

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES ~ SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, June 7, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
Kingsbury School, 220 Columbia Boulevard, Waterbury, CT

PRESENT: President Brown, Commissioners Awwad, Harvey, Hernandez, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney, J. Van Stone, and T. Van Stone.

ABSENT: Commissioner Theriault.

ALSO PRESENT: Deputy Superintendent Robert Henry, Chief Academic Officer Darren Schwartz, and Director of Personnel Robert Brenker.

SILENT PRAYER

President Brown called the special meeting to order at 8:33 p.m. with a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Melissa Serrano-Adorno led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

CLERK: Commissioner Awwad.

AWWAD: Here.

CLERK: Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Serrano-Adorno.

SERRANO-ADORNO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Theriault (absent). Commissioner J. Van Stone.

J. VAN STONE: Present.

CLERK: Commissioner T. Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Present.

CLERK: President Brown.

BROWN: Present.

1. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

- 1.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve of the Department of Education's 2018/2019 Operating Budget totaling \$173,203,300 (\$158,375,000/Board Of Alderman adopted appropriation; \$12,628,300/Alliance Year 7; \$450,000/2016-17 Surplus; \$575,000/2015-16 Surplus; \$675,000/Contingency Surplus; and \$500,000/City non-lapsing contingency).**

BROWN: Discussion. Commissioner Awwad.

AWWAD: I want to thank Doreen for her time and efforts. I think the process was open, it was fair. We heard a lot of discussion, we listened, we made some changes based on input from certain groups that were adversely affected in the initial draft of this. I do want to say that I am looking forward to seeing how the restructuring in Central Office works. I think the information that we heard tonight earlier speaks volumes to the steps that we're taking. I also think that under Mr. Henry's leadership we've gotten to a place where in the next couple of weeks as we begin the opportunity to interview candidates to be the new superintendent and lead the district that we're giving them the tools to hopefully be successful with this budget and we'll look for them to come back to us during the year with potential suggestions and alterations to it. But, again, I'm pleased with it . . . like more to do more especially to put it in the classroom where we think it will have the best impact but I believe we did a fair job. I wouldn't say a good job but a fair job of putting the dollars where they'll do the best services.

BROWN: Thank you. Any other questions? Commissioner Van Stone.

J. VAN STONE: Thank you Madam President, through you. I would echo Commissioner Awwad's comments. I'd like to thank Doreen, great job; Darren, not a terrible job; Deputy Superintendent, thank you; Cathy, yourself, thank you for leading that Committee through what is always a tough process. I think overall it's an okay budget. I think we can do better. I think as we are now starting to tap some contingency funds that were very well thought out and placed years ago, and thank God we did, because we are quickly learning that this money goes fast and increases aren't coming readily so as we adopt a budget tonight I imagine, I think with each decision we make going through the rest of this fiscal year and future fiscal years, we have to remember that every time we approve a contract, every time we create a job, every time we do everything, there's a dollar amount associated with it and I think sometimes, and I'm just as guilty of it, we approve a lot of stuff and then the bill comes through the next budget year and we start scratching our head and wondering who the heck spent all this money. So as we go through this next fiscal year I would ask us to be cautious and be prudent with the money being spent because we're gonna quickly start working through some of the contingencies we rightly built in. So let's just keep, if we could keep that in mind every time we make decisions going forward. Thank you Madam President.

BROWN: Thank you. Any other comments? Commissioner Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Thank you Madam President, through you. First off I hope that a number of people in the public that complain about the budget equal the number of the

people from the public in the audience tonight, that would be great. So obviously there's not as much concern as people try to tell us over the next twelve months. I struggle every year with the budget and there's a lot of reasons for it. There's not a lot to really pick on when it comes to the operating budget. Doreen, you could correct me, but my math in public is in the ballpark of about 75% is salaries. So you're really trying to operate a school, outside of salaries, that's of course operations, but you're trying to do the rest of your job on 25% of what we're allotted to spend. Very challenging. And that aside, I still would like to see us do a better job in two areas – utilization of grant funding. I did make a request a while back and I know we're in a busy time right now with budget and a superintendent search, to review the last few years of the grants we received and how we spent that money and especially how we spent that money versus the so called statement of work of what that money should have been spent on. I'm sure it's fine; I still would like to see how we're utilizing those funds because it's how we survive. As far as Alliance I still think we could do a much better job. I know selfishly I'll say that we've struggled and have not been able to put forward the ELA curriculum in search of spending 1.2 million dollars for a six year plan. One point two million is a pretty small percentage of what we're spending in a lot of areas. So I still think we need to do a much better job. And because of that and Commissioner Van Stone's mentioning of things getting added on later, the leach accounts that come along along the way especially with job creation, many at a pretty good price tag and even though we put it against grant money in many cases, not all, but in many cases those also are bargaining unit positions meaning in two years when a smaller grant disappears, which it will, we're on the hook for that person to remain employed. So we've been way too loose with the checkbook. We're all guilty because at the end of the day we, as a team, approve it regardless of what the vote may be on a given night, it's on us all. So to that point I will not be voting for this because I still think we need to check our p's and q's and do a much better job on how we spend money. Thank you.

BROWN: Thank you. Any other comments? Call the roll please.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON ITEM #1.1:

YEAS: Awwad, Harvey, Hernandez, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney,
J. Van Stone, and Brown - 8
NAYS: T. Van Stone – 1

BROWN: Motion carries. Any other business before us?

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:43 p.m.

ATTEST 
Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education