



**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
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 22, 2010
LOCATION	Rocky Hill Town Hall Council Chambers
DATE OF MEETING	January 26, 2010
TIME MEETING STARTED	6:01 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. Marc Beliveau (Entered at 6:06 p.m.)	4. Brian Dillon
5. Maria Mennella (Entered at 6:08 p.m.)	6. Frank Morse
7. Edward (Alex) Silva	8. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
9. Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan	10. Finance Director Frank Connolly
11. Principal Mario Almeida	12. Principal John Colonghi
13. Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio	14. Principal Rick Watson
15. Dr. Cathrynn Riggs (Director of Special Education and Pupil Services)	16. Darlene Brown (Coordinator of Language Arts)
17. Fred Ames (Technology Coordinator)	18. Lynn Boisvert (Bookkeeper)

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM 5 QUORUM PRESENT Yes No

TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES

1st MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Marc Beliveau, seconded by Edward (Alex) Silva, to adjourn the budget workshop at 7:24 p.m. (Raffaella Calciano-Coler and Dilip Desai were absent.)

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

ACTION

CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:24 p.m.

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: _____.

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUDGET WORKSHOP OF JANUARY 26, 2010**

Members Present: William MacDonald (Chairman)
Rene (Skip) Rivard (Vice Chairman)
Marc Beliveau (Entered at 6:06 p.m.)
Brian Dillon
Maria Mennella (Entered at 6:08 p.m.)
Frank Morse
Edward (Alex) Silva

Members Absent: Raffaella Calciano-Coler
Dilip Desai

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan
Finance Director Frank Connolly
Principal Mario Almeida
Principal John Colonghi
Principal Cori-Ann DiMaggio
Principal Rick Watson
Dr. Cathrynn Riggs (Director of Special Education and
Pupil Services)
Mr. Fred Ames (Technology Coordinator)
Mrs. Darlene Brown (Coordinator of Language Arts)
Ms. Lynn Boisvert (Bookkeeper)

A budget workshop of the Board of Education was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2010 in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Chairman William MacDonald called the budget workshop to order at 6:01 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Chairman MacDonald said this was their second night for the formal budget review of Superintendent Dr. Villar's budget. Chairman MacDonald turned the budget workshop over to Superintendent Dr. Villar at this point.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he was going to go through the remainder of the line items this evening. First, he shared confirmation with the Board of Education members that this district is receiving additional revenues that are not included in the budget currently.

They officially received confirmation yesterday from the State Department of Education that they can depend on an approximate \$62,000 grant that is used for Choice students who are attending in the district. The budget request number will drop to 4.3% if this amount is included.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to a paper that had a colored pie graph on it. Finance Director Connolly passed a copy of this out to each of the Board of Education members. This pie graph demonstrates the impact that the certified salaries have on the budgeting process. There was a smaller colored pie graph on the back of this that looks at the fixed costs, which 92% at a minimum are, of the Board of Education,. The other 8% is very debatable because education supplies, etc. are needed for a school system but these items aren't included in the calculation that brings this to 92%. Over 85% of the budget is made up of benefits and salaries. Eighty-eight percent of the overall budget increase for this year is made up of the increases in benefits and salaries. The budget for all of the remaining items, excluding benefits and salaries, is for district operations. This accounts for 12% of the budget increase. He explained what the district operations are and he said the percent increase from 2009-2010 is up less than 1% for these accounts. The operating costs for the district have increased \$46,627 for this year if Line Item #561 (Out-of-District Tuition Costs) is backed out of the equation which is less than two-tenths of 1% of the overall budget. They have made a lot of effort to control operational costs of the district. The increases being seen are essentially based on the fixed costs with the salaries and the benefits associated with those.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said at the last budget workshop that the Board of Education members had asked for more information on the Special Education supervisor. A document was handed out by Finance Director Connolly which gave a breakdown of the salary, benefits and the overall cost for this position. The net cost is \$116,076. He gave more detail about the costs for this of which \$5,000 is being offset through application of the IDEA grant. A job description for this position had been distributed this week as well as a rationale. He explained why this position is being sought now during the tough times. Special Education regulations require the Board of Education to employ a full time administrator for Special Education and ratios are specified. There needs to be one supervisor for the equivalent of fifteen to twenty-nine FTEs in Special Education instructional personnel. This district has a total of twenty-four personnel. They also have to look at the certified or licensed pupil personnel (School Psychologist and Guidance Counselor, etc.) and there are thirty-four of those people who are in these related services which means that Dr. Riggs supervises fifty-eight personnel in the certified category. Also, sixty-four non-certified paraprofessionals are employed. Dr. Riggs is also responsible for them. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks just this alone means that Dr. Riggs needs additional help. There are two hundred and seventy Special Education students. Federal law continues to make Special Education administration very complicated and he gave more details about this (i.e. following through on IEPs (Individualized Educational Plans) for the students, etc.).

He explained how Dr. Riggs is instrumental in taking a look at educational programs, following the letter of the law and ensuring they do everything they can to keep students in district because outplacement is an extremely expensive option for the district.

Superintendent Dr. Villar had asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan how this district looks with regards to the administration of Special Education in comparison to other districts. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan had a document entitled “Special Education District Staffing Statistics” handed out to each of the Board of Education members. Eight area towns were looked at and their staffing statistics were analyzed. A table with these results was created. Five towns in Rocky Hill’s DRG (District Reference Group) were included. These towns were Cromwell, Berlin, Windsor, Newington and Wethersfield. Rocky Hill has the highest student to supervisor ratio out of these five districts. None of the other eight school districts had a higher student to supervisor ratio. She went over what the overall average was. She explained why the addition of a Special Education supervisor would be beneficial from an instruction and curriculum point of view. She mentioned how Dr. Riggs has instituted collaborative teaching between Special Education and general education teachers throughout this district at all grade levels. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan gave more details about this. She also gave some details about SRBI (Scientifically Research Based Intervention) which they have implemented this year and this is helping to blur the lines between regular education and Special Education. Data teams are being focused on and administrators are being asked to attend as many data teams meetings at schools as possible. In this area, Special Education support would be beneficial as well. The addition of a Special Education supervisor would provide this district with greater Special Education support in instruction and in curriculum.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said Assistant Superintendent Hourigan and Dr. Riggs worked together on the SRBI model. It was highlighted in an article in the *Hartford Courant* a few weeks ago about how Rocky Hill is ahead of the curve statewide and this news has been shared nationally. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan mentioned how Mrs. Brown also was involved with this.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions about this. Vice Chairman Rivard referred to how each of the two hundred and seventy Special Education students requires a meeting and he asked how long each of the meetings lasts. Dr. Riggs said each meeting could last from forty-five minutes to two hours. Vice Chairman Rivard confirmed that it would take seven to nine weeks to complete these meetings. Dr. Riggs said yes. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if these meetings have to be done in a certain time period such as the first quarter of the school year. Dr. Riggs said these have to be done by the date of each student’s annual review. Within a certain timeframe, each student must have an IEP meeting before their annual review or it is within forty-five days of the initiation of the evaluation if an evaluation has been completed. Vice Chairman Rivard asked how many weeks there are in the school year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are approximately thirty-six weeks. Vice

Chairman Rivard told Dr. Riggs that this takes a good bit of her time. Dr. Riggs concurred and said that the rest of her time is spent on the evaluation and supervision of staff.

Chairman MacDonald said when this is looked at from a financial perspective that approximately 4.854 million of the budget is tied to Special Education. This ties into approximately 16% of the overall budget. He said he could make an argument that if they got another supervisor in that this could almost be cost neutral so that they make sure they continue the path that Dr. Riggs has done in trying to reduce the Special Education costs and in streamlining the costs. Chairman MacDonald thinks the numbers show the urgent need for a Special Education supervisor from his perspective.

Chairman MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he had a list of the different line items. Finance Director Connolly distributed a document to the Board of Education members that had Page 2 on the bottom of it and was entitled "Budget Commentary Highlights". Superintendent Dr. Villar said his intent was to go through the remaining line items and he would highlight those that had major moves. He was also going to weave in questions that he had received during the week and there would be time for any additional questions on the items.

Page 2 that was just distributed had some supporting information for Line Item #331 (Professional Services), Line Item #561 (Tuition Costs) and Line Item #590 (Other Services). Line Item #321 (Instruction) has an 11% reduction for this year. The training costs for the Virtual High School Program have been removed. The Virtual High School Program is staying the same size so no additional costs are needed for training additional people.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked Dr. Riggs to speak briefly about Line Item # 322 (Program Improvement) and how that has increased. Dr. Riggs said she has requested a job coach and transportation for one day per week. This would be for taking students who are transitioning to the workplace from the high school out into the community for supervised employment experience one day during the week. IDEA 2004 had changed the definition of transition services and broadened it. This district is working very hard with the students, who are particularly between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, to get them out into the community. There has been good support from local businesses. Many of these students can't be there on their own to attain their job skills and this is why they would like to have a paraprofessional five hours a week and also transportation.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #323 (Pupil Services) of which there is a minor decrease.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #330 (Professional Development) and he asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan to explain about the plans they have for next year. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they are level funding this, this year at

\$35,477. She explained how they are able to hold at this level. For both administrators and teachers, their school and district improvement plans provide direction for their professional development. Their focus now is on improving numeracy and literacy at all grade levels. Their specific emphasis is on the implementation of data teams, the implementation of the new language arts curriculum at the elementary level, the revision of the high school curriculum and the revision and implementation of the middle school math curriculum. Their specific emphasis is on providing and monitoring instructional interventions using SRBI. She went over some other district goals. They will become responsible for new teaching training and certification next year through changes at the state level by replacing the BEST program with TEAM (Teacher Education and Mentoring Program).

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #331 (Professional Services) which is mentioned on the document that was just handed out. This line item is down \$3,000 and the major contributor for this is that summer help contractors are not being used to move computers around the district. Legal fees in this line item are holding with what they had last year. The Athletic Trainer costs remain stable. The Health Director and District Advisor is incorporated in this line item. Through the automated payroll, there was an offset with some additional costs in automated systems. All of this together is what gives the net reduction of \$3,000. Chairman MacDonald asked if it is a one year contract or if it is a multiyear contract for the Athletic Trainer. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they initially went out for a RFP (Request for Proposal) for two years and this is the second year of that contract. At the end of this year, the Board of Education will have to make a decision as to whether it likes the current services to determine if they want to go out for another bid for this.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #430 (Repairs & Maintenance). This line item has gone down \$13,091. This is associated with the new computers and the less shifting of them as well as the overall repairs that are required. Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions on this line item. He referred to the tech ed for the high school and the repairs account seem to be stagnant at \$5,000 per year. He asked what would cost \$5,000 each and every year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said different pieces of equipment are selected to be repaired in a schedule over time. For this year, they have listed the general maintenance of the vehicle lift and other automotive equipment has been listed as a priority. Chairman MacDonald knows that there were requests for additional new types of equipment in the past. Superintendent Dr. Villar said requests for new equipment would be in Line Item #611 (Instructional Supplies) which he slashed significantly before preparing the budget document. Chairman MacDonald told everyone that Line Item #430 has nothing to do with the physical plants of any school.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item # 440 (Rental). This is for different things that are rented across the schools (i.e. materials used for high school productions).

This includes the rental of a P.O. Box which costs \$175. He explored this and this is the best solution to the mail problem at West Hill School as well as at the Central Office. The current costs are being kept and this line item is not being added to. Mr. Silva asked about the mannequin that is being rented for the high school. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that comes under Line Item #611 (Instructional Supplies). There is a \$605 item for CPR at the high school. Four mannequins are rented in the fall and four mannequins are rented in the spring. One hundred and fifty students are able to be certified through the Red Cross as well with all of the coaches districtwide and the staff that is interested. Mr. Silva referred to the narrative for this. He confirmed that this also includes training and that this is not just for the mannequins. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the \$605 that the Red Cross charges this district includes their ability to certify people.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #519 (Field Trips). There is a slight reduction here. This was based on what field trips are historically tied to their curriculum or which are a tradition at each of the schools. Chairman MacDonald said there appears to be a significant reduction for Griswold Middle School. He mentioned how the trip to Washington, D.C. for the eighth graders and some of the other trips are paid for by the parents. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he sits down with Central Office and each principal. He goes through their budget requests and challenges them. He was confident that the argument would have been won if this was a need that the school couldn't live without. Chairman MacDonald thought the cost for Griswold Middle School had been \$1,835 and now it is \$335. Principal Watson said there are some activities that they had participated in, in the past that they are not doing now. They had been involved in a couple of programs that they are no longer involved in. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the hearings they have with each principal are hours long because they have to start from scratch and explain why something is needed. Chairman MacDonald said that is good.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #530 (Advertising & Printing). There is a slight reduction here. This is basically level funded.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #561 (Tuition Costs). This was also highlighted on the "Budget Commentary Highlights" document. There is a significant increase of \$104,730, which is a 13.62% increase. This is made up of two components: (1.) magnet school attendance and tuition; and (2.) the decrease in the states' excess cost reimbursement. He gave more details about both of these components. Finance Director Connolly said they have to spend approximately \$53,000 per pupil before the excess cost reimbursement kicks in. The district is supposed to get 100% reimbursement for the excess cost but it is not receiving it. The state is going to be looking at around 70% to 75% reimbursement for next year. This district is using the figure of 70% reimbursement that it will get back to meet the mandate it has to have. The figure of 87% reimbursement had been used in the current year's budget. This subtle change of percent reimbursement from the state costs Rocky Hill \$73,000. They will know about this a little better when the Governor's budget comes out next week. This district has been very cautious on its revenue estimates as to what is coming in. Mr. Silva asked if magnet schools charge the

same tuition for a student who attends half day at the high school level as opposed to a student who goes for a full day. Superintendent Dr. Villar said no and he explained more. He said the law states that the district must pay whatever tuition CREC sets. Mr. Dillon asked if this is a discussion that is going on at the superintendent level with other towns. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he has been involved with CABA (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) as well as CAPSS (Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents) and both of these groups have been looking at this. A very active group at CABA is looking at the costs associated with the Sheff v. O'Neill situation as far as magnet school tuitions are concerned and as far as open choice is concerned. Hartford receives approximately \$11,000 for each student from Rocky Hill who attends a magnet school in their district. Rocky Hill has twenty-five students who come to Rocky Hill in the Choice Program and it gets \$2,500 per student. He said the greater problem is that it hasn't been resolved as to the cost of educating children in the Hartford region. There is an open choice system but there isn't money following the students. There aren't set tuitions so costs are all over the place. CABA is pushing for a position statement that will ultimately impact legislature. Chairman MacDonald referred to the Project Choice children who come here and he said the arbitrage difference between the \$2,500 and \$10,000 stays with Hartford. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes and he said that Hartford gets their ECS money. He mentioned what the original plan was. The Commissioner has asked in the next legislative upcoming agenda that they empower him to tell districts how many students from Hartford they can take. The State Department of Education will arbitrarily determine how much space this district has based on their class size formula looking at this district's schools. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he responded by saying no to a request recently for this district to take an additional twenty-seven students for next year. This district will stay with its current level of twenty-five students. The cost from the Sheff v. O'Neill decision is being shuffled out to the suburbs.

Mr. Beliveau asked if the courses offered at the magnet schools are courses that aren't offered in Rocky Hill. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained what the concept of a magnet school is. GHAMAS (Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science) offers courses that are typically beyond with this district would offer. Mr. Beliveau asked if there are eligibility requirements and Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a blind lottery. Mr. Beliveau asked if there is any additional financial burden to the families whose children decide to go to these schools. Superintendent Dr. Villar said no with the exception of the part time programs. This district has existing agreements with the Hartford Academy of Arts which limits the number of students who go to the part time program that this district pays for. If parents still want their children to go there if this district fills up the number of seats then tuition is charged. If a family applies for a full time program then the sending district has to pick up that cost if the child is admitted.

Mr. Beliveau referred to the amount of 87% that had been budgeted last year for the reimbursement rate and he asked if this was the actual reimbursement rate. Finance Director Connolly said the 87% reimbursement rate is for this current fiscal year. Special

Education had filed in January and they will see when the first check comes in. There is 75% in the first check and then the district files again in March. The second check is supposed to be the balance of the 25%. They will know what percentage the state is using when the first check comes in. Seventy percent has been budgeted for Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

Vice Chairman Rivard assumed that the part time students fluctuate between a.m. and p.m. or maybe something in between as well. Superintendent Dr. Villar said typically these students spend the morning at Rocky Hill High School and they travel during the lunch period to the p.m. programs which typically go to 4:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if the magnet schools have other students in the morning. Superintendent Dr. Villar said all of the magnet schools are expanding to full day programs. Vice Chairman Rivard referred to Sheff v. O'Neill and he asked if this is all the big cities and not just Hartford. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Sheff v. O'Neill just applies to Hartford. C.A.B.E. has recognized that there isn't a statewide plan to address this issue which also impacts Bridgeport and New Haven but no one has sued them. Vice Chairman Rivard asked how far out this reaches and if it is just for the adjacent towns to Hartford. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Enfield is impacted and Bloomfield is one of the bigger contributors. Bloomfield and Manchester had bills over \$1,000,000.

Mr. Silva explained what they are trying to do with curriculum in this district now. He said if this district offers more science as well as more math and if they change up the dynamics of Rocky Hill High School using the monies they have set aside in this budget then it will be more attractive for the students who go to GHAMAS currently, for example, to stay in district. He asked if this is a fair evaluation. Superintendent Dr. Villar told Mr. Silva that he touched on a dynamic that is occurring with regards to pressures these schools put on districts to step up to an "A". He suggested they do a careful analysis of programming as they are moving forward in the Curriculum Committee. Some of the programs they shouldn't try to compete with and in those decisions, tough decisions about course offerings need to be made so that a greater focus of energy and resource material can be applied to the programs they elect to continue offering. They have to be very mindful of if they are offering parallel programs that cost this district a great deal of money. They can just simply suggest to children that this is a great place to go to school if they are interested in a specific topic and if the program is being offered here. He thinks the days are fading with regards to comprehensive high schools having every program, especially in Connecticut.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #580 (Mileage Reimbursements) and this is level funded. Mileage is reimbursed based on IRS regulations. Chairman MacDonald asked if this is purely a mileage reimbursement for everyone within the district because years ago the superintendent used to have a lease, etc. Finance Director Connolly said employees are now required to submit the actual reimbursement mileage slips at least monthly and no more than quarterly. As of January 1, 2010, the reimbursement rate for mileage is fifty cents per mile. This past year, it was fifty-five cents per mile. This is not

an allotment or stipend but it is strictly a reimbursement. Chairman MacDonald asked why the mileage costs wouldn't go down 8% seeing that the rate did assuming that the same amount of miles are being driven. Finance Director Connolly said they had looked at this but if someone incurs additional mileage then this line item has a little flexibility. Chairman MacDonald said that was fair.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #590 (Other Services) which is also highlighted on the "Budget Commentary Highlights" document. This line item is up \$51,040. The primary movers are improvements in the use of technology, some of which are mandated. He explained more about this. There is also an additional \$9,000 in subsidies to offset the drama and sports student fees. This is based on the analysis that he had asked Finance Director Connolly to conduct of the impact of the lack of gate fees for students.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #611 (Instructional Supplies). This is level funded. He explained what these supplies can range from. This is a really broad category. He said Assistant Superintendent Hourigan could answer any questions about the instructional supplies if anyone had any. Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if any of them had any questions. He said he was looking at the 2008-2009 expenditures compared to the budget and the budget request. There is a significant difference for the computers. He asked Finance Director Connolly if this is more just a geography issue as to where the computers are being applied going forward. Finance Director Connolly said they have centralized all of the computers in the current year's budget so that this is being done under the direction of the IT Director. Superintendent Dr. Villar told the Board of Education members that it would be a good opportunity for them to look at the technology tab in the proposed budget book at this point. There was a technology life cycle cost page and he highlighted a few points off of this. He spoke about the plan they have in place that they are trying to incorporate in a very logical fashion. He mentioned the one hundred and sixty netbooks that they had deployed over the summer. A lot of work had been done by Mr. Ames with regards to this plan. They are trying to stay ahead with the technology.

Mr. Morse asked if the reason why the LCDs aren't being put in for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 is because of the bandwidth being upgraded at Griswold Middle School before they are put in. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the bandwidth issue is currently being worked on and he gave more details. They also want to be systematic by getting the high school done and then moving into the middle school. Wireless upgrades and then LCDs for the high school are kind of happening simultaneously. Mr. Morse said he is all for the netbooks.

Vice Chairman Rivard asked if they have speakers to go along with the projectors. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is part of mounting the units and this is the other piece that is really important. They have to look at the whole package when they budget. Vice Chairman Rivard confirmed that this is a regular media center. Superintendent Dr. Villar

said that is the approach. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if there is the capacity to have VHS. Superintendent Dr. Villar said no but he believes there are converters that are available for that. Most of the videos will be digital. Vice Chairman Rivard asked if there are any courses in their curriculum that will require a special projector (i.e. high definition and better video cards for color). Superintendent Dr. Villar knows that Mr. Ames works with different departments on their requests. Vice Chairman Rivard confirmed that these are not uniform LCD projectors. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was right and they have to make sure these fit the needs. Mr. Ames does a good job of making sure they get the right thing for the right job. Mr. Silva asked if all of these items come off of the state bid list. Superintendent Dr. Villar said often it is the state bid list with regards to technology and they have to follow all of their purchasing policies.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #613 (Maintenance Supplies) and this is level funded. Chairman MacDonald asked what this is for. Finance Director Connolly said this is for the repair of musical instruments.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #641 (Textbooks). He asked Assistant Superintendent Hourigan to speak about this. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said the new language arts textbook series was purchased last year for the elementary schools. They only need to purchase textbooks for a new Grade Two class at West Hill School. They are also looking for additional copies of level readers from the *Treasures* program. They are looking for more trade books. Replacement texts for damaged books at all grade levels are included in this line item. A new math book proposal for Griswold Middle School will be brought forward to the Curriculum Committee. With Board of Education approval, they are planning to purchase a new Algebra textbook next year for new curriculum they are writing for the high school now.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #642 (Library Materials) and this has a slight reduction. With this line item, they look to maintain electronic online subscriptions, periodicals and the collections of books at the schools.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said Line Item #690 (Other Supplies) and Line Item #730 (Equipment) go together. Line Item #690 is where the LCD projectors and the type of equipment that is being installed at the high school come out of. For Line Item #730, most of the equipment comes out of the technology tab. Radios that are used for two way communication are included in this line item. He explained how they have been working on conducting safety drills at the schools for quite some time now in collaboration with the Rocky Hill Police Department. Their ability to communicate has been very limited due to the overall size of the structures and the Police have recommended the use of two way radios. They are supplying the district with one radio per school. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained some more about these radios.

Mrs. Mennella asked where the cost savings of the new copier services they have signed for this past year are in the budget. Finance Director Connolly asked the Board of

Education members to turn to the “Programs” tab in the proposed budget book. He said Program 38 shows that the expenditures for copiers are at a \$0 increase. The detail for this is on the page behind that. This year, they had gone out on a bidding process for copiers. He explained what he and Mr. Ames did for this. They were able to replace the old copiers they had and they were able to double the number of copiers in the district. They have been able to stabilize the cost on this.

Mr. Morse referred to Line Item #690 (Other Supplies) and he asked for it to be explained to him about where it states “other” for this line item. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this depends on which line item is being referred to. He told everyone that the detailed pages in the narrative in the proposed budget book probably provide the best explanation depending on each line item. Mr. Morse asked about “other supplies, other, high school”. The amount for this is \$13,500. Finance Director Connolly said the information for this can be found on Page 34 of the proposed budget book. He referred to Program 29 and other supplies. This will be for the replacement of student chairs, desks and other classroom furnishings. Mr. Morse agreed that this is needed.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #810 (Dues & Fees). A substantial portion of the increase in this line item is due to the upcoming NEASC visitation which takes place once every ten years. He explained what this visitation is about. The cost for this will be approximately \$17,000. CABE membership is also included in this line item.

Superintendent Dr. Villar referred to Line Item #820 (Other Operating Expenses). This is level funded. Chairman MacDonald asked if there were any questions on this and there weren't.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said a question had been asked last week about exactly how much this district is spending on Special Education. He asked the Board of Education members to look under the “Program Detail” tab. He told them to look at Program 22 and this is for Special Education and all of the costs associated with this. The amount is \$4,854,705. This is a 10.87% increase for next year. The program detail is a good place for the Board of Education members to go if they want to look at any other configurations of program expenses. A substantial portion of the proposed budget is for Special Education.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said this concluded his walkthrough of the line items. Chairman MacDonald asked if there were any questions from the public. There were none.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if they had any questions or comments about what had been covered. Mr. Dillon said he wanted to clarify what had been said at the last budget workshop. He confirmed that only 6% to 7% of the budget actually goes to materials and tools to educate the children. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes. He said 92% to 94% of the proposed budget is made up of costs that are

fixed by contract and that are mandated. Chairman MacDonald said 96% of the proposed budget is for the salaries, benefits, transportation, tuition, textbooks, computers and equipment. The other 4% is for everything else and that is what the public probably sees the most of. There are thirty-eight line items in the budget and twenty-three of these remained level or decreased from the prior year. He said when they look at the items that make up the majority of the budget, the remaining of these account for sixteen line items and thirteen of them went down. He spoke about the high percentage that is for the salaries and benefits alone. This is 86%. Any additions, deletions, significant cuts or changes would impact people. They are down on supplies and computers. Textbooks have been cut. He thinks the scores are going up. They are not trying to add anything at all and they are holding steady to what they have. After this evening, he has more and more of a concern on their current Special Education with regards to the supervision. They are less than they should be on this. Dr. Riggs is doing a great job but 40% of her time is spent just in meetings.

Chairman MacDonald said they have only had two budget sessions but every Board of Education member has spent a significant amount of time going through the budget and going through the details, etc. This package is as transparent as any town document they have. This is helping him, as well as the public, understand where the costs are truly going. He referred to the detail and he said Finance Director Connolly has done a great job. He mentioned the employee level that Finance Director Connolly went through. He also mentioned how Principal Watson had gone through the budget stating he didn't need one trip, etc. Chairman MacDonald told the administration that his job is to look at if they are fulfilling their job and if they have performed the correct due diligence to ensure they have a budget that he feels is what is needed to maintain the progress they have made as well as one that is accurate, etc.

Chairman MacDonald said after this point, they have a process under their Charter where they go over to the town side. They will have to come back and go through a process if the town side elects to reduce the Board of Education budget. They don't know what number there is coming from the town side as of today. He mentioned how Superintendent Dr. Villar has talked to Town Manager Barbara Gilbert about this. Chairman MacDonald doesn't think the town knows and he doesn't think there is that much detail on their side because they are much farther down on the timeline.

Chairman MacDonald spoke about how Boards of Education such as in Glastonbury and Simsbury are requesting reductions of FTEs and head counts. This is because they know where they need to be coming out at. He said the entire administration has done a great job. They have taken a very complicated budget process which is driven primarily from the people. Education is a people business. He said he was very comfortable with the budget at this point.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if any of them had any other comments. None of them did. He said they could spend hours looking at items in

the budget (i.e. a pottery wheel for \$100) but he thinks the Board of Education members have the trust in the principals and the administration to have done this. Chairman MacDonald said they got explanations for things that had jumped out at them this evening. He told the Board of Education members that they had to determine if there was enough satisfaction in their minds for them to feel comfortable in moving the budget to the next step.

Chairman MacDonald asked the Board of Education members if there was any need for any further information from Superintendent Dr. Villar and his team that would preclude them from making a motion this evening. Mr. Morse asked if the proposed budget was just going to be redone based on the \$62,000 for the Choice students so that the actual percent increase of the budget will go down to 4.3% Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was correct. An accurate document will be produced and that will be brought to the February 11, 2010 meeting of the Board of Education because the Board of Education will have to act on this at that meeting.

Moved by Marc Beliveau, seconded by Edward (Alex) Silva, to adjourn the budget workshop at 7:24 p.m. (Raffaella Calciano-Coler and Dilip Desai were absent.)

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____