

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
April 29, 2010**

**PRESENT:** Thomas J. Lacey, Chairperson  
Victor Pap, III, Vice Chairperson  
Michael Molisse  
Patrick O'Connor  
Kevin Whitaker

**ALSO PRESENT:** James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer  
Michael Gallagher, Director of Administrative Services / I.T.  
Robert Conlon, Town Councilor  
Mary Jo Livingstone, Superintendent of Schools  
Matthew Ferron, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Sean Guilfoyle, Chairman, Weymouth School Committee  
Karen Berry, Weymouth School Committee  
Gail Sheehan, Weymouth School Committee  
Gerry Murphy, Weymouth School Committee

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Adele M. Cullinane

Chairman Lacey called the Education Committee meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Ms. Livingstone gave a PowerPoint presentation on **SCHOOL FUNDING AND CHAPTER 70** – specific to determining **Net School Spending (NSS)** requirements and an overview of the impact and obvious conditions and challenges given the FY11 School Budget.

Sean Guilfoyle, Chairman of the Weymouth School Committee, speaks on what has and what will be happening to the educational system in Weymouth. He believes Weymouth's educational system is at a "crossroads" which will define what Weymouth will become in the years ahead. The decisions being made in the coming months could literally crumble the foundation of a longstanding commitment Weymouth has always had to an excellence in education. Mr. Guilfoyle mentions the manner in which the students and Parent Councils are working to raise money for sports and other extra-curricular activities-- but it will not be enough.

Mr. Guilfoyle makes note that Weymouth is in violation of Net School Spending mandates and believes we are the only town in this position and the School Committee must speak for the silent majority of the Town.

Chairman Lacey reiterates what the intention of tonight's meeting is hoping to achieve as an "informational meeting" and not open to public commentary. The public hearing has been scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Livingstone explains what Chapter 70 is and how the local town contribution plus Chapter 70 money equals the NSS formula. When Ms. Livingstone went back to try and figure out why we were not meeting NSS, they recalculated all the numbers and found there was a significant error in reporting to the DOE in 2008; it occurred in the Employee Retirement Contribution line item and also in Health Insurance. Since this discovery, Ms. Livingstone, the CFO Jim Wilson and the external auditors have agreed upon the corrected financials that have been sent in to the DOE and DESC for correction. Based on the new, corrected totals, the NSS shortfall for FY11 is projected to be (\$3,904,196).

Ms. Livingstone explained that municipalities that fail to comply with the NSS requirements could face refusal of their tax rate set by the DOR; enforcement action by the Attorney General; and/or a loss of state aid; all of which just exacerbates an already bad problem.

Chairman Lacey asks if there are any questions the Councilors may have before they proceed to the FY11 budget presentation.

Ms. Livingstone explains to Councilor Pap that the '08 valuations are still being used for the '11 budget. A one-time revenue waiver was applied for in October, 2009 by the town which was denied. The Mayor's office has submitted an appeal to that denial.

Mr. Guilfoyle states that an Act of the Legislature will have to correct the discrepancies to the actual numbers posted for '08.

Our State Representatives have already filed this bill according to Councilor O'Connor. Councilor Lacey feels as though we have a freight train heading for us and that we need to rectify this problem now so that we are under the 5% and we are not penalized by the DOR.

Chairman Lacey sees we have a structural problem throughout the town and school and that we have 3 options: Proposition 2 ½, increased fees or a windfall of revenue.

Ms. Livingstone talks about per student expenditures and that we do not have the money to even adequately educate our students for FY11.

### **FY2011 Budget for Schools**

Ms. Livingstone stated that they have submitted a "level service" budget meeting, the contractual obligations, step increases to provide the services needed and are still \$4million short. Ms. Livingstone further explains that currently it is in the administrative teams hands and there will be a formal presentation this Monday night at School Committee. She believes we need to make the reductions in such a way the schools and the schools populace will recover from them; that there is also a structural deficit in the Town that we have to have a remedy for. Ms. Livingstone suggested that one solution is to close a school which they would rather not do. If that was done, the class size would increase (28-35 depending on the grade) to accommodate all the children from the closed school. The paraprofessionals will only be those that are specifically required in a student's I.E.P. More professional staff positions are being cut. The classroom cannot be protected anymore. Ms. Livingstone explains that when the "bumping" process is completed due to attrition, retirement and lay-offs, she will have a better handle on the number teachers/paras who will be eliminated.

Councilor O'Connor questioned if any "talks" have been held between the Weymouth Teachers Union and the School Committee regarding trying to find a way to get through these next fiscal years. Mr. Guilfoyle asserts that meetings have taken place with "special teams" assembled with possible "give-backs" (teacher annual raises).

Chairman Lacey makes it very clear that no matter what cuts or provisions are made to work within the budget, that it has absolutely nothing to do with the deficit we have in NSS.

Councilor Whitaker asks what kind of analysis or budgeting is being done, not just for now but for multi-years going forward.

Ms. Livingstone replies that she hasn't done multi-year budgeting in 2 years; as it is very difficult to predict in these times. The monetary issues are directly responsible for curriculum coordinators and specialty teachers being cut. She believes we have a tremendous deficit issue not just affecting the schools but the town as a whole.

Mr. Guilfoyle explains how MCAS tests are now the determining factor in whether a student can graduate or not; that they are now putting much emphasis on the MCAS that teachers no longer are able to teach basic education. He does not believe one test should qualify what a student's schooling career should end up being.

Councilor Lacey read a statement from Commissioner Mitchell Chester to Ms. Livingstone that Mayor Kay read to the Council at the beginning of the budget season and was made a part of this years budget (dated 3/10). The message was prompted because of amendments and reviews of towns below NSS. Special permission was requested to have the '08 and '09 filings be amended with the corrected numbers. They have amended these numbers and are now just waiting for the legislative action to take place.

**A MOTION was put forward by Councilor Kevin Whitaker to receive a written, legal opinion from the Town's Solicitor, George Lane, as to the town's ramifications or liabilities in not meeting the net school spending mandate. Councilor O'Connor seconds this MOTION and is UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:45 PM, there being no further business, A MOTION was made by Councilor Pap to ADJOURN and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted,  
Adele M. Cullinane, Recording Secretary

Approved by Chairman Thomas J. Lacey