

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

School Department Budget

April 21, 2010 – 6:30 p.m.

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

City Council Present: Mayor Ferrini, Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh, Councilors Lister, Hejtmanek, Spear, Dwyer, Coviello, Kennedy and Smith

Staff Present: John P. Bohenko, City Manager; Judie Belanger, Finance Director; Dianna Fogarty, Human Resources Director; Ed McDonough, Superintendent of Schools; Steven Zadravec, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Steve Bartlett, School Business Administrator and Dianne M. Kirby, Deputy City Clerk

School Board Members Present: Dr. Mitchell Shuldman, Chair; Kent LaPage, Lisa Sweet, Ann Walker, Carol Chellman, Leslie Stevens and Thomas Martin Members

School Board Members Absent: Dexter Legg and Rebecca Emerson

I. Call to Order

Mayor Ferrini called the work session to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Introduction

Mayor Ferrini welcomed the School Board, School Staff, City Staff and City Council. He said he and the Council appreciates the hard work that has been done to this point. He said the Council understands this is a difficult time and a difficult endeavor for everybody. He turned the meeting over to Superintendent of Schools, Edward McDonough.

III. Presentation – Edward McDonough, Superintendent of Schools; Mitchell Shuldman, School Board Chair

Edward McDonough thanked City Manager Bohenko and Judie Belanger, Finance Director for all the assistance they provided the Administrative team along the way. He stated the mission of the Portsmouth School Department is to educate all students to the highest level. He stated he was going to speak briefly on the four themes that emerged either through the questions the Councilors asked or at the public hearing last Wednesday evening.

He said he would first like to touch on student/teacher ratios for pupil expenditures, talk a little on the district performance with the New England Assessment, the VCAP and share a bit of the work that the district has undertaken in order to develop some internal capabilities and get closer to realize our district mission.

Mr. McDonough showed a breakdown in the number of teachers that are in the general fund budget for FY10. He said the total is 251.7 full time equivalents. He said when

you look more closely, you will notice that 189.6 or 74% are regular education teachers and 66 or 24% provide student support services. He said the enrollment for PK-12 this year is 2,646. He said if you take the total 251.7 into the number of professional staff we have the ratio is 10.5 to 1. He said what is also true is that if you look at the classroom average, 139 that have classrooms; the classroom average is 18.9 to 1. He said if you include all the unified arts programs (music, PE, health and technology education) the ratio comes down to 14.3 to 1.

Mr. McDonough said when crafting this budget it was very important to protect the instructional core as they did not want to adjust their ratio and classrooms and wants to continue at 18.9 to 1. He further stated he does not want to underestimate the importance of student support services.

Mr. McDonough stated they have some additional resources such as additional revenue sources that allows for program augmentation, tuitions, and fee revenue which allows them to have additional staff at the Robert J. Lister Academy equaling six full time equivalent teachers. He said we also have outside districts that send students to our programs that enable us to secure additional support for the schools. He stated was also receive considerable support through federal funds, particularly in the areas of title one and special education.

Mr. McDonough said the key is to strike a balance between classroom instruction and student support necessary for us to be successful in achieving our mission.

Mr. McDonough said the next area for discussion is per pupil cost. He said it is safe to say every state has its own formula. He believes it is largely an attempt to discern the unit cost to educate a child in a particular district. He said each district will use this fee in order to determine what would be the charge, at a peculiar level, for outside students coming into the district. He said New Hampshire formula equals all expenditures from any source (local, State or Federal) then subtracts out the tuition, transportation costs and food services costs. He said this total is divided by the average daily membership. He said this figure is used for a number of purposes. Edward McDonough stated the cost per pupil in 2008-2009 was \$14,194. He said there are 48 districts that have been figured using PK – 12 just as Portsmouth is. He said Portsmouth is ranked 11th out of the 48 schools. He said the size of the district determines per pupil spending. He said he also did a per pupil cost analysis for the secondary school level against the eight top High Schools in the State and with the exception of one school we are getting high levels of achievement for a lesser expenditure per pupil.

Mr. McDonough talked about the district performance in light of the _____ (North East Com Assessment and our status in relation to adequately yearly progress under the Federal “No Child Left Behind” law. He said since 2001 performance targets have been increasing and in 2013-2014 the expectation is that we will have to have 100% proficiency with all students across the country. He said the law expects that schools not only meet the target that they set, whole school, but they also expect the school to meet it in the nine groups and sub-categories in both reading and math. He said there are 18 criteria a school has to meet. He said if you fail to meet any one of those categories you are deemed under the law to not have made

adequate yearly progress. Mr. McDonough said there are a couple areas where there is an achievement gap. He said these gaps are in the economically disadvantaged sub-groups as well as in the educationally disability groups. He said this is why we need the critical supports to ensure that all students are meeting the standard.

Mr. McDonough said when you look at our overall performance by school, by grade level, he believes they are achieving and serving children in the district well. He said 68% of schools across the State did not make adequate yearly progress. He said this is just notice to them that they need to go back and pay attention to those sub-groups.

Mr. McDonough stated the School Board has established a goal that teacher teams at grade level of the Department will look at student performance data and if a student is not performing at the expected level, set a goal for that student, monitor the student's performance, and collaborate together to develop interventions to ensure all students are learning and as a district are committed to building that kind of a system.

Mr. McDonough went over the goals for each school and how they are progressing within those goals. He stated he believes the proposed budget allows Portsmouth to keep the good work of the district moving forward.

Mr. McDonough thanked the Council and City Staff for their attention this evening.

IV. Questions and Discussions

Mayor Ferrini thanked the Mr. McDonough, Superintendent of Schools and the School Board members for the hard work they put into this budget. He opened the meeting to questions and discussion.

Councilor Coviello asked if the School Department has a policy on class size. School Board Chair Shuldman stated the school does not have a policy on class size. He said reasonable . He did state there is a max range that is stated in the teacher's contracts. Mr. McDonough, Superintendent of Schools stated they like to be under 20 student per class in the Elementary School classes, 18 to 21 students in the Middle School classes and 20 to 21 students in the High School core classes and the number of student per class in the electives will vary.

Councilor Coviello said the goal is not class size, but better education. He asked if the School Board has invested in less costly tools such as on-line education. School Board Chair Shuldman stated they have not.

School Board Member Lisa Sweet

School Board Member Ann Walker

Councilor Dwyer stated students in programs such as the Alex Program where you already have students that are struggling; you would want to have a teacher there for guidance and assistance. The students in the advanced programs

School Board Member Lisa Sweet stated advanced students still need teacher/student instruction.

Councilor Kennedy

She requested to know why when there are cuts to a budget, the cuts are always in special education.

Is it solely grant funded.

Ed McDonough, Superintendent of Schools, out of seven professional staff four He said we are expecting fewer special education students.

High School

IDEA Funding

Councilor Kennedy stated there are IRA funds available for Special Education.

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator stated these are

He said the State has been struggling with the website
months behind.

we are about 6

Councilor Kennedy asked if we can use IRA funds for these cut personnel.

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator stated IRA math programs

Councilor Dwyer asked if they expect to see a trend to move to a lower number with children with disabilities.

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator stated we are

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of Schools said they do see a shift

Early interventions is

Councilor Kennedy said on page 268-269 comparing

266 at Dondero School, 28 at Little Harbor

Councilor Dwyer stated everything should not be equal.

Kent LaPage, School Board

Councilor Lister stated 85% of the School's budget is salaries or fixed costs. He asked if the School Board is looking at current job descriptions and the possibility of consolidation between some of these positions.

Kent LaPage, School Board said there are consolidations first wiggle team athletics with a \$90,000.00 a year savings.

Councilor Kennedy said there is a no book policy home.

Lisa Sweet, School Board stated that is incorrect.

Councilor Kennedy asked if there is a policy for text book rotation.

Library

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator said book replenish the workbook
creates an even from year to year.

Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh said income for SAU \$500,000.00 more next year.

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of Schools said more and more students coming
from SAU

Would like to

\$70,000.00 rent

He doesn't know why that program is over at the Community Campus

Career education

Lisa Sweet

Councilor Coviello asked Cost per pupil

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of Schools in 96% budget

What percent are on the free and reduced lunch program.

Leslie Stevens, School Board

Councilor Hejtmanek intervention

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of School said it is really taking off,

Councilor Dwyer said with all the internal accountability pressure on teacher's performance, what plans are there to gear up with our teachers linking performance with

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of School supervision

He said it is on our radar, but

Councilor Kennedy said on page 281 cost Adult Education Center, can this be self sufficient. She said there are a lot of grants out there for this. She asked if we are duplicating getting grants or charging for this.

She said on page 252 is shows K aid is under special aid. She said there are many other ways to do this.

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator said adult education is under the general fund. He said we have been lowering

Kat Aid reimbursement is thoroughly researched to get every penny we can.

Councilor Spear said he recognizes the economic conditions and does the School Board still feel the budget

School Board Chair Shuldman said \$3,000,000.00 of the debt is what

City Manager Bohenko said the High School

He said the operating side is not pushing the budget this year.

Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh said the City Manager gave his budget of 1.28 we need to bring that number down. She said the school needs to think of ways to shave off a little. She said 1.28 is going to be

Councilor Spear said the 2.8 percent budget everyone believes these budget are over

But the

We can only control what we can

We need to know the impact for a certain deductions

He said the Fire Department had a list

We would like to see a list like this on the School Board side.

Mayor Ferrini we need to know the impact is this something we can

School Board Chair Shuldman

Lisa Sweet, School Board

Councilor Kennedy said we need to look at our revenues.

Agree we need to see

Mayor Ferrini requested a list of the impact on cutting items

School Board Chair Shuldman said a list on the steps we would have to take to get the budget down to zero increase. He asked if the Council feels a 1.28 percent increase is too high, what number are they looking at.

Mayor Ferrini said the Council has not heard from any of the other departments yet. He said they want to weigh the _____ with the impact.

Councilor Coviello said a 2.8 percent increase is reasonable _____ if you need help this year to develop programs that will reduce costs in the future than I would be in favor of it.

Councilor Smith 274 athletic elementary trans cost center
you have three lines,

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator stated it should be elementary, middle and high school.

Councilor Smith

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of Schools

building requests

Councilor Smith page 278

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator outlined in teacher's contract for
reimbursement to teachers.

Councilor Smith replace equipment new equipment large equipment

Steve Bartlett, School Administrator large equipment, replacement and new
equipment

Councilor Smith asked administrative level loss of what
would this do

Edward McDonough, Superintendent of Schools said it would set us back dearly.

Councilor Smith said if there are cuts He said we all want what is
best for our kids, but 1.28 percent increase is too much for the taxpayers.

\$500,000.00 out of sister

We can't measure

When we start to remove programs out of our schools we will loose some of these revenues from students from out of the City.

Lisa Sweet, School Board said it is not just achievements
go down

Councilor Dwyer said one point Mr. McDonough made is the size of the

Have we ever made overtures in more than we

Kent LaPage, School Board said we will be consolidating more with the completion of the new school.

If we market some of our classes we could not handle it.

Yes, but never marketed it.

Councilor Spear said a big cost driver is the 7% raise this year.

City Manger Bohenko said it varies.

Councilor Spear said certain groups have forgone these increases to assist during these economic times. He asked if the School Board would consider renegotiating these contracts.

School Board Chair Shuldman said he agrees with what Councilor Spear said, but he can not speak for the teachers.

Mayor Ferrini

School Board Chair Shuldman said the _____ is different now. He said we are now saving our employees and programs and not just taxpayer money.

Kent LaPage, School Board

Councilor Kennedy look into the future

Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh stated in the teachers agreed to take their raises six months late.

Tom Martin, School Board member said ask that teachers come to the table to contribute.

Councilor Coviello with teachers a large group of people without contracts are not getting cola and

Lisa Sweet, School Board member said a concern that Mr. McDonough is not in the City's plan and properties. She requested if there was a way to get the school on that list.

City Manager Bohenko said it is important to understand that a number of years ago the school was not in the City Budget. He said we

Councilor Smith said the Master Plan set by State law Lane sue and infrastructure document.

He suggested the School Board put together a Master Plan.of their own

Councilor Kennedy a strategic plan encourage everyone to create a
strategic plan to allow us to

Could be included

Mayor Ferrini stated all the hard work done by the School Board and School
Department staff is greatly appreciated and the it is
outstanding.

School Board Chair Shuldman

V. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss at this meeting.

VI. Adjournment

At 8:35 p.m., Mayor Ferrini declared the meeting closed.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dianne M. Kirby, Deputy City Clerk