

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
IN JOINT SESSION WITH
BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

May 7, 2008

5:15 PM

Mayor Guinta called the special meeting of the joint Board of Aldermen and School Board to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance, which was led by Alderman Domaingue.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen M. Roy, Gatsas, Sullivan, J. Roy, Osborne, Pinard, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Ouellette, Domaingue

Absent: Alderman O'Neil

Present: School Committee Members Craig, O'Sullivan, DeBlasi, Labanaris, Soucy, Kelley, Langton, Gelinas, Kruse, Beaudry, Avard, Dolman, Cote

School Committee Member Herbert arrived late.

Messrs: H. Aliberti, K. DeFrancis, K. Burkush, S. Brisson

4. Discussion relating to the proposed FY2009 School District budget.

Mayor Guinta stated the purpose of this meeting is for both Boards to have a follow-up meeting regarding the FY2009 School District budget. I invite the administration from the School District to come forward, and rather than begin with a presentation, I think what we will do is begin with questions from either Board. I suspect after some of the information has been provide by the School District to the Aldermanic Board as well as the School Board, there are particular clarifying question that have come to many of the members' minds and we have an opportunity to discuss those issues.

Alderman Lopez stated before I say anything I just want to say that Alderman O'Neil is stuck up in Maine, so that is the reason he is not here. I want to welcome the School Board members here tonight and I hope that it is productive. I hope truth in budgeting and information that we are given satisfies most of the Aldermen or all the Aldermen, one or the other, and with that, welcome. Are there are any comments that the administration would like to make first before questions?

Dr. Henry Aliberti, Superintendent of Schools, stated I want to thank the Boards for having us come this evening and hopefully we can provide information that you might want and that we can move on with the budgeting process and get things squared away so that we can continue educating Manchester's students.

Alderman Ouellette stated my question would be directed to you as Chairman of the School Board. When you gave your budget presentation, Your Honor, it was your contention that at the \$140 million appropriation number that you gave the School Department in your budget you thought that the teachers would not have to be rifted. You said you could reduce the number of teaching staff through attrition,

and hearing discussions over the weekend, Your Honor, I am just wondering, I am not hearing any substance as to how you arrived at that number, \$140 million, other than just decreasing the amount of revenue, that the School District will be receiving less from their revenues. I really haven't heard much from you, Your Honor, as Chairman of the Board, as to how you think the \$140 million would work without rifting teachers and what cuts from the \$147 million, actually the \$153 million, keeping in mind the fact that we both voted when I was on the School Board to approve the teachers' contracts, increasing spending there. We also voted to approve the West High Academy model which increased spending there, and I believe, with all due respect to the new superintendent coming in, that you voted to increase the salary of the incoming superintendent by increasing spending to \$30,000. Your Honor, I would just like to know if you still feel today that you can reach the \$140 million without sending out rift notices.

Mayor Guinta stated there are some inaccuracies in your statement, so I can try to clarify some of it. First of all, the School Board met as recently as last week and at that meeting I stated that I did not have a formal proposal for the School District for several reasons. First of all, by Charter the responsibility that is placed upon the Office of Mayor is to submit a budget to the City of Manchester and that has been done. I have stated and remained committed working with either Board as well as the school administration and to deal with a \$13 million shortfall in revenue, particularly a \$7.3 million shortfall on the school side, and how best to appropriate dollars and how to prioritize those dollars for the City. I have never made the statement that a rift wouldn't occur. The statements I have made is I would hope a rift would not have to occur, and that I would like to see a far more innovated and creative approach to deal with the very real situation we have before us, which is we have less money to spend for FY2009. It's unfortunate that we have less money to spend in FY2009. I certainly don't want to be in that situation; I don't think any member of either Board want to be in that very

precarious situation but that is the situation that is before us. I did outline some suggestions, some ideas, for the members of the School Board last week, but I do believe it's the role and responsibility of the administration to provide an assessment to the School Board as well as to the Aldermen. They've been asked how they would invest the proposed \$140 million. They have done that by the way of providing us a cut sheet of some of the impacts that they feel would be made if a \$140 million were passed. We can certainly have a dialog and a discussion about the prioritization of that list as well as whether everything on that list has to occur. I am more than willing to have that discussion. I think having both Boards meet today to talk about how to move forward in a productive and a proactive and a solution-based approach is the most appropriate way to go. Again, I don't think anybody wants to be in this situation that we are in, financially, but we are in it. We have an obligation and responsibility I think to systematically work through it. So I have called a special meeting of the Board; I discussed that with the Chairman of the Aldermanic Board and felt it was an appropriate discussion to have with both Boards. Again, I would like it to be productive and positive, but some of the considerations I had when I presented my budget for the City was obviously, first and foremost, the reduction in revenue. When I budget I do look at our expenses and I do look at our revenues. The fact that there is \$7.3 million less in revenue for schools ultimately became the reduction for the FY2009 proposal. What I am asking philosophically is for the administration and the School Board and the Aldermanic Board to consider looking at the amount of money we have to spend and spending that amount, investing that amount. Does it require some changes on how we deliver education? Absolutely, there will be some impacts. But I feel very strongly that that revenue number should be considered when we decided what final number is adopted. If it is the \$140 million that is finally adopted, then so be it. We have a lot of work to do, but here is an opportunity for all Boards to have a conversation, get some more specific answers to some of the questions, but I don't know that it's appropriate for me to

give you a specific way of how I would get to \$140 million. I think it's very reasonable to have a discussion. Again, at the School Board meeting I outlined some very difficult choices that could be made. It certainly didn't require in my view all of this cut sheet to have to actually occur. I didn't think that the number of layoffs that has been suggested would actually have to occur, but again, I think it requires the administration as well as the School Board policy makers to give us some indications as to where they would invest the dollars if they were appropriated at a \$140 million level or at a higher level.

Alderman Ouellette stated Your Honor, as Chairman of the School Board, since that meeting Thursday night, which I attended, have you sat down with the District and come up with different ideas? Obviously, with the Board voting 13-1, that list was not going to pass that evening without further study on what would occur. I am just wondering if you have had a chance as Chairman of the School Board to sit down with the administration to discuss those thoughts and ideas and things that were talked about that night?

Mayor Guinta replied the first chance that I had an opportunity was today and we are doing it today.

Alderman Ouellette asked right now?

Mayor Guinta replied yes, that's why we are here.

Alderman Ouellette asked Dr. Aliberti, in your opinion and the School Board has stated, and I think...I don't want to speak for my colleagues but myself, is that number one, the last thing that needs to be cut obviously is classroom teachers. In your opinion having looked at it for five or six days since Thursday night, do you feel that if the School Board does not rift teachers before the 10th of May that you

will be able to meet the \$140 million if that number that the Mayor puts forward passes?

Dr. Aliberti responded I think that's it is going to be difficult, at least from my point of view, to reach the \$140 million point. There are certainly things we can do in retirements; there are I am sure other economies we can make. I know that Board members are interested in looking at items that were suggested for reductions and modifying those. I still think it is going to be difficult without taking a look at present staff.

Alderman Ouellette asked do you have a new recommendation for the School Board this evening that you plan to hand out? I believe you are meeting after our meeting?

Dr. Aliberti replied my understanding was that the Board had asked me to construct a prioritized list of the possible eliminations and reductions, which I did. I provided that to the School Board and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as well. My understanding at this point was that the Board was going to look at that information in work sessions.

Alderman Ouellette asked are there any work sessions scheduled?

Mayor Guinta replied they are meeting after this; the School Board is meeting immediately following this meeting.

Alderman Shea stated I have a few questions. Karen, at one of the meetings that was conducted, the Mayor indicated that any surplus that you people were able to garner would be applicable to the 2009 budget. In speaking with Henry, he said

that the ball park figure right now is about a half a million. Do you anticipate another \$250,000 in one way or another that you might be able to garner?

Ms. Karen DeFrancis, School Department Business Administrator, replied at the School Finance Committee meeting this week we reported \$700,000 in the expenditure line as a surplus. However, our revenues are short this year as well. I believe our revenues are \$584,000 short, so that leaves us about \$120,000 in surplus as of this point in time, because if we can not collect the revenues we can not spend the appropriation. So right now we are looking at about \$120,000. We are looking at ways to achieve an additional surplus; however, at this point in time we do not have a number out there.

Alderman Shea asked do you anticipate more or less in the forthcoming months?

Ms. DeFrancis replied the Board has directed us to achieve a surplus of \$1 million on the expenditure side; so again, we are out about \$700,000 now; so we are looking for an additional \$300,000. It is difficult at this time of the year to come up with additional savings as all of our staff has obviously been hired at this point. We are looking at other ways to achieve some savings.

Alderman Shea stated so to break it down, what you're indicating is that you will have a surplus; it may be close to a million dollars. Is that correct?

Ms. DeFrancis replied that would be the expenditure side; however, our revenues would offset that because we don't anticipate receiving all of our revenues.

Alderman Shea stated whatever you do get has a surplus you can add to whatever the Mayor's budget is. Is that correct?

Ms. DeFrancis stated that is what I understand.

Alderman Shea stated you have a grant writer, and on your list, Henry, I believe that is one of your positions. Can you state that that's a negation as far as you are concerned? In other words, how much does the grant writer bring into the school and how much would you lose because of eliminating this position?

Dr. Aliberti responded all those positions are positions that we feel need to be maintained within the District.

Alderman Shea stated let's focus on the grant writer.

Dr. Aliberti continued the grant writing position is an important position because it does obviously generate dollars for the District. It also frees individuals from having to focus on seeking grants, writing grants, and so it is an important position. My druthers would be to maintain that position and I think in an effort to look at getting down to \$140 million, that was one of the positions...

Alderman Shea stated Henry, my question to you is how much does this grant writer generate for the School District? Can you tell me? Is it like a half a million? Is it a quarter of a million? Is it ten cents? What is it?

Dr. Aliberti replied there are a variety of grants that we have that we generate and it's in the millions, but that isn't solely just this one grant writer position. This person does keep on top of those grants so that we do not fall in default or that we can make sure that they are renewed and so on and so forth.

Alderman Shea asked Henry, do you have more than one grant writer or do you just have one?

Dr. Aliberti replied no.

Alderman Shea stated that you just have one grant writer, okay. So basically...

Ms. Sheila Brisson, Federal Projects Coordinator, replied I can just speak for the grants that come out of the federal projects office where the grant writer is positioned. This year we were able to obtain \$11.8 million in grants.

Alderman Shea stated thank you. My next question, Henry, is there is a court liaison. Does that court liaison work with the Office of Youth Services or is that a special kind of person that can only be employed by the School District?

Dr. Aliberti stated I'll let Ms. Burkush address that.

Ms. Karen Burkush, Assistant Superintendent, stated the court liaison does work with Office of Youth Services as well as juvenile probation and parole and Division of Children Youth and Families.

Alderman Shea asked would the Office of Youth Services be able to handle the situation? I know you have this on the list.

Ms. Burkush responded he appears in court on all cases of abuse, neglect or juvenile delinquency, so I'm not sure if that is something that they could take on. I suppose they could take it on and then report to us and then send out all of the notices to the schools, because each time we get joined by the court, we notify the schools because then the schools have to have meetings.

Alderman Shea stated obviously you are going to have to look elsewhere if this is one eliminated positions that you have.

Ms. Burkush stated people in our office are going to have to pick-up. We would have a different person go to court as time allows and reassign some work.

Alderman Shea stated we have in schools librarians, but we have library aids as well. Some of the schools obviously have experienced library aids. I'm not sure we should eliminate all librarians but I am saying that where you have very experienced library aids...I can think of someone at Green Acres School who has been over there for quite a while and so forth...and I am wondering if this isn't some kind of an area that would be less detrimental to the school system in terms of replacing a classroom teacher and not looking at ways to sort of see whether or not there might be a librarian that could go to two schools and so forth. Do you have a comment on that, Henry?

Dr. Aliberti responded yes, depending on the size of the school. For example, the high schools would be in a different situation but I know at the elementary level, you need to have a certified individual to be supervising students in a class situation, so oftentimes aids or paraprofessionals, if they're working individually with a student, depending on the paraprofessional, have to be supervised by a certified person. So it would be more appropriate to have the librarian working in a library with a group of students than just having a librarian aid there doing it.

Alderman Shea asked is this something that is mandated by the state or is this something that obviously is something that the School District does? I see Mr. Dolman; I don't know if he wants to comment. He may know; I do not know.

Mr. Dolman stated when you were in the schools, Mr. Shea, which was a while ago, library was not an assigned class and the teachers used to take the class to the library and the teachers had to stay in the library with the class when you had a paraprofessional in there. Today, because library is a full-fledged class that is considered a prep period for the teacher and the teacher drops the class off, you can not leave the class with a paraprofessional so that is why we have full-fledged, certified teachers in the library. I do not know if that answered your question.

Alderman Shea stated I do not want anyone to misconstrue this, but if you need to have certified librarians there, why would you need to have aids in that school?

Mr. Dolman responded the library is also still being used while the librarians may be teaching a class. There could be individual students coming in assigned to do research from another class, and the paraprofessional would be working with those students off to the side on computers and so forth.

Dr. Aliberti stated it is a requirement.

Alderman Shea stated now my next point is an appeal to the School Board members. Don't eliminate sports from the program because there are kids that are going to school solely and strictly for sports. Regardless of what we think as educators and anything else, these kids are going to school because they are playing sports. The coaches can reach them; they can work with them and these kids develop into good students and come back and become educators themselves. Another point is, don't eliminate the elementary fine arts. In other words, kids come to school at an early age; they don't have two cents to rub together; they come to school; they learn a musical instrument and become interested in music and develop into good sound people. So these are the two areas, regardless of how much money is available, whether that surplus can be applied to that or

whether...you know, there are some good guys on the Board here that are going to add some money to the budget, or whatever it is, don't eliminate those two things. I have some more, Your Honor, but in deference to others I will come back after. Thanks.

Alderman Domaingue stated Henry, I'm looking, I guess, for clarification on why the student/teacher ratio numbers might be skewed in the reporting. I know that the City of Manchester reports the ratios to the state, and I know that October of 2007 it was 13.6 and projected for 2008 is 13.2. If I pull up the NEA website and the Carnegie Foundation for the advancement for teaching, I see that the ideal student ratio is 15 to 1 and not the 13. I know that's not a real number because it is affected by special education. I was wondering if you could walk me through what the actual number is.

Dr. Aliberti replied I know that at the elementary level our regular classroom student to teacher ratio is 19.1. That's what it is presently. It's 19.1. I know that the data reported on the sheets must have been generated by the School Department and sent to the State Department of Education. I'm not sure what was reported because that was done prior to my coming on board, and I think the superintendent has to sign that information that is reported to the state. I am not sure exactly what the state incorporates into those numbers, what grade levels that they consider, what staffing they consider, whether it's all certified personnel or not. I'm just not sure. But I do know at the elementary level for a regular classroom teachers, the student/teacher ratio is about 19 to 1; secondary is higher than that.

Alderman Domaingue stated I know this might be putting you on the spot but to get to a 15 to 1 ratio, how many additional people would you need to bring on board?

Dr. Aliberti asked from 19 to 1 to 15 to 1? I wouldn't dare venture a guess. It would be a number of teaching staff.

Alderman Domaingue asked can you do the math and get it to me?

Dr. Aliberti replied I can try.

Alderman Garrity stated I want to get back to the grant writer, Dr. Aliberti. The \$11.8 million that was mentioned, is that new grant monies this year?

Dr. Aliberti replied I think that includes federal funds that we receive every year, so I don't know how you want to describe it.

Alderman Garrity stated I want to know what new monies that came in, what new grants came in by the grant writer this year.

Ms. Brisson stated we need to apply for all monies every year. I want to say that maybe two grants are on a continuing basis on our final reports, as far as evaluating, but every year we need to submit applications for all but two grants.

Alderman Garrity asked are there any new grants this year? I realize you have to reapply every year for the grants. Are there any new grants that you didn't have last year that you have this year, and what is that dollar amount?

Ms. Brisson stated last year we had \$10.2 million in grants; however, for many of those grants, the funds are no longer available so we are continually seeking alternative resources to fund initiatives in the District.

Alderman Garrity asked what is that number?

Ms. Brisson stated the only grants that we received every year are the five entitlement grants. Presently we have about 32 grants going, just out of our office.

Alderman Garrity stated I would like a dollar amount, not the grants that you had last year, but on the new dollar amount on the new grants, new programs, new entitlements. What is it? What is the number? You haven't given it to me yet.

Ms. Brisson replied I can get it to you. I don't have each grant with me right now but I can get that to you by tomorrow.

Alderman Garrity asked you don't know the number?

Sheila Brisson answered I know that we have about \$1.6 million additional dollars this year.

Alderman Garrity replied that's the number I'm looking for, thank you.

Alderman Lopez stated I would like to address my question to the Vice-Chair Committee Member, Ms. Labanaris. The only reason I am doing this is because there is an impression out there about teachers' aids and she educated me. Could you tell me, do teachers have teachers' aids?

School Committee Vice-Chair Lebanaris replied, no they do not.

Alderman Lopez asked would you explain why that terminology exists then?

School Committee Vice-Chair Lebanaris explained the terminology is incorrect, Mr. Lopez. The situation is that we have paraprofessionals in our classrooms and those paraprofessionals who are aids work with students; they do not work for the teacher, they work for the student who has an individual education plan, some disability of some sort that requires on the individual education plan that student have an aid, a paraprofessional working with him or her. It is not an aid to the teacher as I explained to you; it is an aid to the student.

Alderman Lopez stated so no matter what happens, if you have those students in that category you are going to have.....

School Committee Vice-Chair Lebanaris continued if the individual education plan states that a student requires a paraprofessional, the federal law requires us to employ those people to work with those students.

Alderman Lopez stated thank you. The second question I have is for the Chairman, if it's okay, Your Honor, that we question and have some of the comments on the record, I would appreciate it. Chairman of the Finance Committee, Doug Kruse, when you had your committee put the \$151 million budget...I think it was somewhere around there that the Finance Committee approved and then it went to the full Board. Can you enlighten us how it got to \$153 million and the second question is, in your opinion, since you worked with the numbers, what is the final cut off point that you think teachers will be rifted?

School Committee Member Kruse responded how it got from \$151 million to \$153 million is quite simple. The Board added more items to the budget to the tune of \$2 million. There were a number of requests and items that the superintendent and the administration had put together that they wanted to bring forward for consideration and the Board decided collectively to add those items to

what the Finance Committee brought forward. As to your second question, I don't know that any one person in this room can tell you what's the magic number. The bottom line is that after all the talking that is going to go on tonight, and there will be some posturing and there will be some back and forth and there will be some good questions and some good discussion. But the fact of the matter is that at this point what we need to know is what number do the Aldermen believe they are able to allocate to the schools based on the overall picture of the City budget, based on the financial situation we face, and based on the needs of our schools. Whatever number that is, our Board is prepared to go to work and make that number work as best we can. We will work collaboratively to put together a plan to spend those funds required by the Charter. I don't have the magic number; nobody in this room has the magic number, but I do hope that by the end of this evening our Board has the number so we can tell the teachers in this room whether or not we need to rift them.

Alderman Lopez asked do you believe that you could work with the \$140 million as the Finance Chair?

School Committee Member Kruse stated we are prepared to work with whatever the number the Aldermen give us. We have to work with whatever number the Aldermen give us because that is the way the process is set up. It may or may not make sense to have it that way, but we have to work within what the City Charter provides, and if you give us a number we are going to work with that number as best as we can.

Alderman Lopez stated what amazes me is the wish list, so to speak, and other individuals, School Board members, as well as the Mayor, have different ideas. It amazes me that the maybe one page here from Dr. Aliberti and other School Board members have other ideas and the Mayor has other ideas that this is a major issue

that a priority list hasn't been put together by now. Regardless of the number that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen give, or the Mayor's number, one or the other, it seems to me that the final truth in budgeting is at \$150, \$149, or \$148 million, it should be what you are going to do and I would have hoped that would have been done by now. This is a serious problem, one of the most serious problems we've all faced in doing this. As much as we both talk about quality education, I don't think that there is anybody in this room that wants to eliminate, but there are resources. You are not going to get \$153, \$151 million; you're not going to get \$145 or \$146 million, I can tell you that. I don't know where we get it. That is my opinion, okay. My question is, what has been happening? This list was produced...I think now I've got April 17th, but I think I have seen other lists earlier than that with the same numbers. I don't have it but I know I've been shown this list, probably the end of March or sooner, and nobody seems to want to make decisions and say okay. You give me \$150 million we're not going to have those new programs; we are not going to do this and we are not going to do this or do that. It makes it very difficult, very difficult. So if anyone wants to comment on why we haven't done that...I know that everyone says we are just doing it today, well what happened? It seems to me that everybody should be sitting down right at the table, regardless of whether you are an elected official and just sit down all day long. We spend many hours up here just looking at, not just the School Board, but the entire City, and we have three meetings next week and Friday afternoon because it is a very serious business. So if you have to sit down and do this all night it should be done, so that we have really an understanding of what is going to happen. And then everybody knows what is going to happen; once you've made your decision, what is priority, people know what is going to happen. I can't understand why that wasn't done now. If you want to comment...

School Committee Member Kruse stated yes, if I may. I think that for the School Board the setting of the priorities...we need to know what is the number we have to work with so that we can decided what are those things that we are going to keep, what are those things that we are not going to keep? We can run a scenario for every number imaginable but that is a lot of time and energy expended. If we're not going to get \$150 million, then there is no point in devising a scenario for \$150 million; if we are not going to get \$146 million, then there is no point in devising a scenario for \$146 million. We need to know what number we are going to work with. With that number we will then determine the priorities.

Obliviously, there are contractual components to our budget that are priorities because we have to do them. We have to turn on the lights in the buildings; we have to heat the buildings; we have employees in place that if they stay in place, there are raises that kick in; we have contracts with vendors. Many of those things are obviously are going to keep going. We have a lot of these discussions every year and every year we get to the same point where the School District has a budget; sometimes the Finance Committee has another budget or other members have other budgets. We all fight about it. Then we ship it on over to the City side. Whoever the Mayor is at the time, he or she has a budget; the Aldermen have a budget. There are multiple Aldermanic budgets. In the end, though, what really is going to count is when our Board has our number, we can go to work and make that number work as best as we can. We don't have the larger picture and we're not privy to all the details as all of you Aldermen are in terms of what the larger context is within the City budget and the other City departments, so we're creating our budget in somewhat of a vacuum. But at this point we seek your wisdom in terms of what can the City reasonably afford, based on all the circumstances, to provide to the School District and then we will take that number and go to work with it. I think that is the best we can offer.

Alderman Lopez stated I'm not satisfied with that answer but go ahead.

Mayor Guinta stated I just want to clarify what Alderman Lopez was saying. To put in context, when the Board of Mayor and Aldermen met with the administration to review their budget proposal, there were some questions from the members of the Aldermanic Board asking for different scenarios at different dollar amounts. I don't think that has been prepared to date and it hasn't been disseminated to the Aldermanic Board. I'm not sure if there was a certain expectation that the School Board would do that. Beyond the 98%, 100%, and 103%, and then obviously the \$151 million, which was an original proposal by the Finance Committee and then the final \$153 million, I think there were particular questions that Aldermanic members were looking at, at other numbers which I think is the direction that you are going Doug.

Alderman Shea asked Karen, what is the impact on revenues if a lower balance is adopted? In other words what happens in terms of, how do you balance that out? Let's assume for the sake of discussion, only discussion, you get \$140 million rather than \$145 or \$148 million.

Ms. DeFrancis replied the only line item that would change on the revenue side would be the tax line. All the other revenues would remain the same.

Alderman Shea asked assuming that the lower budget is adopted and the School District has to work with that budget, what impact does that have legally from the sending towns: Bedford, Auburn and Hooksett? That is, as far as providing services to their particular children that they have negotiated agreements with, will \$140 million satisfy the needs that they are looking for?

Ms. DeFrancis responded not in accordance with the recommendations made by the Superintendent. The programs that we are cutting in order to achieve the \$140 million, we have received letters from the surrounding towns regarding their concerns over that.

Alderman Shea asked so that they could sue the City?

Ms. DeFrancis responded I would assume that they could.

Alderman Shea stated I know I got a letter from somebody that indicating that that's what they intend to do. Right?

Mayor Guinta stated let me just a clarifying question: Are you still stating that everything on this list will occur at \$140 million appropriation?

Dr. Aliberti replied this was a recommended list that I was asked to generate by the Aldermen; actually I think it was Peter Sullivan that had the suggested list that asked for a priorities list and that's what we generated.

Mayor Guinta stated my question is...you're stating in order to get to \$140 million, this is your recommendation?

Dr. Aliberti responded I am recommending the items on the list as options to get to \$140 million.

Mayor Guinta stated okay, assuming the School Board...let's move down the road a little bit. Let's assume \$140 million is appropriated and the School Board says yes to your list of recommendations. Are you stating that every single thing on this list is actually going to occur?

Dr. Aliberti responded there would be one item that we would have to take a look at and that is the Navy Junior ROTC program, because we discovered after completing the list that we have to give one year notice to the program before elimination.

Mayor Guinta asked, other than that, you are stating that every single thing on the list will occur?

Dr. Aliberti responded this is the recommendation that I came forward with to get to \$140 million, and unless other people generate other options that is what I would expect to see happening. This list that was constructed was my recommendation to the School Board for their consideration. They can certainly say that they we don't want to do this item or that item. Instead of doing this we want you to do that, and that is fine.

Mayor Guinta asked since the meeting that the School Board had, the special meeting on Thursday, have you looked at other possibilities?

Dr. Aliberti responded my understanding was that there were going to be work sessions scheduled.

Mayor Guinta asked were you waiting for a work session? Did you decide not to work on it until we actually have a work session?

Dr. Aliberti replied I need the input from the Board because I'm not sure what items on this list they were interested in following up with or whether they had other suggestions.

School Committee Member Dolman stated my question is for the administration on the Navy ROTC program. I understand we have to give a year's notice to eliminate the program, but can we eliminate our contribution to the salaries without eliminating the program because they also get a salary from the military? Is that something that we can possibly do?

Dr. Aliberti stated it is a contractual piece.

School Committee Member Dolman stated yes, but to me that sounds like, no offence, double dipping, to some extent. They're getting the money from the military to do that ROTC program and they also are getting money from the City to do the ROTC program. So that is my concern. I don't know if we can look into that legally or what we can do to check that out, because what we pay them for salaries could probably be two or three teachers.

Alderman Shea stated while we're settling that problem I'll create another one maybe, but anyway, the point that I would like to get back to is a few years ago there was a contractual agreement that the schools would hire about 12 or so science teachers to go in and to take part in the discussion of science. My questions is, is that still part and parcel of what you have to do as far as providing science teachers in the lower grades: kindergarten, pre-school or wherever? Is that really what has to be done because of time the teachers are allowed for prep time, and so forth? Is that still part?

Dr. Aliberti responded it was actually health teachers that were hired several years ago; it was probably 2001 or so when they came on board. I guess it is looking at any option for programming. I mean, if you want to eliminate a certain

content area then you would look at the staff that provides the instruction for that content area.

Alderman Shea stated are these people able to teach elementary or secondary? Are they trained to convert over to that area or are they strictly science people and they can only be used for that one activity?

Dr. Aliberti replied we do have health teachers that are K through 12.

Alderman Shea stated my last question is more of an editorial than anything else. At the elementary level you have self-contained classrooms; at the middle school you have a different type of education and then the high school also has self contained. My understanding in speaking and listening at times to the School Board meetings is that kids going into high school are not as well trained as they used to be in certain areas and I think that is a discussion. So what I find confusing is why in the same School District do we have two connected: the elementary and the senior high school, and at the middle school an entirely different kind of concept that is pervading? In other words while I don't mean this in the wrong sense, but at the middle school areas, do the teachers there at times maybe not too many times, spend more time discussing and meeting rather than instructing? And I think that is a complaint possibly that people that are in the secondary area can adhere to, and I am not being critical of the middle school teachers. I'm just saying that possibly that there is possibly discombobulating between what is going on at the elementary and the senior level and what is going on in the middle school level. Because basically, how can kids relate to teachers in one area and a group in the second area and a teacher in the third area? With that I will conclude. Thank You, Your Honor.

School Committee Member Dolman stated point of information: the NECAP test now are going to be testing science at the elementary school level.

Alderman DeVries stated I have a couple of question for School Committee Member Kruse, if I might ask, as Chair of Finance. I have heard you speak previously to your budget that was prepared coming out of the Finance Committee and I'm assuming that you have greater ownership of that budget, so for the purposes of my questions maybe we can talk about the \$151 million budget. What was the student enrollment that you built that budget around? I am assuming that your student body number works into your budgeting.

School Committee Member Kruse responded first of all, I don't think any individual takes ownership of any of the budgets that come through because these are a collective processes. I understand the game that is being played here and I am not biting. But the enrollment number....

Alderman DeVries interjected I am not sure what game you are referencing to.

Alderman Lopez stated don't worry about it. Your Honor, I would ask, there is no need for this back and forth or comments like that. It is not necessary.

School Committee Member Kruse stated the number that we have had for enrollment is the 16,000 and change. The latest one, the 15,970 is a more recent number than I think what we saw earlier. But it's around 16,000. I don't know the exact number.

Alderman DeVries stated thank you, and when you looked at the revenue, you knew the revenue from West High School students would be less this year. How did that factor in the budget that was built for the sum?

School Committee Member Kruse replied there are two components of the revenue that are going to be lost. One is the tuition from the students and the other is that last year in the budget...and I don't remember the number off the top of my head...I thought it was in the order of \$3.6 million. Karen DeFrancis might know that number which was brought over from the capital tuition that was paid. They paid up ten years worth and the rest of that was brought over into last year's, so that obviously is part of budget number. Quite honestly, the way that the School District did the budget this year was slightly different from previous years. Typically what has happened in recent years is the administration will come forward with beginning recommendations and what Dr. Aliberti was asked to this time was come forward with the three scenarios that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen had asked for: 98%, 100%, 103%. They did that and we also said to them, if there are other items that you want this Board to consider in the context of looking at the budget, bring those forward in some priority order so that we can make sure we are having discussion about those items that are important educationally, and that is what Dr. Aliberti did. The Finance Committee determined this year that we were not going to spend the hours and hours of time that we had spent in recent years going through the process to make a recommendation to the full Board because typically what happens is Finance makes a recommendation and the full Board ends up changing it dramatically and supporting what the administration had brought in in the first place. The decision was made that, rather than going through that whole exercise which ends up being somewhat futile, we're going to bring in a modestly shaved recommendation for the Board's consideration and when we know the final number, that is when our Board was going to do the real scrutiny of the different numbers because then we would know what we are working with. If the number that we have is \$151 million, that opens a whole set of particular items that we as a Board would have to look at in terms of what we would keep or not keep. If we're looking at a

number that is \$140 million, that's a whole different set of circumstances, so I think what we need in order to determine what is going to stay or go is to know what is the number we have to work with. Absent that, it's going to be difficult to do those priorities.

Alderman DeVries stated Your Honor, I'm hoping you are not deducting from my time because his answers are longer winded, I still didn't hear...the question that I asked was specific to the loss of tuition dollars and was that built into your number when you predicated the \$151 million or the \$153 million, whichever?

School Committee Member Kruse stated actually most of the budget work was done prior to receipt of the final revenue numbers, so it wasn't factored in to the extent that it certainly should have been, but that is because many of the revenues appeared not to be available until pretty much the last or the next to last budget session. So no, we didn't have the full revenue picture at that point.

Alderman DeVries asked how are you building a number for teachers? Even if you didn't have the revenue number I think the whole City knew that we were losing students at West High School. What number of teachers did you build your budget around? How did you account for the reduction of students that we are seeing across the City?

School Committee Member Kruse replied my recollection...and of course our budget process starts in January rather than March...is that the administration had for us the list of all of the teachers who were going to be retiring, and my recollection was that somewhere around 43, 44, 45. So, we can calculate, based on what the numbers would be at West, the administration would indicated how many of those teachers they thought we would not need to replace, just as we did last year, and last year we were able to not replace more of them then the case was

this year. Of course that was factored in, and of course you lose a teacher at the higher end and you hire a teacher at the lower end, and we factored in the savings in that regard.

Alderman DeVries stated so through attrition you were eliminating teachers and I am just looking as to what the number was.

School Committee Member Kruse replied I don't know off the top of my head how many ended up being eliminated, if any. I think Ms. DeFrancis would have that answer.

Ms. DeFrancis stated positions were not eliminated under the \$151 million. They were just...through the retirements we brought the new teachers in at the lower salaries, so we achieved savings by hiring a teacher at a lower salary. However, in the \$151 million or the \$153 million budget, there were no positions eliminated; there were actually positions added in the \$153 million budget.

School Committee Member Kruse stated by not replacing all of the teachers, one of the things you are able to do is if there are areas there is a need for an additional teachers, you don't need to add a whole new dollar amount because you are going to accommodate that through the savings that you have from one of the teachers who retired. So instead of having to add X number of teachers, you added fewer.

Alderman Ouellette stated first of all, Your Honor, I don't think it's fair if you are going to ask the administration if this is going to happen. I believe that decision needs to come from the Board. And the Superintendent, the acting Superintendent, takes direction from the Board. As of Thursday night, the Superintendent was looking for direction from the Board as I recall, anyway. So I think that is kind of putting the cart before the horse.

Mayor Guinta responded I can clarify that. I asked if it is adopted, will all of this happen?

Alderman Ouellette stated that is ultimately the Board's decision.

Mayor Guinta stated I said if it is adopted by the Board...if the School Board adopts it, will all of this happen?

Alderman Ouellette stated I apologize. I misunderstood what you were saying.

Mayor Guinta stated my point was, has anything changed since this was created? Have any other additional consideration by the administration been created or established, because obviously there are some things on here I think every member of both Boards would say, no we are going to draw a line in the sand there.

Alderman Ouellette stated I just misunderstood what you said. I apologize.

Mayor Guinta replied that's okay.

Alderman Ouellette stated in terms of this Board giving a number to the School District at this point, the School District does have a number, Your Honor, and that number came from your budget presentation. The number right now is \$140 million, and it was Alderman O'Neil who asked for direction from the School Board the other night as to what that meant. He wanted a directive from the School Board as to what the priority list would be to cut. He wanted that communication from the School Board. So that is the process where we are right now. I don't think that this Board is ready to vote on a number for the School District right now. The only number that we have in front of us right now is \$140

million. This Board, if you read the paper this week in terms of changing the Mayor's budget is really kind of all over the place. The only way we can change the number, ladies and gentlemen, is if we have eight votes. The only way to sustain a veto is if we have ten votes to agree on one specific number. I can't say tonight that we can give you a number. My hope is tonight that we are not going to vote on a number because the only number we have before us is \$140 million and I am not prepared to vote on that number tonight. I am just as frustrated with the process as School Committee Member Kruse is, having sat on the other side for so long. The process is that the budget has to be set by the second Tuesday in June. So I would think that you have a lot of people sitting in the audience tonight and they want to know what is going to happen. You have until May 10th to tell them. So do not push the responsibility you have on this Board to give you a number as to do the work that you still have to do. You have to tell them one way or another if you are going to rift by Saturday. Unfortunately that's the process. We don't have a magic number right now, and I don't know. You have not communicated to us like Alderman Lopez, the list that he wanted. The only list that we have is the communication that you worked off of last Thursday. Every Alderman got a copy of that and I thank Alderman Sullivan for asking the administration for that because it is quite helpful, but we are kind of looking for direction from you and that is where we left it the last time. Thank You, Your Honor.

School Committee Member Craig stated I did think an awful lot like you had suggested, and I did come up with savings, about a half a million dollars of savings which have not been communicated to the District or to the School Board but they, you know...and honestly you would have to approve a part of that because it would dip into the expendable trusts. However, there may be opportunities to save more money. But, the list that has come from the District is real. If you want us to get to that \$140 million, that's going to have to happen. I did do back of the envelope numbers, and if we want to keep all of the teachers, if

we want to keep athletics, and if we want to keep extra curricular and fine arts, we would need as a minimum to be level funded. We would need a minimum of \$147 million. That is back of the envelope.

Alderman Smith asked on your recommendations...there are 34 recommendations, Dr. Aliberti, and I am very interested and it's hard to put a price on education, but I'm very interested in teachers first, athletics, fine arts and ROTC. I am very interested in those things but what I want to ask you is in regards to tuition agreements with the towns, do you factor in athletics in your tuition on an individual student? Is athletics involved in that tuition rate?

Dr. Aliberti stated whatever we have established as a tuition rate for our own District students, that's what's charged to the tuition accounts. So whatever expenses are incorporated into that, be it athletics, be it our clubs or organizations or the cost of teachers or whatever that may be in the educational process, is the rate for this charge.

Alderman Smith stated I would like to follow up in regards to music, or fine arts. I noticed the elimination of elementary beginning band and orchestra. I happened to go over to Beech Street School, and I think it's a good process going on, and I think that what they do over there is tremendous, and I certainly appreciate your candor and professionalism but this is...I'll call it a laundry list and I don't know where to go on it. I have certain priorities; other people have priorities, and like the gentlemen said next to me, we have \$140 million. I could tell you honestly, we are divided as a Board right here what to do. Maybe things will change a little bit but you have got to realize we have 24 different departments in the City that we have to take care of: Police, Fire, Highway and so forth. It's just like the revenue. It's not there, so we have a dilemma no matter which way we go, up or down. If we override the Mayor and we get that thing, then they'll say the taxpayers are

going to be irate. If we don't do it for education, I want everybody to know that we have got to have some final direction and I feel sorry for these teachers. I don't want anybody getting pink slipped. It's a reality. There's no money to get there and I don't know which way we are going to go, but I wish that the School Board would go tonight and just tell us and tell the teachers. You can't keep them hanging around and find out they have got to look for other jobs, and I feel very, very sorry this happened because I have been at Beech Street School many a times and I think that is a wonderful school. Thank you.

Mayor Guinta asked would it be helpful for the members of the Board of Aldermen as you deliberate to have more specifics on other numbers, to see those specific impacts in as much detail as you have with the cut sheet for the \$140 million? Would that at least give the Aldermen more opportunity to deliberate?

Alderman Lopez stated I think in talking with some of my colleagues, they would be more comfortable if the School Board would vote that if they got \$150 million, they are going to cut these programs, right down the line to your number of \$140 million.

Mayor Guinta asked in million dollar increments?

Alderman Lopez responded absolutely, because they would have to vote on that. We have no control over it. I think we are talking about...Alderman Shea brought it up...whether its \$750,000 or \$1 million that you have indicated you are going to give to them, that's another area that we have to look at. If they save the \$1million, you are going to give them the \$1 million; that's what you said. So I think we need to see where we are going with this. We turn around and we...maybe these lists...and we all know the elected officials of the School Board as well as the Aldermen always have their particular priority. They don't like Dr.

Aliberti's list so they are going to have to do something else. What is that something else? They are going to have to vote on that at the School Board. Let's all be up front so that we all know when the sky does fall all the truth was there. That is my opinion.

Alderman Domaingue stated Your Honor, that was actually my suggestion originally, and I had thought...it was my understanding that we had asked and I asked the Mayor for clarification a couple minutes ago and he said he thought so too, that we had asked the School Board to come back with budgets based on specific numbers about a month ago. I don't know if that got lost in translation or didn't get properly conveyed but what I would like to see is at least from \$140 to \$145 million, in million dollar increments, setting forth, this is what we cut here, this is what we cut here. I have been on the School Board so I have been through the budget process. I know for a fact that we had budgets where we have said, if you cut us down to this number we are going to have to lay off teachers, and we issued the pink slips and we got cut and it didn't happen. So I think that some of this, while some of it may be appropriate, I think that some of it's scare tactics, and what I want to do it take the scare tactics out of the budget process, get us to a point where we are talking about realistic options and what we are actually going to, not what we say we are going to do to generate media attention.

School Committee Member Dolman stated until we have a number I think what our Board was saying is we have the same disagreements that you have. We have some problems. As you can see, not everyone on my Board agrees with what I said about ROTC. So I am sure we are going to have disagreements about coming to what the numbers are that we need to get to you. That's why we were waiting for a bottom number so we can make a decision. I'll be honest with you. I agree with School Committee Member Craig that \$147 million zero based is just going to about make it, because based on what administration said, we need about \$150

million to keep everything equal with the two percent raises and with all the costs going up. Plus we have added expenses now for busing for special education which we didn't have last year. That's an \$800,000 hit because we used to get \$400,000 worth of revenue. We're not getting that revenue but we still have that \$400,000 expense. We have costs that we have no control over that we are getting hit with. Can we make it...the higher number you give us, the better chance we have of not cutting teachers, which I don't want to cut. I think the previous School Boards did an excellent job of getting classroom size down in the elementary schools to where it's workable. I don't want to cut any athletic programs or fine arts programs. We'll do everything we can. We've been working on coming up with some suggestions on what to cut, but I have got to be honest, if you go down too far there are going to be cuts, in my opinion.

Mayor Guinta stated I think one of the things, as a reminder, the Aldermanic Board I suspect is considering what the tax impact is and the local tax, the local portion, which is what the Board of Mayor and Aldermen controls. The request at \$153 million jumps from \$51 million up to \$65.5 million. That's a big jump. The Aldermen I know have to consider that. That I'm not sure was considered three months ago at the School level; it has to be considered at this level. I think that's why we are hearing questions about the implications at \$141 or \$142 or \$143 or \$144 million, because they are very mindful that they are going to have to ask taxpayers to go from \$51million up to at the high end \$65.5 million, but somewhere in between there. It is a significant increase in the tax impact.

School Committee Member Kruse stated I maybe would propose a compromise here, and it's along the lines of where Alderman Domaingue was headed. We are not going to paint a scenario from \$153 million all the way down to \$140 million because that's nonsensical. So, if the Aldermanic Board will tell us, if \$145 million is the number you want us to start at and work down from there, I am

prepared to call a Finance Committee meeting tomorrow if we have to or the next day to get working on that process. I think that for us to go through the exercise for a wide range of numbers...if \$145 million is not going to happen under any circumstance, don't make us do the scenario for \$145 million. Don't waste everyone's time. Give us the numbers that are real numbers and we will be happy to go back and work out different levels of each of them. We'll start at whatever number you think is realistic, that there is a shot you may decide you want to allocate, and we will work down to the Mayor's number. If there is an Alderman who thinks the number should be lower than the Mayor's number, give us that number too. We'll work down to that number as well. But tell us where to start that's somewhere meaningful so that we're not wasting everybody's time. We are glad to do it and we will start doing it tomorrow if we have to, if we can pull that meeting together. I am ready to go to work on this if my colleagues will join me. I am sorry, is there anyone on the Aldermanic Board who is prepared? Can we get that tonight?

Mayor Guinta stated well be careful what you ask for.

School Committee Member Kruse replied no, I think we have to deal with real numbers and we all recognize the situation the Aldermen are in, and nobody out in this audience or on the School Board or out the City, believes that the Aldermen are looking to do anything other than the best that they can do, and so if you give us some guidance we will put together the scenarios. We need guidance.

Mayor Guinta stated I assume this page...this was part of your budget submission by the School District, the 103%, the 100% and the 98%...these are very rough broad strokes as to what would occur. Do you have more specifics at least at the 100% and the 98% or would you really have to sort of drill down and work through that?

Ms. DeFrancis stated if you're looking for the Superintendent's or the Administration's recommendation, if you take this priority list, the first thing on the list, the first item that we're eliminating, is the maintenance projects at \$50,000 so you could just keep deducting from that \$153 million every line item until you reach \$150 million, \$147 million, \$145 million. Again, it's the Superintendent's priority list; it's not the School Board's.

Mayor Guinta stated the 98% budget is about \$144 million, just to give a rough idea, and I think everybody has this sheet. Maybe, from the Finance Committee or the School Board Committee, there could be some more specifics, but that's an example of \$144 million. Maybe some more specifics could be created at different numbers for the Aldermen to review.

Alderman Sullivan stated Dr. Aliberti, first of all I want to thank you for bringing this priority sheet forward; at least this gives us something to work off of. My question has to do with item 26 on the sheet that you provided. It states Commercial Street personnel; I believe it's \$571,240. What does that line item refer to specifically?

Dr. Aliberti responded there should be a back up attached.

Alderman Sullivan asked okay, so those are the general fund positions on the second page?

Dr. Aliberti stated there are nine positions there.

Alderman Sullivan stated those are, for lack of a better term, office, administrative and management positions, not front line classroom positions. Is that correct?

Dr. Aliberti responded these are not classroom positions.

Alderman Sullivan stated right, they are not classroom positions; they don't deal directly with the education of students. I guess my question is why is that number 26 on the chopping block? When we are talking about putting teachers jobs at risk and we are talking about underfunding special education, why are administrative costs relegated to number 26? We have two dozen other items before that. It strikes me that that should be near the top of the list.

Dr. Aliberti stated it's where we felt that should go. These positions are positions we felt were required in order to have the office function so that's the status of them. There are actually some additional positions in the middle. I don't know if you noticed that. There are a total of 12.5 positions.

Alderman Sullivan stated with the exception of a few of these...the grant writer obviously is a position that essentially pays for itself several times over. I have no problem with that, but when we're trying to make a decision between keeping an accountant and keeping someone who is actually going to work in a classroom educating kids, I'd rather keep the teacher. I would rather focus these dollars on the classroom. I hope that when you are working with the School Board and with the Finance Committee on that side of the house that you try and keep that sense of priorities in mind as we go forward in this process.

Alderman Garrity stated I have been through four budgets as a School Board Member and this is my seventh budget as an Aldermen, and I have never seen it

like this. It is not this Board's job to give a number out. I think what most of my colleagues want to see happen is for the School Board to come back with some different numbers of what happens if you get \$146 million? What happens if you get \$145 million? And have some realistic cuts that you are going to have to make. We could be here until midnight working on this budget. I say we should adjourn, let the School Board work on their budget, maybe they can come up with those scenarios and then we can meet again, but we are just spinning our wheels here. It's not the Aldermen's job to do their budget. That's the School Board's job. The Finance chair says that's going to take a lot of time. We have been down at City Hall almost every night for the past couple weeks. It's three nights this week; it's three nights next; we are down here during the day working on budgets. If it takes hard work, it takes hard work, but we're not going to get anything accomplished here tonight.

Alderman Domaingue stated if that's a motion I'll second it.

Mayor Guinta stated there are a couple people I've recognized and then if there are no other people who do want to speak...I have got two people on the list. I want to give people an opportunity who have not spoke to speak and then I can take a motion.

Alderman Shea stated I am waiting for Alderman Gatsas to come in with the numbers. He will be coming in a few minutes. But anyway, and the trains going to back up and we'll be here for lunch too but anyway, the point, Your Honor, is this: I don't think we should start like Alderman Garrity said with \$145 million. We should say, let them add things to a budget up to say, \$145 million. The second point is a couple of things, as Alderman Smith and I kind of throw balls back and forth between each other, he's a lefty and I'm a righty but anyway, I would say that certain thoughts could be developed like adding more money to the

gate receipts possibly an extra 50 cents or a dollar, because according to the list you gave us those have been in default a little bit. A little bit of a user fee maybe of \$5, \$10, \$15 for sports is not going to kill anybody and if kids can't afford it they can work outside and earn a little bit of money for that. I think that the problem is that we are, or some of you are saying, that the Board members...we have to understand that the leader is right over there. He is the Mayor. It's his budget and we are people who are supposed to somehow or other figure out. I would assume that if we add money to the budget we will get his support, hopefully, because basically we are all in this together so that we're not supposedly dividing between the Mayor and the Aldermen or the Mayor and the Aldermen and the School Board. If we are all in this together then we should stay in it all together. That's what I feel, Your Honor, and I think that we have to depend upon you for leadership to work with the Finance Committee to try to find ways of helping out, not only in this budget of course, but in the other budgets and so I think that with that we can rely on you to help us as well. Thank you.

Alderman Ouellette stated I realize the list that you have been working off of does start at the School Board's budget at \$153 million. Mr. Superintendent, just so I can get this on the record, is this list a prioritized list so you start at number one eliminating Maintenance Project \$50,000? Would that be the first cut? Is that the way that I am to read that?

Dr. Aliberti stated that is my prioritized list.

Alderman Ouellette stated that is your prioritized list. We don't get to the eliminating of teaching positions until item 32, which would reduce non-Title 1 reading specialists. I guess the only issue that remains is that this list has not been approved by the Board of School Committee and that it was...I don't think it was even voted on, Your Honor, right?

Mayor Guinta state no.

Alderman Ouellette stated there wasn't even a vote taken on it. The only vote that was, was the Board was not prepared to send out rift notices at that time, if I am correct in understanding. So we do have a Superintendent's prioritized list to at least start on I would assume. I would feel a lot more comfortable if this was actually voted on by the School Board. Having heard the conversation there was a lot of, 'let's see if we can do this, let's see if we can do that' and there would be some work sessions. I thought though those work sessions would have been scheduled by now but they haven't been and I just wanted to point that out to my colleagues that there is a list and it is a prioritized list of the Superintendent, and if the School Board...it may save them a lot of time but if they don't agree with it, they don't agree with it; then they're going to have to tinker with this list to come up with something we can work off.

Mayor Guinta stated on the work sessions, I think there was a Finances Committee meeting on Monday evening of the School Board, correct? Then there was a BMA meeting on Tuesday. So, this is really the first opportunity for a work session to occur since we talked about it on Thursday, and we do have a meeting after this scheduled for the School Board. I don't want to suggest that the School Board is not interested in a work session to try to come up with other ideas. They are.

Alderman Ouellette stated I didn't want to put that out there as them not being interested; if I gave that impression, I apologize. I know that they are very interested in working with their budget. It's just that there hasn't been an improved list from the Board.

Alderman Lopez stated I think Alderman Ouellette makes a good point. Once we leave tonight and the School Board goes into session, they can either vote on this list, delete it, add some of your stuff, vote again and then we will know.

Mayor Guinta stated they could. I'm not sure if they will, but they could.

Alderman Lopez stated well it's a serious problem and they can work here. They've got the room all night.

School Committee Member Kruse stated I appreciate the comments of my friend from Ward 9, but there are a couple things I do want to point out. First, it actually is the Aldermen's job to give us the final number; that's what the Charter says. That's what I mean when I say, give us the number. I'm not seeking to have the Aldermanic Board do the School Board's work. I submit to you the School Board did its work. People may agree or disagree with how that ended up, but the recommendation came forward, for good or for ill, and the next step in the process is for us to then either have that number approved or rejected. If the number is rejected and alternate numbers provided, then at that point we can go and put together the scenarios under that number. However, I do think that I agree with Alderman Garrity on the idea that if you guys would recess your meeting that would give us the chance to do some of the work on this tonight. We are fully prepared to do as much work and to work as long and hard as we need to. We would prefer to have a number but we will work on it this evening. We can come up with some priorities. I think that it is realistic to say that whatever number the Aldermen finally settle on, certainly circumstances between now and June 30th may alter somewhat. We may decide to shift some of the priorities around. It is the School Board's prerogative to work on the line items, not the Aldermen's prerogative, and I think we need to hold to that prerogative. Your number really needs to be based more on what the City can afford to provide. Our work then is

how do we make that number work, but if you guys want to recess and let us start our meeting, we would be happy to start getting to work on this. I don't know if I speak for my colleagues or not but I am ready to work on it tonight.

Mayor Guinta stated I do have a couple more Aldermen who haven't had a chance to speak yet.

Alderman J. Roy stated I think I am going along the same lines as School Committee Member Kruse. Before we spend a lot of time and energy on developing these scenarios, whether it's \$145 million or \$143 million, even if you gave us a list of what could be accomplished at \$143 million and every one of these Aldermen say, 'this is a great list, we can live with this', there is nothing that says the School Board is going to pass it that way. They could change it completely. Am I correct? So it just seems like an exercise in futility to me.

Alderman Gatsas stated it happened once before, the number changing. I guess I have two questions. I know that I have asked for two things and not received either one. One was pretty simple. Somebody was supposed to supply us a letter from your auditor telling you that you could spend the money last year. That was supposed to be a pretty simple item. That's been over three weeks. Do you have it? Oh, your Board has it but we don't. Let me continue, the next thing I asked you was for a listing by school starting with the principal, of who is in that school, who is in administration, the teachers, the assistants, the aids, the number of students in each class. You provided it to me in a form that I don't think...there is something that was...maybe I asked for it incorrectly. I will take the blame. You and I have had a conversation and I have asked for it again. It should be a pretty simple task if you send each principal maybe seven or eight pieces of paper and send them the list of employees that you sent us maybe they can bill that and just tell us how many students are in each class. That is a pretty simple request.

Dr. Aliberti stated just to respond to you first question, we did supply that letter to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. It was in a packet dated April 25th that contained the questions that emerged from our first meeting with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and the first item was the letter from Bond Council, and there was information about current enrollment, the tuition count, release information. You are correct we did send you the information on the salary detail.

Alderman Gatsas stated I certainly apologize because when it comes in a packet like this, if it's not all the information that somebody is assuming, it's pretty tough to look in there when you look at the things that are on the front. It's pretty clear that the front of it says Bond Council. I agree. I apologize. See it is very easy to say I am sorry. Thank you. Give me a minute to review it please. This has to do with the building aid or the \$105 million building project. Isn't that what this is talking about?

Ms. DeFrancis stated it is talking about the revenue bonds.

Alderman Gatsas stated right. That's not the question I had. I was talking about the money that you received from Bedford that you had in a separate account that the Bond Council told you to spend \$1.8 million.

Ms. DeFrancis stated that would be the letter.

Alderman Gatsas asked this letter here?

Ms. DeFrancis stated it refers to that account. yes.

Mayor Guinta asked are you talking about the letter dated March 19, 2007, from Bob Binefield?

Ms. DeFrancis stated correct.

Mayor Guinta stated this doesn't outline... if my memory serves there was a question about how long...the issue was it was supposed to last ten years.

Alderman Gatsas stated correct.

Mayor Guinta stated it has been spent in three. The question was, did you have to spend it in three? Does this letter answer that question?

Ms. DeFrancis responded the money was spent in five years and during the budget process last year this letter was sent to us and we were instructed that this letter serves as documentation that all of the money that is in that account should have been used each year. Whatever the amount of money was in that account should have been used each year.

Mayor Guinta asked where does it say that in this letter?

Ms. DeFrancis responded the second to last paragraph. The last sentence says 'the District should therefore receive a base payment credit to the extent that funds are available in the debt service fund to pay principle and interest on the bonds.' That's how it was explained to us.

Mayor Guinta asked are you saying that what that says is you have to exhaust the money in the account?

Ms. DeFrancis responded that's what we were told, yes.

Mayor Guinta stated I don't read it that way.

Alderman Lopez asked did our Finance Officer tell you that?

Ms. DeFrancis responded that was told us by Randy Sherman at the time.

Alderman Lopez stated Randy Sherman told you that.

Alderman Gatsas stated if I look through this sheet that you provided everybody, the elimination of positions only, and I'll take you to the lines, it's line 11 for \$1,026,000. Am I correct? Line 12 is eliminating additional staff for \$707,000. Is that correct? I take you then down to line 18 sub line, eliminate AD Salary of \$92,000. Is that correct? I then take you down to line 24, elimination of four administrative assistants for \$128,000. The next line is \$571,000, the next line is \$308,000, the next line is \$365,000, two lines later is \$340,000, the next line is \$534,000 and then I take you down to line 34 and it's \$1,051,176. Is that correct?

Ms. DeFrancis stated I would just clarify that there are a couple of other line items where there would be elimination of positions. Line item 20 would be three positions.

Alderman Gatsas stated right, but they are not in your salary line item, is that correct? Those are chargebacks.

Ms. DeFrancis responded no, line item 21. It was the elimination of elementary beginning band and orchestra.

Alderman Gatsas asked those are how many positions?

Ms. DeFrancis responded three positions.

Alderman Gatsas asked line item again please?

Ms. Burkush repeated 21. The gifted and talented program line 22 would be 1.5 positions. Line item 23 is the ROTC program which would be two positions.

Alderman Gatsas stated well, we decided we couldn't eliminate that so let's leave that on the side.

Ms. DeFrancis stated and the other line item would be line item 18 when we talk about the elimination of all of athletics, there's actually three positions in there. There is the Director, the Administrative Assistant and the groundskeeper.

Alderman Gatsas asked where are those? What sub lines are they? I see the elimination of the AD salary.

Ms. DeFrancis stated right, the other ones would be 'eliminate remainder of athletics budget,' the \$1.89 million. That would include those two other positions.

Alderman Gatsas asked two positions for a million dollars?

Ms. DeFrancis responded no, it's just all other athletics. If you look at the way we have broken down athletics...

Alderman Gatsas interjected I'm just looking for salary lines.

Ms. DeFrancis replied within that million dollars there would be two other positions.

Alderman Gatsas asked and how much are those total, please?

Ms. DeFrancis stated I would have to look that up.

Alderman Gatsas asked \$100,000? Less?

Ms. DeFrancis responded I would say probably a little bit less than that. One is a groundskeeper; I believe that's part time. But \$100,000 would be an estimate.

Alderman Gatsas stated so you have given me \$100,000; you have given me an additional \$116,000, an additional \$112,000. Any more? Or were those basically the three we had discussions on? So it's about \$328,000?

Ms. DeFrancis asked did you talk about on the second page, line item 32? That would be another three positions.

Alderman Gatsas stated line item 32. That's another \$130,000?

Ms. DeFrancis responded correct. Line item 33.

Alderman Gatsas asked the whole \$855,000?

Ms. DeFrancis responded they would be positions, correct.

Alderman Gatsas stated the whole \$855,000?

Ms. DeFrancis responded correct, 22 positions.

Alderman Gatsas stated so it's about \$1.3 million additional to the \$6 million that was in the first columns that I had.

Ms. DeFrancis asked what was the \$6 million?

Alderman Gatsas stated the total of the \$6 million was roughly the \$2 million, the \$1 million, the \$700,000, an additional \$1 million and the line items that I had given out the first time, about \$6.1 million.

Ms. DeFrancis asked that includes line item 34, the balance of the \$2 million?

Alderman Gatsas stated that's correct. So there is an additional \$1.3 million. Those positions...you don't have a medical benefit attached to it, do you?

Ms. DeFrancis responded no, that's salary and benefits.

Alderman Gatsas asked if I look at these positions and divide them by 34 you are going to tell me that somewhere...can you tell me on this sheet where I would find the Athletic Director and what his salary is?

Ms. DeFrancis responded that is under line item 18, eliminate AD salary.

Alderman Gatsas stated I understand that, but in this sheet that you passed out with your budget that listed everybody, I've been fighting trying to find them on there.

Ms. DeFrancis state it would be included with the total athletics budget which would be on page ten under the athletics. It's close to the bottom of the page, the last quarter of the page. The \$742,846 in athletics salaries includes the Athletic Director. Can I ask what report you are looking at that you are trying to find...

Alderman Gatsas stated I am looking at the budget report.

Ms. DeFrancis asked the budget book?

Alderman Gatsas stated the budget book that you gave us.

Ms. DeFrancis stated then that's where I just directed you to page ten.

Alderman Gatsas stated so those are line items that are both benefits and wages, so when you say benefits you are included the 34% which includes FICA and retirement?

Ms. DeFrancis stated correct, the \$92,000 includes that. On the elimination list, every position listed on the elimination list is salary and benefits.

Alderman Gatsas stated so the initial number from the \$153,000

Ms. DeFrancis state the salary piece would be on page ten and the benefits piece would be on page 72, I believe.

Alderman Gatsas asked so about \$7.5 million of the reduction from \$153 million to \$140 million is wages.

Ms. DeFrancis stated correct.

Alderman Domaingue stated I will defer to Alderman Roy if he has a pressing question but I was again going to suggest that I think it's in the best interest of time to allow the School Board to start hammering through these numbers and come up with some more definitive answers for us and so at this time I would make a motion to adjourn.

Mayor Guinta stated I will take the final question.

Alderman M. Roy stated my question is very brief and very concise for Ms. Burkush. Looking at the positions that are General Fund, such as your out of district monitor, I think we somewhat lose track of the classroom teacher versus people providing services that directly impact children. When I look at that list, and some of these titles I am familiar with, it's more of a statement, Karen, you can chime in if I am incorrect, many of these positions have a direct impact on the children of our school district. These aren't people sitting in cushy offices on Commercial Street and Karen, if you want to elaborate what some of these jobs are and how they impact the children of our District, I think that is getting lost in the fact that they are central administration.

Ms. Burkush stated certainly. The out of district placement monitor, we actually have two, and they monitor all of the students, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen have asked for some back up in terms of the number of students so we updated; we had provided a Board update earlier in the year. So far to date we've had 199 students that have been placed out of District, not all by the District, but through the court either through abuse/neglect petitions or truancy petitions or just juvenile. So those people actually follow those students' cases, make sure that they are provided with an appropriate education wherever they may end up. Some of those students end up in a different foster home every other week or they end up

in some juvenile facility, and those two individuals make sure that they get an appropriate education wherever they are. The court liaison that Alderman Shea had mentioned, we have somebody who goes; we have one person because we like to be consistent, that goes to Manchester District Court and speaks on behalf of the students or speaks on behalf of the School District in terms of what the student needs, and so advocating for the students and their family and the School District. There are other positions such as approved private school, people that just do testing so they do directly influence or impact students' education. They facilitate or conduct the individual evaluations that those students need. I am not sure if there are any other positions that you would like clarification on, but those are a few of the ones that are in the offices down at Commercial Street.

Alderman M. Roy stated thank you. The other quick part of that was line 32, the non-Title 1 reading specialists, to one for every two schools. What would that caseload be for the non-Title 1 schools?

Dr. Aliberti stated it doubles their caseload because right now we have one reading specialist per school, so now we would have two traveling.

Alderman M. Roy asked more specifically, how many children would be impacted? I realize if you divide your staff by two it doubles but you know...

Dr. Aliberti stated we have schools like Green Acres, which is a fairly large school that have a full time person who can assist teachers with students that have literacy issues and addressing those and helping our teachers with instructional strategies for improving instruction of literacy, and now we would be saying you are only going to that building half the time so only half that support would be provided for that building.

Alderman M. Roy asked is there someone...you mentioned Green Acres. Is there anyone here that could give me a number of how many children are seen at Green Acres? You have pretty good support behind you, Superintendent.

Dr. Aliberti stated Green Acres has almost 600 students in it right now. Highland would be another large Title 1 school of almost 530 students. Jewett is slightly smaller at about 350, so I think that gives you so idea of the number of students that would be impacted.

Alderman M. Roy asked so by geographic location, if you were to combine Highland and Green Acres you would be talking about roughly 1,100 students could fall into the non-Title 1 reading specialist purview.

Dr. Aliberti stated what we would try to do is look at having a person serve a smaller school and go into a larger school, but that is a lot of students even given that.

Alderman Shea stated just a point of reference, in terms of reading consultants, isn't that done on a teacher referring a child, Henry, rather than that teacher servicing the needs of the whole school. Isn't that the same as when I was principal that a teacher will refer a child for testing or for diagnostic purposes?

Dr. Aliberti responded actually it has changed quite a bit Alderman Shea.

Alderman Shea asked do they go into the classroom now and work with the teacher or do they still test the kids and so forth?

Dr. Aliberti responded they support teachers in their instructional capacity. They could be modeling lessons. It could be doing a diagnostic piece on a particular

student but it is professional development instructional support to the teacher to impact the student's achievement in the classroom in literacy. So, it's not a pull out program on a daily basis. It's not strictly a diagnostic piece. They also support the interpretation of our local literacy assessment results with staff so the role is different than it has been in the past.

Alderman Shea asked so it is not just a referral basis as it was before but they still perform that?

Dr. Aliberti responded I would say to a very limited basis. It's more of supporting what happens in a variety of different classrooms at various grade levels. So this person is really a facilitator, a resource for teachers and what they do in the classroom.

Alderman Shea asked do they go from first grade to fifth or just primarily in the third, fourth and fifth?

Dr. Aliberti stated they can serve any level of student within the school, wherever there are specific issues.

*There being no further business, on motion by **Alderman Domaingue**, duly seconded by **Alderman Garrity** it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk