

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
February 24, 2005**

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, February 24, 2005 for a Special Meeting on the 2005-2006 Budget Proposal at 7:05 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chair:	Ron Haskins
Board Vice-Chair:	Cheryl Smith
Board Secretary:	Amy Sochocki-Norton
Board Members:	Lawrence Casey Lisa Gagliardi Bruce Wentworth

Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe
----------------------------	---------------------

**I. Visitors**

Director of Personnel/Business:	Donald Winnicki
Principals:	Dr. David Perry, NBHS

There were no visitor comments at this time.

**II. 2005-2006 Budget Proposal**

Dr. Wolfe thanked the budget sub-committee for working so diligently on the proposed budget. He remarked that the original proposed budget he submitted to the Board totaled 9.5%. Dr. Wolfe then submitted a spread- sheet that brought the proposal down from 9.5% to 8.9% with 5% fixed costs, 3% arbitration and 1% new employee requests.

Anthem had stated insurance cost would rise between 12.5% to 14% but two days after the arbitration closed Dr. Wolfe received word from Anthem that the insurance rate would drop to 9.4%.

February 24, 2005

With Anthem being at 9.4% and taking the teacher's last, best offer the proposed budget was now at 8.9%.

Dr. Wolfe and Donald Winnicki were not happy with Anthem's 9.4% increase and they met with the insurance agent of records to discuss this.

The first item reviewed was the arbitration award. The award centered on these four areas:

- Premium share
- Medical Plan
- Prescription Plan
- Salary

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the Board of Education did well and our children will be the real winners.

The budget sub-committee further reduced the proposed budget by prepaying the bus contract saving 3% of the bus charges. There were also some savings in the budget by teacher retirements.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the proposed budget of 9.5% is now at a proposed budget of 6.91% with no reduction in personnel, programs or supplies.

Maintenance:	3.74%
Personnel:	1.16%
Arbitration Award:	2.01%

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that statewide Board Of Educations are at an average of a 7.03% increase

Amy Sochocki questioned why we would want to prepay the bus contract.

Dr. Wolfe stated we would have savings of 3% or \$43,000.

Cheryl Smith remarked that the budget sub-committee met with the Town Council and furnished them information for a 6.91% increase and where there has been no commitment she feels the Town Council members are listening. She mentioned that it is very easy to see that there is no cushioning in the proposed budget.

February 24, 2005

**MOTION:** Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey that the Board of Education approve a spending request in the amount of \$24,809,161.00 for the 2005-2006 school year.

**ALL VOTED AYE  
MOTION PASSED 6-0**

Before the final vote on the proposed budget Lisa Gagliardi questioned the priority of personnel. She remarked that the prior two years the Board wanted to hire an art teacher, world language teacher, choral teacher and improve the communications program at the high school. Now, we are hiring a third grade teacher, world language teacher at NBIS and a special education teacher at NBIS. She questioned where the priorities were set.

Dr. Wolfe stated there was no shift from our priorities and all of our schools could use additional teachers and para-professionals. He remarked that our administrators felt class size took precedent over program expansion at this time.

Bruce Wentworth questioned if a teacher was hired for third grade because of the large class sizes would this teacher be able to move up each grade to follow this large class if needed.

Dr. Wolfe stated yes, but we also have to be mindful of certification.

Amy Norton remarked she was relieved we were addressing class sizes at this time. She stated twenty-five students should not be o.k. at the third grade level.

Bruce Wentworth questioned why we needed a special education teacher at NBIS

Dr. Wolfe stated at this time all inclusion students are placed on one team and by hiring another Special Education teacher at NBIS there will be more of an equal distribution especially on the seventh and eighth grade teams.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if all teams at NBIS would have special education students.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would check with Suzanne Wright to see if there would be five or six teams.

February 24, 2005

Cheryl Smith stated she thought it would stigmatize the students by putting them all on one team and we really did not want this to happen. She felt it was better to have special education students on all teams.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if special education students would be in all classes across the board.

Dr. Wolfe stated they would in language arts, math, social studies and science. He mentioned that special education teachers could utilize all grade levels.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned the members of the budget sub-committee if they thought the Town Council would support a higher percentage increase.

Ron Haskins remarked that he supported keeping the percentage increase at the Superintendent's request of 6.91%.

Bruce Wentworth stated he felt the numbers presented to the Town Council would work and he felt the Town Council would not support increases from the figure presented to them.

Cheryl Smith remarked that with the Town side increase and the Board side increase it could represent two mills and we are not looking for a further increase.

Lawrence Casey remarked that from a real estate point of view property owners want to keep their property values high. When people move to a certain location they look to see if the school system in the area provides for all students, test scores and class sizes.

### **III. Capital Improvements**

Donald Winnicki spoke on stadium improvements, bleachers, scoreboard, press box and security doors.

Bruce Wentworth stated he felt the Town Council is interested in the Board to retrofit the bleachers, buy a scoreboard and wait on the press box.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if we could increase the security portion of the budget for extra security doors at NBIS.

February 24, 2005

Ron Haskins stated we should wait to see if the middle school would be renovated or built new.

Amy Norton remarked she would support one set of security double doors near the student parking lot at NBHS.

**MOTION:** Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey that the Board of Education request capital budget expenditure in the amount of \$89,987.00 for the 2005-2006 school year.

**ALL VOTED AYE  
MOTION PASSED 6-0**

**MOTION:** Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Amy Norton to adjourn this special meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:06 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE  
MOTION PASSED 6-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine

Account Clerk