

**MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 23, 2003**

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Thursday, January 23, 2003 at 5:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Jake Metcalfe, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE

Board Members Present: Debbie Ossiander, Rita Holthouse, Mary Marks, Tim Steele, John Steiner, Harriet Drummond, Jake Metcalfe.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, George Vakalis, Jan Christensen, Janet Stokesbary, Mike Henry, Jerry Sjolander, Patricia McRae, Gail Opalinski, Jerry Sjolander, Jeff Wood, Dale Cope, Bob Henry, Ray Amsden, Stan Syta, Steve Kalmes, Todd Arndt, Mike Price, Victoria Parham, Corey Rennell, Robin Siegfried, the press, and other interested people.

Carol Comeau announced upcoming events and meetings.

B. CONSENT AGENDA

1. ASD Memorandum #170 - FY 2003-2004 Proposed Financial Plan (First Reading)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District's FY 2003-2004 Proposed Financial Plan as set forth in the projected revenues and expenditure schedule in the memorandum (Attachment A). The total budget recommendation is \$481,093,785. This includes individual fund budgets currently projected as follows:

	<u>Proposed FY 2003-2004 Financial Plan</u>
General Fund	\$ 369,656,400
Food Service Fund	13,043,000
Debt Service Fund	58,394,385
Local/State/Federal Projects Fund	<u>40,000,000</u>
Total – All Funds	<u>\$ 481,093,785</u>

The total of local tax contribution to be requested is \$142,804,000.

It is further recommended that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to adjust the budget expenditure ceiling and taxes above in accordance with any change to additional Charter Schools, State approval of debt retirement projects, the upper limit of the local tax cap limitation and any education-

addressed. The Girdwood community feels the School Board and Administration have done what they could do to help them and they appreciate that. Mr. Daniels added that Girdwood is the only school in the District without a full time librarian. Mr. Daniels added that it is also important that the Title I schools are served. If money could be spared for the 21st Century Learning Program, Mr. Daniels would appreciate it also.

Tim Steele asked if the librarian also serves another position with the other half time. Mr. Daniels stated that the librarian also teaches PE and she is the technology person for the school.

Jim Cox, principal at Girdwood School, stated that the duties of the librarian are .50 library and .50 physical education. The librarian also teaches one section of health for 7 and 8th grade.

Speaker, Mary Dramer, spoke to the Board on behalf of Ptarmigan Elementary as a parent and social work student. Ms. Dramer spoke of the importance of the 21st Century Learning Program. The speaker stated that her son was behind in his reading and since the program started in September, his reading level has jumped up ten levels. It has enhanced his learning abilities and has also helped with his mathematics skills as well. It is also a safety issue. Students that qualify have a place to go if there is no parent at home. If the parent can't help with their work the educators in this program can help them.

Tim Steele asked how many students are served. Bonnie Hardy explained the way they are identified. The youngest siblings are able to attend also if they need to.

John Steiner asked if this program is well suited to dealing with the issues of helping students who don't learn well in class. Ms. Dramer stated that it does help bridge the gap, which will help with the requirements of No Child Left Behind Act. Carol Comeau emphasized how important these programs are. Ms. Comeau stated that the Title I schools will have to look at all their students' needs and look at everything they are doing to see what they can do to help all of the students succeed, because of NCLB. The needs are huge at the Title I schools, as well as the other schools that have no extra resources. We can build a good case with some of our Learning Opportunity Grant funds for use for our after school programs. The grant doesn't specify that all funds have to be used within the school day. We need to tell the schools to look at what they have been doing that is successful and preserve the best part of these programs.

Jake Metcalfe reminded the Board that we probably won't see a lot of funds on the federal level. Mr. Metcalfe stated that President Bush said that school districts will need to look at spending funds more wisely.

Mary Marks commented that her children participate in the 21st Century Learning Program and the reading level improvement has been valuable. There is a waiting list, so there obviously is a huge need.

Each Board member stated his/her priorities for the FY 2003-2004 budget.

Debbie Ossiander stated that there is a need to be cautionary. Ms. Ossiander reminded the Board and Administration that this budget is built with a hidden \$5,000,000 hole because funds were taken from the fund balance to fill the gap. Ms. Ossiander's concern is that the District and Board will face Federal and State mandates and she continues to hear of significant shortfalls. Ms. Ossiander stated that she thinks the budget presented is a good budget.

Ms. Ossiander added that the Board can do their job better when more accurate budget information is given to them, i.e. the average teacher salary. Ms. Ossiander stated that her top wish is that the senior budget analyst position will be filled in the Budget Department. Ms. Ossiander also shared her concerns regarding the need for people to fill the noon duty positions. Ms. Ossiander is also concerned with the price of lunches and added that she would support some price increase, but would like to phase it in over the next two years and use the food service undesignated fund balance to fill the gap. As far as supporting an additional assistant principal at Wendler Middle School, Ms. Ossiander will support adding an additional person.

Mary Marks stated that her concerns are helping the Title I schools by finding the grants to continue the 21st Century Learning Program, noon duty salary increase, librarian positions, an assistant principal for Wendler and Central Middle Schools, and testing and program evaluation.

Tim Steele echoed Debbie Ossiander's caution. Mr. Steele added that the hole is really more like \$9,000,000 because we started the budget process with a \$3.8 million deficit that was taken care of partially based on salaries of new teachers. Mr. Steele stated that he will not propose the addition of a library coordinator, and a full time librarian for Girdwood tonight, but will keep it in mind when going to Juneau to speak to the legislators. Mr. Steele added that the 21st Century Learning Program grant concept is a concept that needs to be continued. The schools do need to look at their funds to continue similar programs and the Board and Administration needs to help. Mr. Steele stated that he is interested in the noon duty

salary increase issue as well. Mr. Steele would also like to address the issue of an addition of another A.P. at Wendler for at least one year.

John Steiner stated that he is concerned about the fiscal situation and ability of the legislature to give the District more funding. Oil prices could change overnight. Looking for savings is of great interest. Mr. Steiner commented that there are always some things that can be done less expensive and he would like to be able to identify where the savings are. Mr. Steiner added that he is also supportive of an additional AP for Wendler and shares the concern of the other Board members about the need for more noon duties.

Rita Holthouse stated that she has not found any place to fund the issues she would like to see added to the budget and therefore will not put forward any amendments. Ms. Holthouse added that she would like to see what the Board will choose before commenting on additional issues.

Harriet Drummond stated her interest in helping out the noon duty situation and added that after receiving the response to request for information the problem looks more serious than anticipated. Ms. Drummond also shared the Board members' concerns about the assistant principal at Wendler and librarian time.

Jake Metcalfe stated that he is optimistic that the State will give more funds. The Governor and the Legislature are supportive of adequately funding education. It is however, a little reckless to bet on it. Mr. Metcalfe added that he would not support any amendments. The budget presented is a balanced budget. When adding items other items need to be taken out. Mr. Metcalfe stated that the noon duty situation and additional assistant principals would be priorities to add later. Mr. Metcalfe stated that the Board would need to be cautious since the impact of going to war is unknown. School districts are not expecting additional money from the federal government and may not receive the funds they are supposed to receive. Mr. Metcalfe stated that as leaders, the Board members need to take a very cautious approach.

Debbie Ossiander commented on the response to request for information on the budget analyst position. Carol Comeau stated that due to the potential ramifications from ACE the Administration and Board cannot discuss the issue while negotiations are ongoing. Eric Tollefsen agreed that it would not be advisable to discuss at this time. Ms. Ossiander stated that she would not put forth an amendment and will wait for ACE negotiations to end.

John Steiner moved to amend by adding an assistant principal at Wendler Middle School to provide administrative support during the school construction and with transporting students to Dimond High School during the construction period, with an expenditure of \$79,500.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by John Steiner
seconded by Harriet Drummond

to add one assistant principal at Wendler Middle School to provide administrative support during the school construction and with transporting students to Dimond High School during the construction period , with an expenditure of \$79,500. To pay for this position, I move that: \$12,000 be reduced from the Contractual Services - Instructional account 3030 under the High School Administrative budget; \$23,500 be reduced from the Refuse account 3540 for the computer disposal under the Warehouse budget; and \$44,000 be added from the Fund Balance.

Mr. Steiner stated that the reductions proposed were prepared with the Administration. Because it is a one-year situation, Mr. Steiner feels it is justifiable to take the funds from the fund balance. Mr. Steiner added that at this time it is difficult to know if we will move the employee who takes the position to another position or keep the assistant principal position at Wendler the following year. Mr. Steiner added that the response to request for information stated that Wendler Middle School was one of the schools that had more discipline problems and there is a possibility that bussing the students to Dimond High School may add to the discipline problem.

Carol Comeau stated that she appreciated the motion and this was one that the Administration wrestled with. Ms. Comeau thinks this will be good and will reassure the community and staff that the District is trying to address some of their concerns. It is a valid use of the fund balance.

Rita Holthouse stated that she would support this amendment enthusiastically. This is an appropriate use of the fund balance. The

\$12,000 was pointed out as a numerical error and the \$23,500 deduction suggestion came from the Administration.

Tim Steele stated that he will support this amendment and also feels this is an appropriate use of the fund balance.

Carol Comeau stated that she spoke with Marie Laule and Pam Chenier. It was felt that \$65,000 was a good estimate based on what is currently known for a disposing fee of surplus monitors. It is an estimate and if additional funds are needed the Administration will have to go back and find the funds.

Tim Steele offered an amendment to the amendment stating to delete the request to reduce funds from the budget, and moved that \$79,500 be added from the fund balance.

The Board took an at ease at 6:25 p.m. until 6:40 p.m.

The amendment to the amendment failed due to lack of a second.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

Ayes: Ossiander, Marks, Steele, Steiner,
Holthouse, Drummond

Nays: Metcalfe

AMENDMENT PASSED

Tim Steele moved to amend the main motion as amended by increasing the noon duty rate to \$10.00 per hour with the amount to come from the undesignated fund balance. Harriet Drummond seconded for purposes of discussion.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Tim Steele	to increase the noon duty rate to
seconded by Harriet Drummond	\$10.00 per hour with the amount
	to come from the undesignated
	fund balance.

Rita Holthouse stated that the undesignated fund balance is usually reserved for one-time expenditures. This looks like a continuing cost. Tim Steele stated that he agrees it is desirable to use the fund balance for one time expenditures, but thinks the increase in rate from \$9.00 and \$8.25 is one of fairness as well as a safety issue. The minimum wage has just gone up. We need to have some stability in the schools with these positions.

Debbie Ossiander moved to amend the amendment to increase the pay by .25 for a total cost of \$27,750 from the fund balance.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander
seconded by Mary Marks

to amend the amendment to increase the noon duty rate by \$.25 per hour for a cost of \$27,750 with the amount to come from the undesignated fund balance.

Rita Holthouse asked Superintendent Comeau for a comment. Ms. Comeau stated that she thinks the noon duty position is a critical position and she knows how hard it is to find people for this position. Ms. Comeau's concern is going into the fund balance more than once. Ms. Comeau suggested that if the Board stated this is their next priority, when the Administration begins budget adjustments later in the year, the Administration would bring back a proposal to do this. Ms. Comeau stated that she would rather identify the funds another way than using the fund balance. Rita Holthouse asked if the Administration could look to see if there is money available in the budget and bring it back to the Board by the second reading. Ms. Comeau stated that the Administration would do that. Rita Holthouse stated that she is not in favor of taking the funds from the undesignated fund balance and would like to table the pending question until the next meeting.

The Board members requested the Administration to research how much of an increase it would take to attract more people to the noon duty positions; how much per hour do temporary TA's make; and what other issues would make noon duty attendant positions more attractive.

The Board continued discussion and made the decision to table the pending question until the second reading of the budget.

MOTION TO TABLE:

Moved by John Steiner
seconded by Rita Holthouse

to lay the pending question on the table until the second reading of the budget .

VOTE:

Ayes: Marks, Steele, Metcalfe,
Steiner, Holthouse, Drummond

Nays: Ossiander

MOTION TO TABLE PASSED

Rita Holthouse asked if the two types of food service workers pay full price for their meals. Ms. Comeau stated that the Administration would develop a response to the request for information.

AMENDMENT:

Moved by Debbie Ossiander	increase the student meals price
seconded by Harriet Drummond	by .10 rather than the .15
	proposed. This would require
	\$74,265 from the Food Service
	Undesignated Fund Balance.
	The intent would be to phase the
	increase in.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

Ayes: Marks, Steele, Metcalfe,
Steiner, Holthouse, Drummond
Nays: Ossiander
AMENDMENT PASSED

The Board took a brief recess at 7:20 p.m. and reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

Speaker, Sydney Seward, spoke to the Board about the assessment and evaluation of the writing assessment and feels it is a valuable tool for having teachers calibrate themselves across the district and helps get an overall view of where their strengths are. Debbie Ossiander stated that she shares the sense of loss of the writing assessment, but the District has so many mandated testing now. Carol Comeau agrees it is a valuable tool, but the Administration has also been hearing about the number of testing days. The schools, by using LOG money or other funds, can give a writing assessment and work collaboratively together to score them. The Administration had to look at the amount of instructional time with the number of mandated tests. The number of substitute days is also a problem. The Benchmarks tests also have the different standards and there is a lot of information on the sheets that go to parents.

Debbie Ossiander urged the Administration to look at phasing out the postal box situation in Chugiak/Eagle River schools. Those schools now have addresses.

Carol Comeau thanked the staff for putting the budget together. Ms. Comeau also thanked the Board members for supporting the budget as they did and also stated that the Administration will follow-up on some of the issues mentioned. Ms. Comeau added that the Administration appreciates knowing what issues the Board wants them to continue to look at.

C. BOARD COMMENTSD. EXECUTIVE SESSION-
(PERSONNEL/FINANCE/NEGOTIATIONS/LITIGATIONE. ADJOURNMENT

The Regular Meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:25 p.m.

Jake Metcalfe, President

Mary Marks, Clerk

Robin Siegfried, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved