

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

February 14, 2006

The members of the Board of Education of Howard County held Public Work Session II on the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2007 Operating Budget on Tuesday, February 14, 2006, at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland. The following were present:

Joshua Kaufman, Chairman
Diane Mikulis, Vice Chairman
Patricia Gordon
Mary Kay Sigaty
Courtney Watson
Jeff Lasser, Student Member, arrived 2:00 p.m.

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent of Schools
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Raymond Brown, Chief Operating Officer
David White, Budget Officer
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Florence Jackson, Recording Secretary

Chairman Joshua Kaufman called the meeting to order at 1:05.

Operation of Plant

Program 7101 - Custodial Administration and Training

- Increase in pest control line, which reflects expanded integrated pest management efforts, is due to rebidding the contract last year.
 - The contract at the low bid exceeded the existing bid, and there is an extension to the contract.

Program 7102 – Custodial Services

- The addition of 19.5 new custodian positions, is based on the square footage formula and the usage of facilities.
- The supervisory position for the new elementary school was not cut from this budget.
- There are problems attracting custodians. Many of the hires do not come from this county, and transportation is a problem.
- “Repair and replacement of curtains” is listed twice. One is repairing/cleaning, and one is replacing.

Approved – March 9, 2006

- The cost to replace vehicles will run between \$14,000 and \$21,000. Snow plows and dump trucks will run higher.
 - Most likely these are the vehicles that were cut from the budget last year.
- Increase in supplies and materials and use of green products can be attributed to a general escalation in prices of custodial supplies, which have gone up 15%-20%, and the need to purchase custodial uniforms.

Program 7201 – Utilities

- Deregulation of electricity this summer will have a significant impact.
- There are 10 schools in the energy management program, and 3 schools are under contract now.
 - The other schools will be totally operational by the summer of 2007.
 - The overall savings for the 13 schools should be about \$600,000 per year.

Program 7301 - Warehousing

- Maintenance vehicles are under a pilot program participating with county government, but this budget does not reflect the savings from the program.
- What is the description for additional equipment?
 - Warehousing equipment such as tow motors, fork lifts, etc.
 - Approximate cost of replacement is \$19,500.

Program 7401 - Risk Management

- There is an increase in graffiti and theft.
- Record keeping varies from school to school on reporting these incidents.
 - Laptop theft is on the increase.
- Injuries have increased, including athletic injuries, but with the increase in population, the number of injuries is not unusual.
- The premium for property insurance rates is \$506,000.
- Hepatitis B vaccine is offered to employees based upon their duties.

Program 7501 - Operation of Plant

- Stage curtains are replaced in this budget, and there is a replacement schedule.
 - This is part of the comprehensive maintenance plan.
- Removal cost of recycling materials through environmental clubs is referred to this office.

Maintenance

Program 7601 - Maintenance

- \$3,000 is listed for repair equipment items with no description.
- Staff to provide information.

Program 7602 - Building Maintenance

- Based on a study the goal is to have one employee maintain 70,000 square feet.
 - Currently it is one employee per 90,000 square feet.
 - There should be an additional 30 employees to reach the goal of 70,000 square feet.

Program 7701 - Networks and Technology Support

- Technicians are provided a vehicle to transport equipment, cabling, etc.
- The \$65,000 increase in contracted labor is for infrastructure network improvements. This will enable staff to repair the challenges faced in regard to technology.

Program 7801 - Grounds Maintenance

- The maximum number of hours a person can work in a day is 16 hours.
- Special Projects is in the overtime category because this time is often scheduled after school hours.

Program 7901 - Environmental Maintenance

- Air quality is monitored when a principal or staff member voices concern.
- Bottled water is only supplied in the relocatables.

Community ServicesProgram 9101 - Nonpublic School Transportation Services

No discussion.

Program 9201 - Community Services Grounds Maintenance

- This is the true cost before the offset of fees, and this is true in terms of use of buildings.

Program - 9301 Community Use of Facilities

- Lease agreements are with the cafeteria and with the maintenance building Head Start.
- Conferences and meetings software is being upgraded.
- Staff is working with the Finance Department to handle the backlog of fees owed.

Program 9401 - Other Community Services

- Teen Parenting Program - both mother and child are bused. Half of the program is under community service, and the other is under teen parenting.
 - The budget is based on current being experience.
- Education Foundation shows \$20,000 under other charges for startup assistance.
 - This amount includes filing for the 501C3, office supplies, legal consulting fees, etc.

Program 6701 - Pupil Transportation Office

- Cell phones and radios are used by bus drivers and contractors.
- Contract labor is used when unexpected site improvements to walking routes is needed but was not anticipated.
- Bus assistants are for special education, and monitors are on regular buses for challenging neighborhoods.

Program 6801 - School Bus Operations

- Biggest problem is lack of drivers.
- Drivers are employees of contractors so there is limitation on benefits.
- There is a significant amount of training before they can be allowed to operate a bus.
- Other counties have similar problems.
- Contractors have a 6-year contract and can rebid on other routes.
- Increased cost of fuel is not being passed on to the contractor because the formula in the contract takes that into account.
- Bids have been increasing over the last several years.
- New budget shows 2% increase to compensate bus contractors for rising operating costs.
- The actual amount for the drivers is determined by the contractors.
- Most school systems put an increase in the formula, and Howard County continues to do competitive bidding.

Transportation Other

- This is the category where the cost for the Technology Magnet/Career Technology Academies are.
- The cost of a special needs bus, even though it is smaller, is much more expensive due to the requirement of air conditioning, specialized curb-to-curb service, and an additional employee.

Recess: The work session was recessed by the Chairman at 2:40 p.m. and reconvened at 2:50 p.m.

Program 0101 - Administration/Board of Education

- As a result of a recent audit, and with the addition of the Ombudsman and Auditor positions, and two more Board members, 1.5 new staff positions have been added.
- Dues and subscriptions are paid automatically.
- Additional funds need to be in place for the Auditor to attend conferences and professional development activities.
 - Staff will provide figures.
- Mrs. Mikulis will discuss with staff the conferences and meetings and how many Board members and student member will attend.
 - Concern was raised about student member missing school 3 and 5 days to attend conferences.
- Staff to check on Ombudsman's mileage.
- Auditor will also need mileage.

Office of Superintendent

No discussion.

Equity Assurance/Staff Relations 0103

- Cost for consultants and teachers workshop wages is in grants.

Program 0104 - Legal Services Office

No discussion.

Program 0105 - Business Community Government Partnerships

- These are administrative costs for staff on payroll.

Program 0201 - Business Services and Operations

- The Executive Director is over the facilities management.

Program 0203 - Budget Office

No discussion.

Program 0204 - Payroll Services

No discussion.

Program 0205 - Purchasing Services

- Another clerical support position is needed.

Approved – March 9, 2006

- A new website is needed to help work with the public regarding commercial issues and vendors.

Program 0206 - Accounting Services

- Funding includes training all of the professional staff and in particular the CPA's on staff.

Program 0302 - Public Information Office

- Some documents are already in translated format for ESOL families.
- Funds are used to revise those documents and to expand translation for major publications.
- The conference fund of \$1500 is for the entire staff.
 - More funds would be helpful.

Program 0303 - Human Resources

- The workshop wages increase is for the resident teacher program which is being moved from the professional development department to human resources.

Program 0502 - Student Assessment and Program Evaluation

- There are no funds here for external evaluation.

Program 0304 - Mid-Level Administration

Central Office Instructional Personnel

- A request was made to see a list of positions added in 2006 that were taken from other places in the budget.
 - Staff noted that every position is footnoted, and it is also in the back of the budget under the additional personnel summary.
- Where did the 8.5 positions added come from?
 - Some of these are pool positions, and pool positions that are used for given positions show up next year in a given category not in the regular staffing ratio.

Program 0411 - Curriculum and Curriculum-Based Assessments

No discussion.

Program 1503 - Media Technical Services

No discussion.

Program 2701 - Cable Television Video Production

- Request was made for chapters set up on the DVD's of the Board of Education meetings.
 - The new system in use now auto chapters every 15 minutes.
 - Cable Television is funded by a cable grant as well. There are 4 regular monthly programs, 2 special series on sports and concerts, 8 separate initiatives for in-house use, a tutorial on SAT's, and a number of other smaller programs.
- An emergency preparedness video is in production now.
- Currently students are not given access to do student-produced programs.
 - The option is open for student involvement.
- Cable TV production will be evaluated for future needs, and staff will provide updates as the process unfolds.

Program 3204 - Temporary Services Office

No discussion.

Program 4701 – School-Based Administration

- Instructional team leaders are teachers and part of the HCEA bargaining unit.
- Instructional facilitators are under central office instructional personnel.
- Staff noted that, if it remains in the budget, athletic directors should be under school-based administration before it goes to the County Executive.
- Staff discussed advantages of having permanent fulltime security assistants in the high schools as opposed to contracted security for a net increase of \$327,000 from fiscal year 2006.
- The amount of \$35,000 for contracted services labor/contracting school accounting services is for temporary employee payment.
 - It has been in the budget in different places, over the past two years.
 - It is for the same two employees that are paid on an hourly basis to provide school activity fund accounting assistance to all the schools.
- High schools have a much larger volume than elementary or middle schools.
 - The increase in position from halftime to fulltime for the bookkeeper is addressing the needs at the high school.
- Staff to check on funding the Howard County Association of Student Council Advisors.

Program 4801 - Professional and Organizational

- There are no new positions.
 - The 1.5 positions were moved.

Program 4901 - Professional Development Schools

- Staff will find out how many interns are hired.
- Eight colleges are in partnership in a PDS relationship, and Towson is the largest partner.

Capital Outlay

No discussion.

Program 0202 - School Planning and Construction

- Four-wheel drive vehicles are purchased off the standard bid list, and whatever is low in that particular bid year is purchased.

Program 0212 - Geographical Information Services

No discussion.

Restricted Funds

Global Question

- What is an appropriate level for the fund balances of each of the funds.
 - The funds are so different so there is no single answer.

Program 8301 - Food and Nutrition Services

- The mandate that this program be self supporting is most likely founded in regulation. At times this has been supported by contributions from the General Fund.
- In order to provide fresher, nutritious foods there would have to be no restriction that it would be self supporting.
- In the past contributions from the General Fund were made to the fund mostly to keep the prices of lunches at a reasonable rate.
- Mileage reimbursement is due to daily trips to the bank.
- Prep schools and satellites are traveled daily.

Restricted FundsProgram 9716 – Workers' Compensation

- There was a large increase in insurance premium.
 - This is an anticipated 5 %-10% increase from last year.
- An actuarial study is being performed and should be completed by end of February. The target is based on the actuarial study, and the school system needs to be within a reasonable range for our auditor's assessment.

Approved – March 9, 2006

Workers' Compensation and Self-Insurance Fund

- Staff noted that there may be significant savings of administrative fees.
 - The savings could be up to \$2-to-\$3 million a year and reduced administrative and risk fees.
- Stop loss insurance would cover catastrophic situations even though the school system has the same contracts with the health maintenance organizations.
- The new assistant position will help handle the 7,000 regular employees, 1200 retirees, and 60-80 people on leave of absence. This will also allow staff to remove all of the health insurance-related duties from the payroll clerks.
- Payroll's last position was 26 years ago.
- Actuary consultants will provide a fund balance.
- Staff to find out how many other school systems are self insured.

Program 9715 – Technology

- IFAS funds were transferred to the capital budget.
- There have been additional start-up costs such as service agreements and maintenance of the servers.
- Technology service agreements have increased.
- The funds are not available in this budget to allow purchase of a new software agreement to improve the student information management systems.
- The contingency fund could be made available for this purpose for future budgets.
- Staff was asked to consider this option.
- The conference fund increased so staff could attend training classes which is onsite. A level of proficiency is needed for certain systems.

Program 9713 - Printing

- The print shop prints all school directories. Though, some schools use other resources.
- A service contract helps to save money on repairs.

Grants Fund

- This was prepared before Congress cut 1% at the end of last year. Cuts will probably be seen until mid-April.

Program 8001 - Fixed Charges

- The Fixed Charges program funds employee benefits and other operating costs.

Adjournment

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

