

**BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING**  
**April 3, 2013**  
**Torrington High School Media Center**  
**Major Besse Drive**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:07pm.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Mr. Brady, Mrs. Cappabianca, Mr. Cavagnero (arrived at 6:20pm), Mrs. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Rovero, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder, Mrs. Domanico, Mr. Joslyn, Mrs. Kloczko

**Absent:** Mayor Bingham, Austin Kelson, Kevin Finn, Rachael Kelly

**SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION**

Mr. Traub stated the purpose and rules of the School/Community Session.

There was one (1) speaker, L. Reynolds, regarding the budget.

**APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT'S 2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Mr. Brady made a motion to resume the discussion of the Approval of the Superintendent's 2013-2014 Proposed Budget. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked Mr. Traub to clarify for the public which budget the Board was discussing and voting on.

Mr. Traub said the Board was discussing the Superintendent's 2013-2014 Proposed Budget of \$71,622,258. This proposed budget consists of a 7.8% increase.

Mr. Nargi asked about receiving information on health insurance. He stated that over a two (2) year period the budget has increased by 11%. He said the Board needs to keep in mind the big picture because the Board cannot burden the tax-paying property owners of Torrington with continual increases.

Mr. Joslyn passed around information regarding enrollments, 504, RTI, ESL, and stipends.

Mrs. Batchelder passed around information regarding special education budget, grants, and per person expenditures.

Mr. Joslyn presented to the Board.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked why the number of 504 students drops between elementary school and TMS and THS.

Mr. Traub asked about the difference in the totals of the stipends. He also asked about the stipend for teachers on lunch duty at TMS and THS.

Mr. Cavagnero stated they are spending a lot of money on theatre. He said they are an educational system and would like to know if the students interested in drama would be able to direct, compose, and put on a production on their own by their junior/senior year.

Mr. Nargi asked what the advisors and the High School Student Council members do. He asked if in the future the School Improvement Committee could get more information on the High School student council. Mr. Nargi asked if the Middle School needed to have an Assistant Athletic Director.

Mr. Traub asked why the advisors for the High School Student Council were under a stipend while other advisors are not.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked what the High School music teacher gets paid to do.

Mrs. Batchelder presented.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked about transportation costs and returned students from other schools.

Mr. Kissko asked if the students returned voluntarily or were told they had to return.

Mr. Nargi asked what the costs would be to provide the same courses as the agricultural schools. He also asked about an automotive program, and what the definition of an urban school is.

Mr. Rovero asked about tuition rates at other schools.

Mrs. Batchelder presented about health insurance.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked about health insurance broker fees and commissions.

Mr. Nargi asked about administrative costs of health insurance and revenue. He also asked about cost per employee and retirees.

Mrs. Batchelder presented about special education.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked about the 2011-2012 actual costs.

Mr. Thiabault asked why one report was different from another regarding the number of teachers in the 2011-2012 budget cycle.

Mrs. Cappabianca stated that she was not comfortable voting on the proposed budget at this meeting. She felt the Board did not have accurate and complete worksheets and were not informed enough to make a decision. She stated that they should use this meeting to address any questions or concerns any of the Board members may have and then vote on the proposed budget at the next meeting when they have more accurate information.

Mrs. Cappabianca made a motion to table the vote on the Superintendent's 2013-2014 Proposed Budget until the next meeting. Mr. Cavagnero seconded the motion. *The vote was taken at the end of the meeting. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.*

The Board agreed to have another meeting on Monday, April 8, 2013. They would continue discussion of the proposed budget during this meeting and adjourn the meeting until Monday, April 13, 2013.

Mr. Cavagnero stated the budget is about resource allocation and said it is the Board's responsibility to have accurate and updated information before this budget is presented to the Board of Finance.

Mrs. Cappabianca had a question about differing amounts of stipends.

Mr. Traub asked about coaches stipends.

The amount of staff at the Migeon Avenue building was discussed.

Regular education tuition costs were discussed.

Mrs. Hoehne had questions regarding special education teachers and cost centers. She also wanted information regarding costs of reinstating secretaries.

Mr. Nargi had questions regarding malfunctioning office equipment at the High School.

Mr. Cavagnero asked for a worksheet of staff based on this proposed budget.

Estimated increases were discussed in certain stipends because the Mayor asked the Board to remove any estimated increases they had within the budget. The Mayor also asked the Board to not include any upcoming mandates in the budget.

Mr. Thibault said it is his understanding, according to state statute, the Board members guarantee whatever budget they pass. Therefore he is uncomfortable not having a cushion for any increases that may occur.

Mr. Traub explained what the Mayor had asked them to do, and what he had explained to the Mayor in response.

Mr. Cavagnero stated he would like some kind of hold harmless agreement from the city.

Mr. Traub said the Mayor told him that he would not give them a hold harmless agreement in writing. The Mayor told him that in the past the city had never left them hanging.

Mr. Traub spoke about the elimination of one (1) bus route.

Safety and security were discussed.

Savings from retirements were discussed.

Technology and maintenance savings were discussed.

A Board member asked if, at this point in the budget, middle school sports were included.

The Board members discussed what the percent of increase was, at this point, of the proposed budget.

Pre-K mandates and funding was discussed.

Mr. Traub asked if there were any line items in the proposed budget that any Board member would like to see cut.

The Board members discussed each line item of the proposed budget individually.

Special education funding and student performance was discussed.

Mr. Cavagnero asked about special education certification.

Out of district placements were discussed.

Mr. Nargi asked how many special education students that two (2) specific teaching positions cover.

An Options Program and program manager were discussed.

Mr. Kissko asked if a .4FTE (certified teacher) would be enough to cover all the students' needs for choosing their future options.

Mr. Cavagnero asked how this program would be assessed.

Mrs. Kloczko clarified that the Options Program is really an expansion of what they already have in place. The teacher that would be managing this program would need to teach two (2) less classes in order to be able to reach more of the student body. A new

hire would cover the two (2) classes. Mr. Thibault did not feel any gains could be measured with this program.

A Director of Guidance was discussed.

Mr. Cavagnero asked for more information on what exactly this position entails.

Mr. Thibault wanted this position to have a contract.

An additional Behaviorist for grades K-5 was discussed.

Mrs. Kloczko explained what this position is.

Mr. Thibault asked if this would cover all the students' needs.

Mr. Nargi wanted to know the number of students this position would cover.

Administrative support at TMS was discussed.

Mr. Traub explained this would add a vice principal position.

Mr. Cavagnero asked how the assistant principal positions would be evaluated.

Increased secretarial support at THS, Tarringford and Southwest schools were discussed.

Hiring an ESL tutor for Southwest school was discussed.

Hiring a Pre-K teacher was discussed.

Mr. Brady asked if this was an out of district position, and also asked about costs.

An extended day program for non Title 1 schools was discussed.

Mr. Kissko asked about transportation.

Mr. Nargi asked about costs.

The losses in this proposed budget were discussed.

The loss of one (1) guidance counselor was discussed.

Mr. Rovero had concerns that losing a guidance counselor would negatively affect the students' needs.

The reduction of two (2) teachers at the High School was discussed.

Mr. Brady asked what subjects would be eliminated with these two (2) position reductions.

Mr. Cavagnero spoke about restructuring curriculum and staff, and thinking about long term strategic plans.

Torrington Middle School athletics was discussed.

Mrs. Cappabianca stated she would like to have a pay to play program at the Middle School.

Mrs. Hoehne asked what athletics are available at the Middle School.

Mr. Merola spoke about the health benefits of athletics at the Middle School.

Redesign of the Talented and Gifted Program was discussed.

Mr. Kissko asked what the redesign would be and if there were any teachers dedicated under the current TAG program.

An increase of supplies at the High School was discussed.

Mr. Traub said the proposed budget is now at \$70,489,181 that is an increase of \$4,044,811 or 6.09%.

At this time a motion was made by Mr. Traub to extend the meeting past 10:00pm. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Kissko.

Mrs. Cappabianca stated that she would like to continue the discussion of the proposed budget at the Monday, April 8, 2013 special meeting. She felt that all the Board members had received a lot of information and needed time to process that information and think about any other cuts that may have to be made.

Mr. Cavagnero had some questions regarding the CNA program and cutting other specific positions.

### **COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Mr. Kissko congratulated Mrs. Domanico on her presentation.

Mr. Merola said that the goal of the Board of Education is to improve the education of, advocate for, and act in the best interest of the children of Torrington. It is not the Board's job to make cuts to balance the city's budget.

Mr. Nargi stated he was disappointed that this Board thinks spending more money will necessarily be a solution to make a better school system.

At this time the Board voted on Mrs. Cappabianca's earlier motion to table the vote of the Superintendent's 2013-2014 Proposed Budget.

Mr. Thibault made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:08pm. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.