

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SECOND BUDGET MEETING
February 1, 2007**

The North Branford Board of Education held their second budget meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Totoket Valley Elementary Media Center. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Cheryl Smith
Board Secretary:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Members:	John Bozzuto, Jr. Elisabeth Caplan Ron Haskins

Superintendent of Schools;	Robert K. Wolfe
----------------------------	-----------------

Absent:	Bonnie Symansky
---------	-----------------

I. Visitors

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Curriculum/Instruction:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Supervisor of Building & Grounds:	Todd Jaramillo
Principals:	Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES Dr. Karen Johnson, STW
Interim Principal:	Barbara Gasparine, JHS

Dianne Vumback
Joe Tenczar
Todd Stoeffler
Mary Bigelow

There were no visitor comments at this time.

February 1, 2007

Dr. Wolfe welcomed Barbara Gasparine, Interim Principal JHS, Todd Jaramillo, Supervisor of Building and Grounds, Mary Bigelow, Town Council and Dianne Vumback to tonight's meeting.

Cheryl Smith reviewed the Board's process for the 2007-2008 Superintendent's Budget Request. She stated that the first budget hearing was held on January 23, 2007 and this is the second budget hearing tonight. Next the proposed budget will go to the Budget Sub-Committee for discussion and recommendations. Further discussion will be held at the regular Board of Education meeting on February 15, 2007.

II. Athletic Budget and Athletic Stipends

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the athletic budget was subject to the same percentage increase as the building increase. (4%) He mentioned that the most expensive sports are football and hockey but they are also the two sports that generate the most gate receipts, which are used to offset our costs.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that the school system has no control over rising costs for umpires, referees, transportation, security and police services and ice-time. He also stated that there are no new sports proposed or new coaching positions in this budget.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the difference in this budget is the request for stipends for NBIS sports as they have relied on volunteers and we are probably the only middle school on the shoreline that doesn't have stipends.

Alan Davis stated he gave much credit to all the NBIS volunteers and they make it possible for over thirty percent of the student body to play a sport. Mr. Davis remarked that he is requesting a stipend for the following Fall sports; volleyball, boy's soccer, girls' soccer and field hockey; Winter sports; cross country, boy's basketball and girl's basketball, Summer sports; baseball and softball. He stated that he had three reasons for these requests:

1. Fairness and Equity – he feels we should provide some kind of compensation for these volunteers comparable to schools in our area.

February 1, 2007

2. Accountability – It is very difficult to enforce standards if coach is a volunteer.
3. Difficulty in obtaining coaches - Mr. Davis stated we have been lucky so far in obtaining volunteers but it will be easier if a stipend is offered

Cheryl Smith questioned if all coaches were teachers.

Alan Davis stated that a few teachers are coaches but most are parents.

Cheryl Smith asked if these coaches would be subject to the same rules as NBHS coaches and CIAC rules.

Alan Davis stated that they would be held to the same standards.

John Bozzuto questioned if our stipends would be in line with area towns.

Alan Davis stated these stipends are very modest and probably lower.

Dr. Wolfe stated that North Branford is near the bottom of area towns for stipends.

Ron Haskins questioned how long sporting seasons at NBIS last.

Alan Davis stated basketball is 12 games and other sports are 8 to 10 games.

Dr. Wolfe reminded the Board that all new stipends have to be negotiated with the North Branford Federation of Teachers.

Dr. Wolfe stated the Board already supports NBIS sports with transportation and the next step is to add stipends.

III. Healthcare Costs

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that the trend for health care in October and November 2006 was a 12% increase and this was a bit frightful. Some communities are facing a 31% increase. He mentioned that we were informed in December that the increase in healthcare would be 6% or about \$200,000.

The Board of Education and the Town decided to go out to bid and the Anthem percentage came in at 5.3%. With further talks with health care agents we feel

February 1, 2007

this percentage might come down even further. He remarked that in this contractual year there would be one- percent increases in premium shares.

Dr. Wolfe spoke on replacement teachers opting out of benefits for various reasons. He mentioned that a family benefit is worth \$20,000 but the buy-out is worth \$2,000 plus they save the 15% on premium share. These numbers could drop down if we have additional personnel who retire this year. We are also looking at bids from other healthcare companies.

Dr. Wolfe stated that five years ago we increased premium shares for our employees and reinstated the buy out clause. He mentioned that we have done a good job in containing our health care costs.

Donald Winnicki stated that the buyout saves the Board \$571,000 and premium shares save the Board \$387,000 for a savings of \$950,000. This would have to be funded by 4% if this process hadn't happened.

IV. Energy Costs

Dr. Wolfe stated that this budget contains an increase in electricity based on the known numbers we received from Wallingford Electric and the United Illuminating Company. Both the Board of Education and the Town of North Branford have gone out to bid to determine if we can buy our electricity, at least on the southern end of town, from the United Illuminating Company. There has been a 50% increase at JHS, NBIS, Auditorium and NBHS. The total increase is \$200,000. The plan we are looking at is to purchase electricity from a third party but it will still be distributed by UI over UI lines. We should have an answer in the next few days.

Donald Winnicki distributed handouts to the Board on how he got to the rate factors for electricity. He stated that rates from Wallingford Electric are lower at TVES because they use more electricity than STW. He mentioned that the projection for the Wallingford Electric schools are strictly an 8% increase but UI will go from .135 to .239 with the projected increases being in January, April and July. Don mentioned that the oil and natural gas in the 620 lines would go up .25% or \$60,000 so there will be no increase this year but there is an increase in this proposed budget because we were under-budgeted last year.

Donald Winnicki stated that he met with UI representatives last week and they toured NBHS, Auditorium and NBIS. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss

February 1, 2007

potential energy savings. If we purchased electricity from a third party this program would be in jeopardy. If we meet UI standards there could be a forty to sixty percent funding on capital costs for energy improvements. Forty percent is usually the basic number but for 60 percent we have to actually install a designed system. We would have to hire someone to do some engineering and create some specs. This program would depend on an estimate of savings and how soon we would realize the savings.

Donald Winnicki stated that Wallingford Electric does not have a similar program.

Cheryl Smith questioned if this program pays forty percent of the costs for replacements.

Donald Winnicki stated they pay forty percent of the capital costs for the retrofitting of lights. He mentioned that they also have a program for new constructions that will be considered in the new construction project for NBIS.

Cheryl Smith questioned if we decided to go with the conversion if the sixty-percent of the cost could be in the Capital Improvements Budget.

Donald Winnicki stated he does not have numbers yet but maybe.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the Board could put in a place- holder in the Capital Budget.

V. Building and Grounds

Todd Jaramillo spoke on service contracts for our buildings, elevators, fire alarms, emergency lights, intercom, clocks, air conditioners, fire extinguishers, kitchen hoods and other emergency repairs.

Todd spoke on asbestos abatement at STW, locker upgrades and double door replacement at TVES, asbestos abatement and tile replacement at NBHS.

Donald Winnicki mentioned that the ventilator project had been moved to Capital Improvements.

Elisabeth Caplan questioned if the carpeting at NBHS was from last year.

Donald Winnicki stated yes, as the project was deferred from last year. Donald mentioned that last year many floors had carpet on cement and we pulled up the carpets and had our custodians replace them with tile. Mr. Winnicki

February 1, 2007

mentioned that some of the hallways needed carpet abatement because of the asbestos and then we tiled the floors.

Cheryl Smith asked if we use all the money we budget each year for emergency repairs.

Donald Winnicki stated that yes, we usually do. Last year we had to do the gym floor at TVES, domestic hot water heater, boiler issues and septic problems. Don stated we have no choice but to fix these items.

Mr. Winnicki mentioned that with every new building we get inherent costs such as sprinkler systems, elevators, etc.

VI. Capital Improvements

Security

Donald Winnicki mentioned that electronic access controls have to be installed on all exterior doors as well as door open switches. These switches will alert the main office when a door is open or left ajar.

Mr. Winnicki mentioned that where fobs, like an electronic key, are used they can be disabled if the employee leaves and doesn't return the fob.

Cheryl Smith questioned if all doors at all schools would be electronic access.

Donald Winnicki stated they would be.

Mr. Winnicki mentioned that the interim wiring for the new monitoring systems, at all schools, and would be installed before the February break and the monitors during the break. It is hopeful that the end of February or early March would complete this project.

Ventilator Replacement NBHS

Mr. Winnicki mentioned that eight ventilator units would be installed; four in the cafeteria for heating and cooling, three in the business labs for heating and cooling and one in room 111 for heating only. Don stated that there is the cost of \$1,800.00 per unit for controls and another \$500.00 for miscellaneous hardware

February 1, 2007

Roof Replacement – TVES

Mr. Winnicki mentioned the cafeteria roof at TVES has to be replaced. This roof is a stand-alone roof that continues leaking.

Grounds Improvement – NBHS

Donald Winnicki stated the press box has to be replaced and made handicap accessible. The scoreboard must also be replaced and pole vault mats purchased if we are to adhere to CIAC regulations.

Marcey Onofrio questioned if the roof for TVES was put off from last year.

Donald Winnicki stated that it was.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that some area towns are looking for a 7.5% to 12% increase.

Cheryl Smith questioned if the communications position at NBHS included benefits.

Dr. Wolfe stated that benefits would be included, as this person will teach three classes and qualifies for benefits.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned there would be a meeting of the Budget Sub-Committee on Tuesday February 6, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Michele Saulis had to attend a meeting with all eighth grade parents tonight.

VII. Visitor Comments

There were no visitor comments at this time.

February 1, 2007

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:03 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine