



**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES/MOTIONS**

In order to comply with Connecticut General Statutes regarding minutes of meetings, the following will be used to record information during all public meetings that take place. An original must be submitted to the Town Clerk of Rocky Hill within 48 hours of the meeting being adjourned. Motions should be complete, showing the maker and second of the motion as well as how each member voted. Unanimous votes may be listed as unanimous.

NAME OF PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION	Board of Education (Budget Workshop)
DATE MEETING AGENDA POSTED	January 14, 2009
LOCATION	Council Chambers
DATE OF MEETING	January 20, 2009
TIME MEETING STARTED	6:02 p.m.
PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES	Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary
VERBATIM NOTES TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
AUDIO, VIDEO OR LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MEETING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING

1. William MacDonald, Chairman	2. Rene (Skip) Rivard, Vice Chairman
3. Nadine Bell	4. Raffaella Calciano-Coler
5. Charles McMonigle	6. Maria Mennella (Entered at 6:32 p.m.)
7. Frank Morse	8. Catherine Vargas
9. Charles Wisnioski	10. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
11. Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan	12. Interim Finance Director Frank Connolly
13. Fred Ames (Technology Coordinator)	14. Lynn Boisvert (Bookkeeper)
15. Principal Audrey Boutaugh	16. Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio
17. Principal Rick Watson	18. Assistant Principal Edward Malizia
19. Dr. Cathrynn Riggs (Director of Special Education and Pupil Services)	20. Darlene Brown (Coordinator of Language Arts)
21. Tom McCabe (Director of Athletics and Student Activities)	22. Mayor Tony LaRosa (Entered at 6:10 p.m.)
23. Councilor Larrye deBear (Entered at 7:24 p.m.) (Left at 7:43 p.m.)	24.

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM 5 QUORUM PRESENT Yes No

TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES

1st MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to adjourn the budget workshop at 8:30 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

ACTION

CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:30 p.m. .

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: .

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUDGET WORKSHOP OF JANUARY 20, 2009**

Members Present: William MacDonald (Chairman)
Rene (Skip) Rivard
Nadine Bell
Raffaella Calciano-Coler
Charles McMonigle
Maria Mennella (Entered at 6:32 p.m.)
Frank Morse
Catherine Vargas
Charles Wisnioski

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan
Interim Finance Director Frank Connolly
Principal Audrey Boutaugh
Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio
Principal Rick Watson
Assistant Principal Edward Malizia
Dr. Cathrynn Riggs (Director of Special Education and
Pupil Services)
Mr. Fred Ames (Technology Coordinator)
Mrs. Darlene Brown (Coordinator of Language Arts)
Mr. Tom McCabe (Director of Athletics and Student
Activities)
Ms. Lynn Boisvert (Bookkeeper)
Mayor LaRosa (Entered at 6:10 p.m.)
Councilor Larrye deBear (Entered at 7:24 p.m.) (Left at
7:43 p.m.)

A budget workshop of the Board of Education was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Chairman William MacDonald called the budget workshop to order at 6:02 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. Board Discussion and Possible Action on Superintendent's Budget Proposal

Chairman MacDonald said tonight was the first of several budget sessions that the Board of Education most likely will have in order to go through Superintendent Dr. Villar's Proposed Budget for 2009-2010. Chairman MacDonald said that he would be

turning this budget workshop over to Superintendent Dr. Villar for him to make a few remarks and then to take everyone through the budget.

Chairman MacDonald asked if there was anyone from the audience who wanted to make any comments. At the beginning of these budget sessions and towards the end of them, the Board of Education members want to make sure that if there is anyone from the public who has any comments, concerns or questions that they can bring those to them. There was no one in the audience who wished to make any comments, etc. at this point.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said it was a pleasure to be present this evening to speak about his and his team's budget proposal for the 2009-2010 school year with the Board of Education. He thanked the Board of Education for their ongoing patience. He was reminded by staff today that there is no one in Central Office in Rocky Hill who has prepared a budget before for this town. They have all prepared budgets for other places. They are in the process now of changing this budget process and he knew that it has been difficult. Their goal is to be able to answer questions as they come up and their goal is also to be transparent.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said that one of the areas they had been reviewing over the weekend was the backup sheets that are in the Board of Education members' three ring binders. The updating of those were not included in the last photocopy so there has been frustration around them. Replacement pages for the backup materials were distributed to the Board of Education members. He explained that this document exists independently of the documents that were used to produce the budget. A file change occurred where the file that was printed was the inaccurate one. They crosschecked over the weekend to make sure that the numbers included in the documents the Board of Education members are receiving are the same numbers that are included in the actual budget proposal. While they were doing this, they also identified a decimal point that was misplaced in a line item for science materials at Rocky Hill High School. He said that Interim Finance Director Connolly would speak about this in a moment. This line item had initially requested \$13,330 worth of materials and in the original budget request, this was included at \$1,330. An adjustment will have to be made to that page.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is going to be a process and during this process, changes or potential changes to the budget are going to be identified. They are proposing that he and Interim Finance Director Connolly are going to keep a tally of plus and minus suggestions as well as changes to the budget as the percentage in overall requests continues to change throughout the process. When a Board of Education vote is ultimately asked for then it will be very clear what is being voted on.

Superintendent Dr. Villar pointed out that his budget request he presented last week comes in significantly lower than the prior year. As far as an increase, the request for overall dollars is lower than what has been experienced. He wanted to stress that this budget for the Board of Education consideration is very lean. Major contingencies are

not built into the budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said as they move forward in the management of the district in the next school year, the impact is that there are line items that are very tightly calculated. They will begin discussing these this evening.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they were going to begin with Certified Salaries (Object 111). A great deal of time was spent in this area to make sure that they account for this expenditure and predict as accurately as possible for the next year. From his office, this ultimately results in a lower budget request. This has a double edge to it because it means there is less money at play within the Object 111 account. Turnover, etc. is tightly accounted for. In the upcoming year, they have to be very mindful of time off and hires, etc. because this can have a very significant impact on the district in the year to come.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Interim Finance Director Connolly to clarify the issue with regards to the decimal point in the science line item. They will then begin with a discussion about Object 111. They will move through the budget as proposed based on object but to support this, they will use program data. Superintendent Dr. Villar was sure that Interim Finance Director Connolly was going to point out how the program tab in the binders works.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said Superintendent Dr. Villar indicated that they are recommending to the Board of Education members that they will be keeping track of adjustments. When the Board of Education is ready to adopt the budget, the pluses and minuses will be tallied up. Interim Finance Director Connolly spoke about the one adjustment that Superintendent Dr. Villar had just made reference to which is a \$10,000 addition. This addition is in Supplies HS (Object Code 20-611-1000-01). He said it states \$1,330 and it should state \$13,330. Mr. Wisnioski asked Interim Finance Director Connolly what document he was referring to. Interim Finance Director Connolly said he was going to be working from the Object Code this evening. He told the Board of Education members that they have a summary of the Object Code. He told them that this is on Page 7 of the detail by Object Code. He explained that the narratives that were handed out from the schools were never linked to the budget. They are being linked now. These had been done independently by the schools and turned into Central Office. Someone in Central Office worked on them and then sent them back to the schools. He said none of them were familiar with the process of who did what. The narratives should be correct but Interim Finance Director Connolly said the number that is being pointed out to the Board of Education members is a real budget number. Mrs. Bell confirmed with Interim Finance Director Connolly that the narratives are correct. Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to what had been handed out to the Board of Education members this evening and he said the narratives should have the right number in them now. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this paperwork should replace what they had. Mr. McMonigle asked if this was a complete replacement and Interim Finance Director Connolly said yes.

Superintendent Dr. Villar went over the process that was gone over this weekend. The school level administrators reviewed the pages as well as he and the Central Office clerical support and this was how they crosschecked the numbers against the budget document that they had been working off of. They also had edited the description. The replacement package should be accurate and it should fully replace what the Board of Education members had. Superintendent Dr. Villar said if they find any difference at this point then this is something they will want to speak to because they believe these are now matched up.

Mr. McMonigle asked if any changes had been made to the Object Code Schedule. He referred everyone to Page 3 of 11 in the Object Codes and he told everyone to look two-thirds of the way down on this page where it states "Instruction". The subtotal states \$51,754 and \$36,059 etc. These don't agree to the detail that is above these subtotals. He said these figures don't carry down. He said that this was just one that he noticed and that he didn't go through all of them. After checking into this, Interim Finance Director Connolly said the number is correct in the budget. For the detail, in one of the versions, a couple of individual line items weren't picked up. The total is correct though. He said they would get this printed out. Chairman MacDonald confirmed that the figure of \$51,744 is correct and that something is missing in the components that add up to that. Interim Finance Director Connolly said two or three numbers are missing on the bottom of the detail. He thanked Mr. McMonigle for picking this up. Mrs. Bell asked if this was true for all of the totals. Interim Finance Director Connolly said that it shouldn't be and that this is all done by formula. Mr. McMonigle asked if that could be double checked too. Interim Finance Director Connolly said they would do that.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to the constructing of the budget and them going through the detail of the Object Code. Once this had been done, two of the women in Central Office took several days to translate the Object Code into the Program Code. There were hundreds and hundreds of individuals accounts that had to be translated. Now that they have this, it will be a lot easier going forward in future budgets.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to the tallies at the end of the budgetary process. The information may change. He told the Board of Education members that he will have a handout for them when they get to the benefits account so that they can see how that line item was constructed. They will have the quotes back from the Agent of Record in another week. Interim Finance Director Connolly explained that he made copies of the Agent of Record's letter where he showed how much the benefits are going up, which is 11.5%. Actual quotes will be ready in another week and this could impact the budget favorably. They should have the quotes by the middle of next week.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said that Superintendent Dr. Villar had mentioned that they will keep a tally of the pluses and minuses if the Board of Education decides to eliminate a program or add one. The pluses, minuses and adjustments will be in the

budget when the Board of Education is ready to adopt it. This way, they will know where they are exactly.

Mr. McMonigle referred to the health insurance and how Interim Finance Director Connolly had mentioned quotes. Mr. McMonigle asked if there would be multiple quotes. Interim Finance Director Connolly said yes. He wasn't sure how many they will get but he expects that it will be at least a couple. Mr. McMonigle said that is good. Interim Finance Director Connolly said that when they get to the benefits section, he will have a handout for the Board of Education members. There is a fairly detailed letter that gives a lot of information with regards to where this district is in claims and the loss history, etc. This letter has been included in the Board of Education members' packets. The number of 11.5% on the health benefits is built into this budget. He is hoping that this will go down but he used the more conservative number of the higher number. This information with regards to the quotes will probably be ready by next Wednesday.

Mrs. Bell referred to the addition needing to be made to the line item for the science materials for the high school. She asked if the addition would be \$11,970 instead of \$10,000. Mr. Wisnioski confirmed that the Board of Education members got a new Page 7 and Interim Finance Director Connolly said that they did. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this number is correct in the narrative. It hadn't been adjusted in the Object Codes or Program Codes.

Chairman MacDonald said he knew that they had a lot to cover so he asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he wanted to walk everyone through Object 111. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained that handouts had been prepared for the Board of Education members so that hopefully they would make everything easier to follow along with. Chairman MacDonald told Superintendent Dr. Villar that maybe he could give a little prelude. Chairman MacDonald understood in reviewing this budget that it included no new positions and no new head count, etc. He asked if this was the synopsis roughly. Superintendent Dr. Villar said absolutely. He told the Board of Education members that when they go through the initial budget document in the small document that FTE sheets have been included. In the district this year, there are no added FTEs and no program has been added. The full number that has been brought forth in this budget was constructed including existing programs. No programs have been eliminated to come to this number. His philosophy from which he put the budget together was that he was as mindful as he could be with regards to the expenditures that Rocky Hill was going to have to shoulder as the school budget was constructed but he didn't take it upon himself at this juncture to independently eliminate programs from the schools. He felt that if the budgetary amount that is proposed was too large then a discussion with regards to what would be eliminated would be a policy level position that the Board of Education would need to be a part of. The assumption behind this budget is that as they move forward next year, they are going to exist as they are now. No new programs are built in with the exception of the three items that he has already spoken about. This would include the bus. He said he would even argue that the Language Arts is not new in the sense of an expenditure because they

are looking at money for funding that they have currently. The other item is the Virtual High School and he told the members of the Board of Education that they would receive a handout this evening with regards to that if they got that far this evening. The budget just brings forward the program with the exception of these three items and it is as lean as possible. FTEs and head counts are scrutinized. Benefits are looked at as well as the transportation contract. They also have accounted for expenditures as tightly as they could so that they could prepare a budget that is as low as possible. He reiterated that there aren't a lot of avenues to take to reduce the budget without losing program or losing employees that are also part of program. He thinks this will be seen a little as they get into the discussion of Object 111. He said that Interim Finance Director Connolly had some detail with regards to this and he asked him to walk everyone through this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they could continue the discussion.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said the lack of historical data was the problem that they had in several of the accounts in trying to find out how the budget was constructed. They had gross numbers but they didn't have a lot of detail. A lot of the files had been corrupted on the computers as well as no one in Central Office had worked on this.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said Certified Salaries (Object 111) is the largest single item in the budget. This part of the budget was constructed by them going through payroll records which took several days for them to do. They identified every single teacher that is employed by this district. The teachers were then advanced for the new teachers' contract. Stipends and longevity were adjusted. A number was come up with for the current payroll that had the current people who are working. This is how they came up with the adjusted salaries. In the line item, the problem that they ran into is in Program 29 which is part of line item 111 in the Objects. In Program 29, there are a variety of different expenses and when he looked at the budget, this showed up as one line item and didn't give him any detail. He told everyone if they looked at Program 29 and then the current year's budget, there is a total figure of \$557,300. This is a lump sum figure and he had trouble trying to figure out the detail on this except in the narrative form. In Program 29 there are anticipated degree changes and they built in the ones that they definitely already know about. He also mentioned the teacher mentors, employee buyouts, Saturday detention, teacher substitutes, unsettled contract, teacher turnover and severance that are in Program 29. Looking at this line item from a budgeting point of view, the teacher substitutes should be in their own line item. Employee buyouts are more of a benefit than salary but it is buried in this line item. He said this probably should be in the 200 accounts. Mrs. Bell told Interim Finance Director Connolly that for those of them who have done budgets prior to this year, this is a correspondence to Program 29F of what they had last year and all of this is broken out. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is broken out as a narrative. He told the Board of Education members that if they look at the monthly financial reports that they won't find sub-line items that track the narrative and this is the problem that they have run into. There is a narrative stating what everything is but there is a lump sum in the budget so this was not carried over. He told Mrs. Bell that he would show her what he meant later on. Interim

Finance Director Connolly said these were some suggestions that he just had referred to with regards to going forward in the future.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to some notes he had and he said there was no detail available for the actual adjusted salaries for 2008-2009. Overall Object 111 is up 6.1% in the current fiscal year over last fiscal year. This is up 4.83% for next year. The actual adjusted salaries for 2009-2010 are based upon the actual employee count and this includes the adjustments for steps, stipends, longevity and new salaries. He said that Program 29 is one lump sum in the budget financial documents. For degree changes, they have received notices of these that amount to \$24,469 as of January 14, 2009. He told everyone that he is carrying \$60,000 in the degree changes. He said that he will also have other suggestions for contract language changes at some point that can help to address some of the problems that they are running into. A budget is trying to be prepared and they don't know who might be retiring or when they will be. This has budgetary impacts. He will give them some suggestions later for some wording that could be adjusted in the teachers' contracts for the future that could help them in trying to prepare the budget.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to Note 5. on the handout that everyone received for Certified Salaries (Object 111). The teacher mentor program is part of the BEST program. The State of Connecticut Department of Education is eliminating the "Portfolio Assessment" requirements of the BEST program as of June 30, 2009. Contingency funds are left here since it is not known what the State of Connecticut Department of Education is doing. He explained that the line item for this was \$16,300 in this year's narrative and this is \$10,000 in the 2009-2010 budget.

Mrs. Vargas said when she spoke with Superintendent Dr. Villar this morning that she had asked for information with regards to the stipend positions. In the past, they have always been able to get a complete listing of all of the staff with the stipends. This showed what positions were open and which were full. She knew these positions are contractual and she said they increase with the contracts. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the contract has the new stipends in it. Mrs. Vargas explained that this list is a listing of all of the faculty and/or administrators along with the stipend position that they hold and the salary amount they are getting for this. Interim Finance Director Connolly asked if this is by name and Mrs. Vargas said yes. Mrs. Bell said this is by position too because they have found out from year to year that sometimes there have been multiple years where a stipend position has been vacant. If these had been carried forward, they could say that they didn't necessarily need this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they did have this detail. He reminded the Board of Education that in the recent negotiations with the Rocky Hill Teachers Association that as part of their side letter agreement, they are revisiting stipends with them and they still have to hold these conversations. They do have the stipend data on teachers and what expenditure is associated with each individual. He told the Board of Education members that this can be shared with them. Chairman MacDonald asked if this is going to go on the list of the

“take away”. He thought this was very useful. When they had received this last year, he asked for it a second time with names next to it. He said there is a document and he didn't think that it would be an inordinate amount of work for them to prepare this. This would be an item for the pluses and minuses of the budget. He told Superintendent Dr. Villar that this list could be given to the Board of Education members at the next meeting. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this would be easy enough to do. This exists and knowing what these costs are was part of preparing this line item.

Mr. McMonigle said he had a question regarding some of the activity in Object Codes 111. When this is looked at by program, there are a lot of increases that he can see but there are certain line items where there are fairly significant decreases. He asked if this is just because there is staff turnover and staff has been replaced with less experienced staff. He knew that there is the same number of FTEs but he asked if people have been moved between programs. Superintendent Dr. Villar said his initial reaction would be to say that staff has been replaced over the year. There have been new hires and a new hire costs less traditionally than someone who is more veteran. He said that he wanted to examine this again though. He said to figure out this answer that every employee would have to be looked at but this is something that they have information on. He was sure there are certain specific departments or areas of concern where they can get this data.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he would like to move on to benefits. Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any more questions on Object 111. Mr. McMonigle said when the revenue section is looked at, there are two revenue increases this year that are of significance. One of these is the \$26,000 for the Non-English Speaking Grant and one of these is for Title I. Years ago, they got approximately the same amount of money for Title I and they used this to hire teachers in the elementary schools to support the reading programs. The teachers were kept after Title I was lost and the teachers are still in the budget. He asked what the \$51,000 is being used for now. He asked if this money is being used to add to the staff or to cover salary dollars that normally came out of the general fund. He had the same question for the \$26,000. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that Assistant Superintendent Hourigan manages the grants so he asked her to speak to the current breakdown. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they have to be very careful not to supplant things that the Board of Education is already funding when these grants are looked at. With the Title I money, they added two tutors for Stevens School this year for math and reading. They also had to train paraprofessionals for them to take the paraprofessional test. The bulk of this money was used to purchase guided reading books and materials for the classroom that would support the guided reading initiative which hopefully will increase the scores at Moser School and at Stevens School. She referred to the Immigrant Grant for \$26,000 that Mr. McMonigle had referred to and she said that is used to provide tutoring. There are very strict guidelines on this and the money has to be spent on students who have immigrant status. There are afterschool tutoring programs going on at all of the schools right now. Money is being spent on the salaries for the tutors and on the materials for

them to use. Mr. McMonigle asked if this is in addition to the ESOL program they have. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said it is.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to Non-Certified Salaries (Object 112). These include individuals who are generally not administrators or teachers. These would be people such as the paraprofessionals, secretaries and nurses. Certification is not required for these people. This comprises the entire Object 112. He told everyone that the details for this were being handed out to them now. On the handout, he referred to Note 1. which stated that the actual adjusted salaries for 2008-2009 include the recently settled secretaries' contract and this is based upon actual payroll money. He told the Board of Education members that the numbers from the contracts that they just ratified were taken and they were built into the current year's numbers. This is important because it could affect the base going up for next year. He referred on the handout to Note 2. This stated that that the actual adjusted salaries for 2009-2010 are based upon actual employee count and this includes adjustment for new salaries, steps, longevity and stipends. He then referred to the handout and Note 3. This stated that unsettled contracts are for paraprofessionals' and nurses' contracts as well as other individual non-bargaining unit employee wage increases. The unsettled contracts go from \$74,500 (in 2008-2009) to \$54,500 (2009-2010). He said hopefully these contracts will be settled in this fiscal year. The issue they will run into, which is a common one, is that if the contracts are not settled in the current fiscal year but there is money in the current year's budget then this will be a surplus if it is not spent for these salaries. If this is spent in the current fiscal year on something else then two fiscal years will have to be built into next year's budget. If this is not adjusted for the current year settlement even though the contracts aren't settled then when budgeting is being done, an increase of two fiscal years will basically be looked at. This is a subtle but important point. In constructing this, they took the position that the money allocated for the current fiscal year for wage settlements will be used in the current fiscal year for the current year's salaries even if a contract has not been settled by June 30, 2009. He said there is a way of handling this so this money is protected to allocate for those contracts. He explained some more about this. Mrs. Calciano-Coler asked Interim Finance Director Connolly if he is just talking about retroactive pay. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is retroactive pay for the current fiscal year back to July 1, 2008. Mrs. Calciano-Coler said they have two unsettled contracts for this fiscal year which they hope to have done so this is probably all moot. Interim Finance Director Connolly said he would hope so. He said hopefully these will be settled by June 30, 2009 but if not then this will still be charged against the current fiscal year. Mrs. Calciano-Coler didn't think they have any contracts coming up in 2009-2010. She was told that there will be the administration contract coming up. She referred to the \$54,500. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this also includes anticipated wage increases for all of the administrators, nurses and paraprofessionals because they have to be budgeted for, for the second year. There is a conglomerate of groups that are in this. Mrs. Vargas told Interim Finance Director Connolly that his total is off by \$1,500. Mrs. Bell said this doesn't match the budget book.

Interim Finance Director Connolly asked if there were any other questions on the non-certified salaries. There were no other questions. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the next group is the Object 200s and there is a series of Object 200s that have been broken out. These have been broken out into Employee Benefits - Life AD & D (Object 200), Employee Benefits – Medicare (Object 205), Employee Benefits – Long Term Disability (Object 215), Employee Benefits – Social Security (Object 220) and Unemployment Compensation (Object 250). He told everyone that he was reading from the control sheet. Mrs. Calciano-Coler asked what the control sheet is. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is the one page summary of the Object Code in the front of the budget book. This is under the “Global” tab.

Interim Finance Director Connolly told the Board of Education members that the handout they just got was a detailed breakdown of the benefits. He explained that this is just a reiteration of Page 1. He told everyone if they turned to Page 2 that this gives the detail on the single largest line item there which is the health insurance benefits. The projected health premium is \$4,756,241. This number is based on an 11.5% increase. Attached to the page on the handout that the projected health premium is on is the letter from the Agent of Record. On January 9, 2009, the Agent of Record’s best estimate was 11.5%. He explained that they did an analysis of the actual employee contributions. This is the employee premium cost sharing. The employee will pay 10%, 11% or 12% of the overall cost of it. When the contracts are negotiated, the employee cost share increases. The percent that the employees are contributing show up in that line item. The district gets a subsidy for each retired teacher that is on the plan from the Teachers Retirement Board. This subsidy is \$110.00 per month for the teacher. This is another offset. He explained that this is subtracted out of the estimated premium. There are the retired employees or the ones that are referred to as COBRA. An analysis was done of those who are paying directly to this district for their health benefits. All of the numbers are subtracted out of the estimated premium. They came up with a number of \$4,008,648. This is how the premium package was determined for next year. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the data gets better and better as the Agent of Record has more time to work on this. Interim Finance Director Connolly mentioned once again how the Agent of Record is getting quotes and they are hoping that these will come in less than the 11.5% increase.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the recently negotiated contracts and he said it was important for them to recognize that there were significant savings in the plan changes that were part of the Board of Education’s negotiations. The work of the Board of Education P & N Committee with regards to negotiating these contracts resulted in some significant savings because of the plan change. Interim Finance Director Connolly said plan changes have a significant impact on overall claims. He referred the Board of Education members to the bottom of the January 9, 2009 letter from the Agent of Record. There is an estimated adjustment after negotiated plan changes. Plan changes that were just done were sent to the Agent of Record so that he could work with them and come up with his estimates based on the plan changes in the contract itself.

Mr. McMonigle asked what is being used for the escalator and he asked if it was 11.5% or 11.05%. On the global sheet, this is 11.05% but on the narrative it is 11.5%. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is supposed to be 11.5%. Mr. McMonigle said the number they have of \$398,759 didn't work to the 11.5%. Chairman MacDonald said the way he is reading this is that the 11.5% is for the projected health premium. He said the projected employee contributions are around 16%. Chairman MacDonald explained some more about this. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the 11.05% for the line item was correct and with the detail sheet, they could see how it went up to 11.5% but then it was offset by COBRA, etc.

Mrs. Bell referred to the packet that they just received and she referred to Object 225 under Benefits which stated "Other". She said on the Proposed Budget by Object Code that she didn't see an Object 225 listed. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this might be part of another line item and this is on the control page. Mrs. Bell said this wasn't listed in the detail. Interim Finance Director Connolly said he was working off of the control page. Mr. Morse said that Object 210 should be Object 225. Mrs. Bell asked if this was mislabeled. She was told that it was. Mrs. Vargas pointed out to Interim Finance Director Connolly where this was mislabeled.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said this was the summary on the health benefits and hopefully there will be better news for them next week. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Interim Finance Director Connolly that Object 210 and Object 225 in the current budget were labeled differently in one budget year to the next and he said this might be part of the confusion. Interim Finance Director Connolly said Ms. Boisvert just reminded him that this was Object 210 in the current budget. When they broke out the budget to give more detail, they created another line item that they called Object 225. For the whole benefit package, they created new accounts so the Board of Education members could see the detail. There won't be this problem next year because the transition was made this year.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Professional Services (Object 331). The reason this line item goes up is because of the Athletic Trainer. Also the district physician's cost went up 4%. He said Mr. McCabe was present this evening if there were any specific questions about the Athletic Trainer.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Mr. McMonigle said at the last budget workshop that he had asked if they were going to go out to bid again on the Athletic Trainer because a drastic increase was seen from \$12,000 two years ago to \$43,000 next year. The last time they went out to bid, they did this late in the game and they had two bids. He asked where they are in this process now and what the intent is. Superintendent Dr. Villar said with the Board of Education direction that they can definitely go out to bid. The RFP (Request for Proposals) hasn't been put together yet and that is why this number is being carried to move forward. It seems to him that the will of the Board of Education is to go out to RFP. The bid will

have to be put together and if they go out early enough then they might have a different response. Last year, each time they went out to bid for this, it unfortunately ended up costing them because they received single replies to the bid. He has confidence in Mr. McCabe's ability that a very attractive bid will be written by him. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks they have to carry the number that they know for the budget process though and hopefully they will gain some additional savings later. Chairman MacDonald asked Mr. McCabe what his view is on the \$43,000. Chairman MacDonald said there is a lot of history going back on the Athletic Trainer. He asked Mr. McCabe where he thinks this number will be coming out based on his extensive experience in the field. Mr. McCabe said a lot of this will depend on what type of coverage the Board of Education is looking for, for the athletes. The number they have now is a competitive price but he agreed that they should go out to bid to see what else is out there and they would be crazy not to. They had tried to do this when he came on board in August but it was late. The Athletic Trainer they presently have has given an enormous amount of volunteer hours and he has been outstanding on top of what he has been doing. There has been good success with him and good reports from the athletes as well as from the coaches. Mr. McCabe is sure that this Athletic Trainer would be involved in the bid process as well. He agreed with Superintendent Dr. Villar with regards to the number being used for budgetary purposes. In the future, Mr. McCabe said there will be negotiations involved to see what type of coverage there is, how much the Athletic Trainer can do and what the Board of Education wants for the athletes. Mrs. Bell asked Mr. McCabe what his estimated timeframe is for getting this bid together and getting a response back hopefully. Mr. McCabe said if the Board of Education wishes, he can start putting the bid together immediately.

Mrs. Vargas referred to the Professional Services (Object 331) and she said the \$23,500 is for the Athletic Trainer. She asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he stated that the amount of \$2,000 is for the Doctor because she noticed it was stated somewhere that this is for an increase in the accounting services. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was going to ask Interim Finance Director Connolly to go back and double check because he wasn't going to presume to know he detail. He said that he may have misspoken and he will have Interim Finance Director Connolly look at this. They will give an answer back to Mrs. Vargas. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is for the payroll services with ADP so they put a few thousand dollars in here because they don't know what is going to happen with the payroll services. Mrs. Vargas asked if that is primarily for this and not for the increase in the district's doctor. Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to the Detail by Object Code on Page 4 of 11. The overall increase in this line item is \$27,382. The "lion's share" for this is in the Athletic Trainer. Mrs. Vargas said she is addressing the \$2,000. Interim Finance Director Connolly said \$2,000 of the \$27,382 increase is involved in payroll services.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he is working off of the "Global" which is the one page summary of the budget. This is in the smaller budget document. He referred to transportation which is in the Object 500 accounts. There are several things in the transportation accounts. There is Student Transportation: Reg Ed (Object 510); Student

Transportation: Reg Ed OD (Object 511); Student Transportation: Sp Ed (Object 515); Student Transportation: Sp Ed OD (Object 516) and Field Trips (Object 519). The new school bus is the major policy issue in here. He had written documentation for everyone with regards to the rationale for the new school bus. They are recommending a twelfth bus for this district because some bus drivers can't complete their routes on time and some buses are overcrowded. The capacity of the high school bus is for forty-eight students with two students to a seat. Trip 4 has seventy-one possible students on its roster and Trip 11 has seventy-six students. They count on all or most of the upperclassmen to drive themselves to school in order to keep these buses within capacity. He mentioned that when the price of gasoline skyrocketed in the past year, more students were riding school buses. For the middle school, they try to keep it so there are two students per seat but three buses require three to a seat. For Trip 66, there are sixty-six students. At the elementary level, three students to a seat is the norm. On a given run, there should be ten and no more than fifteen stops ideally. Some routes at the elementary level contain nineteen, twenty or even twenty-five stops due to the number of stops that are needed. This is true for Trip 36 at Stevens School. Bus stops have been moved and students have been moved from one bus to another several times but this ends up helping one bus route and making another bus route overcrowded or late. At the high school, the buses start off on time and then they get progressively later as they move from school to school. He gave an example of this. Buses should arrive at a school either before or shortly after school lets out ideally. Superintendent Dr. Villar has had dialogue with regards to the impact this has had not only on the parents and the students but also on the school staff. Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to the bus issue with regards to them being late and he said this is a problem that has had some history now. Unfortunately last year, this was an item that had to be eliminated as the budget was trying to be balanced. He has been working very closely this year with the Rocky Hill Teachers Association attempting to restructure the routes so that staff wasn't being held at school well beyond the contractual day. They weren't able to come up with any other means of addressing this situation. He is currently in negotiations with the Rocky Hill Teachers Association. This Association has agreed to relax timelines in the formal process with regards to dealing with these types of disputes. He said they have not been able to uphold their portion of their agreement with the Rocky Hill Teachers Association to date. There are presently scheduled meetings with the Association, the administration and the transportation company to continue this dialogue but he strongly feels that they have reached a point where they have exhausted "band-aid" types of solutions to this. He believes that the transportation issues have reached a point where they have to be addressed even though the current fiscal climate is very difficult. They have to be in compliance with their agreement and he doesn't feel that it is acceptable that children are waiting after school for such long periods of time and that the families are waiting so long in the afternoon for their elementary aged children to arrive home.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions with regards to this. Mr. McMonigle referred to the Special Education out of district transportation and how that is down almost twenty-five. He presumed that this is

specifically ID'd to some children who aren't being transported out anymore. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the out of district transportation is impacted by excess cost reimbursement as well as tuition. He believed that the Board of Education members had a spreadsheet already with regards to how excess cost reimbursement is applied to one of the line items. Mr. McMonigle said he understood the calculation. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the transportation is based on looking at what the anticipated actual costs are. Mr. McMonigle wanted to make sure that this is ID'd by child.

Mr. McMonigle continued to speak about out of district transportation. He said he knew that CREC started a program last year where it was putting together out of district transportation and it was sending out bids to districts. It didn't make sense when the bid came in for this district to do this because it was able to handle it for less. Based on the new mix of children they have, he asked if this has been looked at again this year. Dr. Riggs didn't believe that Rocky Hill was in the area that was serviced by CREC last year. Mr. McMonigle knew that CREC came through with a bid but it was higher than what this district had. Dr. Riggs said this district recently got some information that she and Interim Finance Director Connolly looked at. Dr. Riggs said they should perhaps investigate with CREC again. She said though that it didn't make sense for this district to transport from CREC's place to here and out. Mr. McMonigle thought there was no additional transportation and that CREC was coming to the home districts and taking the students out. He thought CREC was trying to use economy of scales and linking different districts. He explained some more about this. Dr. Riggs said this may or may not work for this district but they can look at it again. She explained that this district currently ride shares with Cromwell and sometimes with Wethersfield when there are children going at the same time to the same places. They also run double runs. She said that they can look to see if CREC will be cheaper.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said the Board of Education is currently in a five year contract with Durham for bus services. Next year will be the fourth year of this contract. The Board of Education will then have to make a decision if it is going to go out for bid or if it is going to renegotiate a contract. He is giving Superintendent Dr. Villar some suggestions for word changes in the current contract. Interim Finance Director Connolly thinks there are some things that need to be addressed in the current contract with regards to how it is structured, etc. He said on the spreadsheet that the Board of Education members have, there is a footnote so that they are clear as to where they are with this contract. Chairman MacDonald asked if there is an automatic increase every year at a percentage and he asked if this has been built into the budget. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the bus contract shows the percent increase by the type of buses and at the back of this contract, there is a schedule. The schedule calls for a 4% increase in the bus contract for next year but there is a footnote that specifies that the Consumer Price Index W can also be looked at. Interim Finance Director Connolly said they went online to track what the Consumer Price Index is. It was found out that the Consumer Price Index is way down because of the way the economy is. The contract states that the increase

will be whichever is lower as of April out of the 4% or what the Consumer Price Index is. This will not help though because April will come after the budget is adopted. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the Consumer Price Index W is .7 of 1% currently. By them trying to be conservative and projecting ahead four months, they came up with 2%. This was reviewed with the bus contractor who was comfortable with this number. This is one of the items that he is going to make a recommendation of changing in the bus contract to Superintendent Dr. Villar. Mrs. Bell asked if they should have this number well in advance of when they have to adopt the final budget and Interim Finance Director Connolly told her that they should but the contract states that they go with April 2009. Mrs. Bell gave an example of the health insurance and she said they have adjustments for this between when they submit their budget to the Town Council and the June formal budget adoption. Superintendent Dr. Villar said a good point was being made for anyone who was listening that a conservative but projected cost was being made in this line item. They could have left 4% in which would have inflated the bottom line. A decision was made to keep this number as accurate as possible so they went with the best information they had and put the 2%. He said this reiterates the position that he keeps taking with regards to all of the "wobble room" being taken away.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to the second page of the handout with regards to the rationale for one new bus. This is the detail that shows how the line items were constructed. He called to everyone's attention the actual cost for a new bus and this is \$44,844. This number is built into this budget.

Chairman MacDonald told Interim Finance Director Connolly that he appreciated him trying to get as transparent as he could with regards to the new bus. Chairman MacDonald said this is a million dollar item in the budget. He encouraged the Board of Education members that if they are talking about sending out a bid for a \$40,000 Athletic Trainer then the bus is absolutely something that they should go out to bid for. He doesn't believe in any renegotiation absent of having a detailed bidding process. He told Interim Finance Director Connolly that he appreciates him looking at all of the contracts as they relate to the budget and he thinks it is great if there are any suggestions going forward.

Chairman MacDonald asked if there were any more questions. Mr. Wisnioski referred to the note about the fuel. He asked how closely the fuel has been monitored and what they are paying for it presently. Interim Finance Director Connolly said they get a detailed statement for the fuel every month and they track what it is. The fuel costs are built into the bus contract itself. Mr. Wisnioski said he was talking about that. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the bus contract is a blended contract that is for bus services and for fuel. This district gets the bills in every month for the fuel and it pays directly for the fuel. Mr. Wisnioski thought the contractor pays the first \$1.50. Interim Finance Director Connolly said yes. He admitted that he still doesn't understand this contract fully. Mr. Wisnioski asked how much the fuel portion is of the \$1,000,000. Interim Finance Director Connolly said it is very substantial and this district paid almost \$300,000 last

year in fuel costs. Mr. Wisnioski asked where the fuel is bought. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is bought from City Oil and they have all of the invoices. Mr. Wisnioski asked if it is the bus company's duty to seek the lowest cost and he asked how they know that they do this. He asked what kind of controls there are, etc. Interim Finance Director Connolly said that he couldn't give a good answer for this. Mr. Wisnioski asked if someone could get back to the Board of Education members to tell them the nature of how this is determined. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the contract is very atypical. It is a combination of the fuel cost expense with the transportation expense. Often it is separated out so that fuel can be bid for separately. He said Interim Finance Director Connolly had difficulty explaining this because there is a lot of nuance to it and it is complicated. In conversations, some of the suggestions are to change the structure of the contract as they look to move forward. The price of the fuel has been researched and Superintendent Dr. Villar remembers having a conversation that in and of itself, it is a good rate but it is absent of the process of going out to bid. Potentially, there could be or couldn't be savings with that. This is an area that has to be looked at and the Board of Education has to be worked with as the proposal to go out to bid is being developed. This includes negotiating with vendors as to how they move forward. They would then have an easier time accounting for these things because now fuel and transportation are blended together and it makes it difficult. Mr. Wisnioski asked that the Board of Education receive more information on this with regards to what this has been historically and how this is planned for. He referred to the second footnote on the handout. He asked if this is diesel fuel or if it is gasoline. Interim Finance Director Connolly said it is both but it is predominately diesel fuel for the larger buses. Mr. Wisnioski said the cost of diesel fuel did not come down as much as gasoline did. Interim Finance Director Connolly said he still has trouble understanding this. When the fuel bill comes in, this district pays the fuel bill directly. He gave an example of a fuel bill being \$20,000 and how this is subtracted from the contractor's bill next month. Mr. Wisnioski said how it stated in the second footnote that if the price exceeds \$3.00 then this is subject to negotiations. He said that diesel has probably been above \$3.00 for a long time and he questioned what they negotiate. Interim Finance Director Connolly apologized and said he has not been involved with this. He had one meeting with the bus company and he will be calling them in again because he doesn't understand the contract. Chairman MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he agrees that within a short period of days, they will get back to the Board of Education with more details with regards to the charges of the gas and the process, etc. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they will try to get as much detail as possible. Vice Chairman Rivard confirmed that this district is into this contract for another year anyway so it won't impact this for this budget. Interim Finance Director Connolly said yes. Chairman MacDonald said the Board of Education just wants a better understanding of what the terms and conditions are.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Tuition: Regular & Adult Ed (Object 561). This is an area that every Superintendent in the Hartford area is struggling with in great deal because of the legislative change that had happened last July which removed the

restriction for students and families to apply directly to magnet schools. He has shared this already with the Board of Education at several meetings. In the past, this required a cooperative agreement between a magnet school and the Board of Education prior to a student being enrolled in a magnet school. Rocky Hill continues to have these types of agreements with GHAMAS, etc. but with the lifting of this regulation, it has been nearly impossible for all Hartford area districts to predict which families are going to avail themselves of this opportunity. This has resulted in various significant budget shortfalls in the Hartford area. He said Interim Finance Director Connolly was going to walk everyone through the spreadsheet that gives the detail on what they know about magnet school tuitions this year and how they are trying to use this information to project for next year.

Interim Finance Director Connolly told the Board of Education members that in the budget book document (the first budget book they received), they will find a tab that is named "Transportation & Magnet Schools". They had a lot of difficulty in trying to figure out where to go with this because the magnet school is changing so much. They did a head count of the students that they know. For 2008-2009, they took each of the schools and they tried to identify the magnet schools. They tried to identify what they knew at the time as far as how many students were at each of the schools along with the estimated student cost. They have a total count of fifty-eight students who are attending the magnet schools. This number was taken and rolled into next year for the head count. Fifty-eight students have been put into the proposed budget for next year. Adjustments were made for a projected 10% increase in tuition. He referred everyone to where it stated the Public Safety Academy in Enfield and how it stated \$9,000 for tuition. This does not impact the budget because there are no students from this district going there. This was a number that they had to work with. They added 10% to this bringing it to \$9,900 but once again this did not impact the budget because of the fact there are no students going there. He asked Mr. McMonigle what the updated figure is for this tuition and Mr. McMonigle said it is \$4,600. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the best information they had was that tuitions were going up 10% overall so this was built into the budget. The student count can change. Superintendent Dr. Villar said all of this is in flux and it is very difficult for them to know what is going to happen other than going off of actual experience. At the state level, there are significant financial issues. Magnet school operators and CREC are suffering from budgetary problems. Part of the issue is to what extent and how much they will distribute these problems to the local area of educational authorities. In support of magnet schools, it is unclear what the legislature is going to do. It is also unclear what is going to happen with the School Choice Program and this appears to be the direction that the Commissioner wants to move in. Different funding options are being looked at that could positively or negatively impact this district in that area. This information is subject to change more than the health insurance information. There is no history to base this on and they are going to have to keep monitoring this for quite some time.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions. Mrs. Calciano-Coler said they have history on this for 2008-2009 in that there are fifty-eight students. She asked if they have history from previous years and if this number of fifty-eight is pretty consistent. Superintendent Dr. Villar said one of the issues is that this current operating year is the first year that families could elect to go. There were people who had been participating for a long time at GHAMAS and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts because there were operating agreements with them. For a long time, this district was able to budget for this based on a controlled and expected participation rate because they had the agreements. The new law “blew them all out of the water”. He explained some more. Mrs. Calciano-Coler assumed that there would be more people opting to go because of the barrier being removed. She asked Superintendent Dr. Villar why he stayed with the number of fifty-eight students and didn’t increase this. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Mrs. Calciano-Coler that this was a good question and they assumed that there will be children who will be graduating out of this so there will be slots that could be filled with children who are not going to be attending. Mrs. Calciano-Coler said that any number would do at this point. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is hard and for the sake of transparency, they picked a number that they had some support for.

Mr. Wisnioski confirmed that the state created this modification of the regulation law that states if a student from Rocky Hill decides to go to GHAMAS then they can go unrestricted. He asked if the bill for this would come to this district and if the level of compensation has been changed. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes and he said the control for this is that the student has to be admitted to the program. For the Greater Academy of the Arts, students have to audition in order to get in. For other magnet schools, the student would apply and if they get accepted then the bill would come to the local educational authority. Mr. Wisnioski said he understood that GHAMAS was going to change to an all day student type of enrollment. He asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he knew anything about this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he knew that there was a full time program put in place at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts for a select number of children. He heard the same discussion about full time at GHAMAS but he didn’t have solid information with regards to this. He will check with Mr. Bruce Douglas to be sure and he told Mr. Wisnioski that they can get back to him. Mr. Wisnioski said he heard this from someone who is on the Student Board of GHAMAS. Mr. Wisnioski asked if this district has no control at all with regards to where a child might want to go and he asked if this district doesn’t have the ability to say no in any way. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is correct. The only option that the Board of Education has is that it could elect not to pay the magnet school tuition bill. CREC, working with the State Department of Education, would then deduct this amount from the ECS payment made to this town. Mr. Wisnioski referred to the fifty-eight students and he confirmed that they can’t do anything that would force them to come back into this district and it was not worth it to look to see what the impact would be if they could because it is an unlikely scenario. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was correct.

Mrs. Bell asked with the economy the way it is, if it is anticipated that they might have children who might choose to go to GHAMAS who might otherwise have gone to private schools. It seemed to her that they might get more children who make this adjustment and perhaps they might want to look at the number of fifty-eight and think about it as they go forward with the budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the potential is absolutely there and this is a very plausible line of thinking. This is an area where they are currently in a deficit. He thinks this is something that warrants discussion and he said there are difficult choices this year obviously. Mrs. Bell explained that there had been a limited number of slots for GHAMAS in the past. If this is opened up then all of the children who didn't get in, in the past, will say they can go now. Superintendent Dr. Villar said CREC opened six magnet schools this past summer so this is of even greater concern. His personal feeling is that CREC is going to get up-to-speed in advertising these. The legislature changed the law because it is imperative for a magnet school to be full. It is a not so subtle shifting of funds from the state level to the local educational authorities in how they used to support magnet schools.

Mr. Wisnioski said he had a daughter who went to GHAMAS and he said they don't have an unlimited capacity to accept. He asked what will happen if there is an oversubscription to go there. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that generally some type of lottery system is run when there is an oversubscription for the magnet schools. It is a blind lottery often but not always and this is a choice that CREC would have to make. The key to the legislation that has to be considered is that magnet schools have a limited number of seats. If a school is full, they won't accept additional students. It will be incumbent on the other magnet schools that are having trouble being filled to draw children who are interested in leaving the district. Mr. Wisnioski said it is not likely that twenty children from this town will go to GHAMAS because there is not the physical space for this to be done. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is correct. Rocky Hill is not the only sending district and all of the Hartford area districts have to be considered. There is a level of competition. The healthier magnet schools are full. There are a lot of magnet schools that aren't but they benefited by the legislature. At some point in the future, he thinks there is going to be a saturation point in a natural leveling. Everything will seek a balance at some point. There will be some type of trend that this district will be able to look at it. This year, they have to project so it will be tricky.

Mr. McMonigle said they are much more likely to see increased enrollments in the elementary magnet schools than in the high school magnet schools. High school magnet schools are full and much more competitive. The elementary magnet schools didn't open until last May so they didn't have time to advertise. He thinks if a spike is going to be seen then it will be at the elementary magnet schools.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the only issue that he would focus on is that School Choice is the real "wildcard" that is coming out of the legislative body this year. He thinks the state is beginning to realize its investment in magnet schools. Multi-Millions of dollars have been spent and the impact has been negligible on Sheff. A formula is being worked

on to tell districts in the Hartford area how many students a district can take from Hartford and how much money a district will get per student. This can't be budgeted for because it is not known what they are going to tell Rocky Hill that its capacity is and it is not known how much money will be given per student. Presently, Rocky Hill is being given \$2,500 per student for Choice. This money used to offset the cost of GHAMAS and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts at one point. It worked at one point but now this is significantly impacting this district in a negative manner.

Vice Chairman Rivard referred to the amount of \$2,500 per student being given to this district and he asked what the average cost per student is normally. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is much greater than that and it is easily two, three or four times this amount. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he has argued to the Commissioner that for magnet schools to work and for School Choice to work that he believes they need to come up with a regional estimate on the cost for education. If the money follows the child then it would lessen the impact of students attending magnet schools. His quick estimate is that it costs \$11,400 for a student to attend school in this district.

Chairman MacDonald asked if there were any more questions on this item. There weren't any more questions. He said to them the before they move on, one of the process checkpoints they spoke about earlier with regards to the budget workshops is for them to try to limit them to two hour sessions. He told everyone when they look at what they had talked about today that 100% of the increase has been covered. There are some other negatives for the budget decreases. When they think about what has been covered this evening, it is effectively the entire increase of the Board of Education. He knew that there would be many more budget sessions and he said there is always the opportunity to get into a lot more detail on some of the smaller items. He thought it was important for the public to know that there are very few components of the budget (i.e. salaries, tuition, transportation and benefits). He thought there had been some good healthy discussions this evening.

Chairman MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he had another item or two that he wanted to cover this evening because he thought that he did have some time to do this, this evening. Chairman MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar what he suggested going forward. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had a few additional items with regards to his list of objects which had a variance that were significant to talk about. He thought they could move through these items and he said if more time was needed then they could move the discussion to Thursday.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said the items that he had remaining that he thought would be important to highlight were Instructional Supplies (Object 611) and Textbooks (Object 641). He mentioned these together because they are impacted by this district's plans for Language Arts improvements. The last item was Other Supplies (Object 690). There was a significant reduction in this and he wanted to bring this out for the sake of transparency. He said he was going to have Assistant Superintendent Hourigan speak

with regards to Object 611 and Object 641. Superintendent Dr. Villar hoped that a whole image or picture of what they did would be projected. He highlighted that one of the cost saving strategies they are trying to take is to look at the current funding levels. The current expenditures for the textbooks were looked at and they looked at their needs for the Kindergarten Language Arts Program. Three different series are currently being piloted working through the Board of Education Curriculum Committee. He is hoping that they will bring a recommendation for an adoption of a series this spring. Language Arts is the core foundation of the improvement program for the elementary schools. They want to make sure that they continue to achieve the high levels. In January of this school year now, they have found that there are textbook expenditures that haven't been made. His position has been that if they haven't expended for textbook replacements by now then they are most likely not going to be using those accounts for textbooks this year. He said this isn't a bad thing but these funds need to be used wisely. His proposal is to try to use some of these funds to offset costs for next year by looking at those materials. This will be later this year because the Board of Education Curriculum Committee has to be gone through and the Board of Education has to approve the series. The thought is to use some of the current funds to help offset the cost of the new series for Kindergarten.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they looked closely at Object 611 to see what it was that has traditionally been funded out of there. With the changes in the instructional practices (i.e. guided reading, reader's workshop model, etc.) some of the things that had traditionally been purchased through Object 611 didn't need to be purchased anymore because they are built into the instructional practices that are being done with guided reading. They wanted to focus on getting the guided reading books into the hands of students and attempt to fund the Kindergarten Language Arts Core Program. Some of the things that would traditionally be purchased in Object 611 wouldn't be needed anymore because they are part of the core program. A shift was made from Object 611 into Object 641. They also tried to take a look at using the grants more wisely too. She said how she had already mentioned using Title I money for Stevens School and Moser School to purchase guided reading materials that would help teachers with this as well as using some Immigrant Grant money to have more books purchased for all of the schools. They are looking to taking some of the money from Title I to purchase these materials as well as the balances from the textbook accounts so that these can be put together. This is how they would like to fund the start of getting a core program in Kindergarten if the Board of Education approves this and as they proceed with the pilot.

Mrs. Vargas asked if this is where Mrs. Brown's budget comes in. When looking at the detailed pages in the back of the budget book, she saw that everything from the elementary schools was supposed to be centralized in a Language Arts budget but she didn't see a tab that stated "Language Arts". She assumed that in middle school and high school, each of the administrators is responsible for those budgets. Mrs. Vargas said she asked Superintendent Dr. Villar this morning if Mrs. Brown had a budget and he said that she did. Mrs. Vargas said she would like to see this for the next budget session.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said sure. They had this document which they made copies of and distributed at this point.

Mr. Wisnioski asked if the Language Arts budget is just for next year. He said he would like to understand this in the same context that they are approaching computers. He explained some more. They need to understand that the magnitude they are making of the investment is a multi-year investment and not a single year one and this should somehow be tied to the enrollment information. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a great point. He said that Assistant Superintendent Hourigan can speak to this on Thursday. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was disappointed that in good faith, he wasn't able to bring forth a proposal for an adoption of the textbook series for K-3 at least. This is a considerable investment and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan had to be mindful of the bottom line in the current year. Some good time can be spent on this on Thursday and he said it can be mapped out. He said they can maybe review on Thursday, the document that passed out to everyone this evening.

Mr. McMonigle went back to Textbooks (Object 641) and he referred everyone to Page 14 of 25 with regards to the "Budget by Program". There is a proposed appropriation of \$20,000 for textbooks for West Hill School and \$0 for Stevens School. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said Stevens School and Moser School have Title I funding.

Mrs. Vargas referred to Object 611 for Griswold Middle School. She asked if the costs that are associated for English have been reviewed by Mrs. Brown as well. Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Mrs. Brown to speak briefly to her efforts to coordinate with Griswold Middle School. Mrs. Brown said elementary is being focused on now because they are looking at a new core program. They have been looking at assessments for a K-8 continuum as well as different curriculums that are in place now. At this point, they are not looking to make any changes at the middle school.

Mrs. Vargas asked Principal Watson if the number of \$20,000 that is listed there is a number that will probably be needed for a number of years. Principal Watson said yes unless the program shift changes overtime. Mrs. Vargas wanted to make sure that within the next year or two this wasn't something that they were going to look at as being money that they spent but if they had thought a little bit ahead of time that they might have saved. Superintendent Dr. Villar appreciated this point and he said it was a point that he wanted to make. When curriculum is being talked about districtwide, they are not going to purchase expensive materials to support courses until curriculum work is done first. The absolute foundation of everything they do as a district is curriculum. Curriculum needs to be built first that aligns well with the students' learning needs, with the state's standards as well as the expectations and learning outcomes that the national standards and the state have set. Once this is done, they are in the process to select texts that can support this. They are currently working on the elementary curriculum and they have compiled some series. When the curriculum work is finished, they will have recommendations for a series and they will be able to roll out the new curriculum with

the new series. In this budget, they have tried to line up the curriculum work and the resource. In the future, they may additionally purchase support materials for math in the middle school. The curriculum will be done first though. Mrs. Vargas said they have made a conscious effort in math to go only one grade or two at a time and to hold off in the middle school as well as the high school. She wanted to make sure they are approaching this in the same way for Language Arts. Superintendent Dr. Villar agreed and he said it was a good roll out model.

Mrs. Vargas said she had a question about textbooks. There has always been a textbook replacement schedule in the past. She asked where they stand on this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are monies built into the budget in every content area for textbook replacement. The adoption cycle is going to be done by a curriculum review cycle. Under the state's auspices, a curriculum review is done every five years. Language Arts is being worked on now. He explained what areas are being looked at, at the middle school and the high school. The curriculum review cycle being looked at (every five years) will eventually drive the request for textbooks. He needs to be convinced in these times though that a textbook is no longer serving its purpose and there has to be an educational reason why that textbook is not solidly linked to the curriculum. If a textbook is not, then he would support the request for the Board of Education Curriculum Committee to review and ultimately recommend a new text. There aren't new adoptions coming forward other than for Language Arts because the curriculum work hasn't been done yet. This is a requirement he has injected into the cycle so that it sets everyone into a new cycle starting this school year.

Mr. Wisnioski said there had been a discussion last year about bringing Trailblazers into the middle school. He thought that earlier in the year they had discussed that the funds hadn't been expended and that a book hadn't been purchased. He asked what the plan is for next year and what they are doing with Trailblazers moving into the middle school. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this was in process last year when he came on board. He had met with Principal Watson who is the Math Chairman along with Ms. Joyce Waterbury. They made the decision that the curriculum work wasn't in place yet to make the expenditure to move forward. There was a component that was purchased and it formed a bridge for the sixth graders. He explained more about this. In Grade Six, Mathscapes was purchased because it is a transitional text and it provides similar activities to what was being used in Trailblazers.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he would have Assistant Superintendent Hourigan speak to some of the efforts that have been done in the math curriculum writing thus far. There is a lot of work that has to be done to get it up to the request for additional support materials. Mr. Wisnioski asked if a math textbook had been bought for the sixth grade. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the one support series that was purchased is a full textbook but it is used as a resource. There was a considerable savings in textbooks as a result of this because they didn't go with the whole series.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they are developing the curriculum in the middle school right now with a program called a Balanced Curriculum. This incorporates something called significant tasks which would be similar to inquiry based learning. This is going to be done as part of the middle school math curriculum and it is very similar to what is done in Trailblazers. This will already be in the program without a specific textbook. Tasks are being come up that will go along with every objective they are teaching that will have a similar philosophy to Trailblazers. Mr. Wisnioski asked when Trailblazers starts. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said it is for K-5. Mr. Wisnioski asked if the intent of this was that it was going to go to sixth grade and now they are saying instead that they have this transitional textbook (non-Trailblazers). He asked what happens in the seventh grade. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they are working on math curriculum for sixth grade, seventh grade and eighth grade. Mr. Wisnioski asked if they may have a future request for a new textbook. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they may possibly depending on what is found when they go through the curriculum document and what the Board of Education approves. Mr. Wisnioski asked what happens to the children who move from the elementary school after having been raised on Trailblazers and a certain type of problem solving which varies from traditional. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this gap is trying to be bridged now with the Mathscares series. Mr. Wisnioski asked what was being planned to happen. Principal Watson said the high school has a very traditional program and the middle school is stuck in the middle. They obviously needed to have something in place with the sixth grade teachers in order to prepare them for what they would be expecting from the fifth graders with the Trailblazers program going “full bore” at the elementary school. He and Superintendent Dr. Villar had met with former Assistant Superintendent Boutilier and they had determined that there had been money at some point to buy new textbooks. They were buying textbooks though without the Balanced Curriculum piece. The initial intent at one point had been to buy the newer version of the present textbook that they had. The process that Assistant Superintendent Hourigan has orchestrated by having the curriculum planned by the teachers with some assistance from Mrs. Waterbury, etc. makes them take a look at this to say they should buy the program that fits the curriculum. Principal Watson explained some more. He believes the proposal for this year is that there are some replacement texts in the budget for some of the Algebra classes, etc. but there also is a large sum of money that has not been earmarked for a specific program because the process of developing the curriculum hasn't been finished yet for them to truly understand what would best fit it. They are trying to mesh the traditional with the Trailblazer type of activities. Mathscares is a shorter and smaller version of a textbook. He believes that they had to spend far less money than they had allocated originally. The teachers have been trained on how to implement these strategies without eliminating traditional math. Hopefully when they firm up the Math Balanced Curriculum then they can move forward to say what materials they need. Something will be in place for next year.

Mr. Wisnioski referred to the information they received with regards to the CMT percentages of students who are at goal. Math is one of the subjects. Fifth grade math

students have a very good rate of change from 2007 to 2008. The sixth grade declined and the seventh grade had a marginal increase. The eighth grade declined. He asked someone to comment on the math program, math textbooks and expenditures and where they are going. Mr. Wisnioski mentioned how Mayor LaRosa was present at this evening's meeting and he had forwarded some emails to him from some citizens who were questioning the students' performance on some standardized tests. Mr. Wisnioski asked how the performance on testing ties into the math program. Superintendent Dr. Villar mentioned how there had been a presentation in the fall on the CMT results. One of the themes was that this district is up and down which is an inconsistency in the performance. This leads to performance being student dependent. He personally believes in an educational system that is responsive to the needs of the students on an annual basis. The trend lines for this district now are up and down so it is hard to get a handle on where this district is because this is dependent on the skill set of the students coming into the classroom. He thought it was safe to say that they have had significant success with Trailblazers. It was a good investment and it has resulted in a trend line of increased performance over time. This needs to be continued as they work on the middle school in all areas. This district wants to have trend lines that are moving in an upward position on a consistent basis. This is not easy to do. They are putting systems in place that track student performance in a way that doesn't stop education. They are also creating systems to support instruction. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Waterbury are doing supportive work. These things are investments in the future and they take time. His experience has been that if they get these in place then the trend lines will go up and there will be consistent improvement. A solid curriculum core, great assessment system and the ability for the teachers to look at this data and talk professionally in a meaningful setting are needed in order to see consistent improvement. He is confident this is going to happen. He explained that this is not always dependent on resource. Time is a resource and how it is allocated is often dependent on how current resources are used. One area that research consistently supports as a way to improve a school system is teacher professional dialogue. This is the core of what they have been putting in place. Some textbooks, some supplies, some support and curriculum revision are needed. He thinks over time that this district will see better trends.

Chairman MacDonald asked if there were any other questions. Mrs. Calciano-Coler asked when there will be an update on Trailblazers for the parents because she finds it real difficult to teach this to her daughter. Principal Watson said the whole structure of Language Arts and math throughout this district is completely different. There are reading consultants, etc. for Language Arts at the elementary level. There is a double block period at the middle school for Language Arts. In Grade Six, there is a reading consultant. For math, the children take one period of math per day and Principal Watson said there is no math consultant in his building. He explained more about this. The children at the middle school get more Language Arts time than they do math time. There is a greater structure for support of Language Arts at the middle school than there is for math.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said Mrs. Waterbury has gone to the elementary schools and has made evening presentations for the parents for the PTOs to explain Trailblazers. There are also some parent resources that are available on the website. Principal DiMaggio said they have had family math night as well so that the parents can go and have a hands-on experience as to what the different lessons are. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they probably should continue to do this annually because it makes a very big difference.

Mr. Wisnioski said Trailblazers is similar to inquiry based learning. Inquiry based learning was the method of learning that was used by GHAMAS when his daughter went there. He understood with regards to the first group that took fifth grade Trailblazers that when they went up to the middle school, the faculty and method of teaching math were different. He thought at the Board of Education Curriculum Committee that it was talked about trying to smooth this transition. He didn't know how this was being done. He said that maybe having a different method of teaching and having no textbook has an impact. He explained more about this. He hopes that the ultimate outcome of curriculum in the budget is that more money is put in math because math is important. He hoped that they put as much effort into math that they are putting into Language Arts. He didn't see how this works with there being no textbook.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they will be able to bring the curriculum development to the Board of Education Curriculum Committee. They will see that the significant tasks Assistant Superintendent Hourigan spoke about do provide the structure that a textbook often does. There will still need to be supportive textbooks. They will show the direction they are headed in.

Mr. Wisnioski said it had been mentioned earlier in this meeting that they were going "to steal" from the unexpended textbook line of this year to buy something for the future year in a different subject perhaps. He asked that this be looked at carefully. Superintendent Dr. Villar said certainly. He explained that the rationale behind this is that they are going to buy something that they are ready for. There is a math program in place that has been in place for a long time. Chairman MacDonald was sure that this would be revisited on Thursday.

Chairman MacDonald asked if there were any other questions. Mrs. Bell said as they go through this on Thursday, she would like to have an understanding that if they have the same student demand for the courses that they are holding now if they are going to be able to staff and hold those classes. She said this is particularly for the high school level. She said the Virtual High School has to be staffed and yet the staff is remaining at the same level. She would like to have a discussion on this. She thinks this needs to be a conscious decision. She thinks the object level discussion has been good but it doesn't tell the whole story. In the detail, there are line items that talk about specific programs held at all of the schools. If some of these are going to be eliminated to shift the funding

elsewhere then there should be a conscious awareness from the Board of Education level with regards to what is being done with the shifting of expenditures.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have a detail accounting with regards to what the Virtual High School Program costs. He told Mrs. Bell that they can talk to any of the points that she has just raised with regards to FTEs and any shifts as well as impacts this has. There is an impact the Virtual High School Program has so Superintendent Dr. Villar said they will make sure that this is clearly articulated to the Board of Education. This will be prepared for Thursday night.

Mr. McMonigle referred to the salaries. He knows there is an agreement with the Rocky Hill Administrators Association that the Board of Education will entertain a discussion of adding an assistant principal any time that the elementary levels exceed a certain threshold. Mr. McMonigle said there is no inclusion of this in this budget and he asked if this is a conscious decision by the Administrators for this not to be brought up at this point or he asked if this is something that they missed. Superintendent Dr. Villar thanked Mr. McMonigle for bringing this up. Superintendent Dr. Villar said if the elementary principals were asked if they would like assistance that they would say yes and if he was asked if they need and deserve assistance that he would say yes. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he consciously elected not to include this in his requests because of the current fiscal situation they are in. If they could find a way to work an approximately \$230,000 expenditure into the budget then he would have but he couldn't see a way of doing this. He wanted the public to know that this wasn't included because it wasn't needed but he is just being cognizant of the climate that everyone is in right now. Mr. McMonigle understood why this is not in the budget but he said there is a process where this has to come forward and be discussed. He wasn't sure if Superintendent Dr. Villar could take this off of the table without the agreement of the Association. Mr. McMonigle asked Superintendent Dr. Villar to check with the Association. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he met with each member of the Association and they didn't make him aware of any disagreement with his decision not to include this expenditure but he was sure that if the President of the Association feels that he has acted inappropriately then he will notify him.

Mr. Wisnioski asked if the budget includes a nominal amount to support someone as a substitute principal when the principal is unable to be in the building. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes and he said this is a stipend position.

Mrs. Vargas asked if they can start with the Language Arts detail on Thursday. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes if this was the Board of Education's pleasure. Chairman MacDonald said this is fine.

Mrs. Bell clarified that the backup pages with the text ties in now. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the principals have looked at this as well as Ms. Boisvert who has done a herculean task. He thanked Ms. Boisvert. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Ms. Boisvert

has crosschecked this and he had a strong feeling that they were good. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the information does correspond.

Chairman MacDonald told everyone that in the next day or so, he will work together with Superintendent Dr. Villar to make sure that they put together an agenda of the items that they will be covering at the next budget workshop like they did for today's budget workshop. Chairman MacDonald told the Board of Education members to let them know if there is anything missing or any changes in the order of the items on the agenda. This way they will have a little bit of a structure as to what they will be covering.

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Raffaella Calciano-Coler, to adjourn the budget workshop at 8:30 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____