explained that there is one contract with the IFL for all professional development including the coaches's training. He also noted that the instructional coaches spend a good deal of time in classrooms working with the teachers.

Ms. Beckett asked for clarification regarding the explanation of transportation decreases and increases in the budget. Dr. Forcella explained that while regular transportation is increasing, the district will realize a net savings of \$80,200 due to a savings of \$178,700 in Special Education transportation.

Chairman Bloss noted teacher contract comparisons with other towns in Connecticut negotiated within the framework of the binding arbitration system. The percent increases ranged from 3.7% for two years in Madison to 8.93% for three years in Andover. The average increase was approximately 6%. Guilford's GEA contract represents a 6.14% increase over three years. Chairman Bloss noted that Shelton's contract went to an arbitrator and the result was a 7.5% increase over three years.

Chairman Bloss noted that Guilford's school system achieves more with less, noting that Guilford ranks 80<sup>th</sup> in the state in expenditures per pupil.

Mr. Zuse noted district accomplishments including maintaining small class sizes, the elementary world language program, technology, and revised class schedules at GHS. He noted his concern about underfunding instructional materials and supplies.

Marlene Bodner noted that a smaller supply budget impacts families who have to provide classroom supplies for projects in school that use to be provided by the school system.

Mrs. Dudley expressed her appreciation to Dr. Forcella for putting forth a responsible budget and believes that most community members share this belief.

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Mr. Zuse stated that he believes there are people who are uncomfortable with the underfunding of supplies and instructional materials (in the 2011-12 budget).

Mrs. Beeman asked if it is feasible to begin making some purchases in anticipation of a future in-house autism program.

Dr. Forcella responded that the district is actively pursuing grants and could potentially begin training and professional development for existing staff. He noted that there is work to be done within the existing Special Education Department whether the program begins or not.

Mr. Zuse requested that a comparison be made between the cost to create an in-house program with our existing K-12 students and the cost to out place these students.

Chairman Bloss suggested that the district consider having an outside consultant analyze our Special Education Program as other districts like Simsbury have done before we launch a major new initiative like the autism program.

Dr. Forcella noted that the Facilities Subcommittee will be bringing capital projects to the Board for discussion on January 31, 2011.

Ms. Bloom suggested that, if the supply budget should increase, something else in the budget should be decreased. She doesn't believe that the overall budget should increase over the proposed 2.3%.

Chairman Bloss noted that the Senior Tax Freeze Program for those who qualify in Guilford remains a viable and successful program.

The Board discussed the importance of the Budget not being too low as to leave people feeling dissatisfied that needs are not being met. They discussed the importance of a certain percentage increase and what it will take to maintain current levels of student performance.

Jamie Mikolay asked if there are other areas of concern that are being underfunded.

John Ireland noted that there are ongoing issues with facilities and energy inefficiencies that should be addressed, some of which that should be a part of the budget and not have to be bonded.

Chairman Bloss stated that the Board will continue its discussion on the budget on January 31, 2011, and will vote to move the budget on to the Board of Finance.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Zuse and seconded by Mrs. Renner, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lorri Hahn  
Clerk to the Board of Education