

MINUTES
Murfreesboro City School Board
Special Called Budget Meeting
Monday, April 14, 2014
Central Administration Office

ATTENDANCE:

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Nancy Phillips, Butch Campbell, Andy Brown, Collier Smith, Jared Barrett, and Nancy Rainier

City Attorney: Kelley Baker

Council Liaison: Ron Washington

Staff: Dr. Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Beth Prater, Angela Fairchild

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wade called the meeting to order.

II. BY '15 BUDGET REVIEW

Chair Wade opened noting the Fund balance is very near state requirement, and asked if the revenue was not what it is expected to be to maintain three percent (3%). Mr. Anderson gave a brief overview of the revenue side. Mr. Barrett asked if we gain from the liquor tax, and Mr. Anderson stated yes. Ms. Phillips noted a net budget increase over the estimated original budget. Mr. Anderson noted a BEP \$23,000 mandatory increase with no additional new monies. Ms. Phillips asked if about a cost of living increase. Mr. Anderson directed the Board to expenditures on Page 13 of the budget. Ms. Phillips asked how many new students are projected for Overall Creek. Mr. Anderson responded 435, adding 7,600 total students with BEP funding for 7,308.

Discussion was held regarding technology positions and number of technology personnel per school. Beginning teacher's salary is \$36,000. Ms. Rainier noted that last year we did not change at all. Mr. Anderson said that line 200 is directed by health and Medicare. Ms. Phillips asked why five new people are needed in Special Education. Dr. Gilbert explained that four of those are speech pathologists. Ms. Phillips asked how many EA's will not be re-hired. Mr. Ringstaff responded -9.67, which are nine or ten positions. Ms. Smith directed attention to line 116 on Page 14. Dr. Gilbert stated the shift to have fewer teachers, noting that in K-3, there is a 20:1 student teacher ratio.

Mr. Campbell asked about additional teacher training. Dr. Gilbert stated that there would not be as much training this year. Mr. Campbell asked how many times teachers are out of the classroom. Dr. Gilbert answered 750 days for all Teachers TDL; sub pay is \$75.00 per day. Dr.

Gilbert said they would not be required to come after school or on Saturday. Ms. Rainier thought this might be the area for cuts. Dr. Gilbert said she would rather cut a teaching position rather than cut training. Ms. Rainier asked about use of professional days. Dr. Gilbert said unused professional days must be used first for professional development.

Ms. Smith asked about line 336 on page 14. Mr. Anderson stated that we are not spending as much on equipment. Ms. Rainier asked if all schools have smart boards. Mr. Anderson stated that Mitchell-Neilson, Black Fox, and Discovery have them, adding that it is up to them at the school level and school budget money. Ms. Phillips commented that in prior years, teachers have taken money out of their own pockets to make copies when the schools should pay for this. Ms. Rainier stated she believes the Media Center gets \$6.00 per student per school. Ms. Phillips raised questions about special education and what resource teachers are doing versus EA's. Ms. Fairchild explained that having EA's enables teachers to work around the room. Ms. Fairchild said that autism students work with Ms. Frank the last two days of school. Dr. Brown expressed that he is very happy with the Special Education Department, noting that if students do not get the training early, they do not graduate from high school. Ms. Rainier said she has always seen at least two resource teachers, and EA's can assist them. Ms. Fairchild said the third, fourth, and fifth grades break out at the same time. Chair Wade congratulated for working on skill deficit instead of grade level. Ms. Smith asked if all psychologists are in the schools now, with no one located at Central Office. Ms. Fairchild said yes, and there are five school psychologists.

Ms. Phillips asked about making a decision about doing a compensation study. Ms. Baker said this was bid out for the compensation study with the City of Murfreesboro. Ms. Phillips said if we are going to City Council and ask for more money for cost of living, we need to show we are good stewards of money for support staff at Central Office. The study would not be for Teachers' salaries. Dr. Gilbert said if we are going to have a study, we need to do it on everyone. Ms. Phillips asked if it would raise the cost of the study for everyone. Ms. Phillips said teachers deserve more money than what they get because they are professionals. She added that some of the salaries when employees were hired were on the high end. Mr. Campbell said he asked Jeff Sandlin at Rutherford County Schools (RCS) what they do about salary. He said the formula is teacher salary divided by 200 multiplied by number of days the principal works index 1.15×1.15 add \$1,000 to it. Master's degree, 15 years' experience $\times 220$ days adds \$1600.00. The salary for a RCS Principal is \$72,018.55 and MCS is \$83,500, adding that we are paying several more dollars than the county pays. Ms. Phillips said due to Race to the Top funds, the board voted on how money is to be spent. Because of Race to the Top money, we brought someone in at \$80,000 then. Do we pay them less now? Ms. Phillips asked if we need to do an in-house or out-of-house compensation study. Mr. Campbell said we will not have this done for this budget, but may need to include money for the study in the budget for next year. He said we need to review this budget. Chair Wade added that this budget needs to be to the City by May 1, and the next meeting is April 22.

Dr. Brown said the board needs to review the cell phone bill. Mr. Anderson reviewed page 16 noting that April Hall has a cell phone paid for by MCS because she is out of the building. Dr. Brown said the phone bill is extremely high. Mr. Anderson said he would find out the

breakdown of the Verizon bill and the landline. Mr. Anderson said every school has multiple lines, and Ms. Trail does all communications for snow days.

Ms. Rainier drew attention to the Skyward fee of \$6,500 with additional cost to maintain and run the program. Ms. Baker said it cost the City of Murfreesboro \$68,400 for the compensation study. Mr. Anderson noted on page 17 under Health Services, the system has one full-time nurse at Mitchell-Neilson and one at Overall Creek. Ms. Phillips talked about the responsibility of nurses, and asked if they lead health programs for staff. Dr. Brown discussed other contracted services. Dr. Brown said 413 first aid kits are needed for schools, and could we get donations for first aid kits? Regarding Hepatitis shots, Mr. Anderson asked if Dr. Brown can get a better price on these. Ms. Baker noted that some people get hepatitis shots and some do not. Mr. Anderson said thermometers and blood pressure machines are being bought for each school. He added we have a \$100,000 grant from the state and our match is \$23,000. He noted, we also offer flu shots etc. Mr. Campbell said that if we find out we can do less than \$55.00 for sub nurses do we have parents that are nurses? We pay our nurses \$16.00 hour and ask parent of medically needed student if they want to go on the field trip. Ms. Baker said there are liability concerns. Ms. Smith asked how many first aid kits because she might be able to get some donated by Reeves-Sain.

Ms. Rainier noted that Ms. Frank is an administrative person at Central Office, and asked if social workers carry MCS cell phones with them. Discussed items on Page 18 evaluation and testing, and were there any that we can do without. Dr. Gilbert said there are not. A question was asked, who is under Ms. Frank. Dr. Gilbert said she has one person under her at each school.

Ms. Phillips referenced page 19 and Assistant Principal positions. She noted Caresa Brooks' salary is \$91,000, and Sheri Arnette's salary is \$73,000. Ms. Smith said these were Race to the Top positions, and asked if the board agreed to take on the salary when Race to the Top was gone. Ms. Phillips stated she came to the board to share the hope to sustain positions after Race to the Top is gone. Chair Wade asked if when the money runs out, could we keep these positions. Mr. Campbell noted that when the district accept grants, etc. there are strings attached. Ms. Phillips said she would like to see a one percent (1%) raise across the board. She stated a broader picture is to take it piece by piece, but she would like to see an assistant principal in every school. Ms. Rainier stated that Dr. Gilbert and Mr. Anderson deserve more money, but there are lots of needs and wants. Mr. Campbell asked Dr. Gilbert that if it were left up to her to cut \$100,000 out of the budget where would the cut be. He also asked if she had the responsibility to cut this or that, could she go to that person to let them know their salary could no longer be afforded. Dr. Gilbert said she would try to do what is the best for children noting that some people are very critical to this school system and are irreplaceable. Ms. Smith said the principals do not deal directly with students and do not impact children that much. Ms. Phillips said she thinks we should keep step increases and do a one percent (1%) raise for employees, noting her concern for the non-licensed personnel. Mr. Campbell said that a one percent raise (1%) for licensed personnel with 15-26 years is \$95,893 and non-licensed is \$92,377 and that a total one percent (1%) for everyone will cost \$426,192.

Chair Wade said travel expenses should be dropped from .55 per mile to .45 per mile. Ms. Rainier said travel should be a part of their job. Chair Wade said if travel is a part of the job maybe they should lose the mileage reimbursement.

Page 19 was discussed. Dr. Gilbert said Marisela Tapia is a translator of documents to multiple languages, adding that there are some on staff that speak Spanish and Arabic. The fee for this is \$15,000. Ms. Baker said there are federal grants, federal laws, and federal funding involved, and we are obligated to communicate to them.

Mr. Barrett brought attention to page 196 and the \$15,000 for the training in Gatlinburg. Ms. Phillips noted that it is important for the board to go to training, but the amount might be lowered by \$2,500-\$3,000. Ms. Rainier, Ms. Smith and Mr. Barrett agreed.

Ms. Smith said small cuts could be made to page 21. Ms. Rainier said to cut \$3,000. Dr. Gilbert noted line item 599, and that sometimes we need to treat them. Mr. Barrett said to leave things like they are. Ms. Phillips said more might be lost than gained with cuts there. Ms. Rainier said not to give up Teacher of the Year. Dr. Gilbert said we could look at the cost of the Teachers of the Year, etc. She said the district spent \$706 for the retirement meal.

Ms. Rainier asked if we cut \$3,000 on page 22, could it be given to the Director of Schools. Chair Wade said Dr. Gilbert is not working for the money she is working for the cause. Ms. Smith said the courier is on custodial, Rose is line 162 and Melanie is 161. Page 23, the AP salary and one new were discussed. The board discussed page 24, Jo, Dena, Beth, payroll, Marissa, Rachel, and Pam. Ms. Rainier asked if local mileage should be cut and only pay out of city. They discussed page 25, and that Xavier's position was not replaced, and Ralph Ringstaff is doing it now. Ms. Phillips discussed page 26 and the custodial for Central Office. Dr. Gilbert explained the courier sets up for meetings and other miscellaneous duties in addition to being the courier from school to school.

Mr. Campbell said he did not like the idea of contract custodians. Ms. Phillips agreed. Mr. Barrett asked if custodians are kept then who can be cut. Ms. Phillips said it sounds good, but it is not. Dr. Brown asked if the custodians retire from the system, can they be rehired and what do principals want to do. Chair Wade said, we are throwing them to the wolves. Some have been around for a long time. There is a bond there with custodians and staff. They have a career of 25 years on the job for some of them. Ms. Rainier asked if the company goes through license and bonding, and expressed concern that there could be strangers coming in and things being taken from classrooms. Mr. Anderson stated there would be no reduction in staff and that all custodians are out of the buildings by 11 p.m. Mr. Campbell asked if they provide cleaning products, mops and brooms. Ms. Smith asked if it is feasible to keep people on the retirement track. Ms. Baker said the city adopted a policy of who gets laid off and to make sure you are consistent. Ms. Rainier asked if people are laid off do we pay unemployment compensation, and that needs to be avoided. Mr. Anderson stated that a proposal from GCA is that they will hire our people. Ms. Phillips asked if we could offer more than 15 people a buyout package? Ms. Baker asked about the criteria for who stays and who goes. Ms. Smith said the principal gets to meet and approve the person that comes to the school. Mr. Anderson said it is a suggestion that custodians clean only four days a week.

Chair Wade said a regular board meeting would be held on April 22, and that they will have to vote before May 1. Ms. Baker said May 22 will be the last board meeting for Mary Wade, and that swearing in of Butch Campbell will be at the first policy session. Chair Wade said April 21 is the next meeting at 3:00 PM and the board should stay until the budget is done. She said the back-up date is April 28 at 3:00 PM. Ms. Baker said to make sure and put an ad in the paper for meeting on April 21 and April 28.

Mr. Barrett said the board would need to make more cuts, discuss early retirement, buyouts, and salary study. He said we need to increase the portion from the City next year or face major budget cuts. The projection two to three years out is reduction to travel or drop travel all together. Ms. Smith said to cut sub pay, rebid cell phones, and get better price on sub nurses. She said some medical supplies could be contributed. Ms. Phillips said she echoes their statements, and this budget has a timeline. She said to put aside money for technology in the future, and it will save us in the long run.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The Budget Session adjourned.

Director of Schools