

**BUDGET WORKING SESSION  
OF THE NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
~MINUTES~**

PRESENT: MAYOR MITCHELL, MR. LIVRAMENTO, MR. AMARAL, DR. FINNERTY,  
MR. NOBREGA, MR. OLIVEIRA MS. POLLOCK

ABSENT: NONE

IN ATTENDANCE: DR. DURKIN, MR. MURPHY, MRS. DUNAWAY (Recording Secretary)

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The FY 15 Budget Working Session process commenced earlier in the year as suggested last year by the School Committee.

Dr. Durkin stated that the fiscal plan shows extensive needs and priorities of the district. The needs are not taken lightly and the process is taken very seriously. Tools are needed as well as support for teachers to give students the education they need to succeed.

A PowerPoint presentation was given as follows:

**FY15 Superintendent's  
Preliminary Budget**

**CHALLENGES AND URGENCY**

New Bedford Public Schools: Level 4 District  
Concern for stopping the decline in achievement and designation of additional Level 4/5 schools.  
Facing effects of multiple years without necessary resources  
Living with lack of student progress  
Fiscal Plan must match Educational Plan

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

Approximately \$4 million is needed just to provide the same level of service in FY15 as in FY14.  
Budget for "just keeping the lights on" is \$113.5 million (+\$4 million in addition to FY14 budget of \$109.4)

**REQUIREMENTS**

New Bedford High School: Level 4  
John Avery Parker School: Level 5  
Elementary Core Literacy Reading Program: \$1.9 million (*replacing 11 year old books*) with *Reading Street*

**KEEP THE LIGHTS ON**

We are starting at \$109,400,000  
\$2,400,000 required to meet steps and lanes  
\$700,000 required for increased tuition payments for out of district SPED students  
\$800,000 to cover district wide increases in utilities and materials  
\$200,000 to cover grant requirements  
**Subtotal: \$113,500,000**

The \$116,725,000 request is 2.37% above the estimated Net School Spending requirement

Mr. Oliveira stated that the proposed budget was well thought out. Dr. Durkin stated that the district cannot afford any more Level 4 schools for the health of student learning and fiscal costs. She also said that we must invest in youth and adopt a new Reading Program which is a "one time" spending for a specific item.

Ms. Pollock commented that English Language Learners (ELL) numbers are increasing and there are dismal failure rates. She would like more than the three teachers proposed in the budget to support the ELL program.

Mr. Amaral asked what other districts spend on Net School Spending. Mr. Murphy responded that others spend between 13-15%. Mr. Amaral stated that we always ask why we don't do as well. Now we have schools at Level 4, 5 and three are near to becoming Level 4. We must be pro-active.

To several questions asked by Dr. Finnerty, on Circuit Breaker funding, Dr. Durkin responded that Circuit Breaker is not a high level of revenue but we capture what we can, the state has allowed increases in costs for Out of District Placements and we currently receive no Medicaid reimbursement. Medicaid reimbursement should be shared with the City at least with a 50/50 split.

Dr. Finnerty also stated that more funding should be put into general education and to provide interventions before students are placed in Special Education.

Mr. Livramento asked if more grant funding would be forthcoming. Dr. Durkin stated that the School Redesign Grant (SRG) is due April 2. NBHS is the largest school submitting an application for the competitive grant. She cautioned that the plan must be sustainable with or without added funds from grants. Also, we may not see significant change until year three of the plan.

Mr. Nobrega asked what is being done to get parents involved. Dr. Durkin said the principals are working very hard to communicate, but we have to do better.

Mr. Oliveira suggested that a subsequent budget session be held on March 6 in place of the Finance Sub Committee meeting.

Mayor Mitchell stated that we have to look out for schools and students but also must look out for tax payers. It is very expensive and must look at this very carefully. He stated that we must look at what we can afford, but education cannot be done cheaply.

Addendum - New Business:

Mr. Al Oliveira addressed to the Committee at their Regular Meeting on February 10, 2014, to inform them of the need to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) under the Accelerated Repair Program. The SOI will be submitted to request funding to replace a boiler at the John B. DeValles Elementary School.

In accordance with MSBA guidelines, the following motion was made and voted on as follows:

On a motion by Mr. Amaral and seconded by Mr. Livramento, the Committee voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated February 14th, 2014 for the John B. DeValles Elementary School located at 120 Katherine Street, New Bedford 02744, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: