

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Work Session

MINUTES

March 9, 2016

President Haas called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. in the board room of the FNSBSD Administrative Center at 520 Fifth Avenue. The work session was called to accept public testimony and for board discussion and work on the 2016-17 budget.

President Haas read the district's mission statement: *"Our mission is to provide an excellent, equitable education in a safe, supportive environment so all students will succeed and contribute to a diverse and changing society."*

Present:

Heidi Haas, President  
Lisa Gentry, Vice President  
Allyson Lambert, Treasurer  
Michael O'Brien, Clerk  
Wendy Dominique, Member  
Sue Hull, Member (By Phone)  
Sean Rice, Member  
Kobe Rizk, Student Representative

Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Dr. Karen Gaborik, Superintendent of Schools  
Lisa Pearce, Chief Financial Officer  
Sandra Kowalski, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education  
Dan Schmidt, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education  
Traci Gatewood, Executive Director of Human Resources  
Kathie Wassmann, Executive Director of Special Education  
Dave Norum, Executive Director of Facilities Maintenance  
Janet Cobb, Executive Director of Technology  
Melanie Hadaway, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Sharice Walker, Director of Public Relations  
Helen Clark, Director of Federal Programs  
Holly Cervin, Director of Alternative Education  
Heather Rauenhorst, Director of Grants and Strategic Partnerships  
Dan Domke, Director of Career Technical Education  
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the Board

**Public Testimony on the 2016-17 Budget** [0:00:39]

President Haas called for public testimony.

Donna Laiti, 780 Lancaster Drive, spoke in support of the SMART program. Her grandson was in the program which allowed him to continue his education in a safe and structured environment. It had also taught him about the importance of being a part of the public school system. Ms. Laiti wanted the program to continue, as homeschools and private schools were not options for all students.

Mrs. Dominique arrived at 6:03 p.m.

## **Public Testimony on the 2016-17 Budget (continued)**

Dr. Mikki Barker, 253 Randall Court, a local psychiatrist, testified in support of the SMART program. Dr. Barker worked with a large number of under-privileged children, some of who had no other means of intervention than the SMART program. The program made a difference in the lives of many children. Dr. Barker was trying to contact the Governor about the possibility of instituting a lottery in Alaska to raise revenue to help education – which was being done in other states in the Lower 48. She encouraged the board to maintain the SMART program; it really helped students.

Kelly Atlee 1827 Valley-Hi Drive, parent and product of school district, thanked board members for their service and efforts for working on the budget. Ms. Atlee spoke in support of maintaining registered nurses in schools. She recognized a recruitment challenge existed, but just because it was a hard-to-fill position did not eliminate the need for the position. Ms. Atlee also recognized the need to reduce personnel costs, but would argue that replacing a licensed nurse with a health assistant, CNA, or CMA, might be the equivalent of replacing a teacher with a certified teacher's aide. They could do some parts of the job, but they could not do it as well as those who were licensed and registered to do the job. She felt replacing nurses was a dangerous decision. Ms. Atlee asked the board to look hard at keeping registered nurses in schools.

Michael Tapp, 666 Lowell Road, a part-time math teacher at SMART since January, voiced his support for the SMART program. In his short time with the program, Mr. Tapp had already seen a lot of success. He had lived in Alaska since 2001 and wanted to do what he could to see Fairbanks and Alaska flourish. As others had mentioned, he was concerned about the students who could not afford online courses or private schools. The SMART program offered students an alternative to sitting on the couch and possibly falling deeper into drug and alcohol issues or jail. Students needed a place to learn and be safe. They might have made mistakes, but they deserved a chance for a safe learning environment. Mr. Tapp encouraged the board to maintain the SMART program.

Montean Jackson, 1018 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, director of the SMART program, provided the board with an overview of the SMART program and the Office of Safe and Healthy Students. Ms. Jackson shared SMART enrollment data, along with data on UA testing and costs. SMART was a voluntary program that provided appropriate education for substance abuse and some behavior problems. It helped expelled students continue with their academic program in a safe and structured environment. The program currently had 15 students enrolled – 10 regular education students and 5 special education students. Nine of the 15 students were enrolled due to behavior infractions; two were transitioning from the youth facility; and four were there due to drug and alcohol violations. The SMART program provided a host of services to students, collaborated with community providers for support, and provided recommendations to make certain students received wraparound services and support.

Board members appreciated Ms. Jackson's information, overview of the program, and testimony. They had many questions for her regarding the SMART program, including its success rate, working with homeless students, alternatives for students if the program was cut, elearning and online courses, and resources available for students and families.

Asking for and hearing no additional testimony, President Haas closed public testimony at 6:27 p.m.

### **2016-17 Budget Work** [0:27:25]

Superintendent Dr. Gaborik reviewed the list of positions funded by grants. Positions were listed by bargaining group and grant.

Dr. Gaborik expected to start hearing more information on funding from the legislature in the next couple weeks. The administration hoped to have some information on numbers and education funding by the board's next work session on March 21. The board was scheduled to act on the budget at a special meeting on Wednesday, March 23, with the budget going to the borough by April 1. Final funding would not be known until mid-May at the earliest, so the board would have to approve the final budget after all funding had been determined in late May or early June.

## **2016-17 Budget Work (continued)**

After the brief review of grant positions, President Haas opened the floor for board discussion on the 2016-17 budget.

### **Board Questions & Comments**

Board discussion ensued. Board member discussions included the SMART program, the BEST program, energy costs, special education, RTI, charter schools, activity directors, SAS contracts, background check requirements, and outsourced sports.

Board requests were made for BEST revenue information, along with a list of district sports by outsourced or not outsourced.

Dr. Gaborik stated she planned to make a few adjustments in the proposed budget adjustments for the next work session, although she wasn't ready to speak to those at the current time.

President Haas asked for board direction regarding how to move forward on the budget in light of still unknown funding. She asked board members for input to assist Dr. Gaborik as she worked on adjustments. After a brief discussion, there was general board agreement regarding the \$2,287,451 proposed reductions to cover the \$2,270,000 in salary and benefit obligations.

### **Board Comments/Announcements** [1:16:07]

It was hoped more information would be known about funding when the board met again on March 21.

Mrs. Dominique shared a quote regarding funding from her recent budget analyst training.

Mr. Rizk encouraged people to check out the Alaska Legislature app.

President Haas wished everyone a wonderful spring break.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Submitted by Sharon Tuttle, executive assistant to the Board of Education.