

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Vineland was held Wednesday, February 1, 2012 at 5:37 p.m., in the Board Room, 625 Plum Street, Vineland, New Jersey, pursuant to notice with Ms. Rios presiding and the following members present: Mr. DiGiorgio, Mr. English, Mr. Fanucci, Mr. Medio, Mr. Mercado, Dr. Mounier and Mrs. Phillips. Absent: Mr. Ulrich

Also present: Dr. Banks, Superintendent, Dr. Gruccio, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Schneider, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Franchetta, Board Secretary, Ms. Greenfield, Executive Director of Personnel and Mr. DeSanto, Board Solicitor. Absent: None.

Ms. Rios announced that in compliance with the New Jersey meeting law commonly referred to as "The Sunshine Law," the Vineland Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting.

Flag Salute:

Special

Presentations: Dr. Banks introduced Mr. Kevin Franchetta to give a presentation on the 2012-2013 Budget and to discuss the budget as a whole.

Mr. Franchetta said the first item discussed will be the additional 6.7 million dollars that the district received. He said last summer the district was awarded by the NJ Department of Education an additional 6.7 million dollars for the 2011-2012. Mr. Franchetta said 2.8 million dollars was deferred to next year's budget. A few months ago the board submitted a plan in regards to how the remaining money will be spent to the county superintendent. The county superintendent approved everything except the transfer of money to food service to cover the deficit. Mr. Franchetta said the analysis that was done was broken into two pieces. The first part are items that have been executed fully and the second are items not in progress.

Mr. Fanucci said a finance committee meeting was held this evening and suggestions were made on behalf of the elementary school principals with respect to the balance of this money. He said two representatives are present tonight on behalf of those principals and would like to speak to the board. Mr. Medio said before they speak he would like to see what the projections are for next year's budget. Mr. Fanucci said this is something that needs to be allocated for the remaining portion of this year's budget. Mr. Medio said he understands but the decision is based on whether or not there is enough money to support those positions in next year's budget. Mr. Fanucci said this is only for open discussion as to what the thoughts and requests were of the principals.

Debbie Bechtel, Winslow School Principal and Dan Greco, Durand School Principal came to the podium. Ms. Bechtel said the elementary principals have been faced with increasing test scores, large class sizes along with various other things. She said the elementary principals developed a condensed version of their highest needs. Mr. Greco said the main problem they are facing in the elementary schools is overcrowding particularly at the first grade level. He said they have about 27 students in each first grade classroom, which is a need they would like addressed by the board. Mr. Greco said they propose possibly adding one teacher at each elementary school. Ms. Bechtel said the teacher would be a certified elementary teacher but would act in a collaborative teacher role placing them in first and second grade classrooms. She said the cost would be \$609,192 dollars. Mr. Greco said if a new building did open up you would have those teachers on staff already to be used in that building.

Dr. Mounier asked how the additional teachers would be deployed in the schools. Mr. Greco said they need teachers to go into the classrooms and work with the first and second graders. Dr. Mounier asked if there would be multiple episodes of instruction taking place simultaneously. Ms. Bechtel said yes that is done now. Dr. Mounier asked if we are presently functioning with more students than is permissible per classroom. Ms. Bechtel said yes we are above the state guideline.

Mr. Medio asked how this restructuring would address reduction of class size. Mr. Greco said we would lose only two to three students per grade level at each school. Ms. Bechtel said opening Leuchter School would definitely help. Mr. Medio asked if classrooms have been transferred to office space. Mr. Greco and Ms. Bechtel said it is not the case at their schools. Ms. Bechtel said Winslow School does not have an art or music room because it is being used as teaching space. Mr. Medio suggested sending some fourth graders to the middle schools where there is extra space. Mr. Greco said he would rather not address that. Mr. Medio said somewhere along the line this will have to be decided. Mr. Fanucci asked Mr. Medio if he means sending fifth graders to the middle schools. Mr. Medio said this year's fourth graders will be next year's fifth graders.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if something would be taken off the not in progress list to address this need. Mr. Fanucci said you could because the food service transfer was denied and that would be a little over half of the money needed. Mr. Medio said there is also \$680,000 in wireless access that could be used.

Mr. Fanucci thanked the two principals who spoke and for attending the finance committee meeting.

Mr. Franchetta reminded the board that it is February 1st and if you would like to make changes to the list and execute the items not in process you need to move forward soon.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked when we found out that the food service transfer on this list was not going to pass. Mr. Franchetta said about two weeks ago we received a letter from the county superintendent. Mr. DiGiorgio asked why it is still on the list. Mr. Franchetta said he just wanted to show what was on the original list.

Mr. Franchetta said we will not know how much state aid we are going to receive for the 2011-2012 school year until the Governor's address on Tuesday, February 21st. The Governor has 48 hours after that to release the state aid figures. Mr. Franchetta said we were told by the county to assume a flat funded budget and the additional six million dollars we received will be a part of next year's budget. Mr. Medio asked Mr. Franchetta what it means by flat funded. Mr. Franchetta said he will not know until after February 21st. He said our enrollment is up to 8,159.5 students, which is the highest it has been in ten years. Mr. Franchetta said our special education enrollment is 1,452 and is the lowest it has ever been. The district has historically received funding from the following eight major sources: fund balance, local tax levy, local non-tax revenue, state provided funds, federal provided funds, local, state and federal grants. Our general fund budget for the 2011-2012 school year was 165 million dollars, which represented 86.4% of our total budget. The balance of our budget 19.7 million dollars came from state grants, which was basically our ECPA pre-3 & 4 program. Mr. Franchetta said our total revenue for the year was 191 million dollars and 58.70% of the district's operating budget directly supports students. During the months of November and December Scott Musterel met with the principals to review their school based budgets. A flat funded budget is what is being presented this evening to the board. Mr. Franchetta said we requested for the principals to prepare a wish list if additional state aid was received and a reverse priority list if less state aid was received. We are ready to go in either direction depending on the state aid figures that we receive after the Governor's address on February 21st. Mr. Franchetta said in our 2011 – 2012 budget salary and benefit costs were understated due to unsettled labor contracts at the time of budget submission. He said the major change in the school based budgets was the increase in the FTE's because of changes to special education. Mr. Medio asked what FTE meant. Mr. Franchetta said Full Time Equivalent.

Mr. DiGiorgio asked if we are taking into consideration a reduction in staff that we do not need. Mr. Franchetta said if we are going to ruff teachers, because we are not offering courses, it is usually not done until the May time frame.

Mr. Fanucci said that he requested for reversed priority lists to be made and asked if they have been done. Mr. Franchetta said he knows the principals have done them. Mr. Fanucci asked what percentages they are working on. Mr. Smith said we are going on a needs basis because different departments have different needs. Mr. Fanucci asked if there was an estimated time given for all the reversed priority lists to be completed. Mr. Smith said he is hoping by the end of next week. Mr. Fanucci said this should have been done already and asked for this to be expedited.

Mr. Medio asked if we need to have our numbers by Thursday, February 23rd. Mr. Franchetta said the Governor gives his state of the union address on February 21st and he has 48 hours by statute to release the state aid numbers. Mr. Medio asked if there is any money in the budget to do a roof in the district. Mr. Franchetta said he does not recall any capital funds for any major roof renovations just for repairs. Mr. Medio asked if it would be prudent to look at putting a million dollars towards any roofing projects that have to be done this year. Mr. Franchetta said we could take a look at the budget to see if there is excess funds that could help utilize these repairs. Mr. Medio asked if there is a cap as to how much money could be placed in the capital reserve. Mr. Franchetta said the budget is reviewed by the county office and last year Dr. Stepura, the county superintendent, felt that there was too much money spent in maintenance.

Comments by

Board Solicitor: None.

Public Comments

on Agenda Items: None.

Recommendations:

Public Comments: Brian DeWinne, Vineland Resident
Mr. DeWinne said the finance of the budget is one of the biggest ways a board member can be most effective. He said the Governor made a promise to cut taxes and he fears that there will eventually be some big cuts. Mr. DeWinne said we need to think out of the box for the future. He said with the interest rates being down it may be time to look at doing some major repairs such as roofs.

Resolution: Mr. Franchetta read a resolution to recess into executive session on **Wednesday, February 1, 2012** regarding personnel matters and the purchase of property.

Motion: Upon motion by Mr. Fanucci, seconded by Mr. English, the resolution was passed. All Members voted “yes.”

The board recessed to executive session at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Franchetta, CPA
Board Secretary

