

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

SPECIAL MEETING  
PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION  
77 Main Street  
Terryville, CT 06786

BOARD OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE ROOM

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2016

6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Board of Education: Mrs. Kremmel, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Orsini, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Bourbonniere, Ms. McCann, Mrs. Kulesa, and Mrs. Johnson

Absent: Mr. Melchionna and Ms. McCann

Administrators: Dr. Semmel, Superintendent, Dr. Tenney, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mr. Penn, Business Manager, Mrs. Trinkis, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education, Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology, Mrs. Worhunsy, Principal Harry S. Fisher Elementary School, Mrs. Collins, Principal Plymouth Center School, Ms. Suffridge, Principal Eli Terry Jr. Middle School and Mr. Hults, Principal Terryville High School

1. Call to Order and Pledge to Flag

Mrs. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION: To adopt the agenda. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, seconded Mr. Goodwin, motion passes.

3. Budget Workshop II for the 2016 – 2017 Budget

Prior to the beginning of the workshop, Mrs. Johnson, Chair explained the process and thanked everyone for attending the workshop.

Mr. Penn, Business Manager

Updates: (a) Most of the changes are tied to energy costs; and (b) Transfer of the replacement of the vehicle originally in the budget to

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*Bonnie A. Rockwell*  
TOWN CLERK

be transferred to the town's capital budget as suggested by the Board of Finance.

Original Increase	\$897,849
With Changes	\$809,049
Increase	3.41%

Mrs. Trinks, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education

Highlights

- a) Special Education Related Services & PreK Funding
- b) Salary, Extended School Year, Diagnostic Services & Outplacements (public & non-public)

The difference between the testing line item, diagnostic services line and the testing material line item: Testing Materials is 3 different sections: (a) 6422- Special Education (types of text materials); (b) 3232 – Diagnostic Service (IQ testing); (c) 6422 – Testing Material – Speech & Language Assessment (purchasing materials to administer tests).

- c) Three (3) types of reasons why students are outplaced: (1) by parental choice (those students attending magnet schools (the district is still responsible for a student's IEP); (2) state agency placed (DCF); and (3) students placed by PPT (out of district).

The difference between sending a special needs child to a magnet school compared to leaving a child in the Plymouth School District goes deeper and beyond Special Education. If a parent chooses to send their child to a magnet school, there is little the district can do. Once a parent has made this choice, if the student happens to be identified as having a disability, the Special Education Department needs to remain involved and pay the bill.

Regarding the increase in the Psychologist Salary Account – between 2015 budget and 2016 budget there was an increase in one psychologist. In 2015, one of the salaries was paid from the budget while the other two were paid from IDEA funds.

The reason for the increase in the Director's salary was due to the fact that there was not a full time Director in 2015.

IEP has changed the manner in which the district goes about transporting a student and there are specific criteria that need to be followed per the State regarding the needs of the student when it pertains to transportation. First, safety is a factor and it is a PPT decision if there is special transportation. From an IEP standpoint, transportation restrictions can vary.

- d) Equipment Repair
- e) Instructional

- f) Medical Supplies – change in the law regarding epi-pens, the cost to the district is approximately \$600 to \$700 per pen and the district will need a total of 5.
- g) Dues
- h) Professional Development – epi-pen changes; concussion law and nurses conference(s).
- i) Homebound Instruction – educational programming from ill students who are unable to attend school.

Special Education Reimbursement – the district will attempt to recoup as much as possible. Due to the decrease in district enrollment across the state, some of the smaller districts have seen their overall per pupil costs increase.

Mr. Trudeau – Director of Technology

Highlights

- a) Chromebooks Program
- b) Technology Repair – Infrastructure (switches, routers, phone system and miscellaneous classroom technology repair)
- d) Emergency Repair
- e) Technology Travel (mileage)
- f) Internet T-1 (contracts with Fiber Tech)
- g) Software (encumbers yearly renewals, i.e. student inform system, antivirus, security software and messaging system)
- h) Materials (i.e. ink jet printers)
- i) Technology Equipment Replacement – (a large portion of this is chromebooks and the purchase of any equipment for classrooms that is required, i.e. projectors)
- j) Technology Staff Development – PowerSchool (student information system upgrades)

A suggestion was, in the future, making it easier for students to use their own devices because long term this would save the district costs.

Currently, the elementary schools have carts of chromebooks that are not involved in the 1 to 1 program, however, teacher may sign out for chromebooks for use in their classroom. Also, children in grades K – 5 are being introduced to chrome books prior to them entering the middle school.

A question arose if a student received the same chromebook the next school year. If a chromebook is inspected and there are no repairs needed, the student will receive the same chrome book at the beginning of the new school year, however, if a student's chromebook is in need of repair, that student may receive an alternative chrome book.

If a parent chooses not to purchase insurance for their child's chromebook and a problem arises; the parent would be responsible for the repair(s) or costs. However, a child will not be deprived a chromebook, at the library media centers at the middle and high schools, there is a cart of loaners, but at the end

of the school day, those loaners must be returned and are not taken home by the student.

Mr. Penn, Business Manager

Highlights (general)

- 1) Energy Costs – solar, weather patterns and refining demand
- 2) Contractual (non-salaried accounts in the district) – diesel costs for buses; heating oil cost for central office and for other schools where needed: natural gas (calendar year); and electricity.
- 3) District Wide Services
  - a) Certified Substitutes (i.e. retiree previously employed by the district.
  - b) Purchased Subs Certified (obtained from an outside agency)
  - c) Tuition VoAg (comment Mr. Goodwin (as a caution) WAMOGO is facing a declining enrollment. Their thought is to increase size of the VoAg program with a purpose of having more kids apply will be accepted. Also, at the state level there are many advocates pushing for other VoAg schools to be placed on the same level as magnet schools.
- 4) Title I Salary Account – increase of \$61,000. This amount reflects the excess of the costs for our coaches in the district beyond what the actual value of what the Title I and II grants will pay for.
- 5) Adjustment to Unemployment and Earlier Retirement – based on what is known today and what is currently in the system.
- 6) Lunch Program Support - \$9,500 contribution to the school lunch program.
- 7) Pension Costs - \$94,000 increase
- 8) Health Care – combination of 2015 – 2016 year number not correct as it does not reflect the true cost of the programs to the tune of \$250,000.
  - a) \$150,000 in deductible contributions toward the HSA that should have been factored into the cost of the program that was not; and
  - b) \$100,000 in anticipated reduction in actual claims vs where we were finishing up the 2014 – 2015 year vs what was assumed for the 2015 – 2016 year.
  - c) 2015 – 2016 should have been \$250,000 more than reported on the report.
- 9) In District Transportation – the business manager is in contact with the bus company on an ongoing basis looking for efficiency where he can.
- 10) Repair – reflects what we think we've anticipated and seen in the past and try to rely on past experience.

Suggestion: Consider the Town and BOE collaborate to obtain figures regarding the State Insurance Plan. Objection: The district and/or town would lose complete control of the plan, design and the cost

(going forward these items would not be negotiable and the state plan is permanent, you may not leave once you are a member).

Mr. Goodwin – Concern – if the budget fails referendum and there is no support and the Board will need to begin cutting, he sees no issue in decreasing the bus routes.

Mr. Orsini – Increase is \$809,000 – 3.4% - 1 mil = \$765,000. Concern – it will not be known how this fits into the total budget until the Board of Finance does their job.

Mr. Zovich – It won't pass. He does not have a good feeling. Hopes to work together to present a reasonable budget that meets all the needs of the students and the community and is transparent (meaning we need to explain where the money comes from, where it's going and is reasonable so the Disproportionate burden falls on residential property owners because we have so small commercial and industrial tax base. Unfortunately, because Terryville is in the lower DRG and have the lower per capita wealth and per capita income even a small tax increase is looked upon by many of the voters as a burden. He suggested in all fairness to take the reimbursement the town received and apply it back to the BOE Health fund to help offset the increase. The two highest components in the BOE Budget of \$809,000 is Special Education - \$410,000 and System-wide Services of \$400,000. Consider taking some of the capital equipment items, i.e. Chromebook and table saw (as long as they have more than a 1 year economic life) and place these items in the sinking fund which does not go into the budget.

Victoria Carey, 665 Greystone Road – Asked the Board if they had an opportunity to look into the legal ramifications regarding using the money from the sinking fund.

Mr. Penn – The Board of Finance and the Board of Education would need to be in agreement regarding the use of funds in the sinking fund. However, as of this time, the fund does not exist.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Historical Issues – 6 years of regression; 2008 – 2009 – 3 ½% ; 5 years of less than 1% increase and last year 2.2%. A 2% decrease will mean a cut of \$400,000, but where. \$800,000 will be a tough sell to the taxpayers. Concerned if the referendum fails there will have to be drastic cuts.

Dr. Semmel – The responsibility of the Board of Education is to the children of Plymouth. The Board of Finance is responsible to the taxpayers and to try to create a balanced budget. We tried to put together a budget that was fiscally responsible as we could looking for as many cuts as we could. It's not items we are trying to add to the budget that's causing a problem but rather inherent structural issues that we have in terms of benefits (contracted obligations), legal requirements (special education). He offered, if the Board felt there are other items to look at, the administrators would be open to any suggestions.

Board Comments: A bigger problem, other than the budget, is the lack of support.

The Board needs to figure out a way to get this support.  
No guarantee, even if the Board requested a 1% increase, that it would pass referendum. Keep the budget increase at the percentage that was presented by the administration and if the town's people, through referendum, decide against the increase, it will then go to the Town Council and then recommend a decrease or increase of 3%.  
To move the budget forward.  
It's up to the Board now to market the budget.

Question: If the state government is picking up roughly up to 50%, how does that market. Are we asking for 800 from the town or 400? How does this effect the mill?

4. Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per speaker)

Chris Simo Kinzer, 52 Old Farm Road – Commented on the recycling, reimbursement and insurance regarding the chromebooks; indicated he had presented some options (durable, long lasting devices; integration of other devices, interdistrict bussing; and time cost analysis on teacher evaluations.

Laura Wipfler, 6 Steven Street – Board needs to market the budget and would like to hear ideas from the Board as to how they plan on accomplishing this.

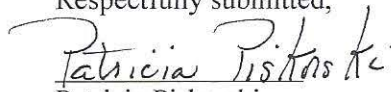
Dan Gentile, 269 Mt. Tobe Road - Rescind some unfunded Mandates. Use our system to tell people to go out and vote.

Ralph Zovich, 4 Knight Lane – Recommendation that the Board authorize the Superintendent and the Business Manager to have some savings in its back pocket just in case things do not go as planned. Presentation on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The Board of Finance will inform the Board of Education what it is going to present prior to the public hearing.

5. Adjournment

**MOTION:** To adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Motion Mr. Goodwin, seconded Mrs. Kremmel, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Patricia Piskorski  
Recording Secretary