

Approved & released  
5/14/15 DHH

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
PUBLIC HEARING--BUDGET & RESTRUCTURING  
THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2015  
TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

1. Call to order: 6:10 P M.

Present: Dawn Harris, Michael Niles, Susan Burdsall, Andrea Suchocki,  
Michael Barbaro (arrived late)

Salah Khelifaoui-Superintendent

Mark Chapulis-TMS/Business Management team

S. Khelifaoui noted the current FY16 budget reflects the most recent indirect cost figures provided that afternoon by the Town Manager. The major changes relate to the non-salary expenses which are broken down by cost center. The Business Office provided the "actuals" history from FY12 to FY14 for comparison; figures for FY15 are not yet available. An updated version will be provided at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting; the budget is presented to the FinCom on April 7<sup>th</sup>. He noted the numbers will not change; required cuts now total \$804,919.

Katherine Vanderhoof, TTE Principal spoke, representing staff and students. The TTE staff was asked to refrain from participating in the recent social media dialogue and to send comments or questions directly to the school committee. Issues addressed included safety concerns in several areas of the school building and grounds, and the boundaries' and expectations explained to them. She defended against the dark, dreary and hot description made by a previous speaker and detailed positive aspects. She explained the specialist services and activities similar to those provided at other district buildings. She commended the teachers and staff, and noted there was an increase in the student population. She stressed there is no good choice but the school will support the committees decision.

6:25 PM M. Barbaro apologized for arriving late.

Gail Smith commended the updated budget format and asked several more questions. She suggested the district have fewer cell phones and use those funds for educational supplies. The reasons for the 3budget reductions were reviewed. She suggested Memorial house grades Pre K to 4; the Middle School would remain grades 6-8 and the High School grades 9-12. 5<sup>th</sup> grade could remain at TTE, the Murdock Academy could relocate to TTE and the Sped and Central Office could remain. She outlined a reconfiguration of administrative positions and elimination of various Director and other positions. She stated that as a taxpayer she could not support a budget that includes moving the Memorial School students to TTE. She will email her recommendations to the committee.

Suzanne Cyganowicz, a Para at Memorial, explained why she believes the school has safety features and therapeutic areas better suited to the youngest students.

Jen Chagnon, a graduate of the district, stated she believes Memorial was designed for Elementary students. She gave suggestions regarding a reconfiguration. She stated the focus should not be on building ownership but on what is best for the students.

Kelly (an early childhood education student) and Robert Williams, parents, explained their reasons for supporting Memorial School.

Elizabeth Beauregard, parent and teacher, gave her opinion and perspective on having older high school students in the same building as young elementary students.

Katrina Fleming, parent and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, noted the inconvenience of moving does not factor into the argument to keep Memorial's status quo. She stressed the financial cost of renovating TTE to accommodate Memorial staff and students.

Lisa Musgrove, resident and teacher, stressed the district needs to do what is best for the students and to move the town forward.

Gretchen Renaud, former teacher in Winchendon, noted the teachers have always made the system work with whatever they had.

6:53 PM M. Barbaro moved to recess from the Public Hearing until 7:00 PM. Second by M. Niles. Approved 5-0-0.

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Respectfully submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Barrie E. Martins, School Committee Recording Secretary