

NORTH SALEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
NORTH SALEM, NEW YORK 10560
www.northsalem.k12.ny.us

SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF EDUCATION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2006

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the North Salem Central School District was held on Wednesday, May 24, 2006. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 6:49 p.m. by Board President, Carla Palma.

Board members present at this time:

Ms. Carla Palma, President
Ms. Alison Hublard-Hershman, Vice President
Ms. Lisa Douglas, Trustee
Mr. Paul Giamundo, Trustee
Ms. Norma Hart, Trustee
Ms. Marie Martell, Trustee

Mr. John O'Meara, Trustee, Absent

Also present:

Dr. Peter R. Litchka, Superintendent
Ms. MaryJo Hauser, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach, Director of Finance
Dr. Patricia P. Cyganovich, Principal MS/HS
Mrs. Roberta Reiner, Principal, PQ
Ms. Barbara Lavrakas, Assistant Principal, PQ
Mr. Henry Sassone, Director, Physical Education

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After the Pledge, Board President Carla Palma welcomed all present. This is the second special meeting for budget reconsideration.

COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None at this time.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – 3/22/06, 4/19/06

Tabled

ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDED MINUTES – 3/8/06, 3/15/06

Tabled

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2006-2007 Budget

Dr. Peter R. Litchka

I would like to reiterate last night's presentation of what the various levels of reduction would represent. A 2% reduction of \$664,000 would affect some programs and activities. A 3% reduction of \$996,000 would affect teaching positions. A 4.5% reduction would be a contingency budget resulting in \$1,472,545.00 in required cuts. In reference to the New York State Education Department's School Report Card, 2004-05, we are within one standard deviation of the mean. The diagonal line is the trend line. If you are on the line, you are on the trend that most districts have. We are right on the trend line. This is not class size. It is the number of certified teachers (including administrators) in the District, divided into the student population.

In regards to when and if full-day kindergarten will become mandatory. The legislature is considering a bill to mandate it by 2010. This has not yet been passed by the legislature or signed by the Governor. We are one of 44 districts that do not have full-day kindergarten. Seventy-nine offer combination of full-day and half-day of 750 districts in New York State. All others offer full-day.

Class size

Mrs. Reiner

Our class sizes will be in line with what we feel is appropriate. There will be no teachers asked to leave. Some may change grade level. This includes full-day kindergarten.

JV/Varsity Lacrosse

Dr. Cyganovich

Eliminating junior varsity rather than varsity lacrosse would save \$11,000 rather than \$18,000. We would use existing JV team equipment and uniforms.

Mr. Sassone

Some kids would miss out on the opportunity to play. Varsity coaches and officials are paid at a higher rate.

Advanced Placement Courses

Dr. Cyganovich

You have the current enrollment and the number of sections before you. We are juggling what we will be doing for next year. With the exception of French, we use a cutoff of 10 students. Eliminating a portion of a teacher would impact our ability to attract and maintain quality teachers. These courses are those colleges look at. If a district has no AP classes, it would not be held against the student. Living in Westchester County, colleges assume you have an array of challenging courses for your students. Currently we offer a comparable number of AP courses to other schools in Westchester that are similar in size.

Class Size Analysis

Dr. Cyganovich

Current offering in each department. Some courses are designed to be small. AIS classes are designed to give additional support to students who need it.

Special Education

Ms. MaryJo Hauser

Special education is governed by laws of the state. Resource room is limited to 5 students per teacher. Collaborative classes have special education students in classrooms with regular education students with the addition of a special education teacher.

Bus Replacement Program

Mr. Ken Waldron

Currently have 47 buses. Asking to replace two vans this budget that are over 10 years old. Department of Transportation can come in at any time and say a bus can't run anymore. Buses that we are getting rid of, on bid we can get about \$5,000 - \$8,000.

Ms. Fassler-Wallach

Overview of items with 20% or more increase. Main drivers of the budget are and were shown on handout. Finance increase of 27%

was for a New York State mandated internal auditor. BOCES revised cost structure. Instead of getting savings, we got less of an increase.

Ms. Palma

The basis for costs increases is not necessarily driven by program enhancements from year to year. Added custodial services and pension increases have had a huge impact, as well as insurance rates and mandates.

At this time Ms. Palma asked for questions from Board members. There being none, the discussion was opened to members of the community.

- Poor voter turnout – defeated by 22 votes. 118 families from PQ voted, and 120 from the MS/HS – many only had one parent vote.
- Consider re-instating video conferencing – we are falling behind.
- Keep full-day kindergarten. NYS has one kindergarten curriculum whether it is taught in half-day or full day.
- Budget did not fail because no one voted; it failed because people voted against it. Effect of a full-day kindergarten is eliminated by second grade. We haven't missed anything by not having full-day kindergarten. This area should be considered rather than cutting all these smaller items.
- If full-day kindergarten stays in the budget, I predict we end up with a contingency budget.
- Cost of full-day kindergarten is negligible.
- Cutting full-day kindergarten would be doing a great disservice to our children.
- We live in a community that values education. When a budget goes down, it is arrogant to put up the same budget. Modest, minimal cuts say to the community that the Board of Education is listening and cares about the schools and the students.

Ms. Palma

Thank you all for coming out this evening. We have before us a series of decisions we have to make. We need to decide whether to put up the same or a reduced budget on June 20th. I agree we need

to respond. If the budget fails on June 20th, we will be forced to go to a contingency budget. I would be very concerned about it as a board member as well as a parent.

At 8:45 p.m., Ms. Palma suggested a short break to be sure that all the documentation presented was available to the public.

Ms. Palma

Our goal tonight is to come up with a new list of items to consider reducing. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 30th. At that time, we will finalize it.

Further discussion among Board members and Administrators regarding possible cuts and implications of those cuts. Additional clarification as well as explanation was provided in detail. Some of the areas discussed:

- Fund balance
- Walkabout
- BOCES
- Roof replacement
- Video conferencing
- Summer curriculum
- AIS
- Lacrosse program
- Band equipment

Ms. Palma then closed the discussion – the Board will finalize at next Tuesday's meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

St. Joseph's School – A motion was made by Ms. Hublard-Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart, and carried to allow us to be the lead agency for St. Joseph's food service. When we award a bid, St. Joseph's will participate.

Policy Reading: Final reading and adoption of Policy 9121, Nepotism and Significant Relationships. A motion was made by Ms. Hublard-Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart, and carried to adopt Policy 9121, Nepotism and Significant Relationships.

COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

None at this time.

CONSIDERATION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 11:00 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Hublard-Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart, and carried to adjourn.