

EDUCATION BUDGET MEETING

April 23, 2008

20-10

Chairperson Colleen Stanley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Caucus Room 3rd floor City Hall. In attendance were Committee members Mike Calandrino, Jane Diggs and Robert Riley. Fred Visconti was absent due to illness. Also present was the Director of Finance, David St. Hilaire; the Assistant Director of Finance, Dan Garrick; Board of Education Finance Director Elio Longo; Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sal Pascarella; Board of Education Members Joe Scozzafava, Richard Jannelli, Irving Fox, Kathy Molinaro, Eileen Alberts; Michael McLachlan, Representing the Mayor's Office and Ex-Officio Council Members Paul Rotello, Gregg Seabury, Louise McMahon, Mary Teicholz, Ben Chianese, Joe Cavo and members of the public.

Chairperson Stanley noted that this meeting was part 2 of the Education budget committee and read into the record the minutes of the first meeting from April 16, 2008. In attendance at the first meeting were committee members Mike Calandrino, Jane Diggs, Robert Riley and Fred Visconti. Also in attendance were Council members Mary Teicholz, Paul Rotello, Warren Levy, Mayor Mark Boughton, and members of the public. During the first meeting Dr. Pascarella and Elio Longo were away for Spring break and Finance Director St. Hilaire was at a family function so Mayor Boughton gave a brief history of the budget process.

Chairperson Stanley stated the first meeting was a 'workshop' to propose questions that would be submitted to the Board for answers at the next meeting.

The Mayor stated an issue that the Council should be aware of:

The Honeywell lease will need to be addressed since the City side of the Budget is not prepared to absorb the cost

The board presented a budget of over \$114 million, which was a 7.83% increase. The Finance department and Mayor reduced the budget to approximately \$111 million, a reduction of \$3.5 million off the Board's request.

Chairperson Stanley began the second meeting by asking Mr. Longo to answer questions that came up during the previous meeting.

Council Members questioned:

- Contractual obligations
- Special Education
- Magnet School (currently running at a loss)
- The increase in budget
- The excess of special students
- Increase in salaries
- Workmen's compensation
- Social Security
- Increase Phone usage
- Bulk buying
- Head Start
- Integrated Technology
- Increase in salaries for teachers – average 5.79% compare to City Employees who received 3%
- Lights at High School Field remaining on night and day and the cost

Council Members spoke about the need to conserve in 'tough economic times'. The School side of the Budget has really never taken a 'hit' as the City side of the Budget has for the last several years.

Council President Cavo, once again, encouraged the School system to find ways to 'cut' specifically combining Departments like Purchasing and IT with the City Departments and offering 'retirement packages'.

Finance Director St. Hilaire reminded the members that the difference between the Board's request and the mayors proposed budget, after bonding, works out to be \$1.5 million on a \$112 million budget. The mayor's budget does not cut services to students, and that's still a \$5.8 million dollar increase.

Councilperson Riley moved to adopt the Mayor's proposed Board of Education Budget with the stipulation that the \$500,000.00

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Honeywell Lease be paid by the Board of Education during the 2008-2009 school year. Seconded by Councilperson Diggs. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Diggs **moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.** Seconded by Councilman Riley.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Stanley, Chairperson

Mike Calandrino

Robert Riley

Jane Diggs

Fred Visconti (Absent)