

**MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 30, 2002**

The Anchorage School Board met in a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 30, 2002 at 5:07 p.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: Peggy Robinson, Tim Steele, Rita Holthouse, Harriet Drummond, Debbie Ossiander, Jake Metcalfe, and Dave Werdal by teleconference.

School Budget Advisory Commission: Kay Linton, Paul Schilling, Kevin Waring, and Andrew Kwon.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Janet Stokesbary, Pat McDowell, Mike Henry, Gail Opalinski, Patricia McRae, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Dale Cope, Marie Laule, Roger Fiedler, Debbie Bogart, Lee Wilson, George Vakalis, Bob Henry, Michelle Egan, Ed Conyers, Stan Syta, Ray Amsden, Brent Rock, Mike Klawitter, Corey Rennell, Mary Marks, Robin Siegfried, the press, and other interested people.

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

B. CONSENT AGENDA

ASD MEMORANDUM #184 - FY 2002-2003 PROPOSED FINANCIAL PLAN (SECOND READING)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District's FY 2002-2003 Proposed Financial Plan as set forth in the projected revenues and expenditure schedule in this memorandum (Attachment C). The total budget recommendation is \$454,862,275. This includes individual fund budgets currently projected as follows:

	<u>Proposed FY 2002-2003 Financial Plan</u>
General Fund	\$354,846,135
Food Service Fund	11,800,000
Debt Service Fund	53,216,140
Local/State/Federal Projects Fund	<u>35,000,000</u>
Total – All Funds	<u>\$454,862,275</u>

The total of local tax contribution to be requested is \$136,923,796.

It is further recommended that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to adjust the budget expenditure ceiling above in accordance with any change to the upper limit of the local tax cap limitation and any education-related ballot proposition that may be approved in the April 2, 2002, Municipal Election.

ACTION:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander to approve ASD Memorandum #184
seconded by Jake Metcalfe

Carol Comeau called attention to the additional responses to requests for information and the highlighted information in the memorandum that informs the Board of the information received from the Office of Management and Budget for the Municipality board stating that the five-year Anchorage municipal population change used in the property tax limitation calculations has been reduced from .73 percent to .47 percent. The impact of this change reduced the local tax cap limitation by \$278,984.

One of the things that has challenged the Administration is making sure we have the most up to date information and the Superintendent cautioned the Board on making any changes tonight, because if something happens to the amount of funding, the budget will need to be reduced.

Public Testimony:

Sheree Allard spoke to the Board regarding the 21st Century Learning grant and how much it has helped her.

David Hill spoke to the Board regarding the 21st Century Learning grant and the great opportunity it gives students who need help in their studies.

Sharaya Hays spoke to the Board regarding the 21st Century Learning grant program. It has helped her get better grades and gives her an extension on time to do her homework. It is the best help she has had with her homework.

Rita Holthouse asked if the 21st Century Learning grant is included in the budget. Ms. Comeau replied that it is funded under local and state projects. There are some grants that have the potential to be rolled in with other funds. There is no guidance as of yet from the State or Federal government regarding a change in policy. The District will have to apply again when the rules are different. Debbie Ossiander stated that it is her understanding that agencies outside of school districts will be able to apply for the grant also. Carol Comeau stated that the District may collaborate with a nonprofit industry. The nonprofit industry has to be involved with a District. Tim Steele asked how many programs the District currently operates. Bonnie Hardy replied that there are 17 sites - 5 in middle schools and 12 in elementary schools, serving lower economic areas and those children needing extra assistance in their school programs. Additional information that has been compiled will be provided to the Board next month under the Superintendent's Report.

Tenecia Macon, a student and member of East High School girls' basketball team spoke to the Board about the importance of middle school sports. Ms. Macon feels the girls going into high school are not as well prepared to play high school level sports and asks the Board to reinstate inter-scholastic middle school basketball.

Dorena Bingham, basketball coach at East High School commented to the Board that her seniors this year are the last group that were able to play middle school competitive sports. The other members of her team have not had the benefit. Ms. Bingham asks that the Board reinstate inter-scholastic middle school basketball.

Linda Anderson stated to the Board that she has called each middle school and the numbers of students requesting basketball are high. Ms. Anderson urged the board to rethink current reasons why the District does not have inter-scholastic basketball and asked the Board to reconsider.

Nate Castillo urged the Board to reinstate the inter-scholastic basketball program and suggested that the District look at outsourcing the program. Mr. Castillo mentioned that the girls could use the gyms from 3:00 to 6:00. Peggy Robinson asked Mr. Castillo if he felt the gyms were not being used after school. Mr. Castillo stated that he did. Gail Opalinski stated that the gyms are rented to the municipality and Boys and Girls Club after

school. Ms. Opalinski also stated that the Administration would look into the use of the gyms and give the Board more information on it.

Dave Werdal stated that he agrees with Mr. Castillo's arguments and asked the Administration for information regarding outsourcing the program.

Principal, Connie Bensler, spoke to the Board about the importance of adding three assistant principals at the middle schools. Ms. Bensler mentioned that one of the many reasons is the Assets building program which helps to reduce harassment, build self esteem and the building blocks that help people have successful lives. Middle school years are that time in a child's life when they have fewer assets in their lives. One important asset is forming relationships with adults. Principals and assistant principals set the tone for these relationships. If we want the children to be successful and have the opportunity to build assets the principal and assistant principal need the time to do that. An additional assistant principal in the school would help make that happen.

Rita Holthouse asked Ms. Bensler to describe the relationship between supporting instruction and the addition of assistant principals. Ms. Bensler stated that she spends a lot of time helping new teachers with their curriculum and how to handle their classroom. Principals are expected to be instructional leaders. Jake Metcalfe asked Ms. Bensler to describe a typical day for her vice principal. Ms. Bensler mentioned a bus incident that involved 20 students; work on an expulsion packet; teacher observations, and helping daily with the lunch program. He also spent time with one of the people in charge of the school pictures, and typically spends his evenings supervising the evening activities. He's in charge of the budgets, uniforms and repairs of equipment with no clerical work to help. The assistant principal also supervises the Quality Schools Initiative, tutoring, and school musicals, concerts, and PTSA meetings.

John Randle, spoke to the board regarding community schools, and asked the Board to increase funding for the community schools.

Virginia McDonald, representing Campbell community schools, asked the Board to please find approximately \$45,000 to reopen the previously opened community school. She sees a great need for this in their community.

Rebecca Reichlin spoke to the Board regarding community school support and stated that she has seen the impact an active community school has on a community. Ms. Reichlin asked the Board to reinstate the three affiliate community schools.

Marie Adler asked the Board to fund the affiliate community schools. Harriet Drummond asked the speakers if they thought an increase in user fees would be accepted by people, such as \$5.00 or \$6.00 fees. Rebecca Reichlin stated that she would like to see other ways found for funding because she feels increased fees would decrease participation. Marie Adler felt it would be too much if the fees went up and she described the sliding scale used to determine the fee for each class.

Pam Michaels spoke to the Board regarding community schools, as a mother and a pediatric nurse. As a nurse, Ms. Michaels stated that one of the major causes of children diabetes is lack of activity. The value of learning that comes from tutoring a child is great. Ms. Michaels requested the Board for funds for a full or half time coordinator.

Lois Robbins, volunteer at Bear Valley Elementary, asked the Board to please consider funding for affiliate community schools. Community schools provide activities for youth and adults and also helped to fund education during the day as well as ice rinks that students use during the day and the evening. The community school also helps to fund the artist in the school program.

Sondra Zimmer spoke to the Board on behalf of Campbell community schools and mentioned the importance of the community schools' after school programs for the public. Campbell Ccommunity School and PTA worked together to fund many programs for the students during the day as well.

Ron Downey spoke to the Board regarding Bear Valley community schools and the possibility of funding. Mr. Downey believes they provide important services and would appreciate any funding if possible.

Carol Comeau responded to Dave Werdal's question that asked what the cost would be to reinstate a community school coordinator. Ms. Comeau stated that the cost would be \$45,000 to \$46,670, depending on a person's experience. Ms. Comeau stated that the Administration agonized over cutting the community schools programs the first time. The Administration made the decision that they would prefer not to add money and then perhaps have to take it back out again. It was felt that it was not as high of a priority as some of the other issues they were faced with when trying to balance the budget.

Sheri Stears, principal at Clark middle school, stated to the Board that with the current nationwide shortage of principals, she is asking that they make the jobs of the middle school team more reasonable by adding a

second assistant principal. Discipline and student decorum is the main responsibility of the principal, as well as evaluations of the staff, observations, providing training and assistance, supervising the increasing ESL program, and curriculum development. Ms Stears feels it is critical to add a second assistant principal.

Darrell Keifer, parent of a high school and middle school student, spoke to the Board regarding the high school start time and feels some money should be funded in the budget for the school start time change. Mr. Keifer requested that the Board please set aside some money for later school start times.

Debbie Ossiander clarified to the audience that there is a misperception regarding the money that was found in the Budget. The Administration examined every assumption and scrutinized every salary account and looked at ways to reorganize. The District did not find "extra" money, but looked at the cost for utilities and the average teacher salaries as well as reorganizing some departments. After looking at the options there was approximately \$1.5 or \$1.8 million that could be redirected.

Marshall Reed spoke to the Board regarding the need for full support of the rifle program. Mr. Reed stated the importance of an activity such as riflery. It allows equal competition for female and male competitors. Mike Henry spoke on the issue of the continuance of the rifle season. There are activities but not a continuance of the competition. There is discussion of seeing if the existing facilities can be improved and the Administration strongly supports the activity.

End of Persons to Be Heard.

C. BOARD COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION:

Debbie Ossiander stated that she had several conversations from people who have urged her to add back many of the things that have been cut and thinks a lot of comments are due to media coverage indicating that money was found. We were in a big hole and due to a lot of strong examination by the administration and the legislature and tax increases we are able to maintain status quo. Personal preference is that some of the administration not be added. The District faces large challenges in the next few years. How to deal with salary increases and cost of health care insurance for employees is top on her mind. Ms. Ossiander stated that she would look hard nosed tonight not because kindergarten aides aren't needed or that community schools aren't vital, but she wants to avoid pain in the future. Ms. Ossiander sees some incredible challenges coming in the future.

Dave Werdal asked the Administration if outsourcing the school sports has been looked at. Pat McDowell stated that she would caution outsourcing as an obvious solution that was missed. Outsourcing sports is a huge task and is a lot more difficult than it seems. There are still administrative oversight and transportation issues. Carol Comeau commented that the Administration can look at the option of outsourcing basketball.

Rita Holthouse stated that since last week, she has had a lot of comments from people who are aware that the budget was not changed. It still has to be approved by the Budget Advisory Committee as well as the Assembly and the Mayor. Ms. Holthouse feels the Board should repeat what they did the other night and approve the budget, because it budget deserves that support. Ms. Holthouse added that she would love to add community schools and put in more counselors and assistant principals. Ms. Holthouse stated that she would not support any amendments and urges the Board to approve the budget as is.

Harriet Drummond stated that she had put in request for information in search for potential revenues involving communications antennas and the results are discouraging. Ms. Holthouse hopes the Administration will keep options open in that area. Regarding the request for security systems in school parking lots, and using the funds that are paid for parking by the students. It would cost users an average of \$128 to \$178.00 each. Ms. Drummond stated that the administration has done a good job of staying within the limits of its revenues. The Board hears about the budgets of other districts that are now having to do cuts after they added new programs. Ms. Drummond would like each community to have a functioning community school and thinks the public will need to get used to paying more for any activity. Ms. Drummond urges the public to talk to the Assembly, the Mayor and legislators and stress the importance of funding education and the community schools properly.

Jake Metcalfe stated that the Board should support the budget. Mr. Metcalfe supports the need for community schools and teacher aides for kindergarten and feels money should be spent on education, but feels this is a good budget and the Board needs to wait to find out what the legislators do. Mr. Metcalfe commented that he thinks the District needs to preserve what it has and this budget does that. Mr. Metcalfe agrees that the District wants community school programs, Middle School basketball and smaller class sizes and stressed the need to talk to the legislators. Mr. Metcalfe urged the Board to support this budget.

Peggy Robinson stated that as much as the Board would love to support aides in kindergarten, the argument is better to wait until after the legislation is over and it is known what the funding will be. Ms. Robinson also supports community schools but would like to avoid having to cut some good programs and eliminate positions. The projections are grim. Ms. Robinson stated that if you check on other districts they are in severe financial problems without having a fund balance to rely on to help them get through cuts. Ms. Robinson feels it is prudent not to go into the District's fund balance until it is known what it will look like next year. Middle School sports has had some controversy due to different philosophies. In the past, when groups have come forward with well organized plans it has been possible to consider the group's request but the Board needs the information in order to add one sport back in the budget. When the Board did add something back, the promise to participate did not last. Ms. Robinson mentioned her frustration that intramural basketball groups should be able to do better than they are. Ms. Robinson urged the Board to pass the motion as presented.

Dave Werdal commented that he was impressed with the job the Superintendent did on this budget. Mr. Werdal stated that it is probably the most important thing the Board does. There's only so much money and choices have to be made. Mr. Werdal stated that he feels the reasons Carol Comeau mentioned are not reasons not to change anything. The Board never knows those numbers and won't unless the cycle changes and it is done it after the legislation meet. Mr. Werdal mentioned that he as one or two small amendments to make.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Tim Steele
seconded by Jake Metcalfe

that the Board approve \$90,000 to fund two additional community schools from one-time budget reserve funds. The primary responsibilities of the coordinator positions are: 1) to work to identify and secure additional broad based community schools financial support and 2) to assist the affiliated community school programs with organizational and training assistance and any other support possible within the time and funding restraints.

Mr. Steele stated that he has heard tremendous support for community schools from this Board but also the argument that there is a need to broaden the support. It is a community program and Mr. Steele believes

that there is a need to broaden the support perhaps from the university, private sector, and the municipality. Mr. Steele feels this is a high priority item and knows that the administration is committed to work on it this year. Mr. Steele's amendment gives one time funding and provides a coordinator to work with the community to help them get the funding.

Carol Comeau stated that she applauds Mr. Steele's creativity because he is representing a lot of concern expressed for supporting the affiliate schools. One of the two positions would work with the affiliates but would not be assigned to any community school and the other position would be someone who is responsible to seek other funding sources that would be sustainable over time. Ms. Comeau stated that she would like to look at this issue over the next couple of months and is urging caution at this time.

Dave Werdal stated that he would prefer to give the Administration flexibility in what it can do with the two positions added. Tim Steele added that his intent is to get out of this cycle of not supporting community schools adequately.

Dave Werdal moved to amend the amendment that funds could be designated by the Administration to be taken out of the 2002-2003 budget.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT:

Moved by Dave Werdal	to take the \$90,000 for the community
seconded by Jake Metcalfe	school coordinators designated by the
	Administration to be taken out of the
	2002-2003 budget.

VOTE:

Ayes: Holthouse, Drummond,
Metcalfe, Werdal

Nays: Ossiander, Steele, Robinson

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT PASSED

Harriet Drummond suggested that the amendment should read "two additional community school positions" instead of coordinators. The Board agreed by unanimous consent to the change of wording.

Ms. Drummond also feels there should not be a limit it to amount per position. Carol Comeau asked if there is enough flexibility to issue a special services contract to hire someone to do some work to go out and look at funds. Perhaps they could find someone who had some expertise in fundraising.

Tim Steele stated that it is for whatever will work. It is his hope to provide assistance for the affiliated programs right now and to get off a dead center with regards to broadly funding community schools.

For purpose of clarity, Peggy Robinson read the amendment again :

Amendment: that the Board approves \$90,000 to fund two additional Community School positions. The primary responsibilities of these positions are: 1) to work to identify and secure additional broad based Community Schools financial support and 2) to assist the affiliated Community School Programs with organization and training assistance.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steele, Robinson, Werdal

Nays: Ossiander, Holthouse, Drummond, Metcalfe

AMENDED AMENDMENT FAILED

The Board recessed at 7:25 and reconvened at 7:45 p.m.

Tim Steele moved the following amendment:

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Tim Steele
seconded by Dave Werdal

that the Board approve \$90,000 from the fund balance for community schools to 1) work to identify and secure additional broad based community schools financial support and 2) assist the affiliated community school programs with organization and training.

Mr. Steele would like the Administration to have flexibility as to how to spend the \$90,000, but would like to designate the funds come from the current year's undesignated fund balance because he would like to provide pressure to the Administration to make some progress on broadening out the community school support.

Jake Metcalfe stated his concern with taking money from this year's budget to fund something for next year's budget.

Rita Holthouse suggested that the Board vote the amendment down and look at this issue and kindergarten aides and maybe some other things in the spring. Ms. Holthouse stated that the Board has been fortunate at the end of previous years to have funds to add some things to the budget and

would hope that the Administration would give the Board flexibility with some of the budget transfers in the spring. Carol Comeau also stated that she would like to wait until the spring.

Debbie Ossiander and Jake Metcalfe agreed with Ms. Comeau and Ms. Holthouse.

Dave Werdal made the argument that it (extra funds) may not happen in June and feels that the amount requested is a relatively small one.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steele, Drummond, Werdal

Nays: Ossiander, Robinson, Holthouse, Metcalfe

AMENDMENT FAILED

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Tim Steele
seconded by Harriet Drummond

to increase the elementary education budget by \$440,625 to ensure every full-day kindergarten classroom has, at least, a 3.5 hour (1/2-time) teacher's aide. To fund these positions I would like to fund the attached list of one-time expenditures with budget reserve funds from next year's budget and these teacher aide positions with recurring funds.

Tim Steele stated that by giving students the extra support at the front end you move them along with a lot less problems while growing up. Mr. Steele would hope to try to eliminate or prevent those problems later on by providing a little more support at the kindergarten level.

Carol Comeau stated that she feels this is a wonderful amendment but would rather wait until June. It would still be possible to have people hired and trained in August. Ms. Comeau would like to consider funding from the federal funds for K-3 which was used to lower class size in first grade as well as the Learning Opportunity Grant.

Jake Metcalfe stated that he would support the budget as is until June. A lot has changed since September 11 and he thinks it would be wise to wait.

Rita Holthouse commented that she would also like to wait until the spring and then add. Ms. Holthouse wanted the Administration's assurance that the Administrative budget transfers that don't have to come to the Board would be kept to a minimum so they can take a look at these issues in June.

Carol Comeau assured the Board that the Administration would scrutinize to capture as much funding as possible and reminded the Board of the equipment to be purchased. Rita Holthouse agreed with equipment purchases.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steele

Nays: Ossiander, Robinson, Holthouse,
Drummond, Metcalfe, Werdal

AMENDMENT FAILED

Mr. Steele thanked everyone for their consideration of the amendment.

Peggy Robinson and Carol Comeau mentioned the inadequate funding for special ed services from the federal government, which is supposed to be 40 percent, according to the commitment made in 1974. Ms. Comeau assured the Board that we will get information to the congressional delegation on how important the 40 percent commitment is. Debbie Ossiander agreed and stated that we all have a responsibility to emphasize what is most important, which is education, and there are significant challenges ahead. The problems to face are immense and the solutions are not clearly in sight.

VOTE:

Ayes: Steele, Holthouse, Metcalfe,

Ossiander, Robinson, Drummond, Werdal

Nays: None

MAIN MOTION PASSED

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

F. COMMENTS

Carol Comeau thanked the Administration for their team effort in working on the budget.

Ken Waring thanked the Board and stated that the members would meet as a group to form recommendations on the budget and present their recommendations to the Assembly.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of January 30, 2002 was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:10 p.m.

Peggy Robinson, President

Harriet Drummond, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved