

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
FY11 Budget Presentation
Wednesday, May 12, 2010

A meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, May 10, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, Massachusetts.

Members Present: Dr. Janet Crane, Nate Bryant, Mr. James Fleming, Mrs. Kerry Martin, Dr. Brendan Walsh, and Mr. Kevin Carr,

Members Absent: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Others Present: Dr. William Cameron, Superintendent, Alyce Davis, Assistant Superintendent. Business Administrator Timothy Sheehan and Eileen Sacco, Secretary

Dr. Cane called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Dr. Walsh. The motion carried.

Questions and Comments from the Audience

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Budget Overview

Dr. Cameron made a presentation on the proposed FY11 Salem Public Schools budget. He reported that the budget allocation is \$47 million dollars and represents an increase of +2.45% (1.124 million over \$45,876 million for FY10).

Dr. Cameron explained that there are several areas of uncertainty in this proposal. He noted that we have not received final figures for FY11 for federal assistance from Title I, Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Supplemental Title I and IDEA grants. He also noted that we have been advised that Massachusetts FY11 portion of the National Title I appropriation is reduced overall by 8%. He further noted that this speaks only to the state's allocation overall, and says nothing about district level funding. Nevertheless, it is not encouraging information.

Dr. Cameron reported that steps are being taken to redesign the Title I effort in Salem in light of a proportional cut in our FY11 grant. He noted that preliminary information about other grants from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are that, along with the city's 2.45% increase in our operating budget, they will be adequate to maintain services at the level they are being provided in 2009-10.

Dr. Cameron reported that it will be apparent upon cursory review of this budget that there is an unresolved deficit of \$595,401. He explained that it will be resolved by administrative amendments to the budget during the course of the School Committee's budget approval process. He stated that the final budget that the School Committee will be asked to approve will be balanced in the amount of \$47 million dollars.

Dr. Cameron explained that the \$1.124 million dollar increase in the budget will be promptly consumed and the greatest new cost is the anticipated inflation in the various bargaining units expiring contracts. He noted that this added cost, comprising of step increases, previously negotiated raises and longevity pay increases will cost the district close to \$1 million dollars this year.

Dr. Cameron explained that the increase in the budget will allow us to retain by far the greatest portion if not all of the instructional and support positions the School Committee approved in May 2009. He noted that the core functions and staffing levels found in our schools in May 2010 will, with this appropriation, be retained for FY2011. He also noted that many positions funded with Federal stimulus money will be retained in FY2011. He explained that these positions were funded by aid received from the state ARRA and SFSF money received this year. He further explained that the SFSF money was available to Salem because the district fell short in FY10 of the fiscal year "foundation budget" amount calculated annually pursuant to the 1993 Education Reform Act. He noted that the amount that Salem fell short is the sum that the Commonwealth provided to Salem from SFSF funds intended for educational purposes.

Dr. Cameron explained that there is a temporary deficit in our initial proposal in large part because of demands for personnel or services in new areas. He noted that the FY11 budget, prior to being balanced, proposes some increases beyond FY10's level of service. He explained that all of the increases are proposed to ensure that:

- Class sizes do not exceed either the cap imposed by the Salem Teachers Union contract or sound educational practice (5.0 FTE).
- Programs for English language learners meet state standards and requirements (6.0 FTE)
- New academic programming, specifically Latin I at Salem High School for 2010-11 (1.0 FTE)
- Special needs programming has adequate support personnel as our numbers and programs grow (0.5 FTE)
- Spanish-language assistance is offered in district support services (1.0 FTE)

Dr. Cameron explained that cost for additional positions comes from two sources: reallocation of funds from contracted services to payroll; and reallocation of costs from other budgeted items to payroll.

Dr. Cameron explained that another area in the budget that has increased is transportation. He explained that Special Education transportation costs in FY10 have exceeded what we anticipated when the School Committee adopted the budget. He noted that the total transportation increase being proposed is \$165,000 and is split between salary increases for Salem Public Schools employees (\$50,000) and primarily out of district special education transportation (\$115,000).

Dr. Cameron explained that the proposed budget will enable the district to retain its core academic functions and to provide the services students need in regular and special education alike. He noted that unfortunately some needs directly affecting students, especially in administrative areas, cannot be met with this budget. He noted that our Curriculum department, the members of which do exceptional work with teachers and principals, would benefit from a change in some positions to administrative status. He noted that this will not happen in FY11 and each K-8 school would benefit from having an assistant principal and they are not in the budget for FY11.

Dr. Cameron also noted that additional professional staffing in the Salem High School Guidance Department would enable the hard working members of that staff to provide greater, more comprehensive assistance to students and parents. Additional staff for Guidance will likely not be provided in FY11. Dr. Cameron also noted that several students in all of the schools and their families would benefit from more school adjustment counselors to work with regular education students, and that is unlikely to happen in FY11 as well.

Dr. Cameron also reported that clerical staff positions were cut in the schools and in the Business Office in February of 2008. He noted that restoration of at least some of these positions would greatly enhance the efficiency of our schools and the performance of key functions in the Business Office. He noted that new clerical positions are not being proposed for FY11.

Dr. Cameron thanked Mayor Kimberley Driscoll for proposing an appropriation that recognizes the importance of a sound and innovative school system to the prosperity and well being of the community.

Secondary Education Budget Presentation

Dr. Cameron reviewed the budgets for Salem High School and Collins Middle School.

Questions and Comments from the Audience

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Dr. Walsh moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Carr. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary
Salem School Committee

**Approved by the School Committee
June 7, 2010**