Concord School District
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
FY 2009-2010 Budget Work Session

School Board Committee: Finance Committee

Date: March 9, 2009

Committee Members Present: Laura Bonk, Chair, Chris Casko, Clint Cogswell, Jack Dunn

Other Board Members Present: Kass Ardinger, Megan DeVorsey, Kevin Fleming, Jennifer Patterson, Eric Williams

Administrators: Chris Rath, Rob Prohl, Michele Croteau, Matt Cashman, Larry Prince

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

Laura Bonk opened the Budget Work Session, then turned the meeting over to Superintendent Chris Rath to discuss the new law from the Federal Stimulus Package.

Superintendent Rath gave a PowerPoint presentation on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (AARA) through which the funds from the Federal Stimulus Package will be disbursed. The intent of the AARA is to spend the funds quickly to create jobs and improve student achievement while insuring transparency, reporting and accountability. The law, she stated, has two (2) goals. The first goal is the economy for the short-term and the second goal is education and essential public services for the long-term. There are also two (2) areas of funding that should be coming to the District. One area of funding is the allocation of additional funds to the existing federal Title I grant for reading, the special education IDEA grants and educational technology. She went on to explain that these grants have very strict rules about how the funds are dispersed. Assistant Superintendent Rob Prohl added that the funds received from the federal grants cannot supplant existing District funds.

The second area is the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, of which 81.8% is allocated for the support of public elementary, secondary and higher education plus early childhood education programs and services; with the remaining 18.2% allocated for education (school modernization, renovation and repair), public safety and other government services. Superintendent Rath also stated that how the 18.2% of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund will be distributed is the Governor’s decision and that this section of the Stimulus Package is the most difficult to predict.

Superintendent Rath recommended that the Board invest the one-time AARA funds thoughtfully and not to fund unsustainable continuing commitments after the funding expires. She reminded the Board that the federal programs can fund only new items and further suggested that new technology, new special education staff and new contract services...
be removed from the operating budget and be applied to the federal programs that are getting the increased funding in order to help lower the budget.

Recommendations were given by Superintendent Rath to set a new goal for a 0% tax rate increase, vote on the budget at the Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, March 11, 2009 and wait for the rules on ARRA stimulus money before making further changes.

After the PowerPoint presentation, Superintendent Rath reported on CHS registrations and staffing proposal and the Rundlett world languages proposal for 2009/2010.

Superintendent Rath and Business Administrator Michele Croteau presented and explained proposed cuts in the 2009/2010 budget that were in response to requests arising out of the public hearings for a 0% increase.

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed budget cuts, the CHS registrations and staffing proposal and the Rundlett world languages proposal. Concerns were expressed about the effect on students that decreases in the RMS world languages area would have, and revisited the .6 FTE music teacher position.

Clint Cogswell made a motion to accept all proposed reductions and lower the budget to a 0% increase. Chris Casko seconded the motion.

Discussion continued with some Board members apprehensive to vote on the cuts as is, with some areas still not finalized and more areas that need to be looked into for the possibility of further decreasing the budget and increasing revenue. The Board was reminded that revisions may be made to the 2009/2010 Budget until October 1, 2009.

Laura Bonk called for a vote on the motion to accept all proposed reductions and lower the budget.

    The Board voted 7 – 1 (Ms. Patterson voted nay) to accept all proposed reductions and lower the budget. The proposed reductions will stand as presented and the budget will be lowered to a 0% increase.

Laura Bonk stated that on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, a public Board meeting at 5:30 p.m. will be followed by a non-public meeting. At 7:00 p.m., a public special Board meeting will be held to vote on the approval of the 2009/2010 Budget.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Bonk, Chair
Michele M. Croteau, Recorder

MMR/srr