

DRAFT
Union #39 School Board
Budget Informational Meeting
Wednesday, April 5, 2006
Black River High School Gymnasium
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Board: Diana Chimbolo, Chair, Ralph Pace, David Slivka, Brent Karner

Staff: Frank Perotti, Jr., John Barth, Edie Lou Cole

Public: Mamie Richards, Diana Garrow, Beverly Stepp, Linda Tucker, Cheryl Gurdak, Christine Fuller, Linda Potter, Sharon Nickils, David Nickils, Allen Seiple, Arthur Bakerman, Gary Pollender II, Sharon Bixby, Shona Trimboli, Wayne Hammond, Duncan Love

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Chimbolo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Business Item:

A. 2006-2007 Budget:

Ms. Chimbolo presented the following information regarding the 2006-2007 Union #39 proposed budget: school information; programs changes; budget cost drivers; budget summary; and an overview of Act 68/Tax Calculation. The proposed 2006-2007 budget is \$3,539,113.00.

Mr. Barth discussed school information. He stated there is a higher percentage of students taking the SAT's than in years past. The drop out rate is 1.2% compared with 5+% in years past and a State average of 2.57%. He noted all athletic and other co-curricular programs are strong with 17 students attending National History Project. Mr. Perotti added that BRACC has provided great after-school programs for grades 6 through 8. Ms. Chimbolo stated that 90% of Black River students went on to higher education. Mr. Barth provided a list of colleges that Black River students were accepted to that included the Rochester Institute of Technology and Tufts University.

Ms. Chimbolo and Mr. Barth presented program changes at Black River High School. A Virtual High School, an accredited high school, will be added to offer students over 200 additional course options on-line for a cost of \$14,000.00. These courses will include AP courses

Ms. Chimbolo discussed the expanded Life Skills program developed by Dr. Joan Frangiose. This program for fifth and sixth grade students does not require additional staffing and will save funds at the high school level as students will not have to be placed

out-of-district. This will eliminate the need for transportation to out-of-district placements as well.

Ms. Chimbolo presented budget cost drivers. She noted that salaries increased by \$127,041.00. There are two new positions proposed in the 2006-2007 budget. The first is a special education paraeducator that was added in 2005-2006.

The second additional position is a combined position of Athletic Director, Assistant Principal and Virtual High School Administrator. Last year the in-school suspension position was eliminated leaving the Principal to handle over 400 disciplinary actions in addition to regular duties. The Athletic Director position requires at least 20 hours per week to fulfill responsibilities. This position is budgeted at \$71,000.00 with salaries and benefits. The overall net change to the budget for this position is \$52,000.00, after removing \$9,000.00 for a part-time secretary and \$10,000.00 for the Athletic Director.

Additionally, health insurance costs increased 8% and dental insurance costs increased 3%, increasing the budget 1.23%. Vocational tuition increased 23% due to an increase in enrollment. Twenty-eight students are enrolled for the 2006-07 year. This tuition increase was a 1.3% increase to the budget. Special Education costs increased \$20,179.00 but are partially reimbursed by the State.

Fuel oil costs increased 37%. Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union is also collaborating with Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union for special education services and other projects like fuel oil purchasing to achieve better prices and costs savings. Mr. Perotti is also researching the possibility of purchasing fuel oil directly from a supplier but needs to find a transporter and storage for the fuel oil.

Ms. Chimbolo also discussed other budget items such as supplies and materials, dues and fees and travel reimbursement. She noted that there was an increase in dues and fees because of short term interest of \$5,000.00 on a tax anticipation note when the Town of Ludlow tax bills were late in being mailed out. Mr. Seiple asked if the school will be reimbursed by Town of Ludlow for this \$5,000.00 and Ms. Chimbolo stated that the business office is working on getting that reimbursement.

Mr. Perotti explained that teachers and faculty used zero based budgeting when determining their budget requests. They were encouraged to seek grants for more expensive equipment such as Smartboards and computers.

Ms. Chimbolo discussed Act 68 and the income sensitivity provision. The equalized spending per pupil for the Town of Mt. Holly will be \$11,585.00 and the actual anticipated tax rate will be \$1.915, an increase of \$.28. However, of the \$.28 increase, \$.23 of that is due to the adjusted Common Level of Appraisal.

The equalized spending per pupil for the Town of Ludlow will be \$11,356.00 and the actual anticipated tax rate will be \$1.415, an increase of \$.20. However, of the \$.20 increase, \$.15 of that is due to the adjusted Common Level of Appraisal.

Mr. Perotti noted that the real increase in tax rates is related to the adjustment of the Common Level of Appraisal and that is not controlled by the school district. There was general discussion about the Common Level of Appraisal and the impact of property sales on it. There was also discussion that increasing property values have negatively impacted student enrollment in Vermont.

Ms. Chimbolo stated that the budget vote will be April 11th at the Ludlow town hall and the Mount Holly town offices from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Ms. Chimbolo addressed the costs of closing Black River Middle and High School and sending students out of the district. It has been determined that there would be no costs savings by tuitioning students to other districts.

Mr. Pace noted that the current tax formula favors the majority of Vermont towns and so Vermont legislators will not change the tax formula. He also stated that the school board is openly approaching the idea of consolidating services with other supervisory unions to save money.

Mr. Bakerman asked how much teachers contribute to their health insurance premiums. Ms. Chimbolo stated that their contribution is 7%. Mr. Seiple asked if anyone has researched Health Savings Accounts. Ms. Chimbolo stated that the dental insurance is self funded and health saving accounts are being researched.

Ms. Fuller thanked the board for their presentation.

III. Next Meeting:

Tuesday, April 11, 2006, Annual Budget Meeting, Black River High School
Gymnasium

Tuesday, April 11, 2006, Reorganization Meeting, Ludlow Elementary School
Library

Wednesday, April 26, 2006, Regular Meeting, Black River High School Library

IV. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Balch
Board Recording Secretary