

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

Work Session

MINUTES

June 9, 2016

President Haas called the public hearing and work session to order at 5:36 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
Michael O'Brien, Vice President
Allyson Lambert, Treasurer
Thomas Bartels, Clerk
Wendy Dominique, Member
Sean Rice, Member

Absent:

Sue Hull, Member

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
Wendy Tisland, Executive Director of Human Resources (Incoming)
Dave Norum, Executive Director of Facilities Maintenance
Janet Cobb, Executive Director of Technology
Melanie Hadaway, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Krista Lord, Director of Compliance and Training
Sharice Walker, Director of Public Relations
Helen Clark, Director of Federal Programs
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the Board

Public Testimony on the 2016-17 Budget [0:00:34]

President Haas called for public testimony.

Jenifer Cameron, PO Box 117, district art coordinator, thanked the board for their work on the budget. Ms. Cameron had watched the budget closely for the past 6-7 years and knew that each year was extremely challenging. She thanked the board for keeping the cuts away from classrooms as much as possible. Ms. Cameron wanted the board to know she had been active in contacting her legislators to keep the budget timelines from affecting education. She also welcomed Mr. Bartels to the school board.

2016-17 Budget Work [0:02:28]

Superintendent Dr. Karen Gaborik and Lisa Pearce, chief financial officer, reviewed the Level 1-A, Level 1-B, and Level 2-A budget adjustment work sheets. The administration had prepared different levels of proposed reductions and adjustments based on possible budget scenarios dependent on state and local funding. Based on information known from the legislature and borough to date, the board was looking at approximately \$1.2 million in additional reductions.

2016-17 Budget Work (continued)

Sandra Kowalski, assistant superintendent of elementary education, provided a brief overview of the administration's proposed restructured music program. The new proposal was developed by a cohort of music teachers and administrators. The restructuring would result in a reduction of 1.6 FTE, rather than the original proposal of a reduction of 2 FTEs. The restructured program would only apply to small schools at the elementary level, such as Hunter, Denali, Joy, and Nordale.

Board Questions/Comments [0:15:47]

Board discussion ensued. Board members had questions regarding the use of general fund dollars for board expenses such as strategic plan work and board training and suggested board expenses come from the board reserve. Other questions and comments included the topics of reserve teachers and the RTI, Teen Options, and BEST programs. Board members brainstormed options for bridging the loss of the Teen Options program for next year as the administration looked at restructuring options for the future. There was no consensus regarding the Teen Options program.

Mr. Rice arrived at 6:13 p.m.

Board members asked about department heads and if the administration had a plan for covering the work done by department heads. Dr. Gaborik assured board members, the principals were prepared for the change.

Board members voiced many concerns about the proposed restructuring of the music program. While board members thought the restructured program might be a viable option, they weren't convinced all the details had been vetted enough to implement the program at the current time. Board members voiced reservations regarding the certifications and qualifications of music teachers teaching more specialized areas such as orchestra and band.

At 6:38 p.m., President Haas asked for any objection to continuing the work session until the board's work was complete and then moving to the special meeting to adopt the budget. The special meeting had been scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. Hearing no objection, President Haas continued the work session. It was noted, there were only two members of the public in the audience.

Board member questions and comments continued regarding the restructured music program. The proposed savings of the restructured program were anticipated to be approximately \$179,347 and if the board did not support the restructure, it would need to find other budget adjustments. One suggestion was to reduce human resources by a like amount. Human resources had grown and with the work and systems currently in place, it was thought the reduction could come from that department.

Dr. Gaborik asked Krista Lord, director of compliance and training, to speak to the proposed reduction. Ms. Lord provided an overview of the critical work the human resources department performed on a daily basis, along with all the time consuming tasks of FMLA requests, health care/benefits, training compliance, investigations, and more. The department did a lot to support students by supporting the staff who were in front of students. Dr. Gaborik did not recommend reducing human resources and suggested the board consider other reductions from the Level 1-B list, such as reducing curriculum materials. A majority of board members did not support reducing human resources funding.

Board members considered other reductions to equal the proposed music program restructure. It was noted the addition of the F35s to Eielson might not affect the 2016-17 budget and it was suggested to reduce the reserve teachers for Eielson by one. It was also suggested the board reduce curriculum materials by \$67,255 to maintain the music program.

2016-17 Budget Work (continued)

Dr. Gaborik asked Melanie Hadaway, executive director of curriculum, to speak to a possible reduction in curriculum materials. Ms. Hadaway explained the administration was looking carefully at curriculum materials. She shared the Board Curriculum Advisory Committee and parents had expressed interested in having books and materials for students, pointing out that online materials were often the same cost as hard copies. Ms. Hadaway stated the department was looking at all areas and ways to adjust.

President Haas recapped the board's work to restore the music program by reducing reserve teachers by one and curriculum by approximately \$67,000. There was consensus from the board in support of the proposed budget adjustments.

Board members expressed their appreciation to Dr. Gaborik and her staff for their work on the budget. They encouraged the administration to continue their work on restructuring the music program. Board members supported program efficiencies, they just wanted to be certain the efficiencies did not negatively impact students.

Board Comments/Announcements [1:38:38]

President Haas explained the board would adjourn their work session, allow a few minutes for Ms. Pearce to revise the budget numbers for the adoption of the budget at the special meeting following the work session, and then convene the special meeting to adopt the 2016-17 budget.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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