

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING OF JUNE 5, 2001

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Tuesday, June 5, 2001 at 9:35 a.m. in the Board Room at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President Peggy Robinson presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE

Board Members Present: Debbie Ossiander, Tim Steele, Rita Holthouse, Peggy Robinson, Harriet Drummond, Jake Metcalfe, and Dave Werdal.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, George Vakalis, Pat McDowell, Jim Taylor, Gail Opalinski, Patricia McRae, Robyn Rehmann, Norm Holthouse, Lee Wilson, Ellen Montague, Michelle Egan, Bob Henry, Brent Rock, Steve Kalmes, Stan Syta, Ray Amsden, Corey Rennell, Mary Kay Sambo, the press, and interested people.

The School Board opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

B. SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Peggy Robinson welcomed everyone to the Special School Board meeting and explained that the Board must take action this week, so the revised 2001-2002 budget can be presented to the Assembly for a public hearing on June 19, 2001.

Debbie Ossiander has concerns with the revisions. She would like to see the pertinent information from the CIP used when the budget is being developed. Projected enrollment figures are very important for budget planning. Carol Comeau commented that it was a very good idea, but when the departments develop their budgets, they are using enrollment figures from September 30. She further commented that in order to accomplish that, the budget process would have to be backed up to late winter.

Mr. Werdal stated if the latest enrollment figures were known in January, that information could be used in establishing the next year's budget and cuts/changes would not have to be made later in the year. Ms. Robinson suggested a work session to look at the financial planning process and

time constraints. Carol Comeau commented that it would be a productive discussion.

Ms. Ossiander also requested information on what the financial picture would look like over the next few years. Carol Comeau stated that she did not have the long-range financial picture this morning. Ms. Ossiander stated she is hesitant to proceed without this information. She is also concerned with the addition of new positions in the budget revisions.

Dave Werdal also expressed a concern with the addition of items back into the budget when we are unsure what the financial picture is for next year. He questioned what that shortfall might be projected to be for next year.

Peggy Robinson stopped the discussion and asked the Board members to wait until the consent agenda for further discussion.

Debbie Ossiander stated her concerns about whether or not the curriculum within the District is aligned to state standards. She stated that we have many challenges ahead of us, and there are a fair number of teachers who do not feel comfortable in covering all of the standards. Ms. Ossiander hopes we can focus our increased revenue on remedial programs as well as staff development. The minutes from a recent MECC meeting indicate that they have the same concerns and want to make sure our teachers are qualified and the curriculum is aligned with state standards.

C. CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda attached. **All attachments referred to in memoranda recommendations are on file in the Superintendent's Office.**

1. ASD Memorandum #349 – Revision of FY 2001-2002 Revised Financial Plan

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize a budget increase of \$14,968,955 to the General Fund, \$95,000 to the Food Service Fund, and \$6,000,000 to the Local/State/Federal Projects Fund for a total revised budget of \$448,655,706. The District's FY 2001-2002 revised budget by individual fund will be in the following amounts:

General Fund	\$355,920,728
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Food Service Fund	10,983,000
Debt Service Fund	47,751,978
Local/State/Federal	
Projects Fund	<u>34,000,000</u>
Total All Funds	<u>\$448,655,706</u>

It is also the Administration's recommendation, since the overall appropriation, as revised, will exceed the approved upper limit of the budget, an increase of \$21,063,955 to the upper limit of the Anchorage School District's FY 2001-2002 budget be approved by the School Board for submittal by the Superintendent to the Anchorage Assembly for requested action. **No additional taxes are being requested to support this increase.**

ACTION:

Moved by Rita Holthouse to approve Memorandum #349
seconded by Harriet Drummond

Carol Comeau reviewed how the recommendations were developed. She thanked the School Board for their legislative support, the bi-partisan report, and Larry Wiget and Debbie Ossiander for tracking the legislation concerning educational issues. These two individuals made a significant impact along with the principals in gaining support from the legislature for increased funding. Ms. Comeau also thanked the Unions, Mayor, Assembly, Legislature, and the Governor's Office for their support. The Assembly supported the District's request by going to the cap. This request does not ask for any additional taxes, only increased spending authority. The District is still waiting for the U. S. Congress to complete their action. Ms. Comeau further stated that this budget was built on the increased formula and increased enrollment.

Ms. Comeau explained that the recommendations brought forward by the budget review teams were also reviewed as well as the community's input during the January public hearings. She further commented that the District must show the community that fees could be reduced because the District received increased revenue. The Administration hopes to eliminate the disparity for student activities by reducing the participation fees and lowering the fees for summer school. Class size has been reduced, and the Administration feels there is an adequate teacher pool to cover this reduction. Ms. Comeau stated that the Administration focused on restoring critical activities, staff, and supplies. Input was requested from principals, employees, and parents in making these

recommendations. She also believes that the recommendation to provide more adults in schools to insure safe conditions for children is there as well. Ms. Comeau stated that with the increase to the Learning Opportunity Grant, every school can develop a program to meet the needs of each student.

Ms. Comeau completed her general overview of the recommended revisions to the 2001-2002 Financial plan.

Rita Holthouse commented that she is very pleased with the budget and appreciated the opportunity to submit items to the Superintendent ahead of time that they would like to see incorporated into the budget.

Ms. Holthouse did have a question on class size at various levels. Ms. Comeau responded by reducing class size by one student that Elementary Education was able to acquire 31 more FTE; Middle Schools will gain 8.0 FTE; and High School will gain 16.5 FTE for 2001-2002. The budget also included 3.0 FTE for middle schools to support extra large classes.

Ms. Holthouse asked what was the difference between a hockey club and a hockey sport. Cynthia McCray, Secondary Supervisor, explained that the formation of girls' hockey was a two-year process. The first year, they would start as a club for the District, which would be an interest group and their main purpose would be to recruit and garner enthusiasm. The second year the club would be converted to an actual team and play games; the first year would not involve any ice time. Ms. McCray indicated that the Office of Civil Rights is supportive of this effort and feels like the District is moving in the right direction. Ms. Comeau is supportive of this plan and wants to make sure there is adequate interest among the students before requesting full-funding for the girls' hockey program.

Dave Werdal inquired how interest in girls' hockey can be built without playing any games. Cynthia McCray stated that the District wants to create a desire among girls to be a part of the club. Girls will be wearing jerseys and attending monthly meetings and pep assemblies; it is guaranteed to get a lot of attention among the student population. Mr. Werdal is worried about developing a girls' hockey club that doesn't include any games.

Carol Comeau stated that the Administration believes that the interest is there, but will not bring it forward for a second year if the club does not attract enough students.

Debbie Ossiander inquired about the music allocation. Carol Comeau stated that the allocation will go to the Music Department budget.

Debbie Ossiander asked why the extra cost for the financial audit. Janet Stokesbary explained that the Administration expects a 30 to 40 percent increase due to new requirements from GASB 34. With the District's current auditors leaving Alaska, it will be necessary to re-bid the financial audit next year.

George Vakalis stated that a potential relocation of the Girdwood playground may be necessary. The current location is not unsafe, but because of the condition, it is not appropriate for kids to be playing on the playground. The drinking water has a high iron content, but is considered safe as well.

Debbie Ossiander inquired why there was a need for a custodial trainer. Carol Comeau explained that the new position will be used for educating against injury and improved cleaning. She also would like this person to work with the Literacy Center to help improve English skills among employees.

In response to Mr. Werdal's question on the addition of library aides, Ms. Comeau explained that the original idea was to have librarians in smaller schools close their libraries one day per week and help out in the larger schools. The Administration came to the conclusion, after an abundance of email, that it would be better to provide part-time library aides to the large schools instead of closing the small school libraries one-day per week to students. The aides are four-hour Totem positions without benefits.

Mr. Werdal requested that the Administration consider the size of the school as well as the socio-economic need when assigning the new counselors and assistant principals. Carol Comeau stated that she would like to have a counselor in every school, but the high needs children must be considered first.

Tim Steele asked what types of items were included in the Major Maintenance category. Mr. Vakalis responded mostly heat/vent repairs and a few roof repairs make up this budget.

Tim Steele asked if the addendums for nurses were for new positions or just to take on the overload of the new state regulation requirement on immunizations. Ms. Comeau responded that it was a one-time cost to cover the new requirement.

Mr. Steele commended the Administration for taking the right course on the budget revisions. He likes the lowering of activity fees so more students can afford to participate. He also feels that the new girls' hockey clubs will be able to build support through booster clubs, etc.

Ms. Comeau explained that due to several student problems this past year at Steller, a recommendation came forward to increase the time the school psychologist is able to spend at the school. An additional .2 FTE would allow for the psychologist's services to be available to staff and students two days per week. Ms. Comeau stated that if this does not meet the student's needs, she would return to the Board for further discussion.

Debbie Ossiander complimented the Superintendent on doing a very good job at looking at all the problems. Everything on the list was something all members have requested at one time or another, but the District should not hope for more money from the legislature. Ms. Ossiander proposed an amendment towards putting more money into staff development. She stated that teachers should be made more aware of standards-based curriculum. She does not disagree with the intent or specifics in the budget proposal, but feels that we are going to face a major deficit within the new few years and we must address the curriculum issues now.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander

to take the money allocated for lowering parking fees and put it towards staff development.

MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

Patricia McRae stated that a large percentage of funds from the Learning Opportunity Grant has been allocated for staff development.

Carol Comeau feels that the Annual Report for 2000-2001 will show the huge commitment of time and funds that have been put into staff development this past year. An increase in student achievement will show how us wisely the money was spent.

Rita Holthouse indicated that she would feel comfortable directing a certain amount of money from the Learning Opportunity Grant towards staff development.

Mr. Werdal feels there is enough money in the grant to support staff development and does support the need for an amendment. The Superintendent agreed.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander

that some of the new positions not be added to the budget. Specifically, three secretaries, elementary counselors, and bilingual counselors until we have a better sense of our financial picture.

MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Steele, Holthouse, Robinson,
Drummond, Metcalfe, Werdal

Nays: None

MAIN MOTION PASSED.

2. ASD Memorandum #350 – Personnel Report

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the attached Personnel Report.

ACTION:

Moved by Dave Werdal
seconded by Harriet Drummond

to approve Memorandum #350

VOTE:

Ayes: Ossiander, Steele, Holthouse, Robinson,
Drummond, Metcalfe, Werdal

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED.

Carol Comeau introduced Mr. Michael Henry as the new Executive Director for High Schools. He will begin his new position on July 1, 2001.

- D. EXECUTIVE SESSION – (PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS/
LITIGATION)
- E. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of June 5, 2001 was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:10 a.m.

Peggy Robinson, President

Harriet Drummond, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved