

SPECIAL MEETING-MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
APRIL 5, 2006

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the special meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 6:37 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Clouette, Haddad, Hawkins, Koehn, Paterson, Paulhus, Redding, Schaefer  
Absent: Blair

II. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

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III. NEW BUSINESS

Board of Education

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Mayor Paterson welcomed the members of the Board of Education and staff. Present for the Board of Education: Gary Bent, Mary Feathers, Min Lin, William Simpson and Shamim Patwa. Staff present were Gordon Schimmel, the Superintendent of Schools and Fred Barruzzi, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. Simpson presented an overview of their budget noting that the increase is a modest 4.27% over the present year. Salaries and benefits increased 2.61% and make up 82.5% of the overall budget. Due to an enrollment decline three classroom and one support service positions have been eliminated. This change presented the Board with an opportunity to fill some long-deferred professional development and instructional support positions. Two language arts consultants and one math consultant are included in the proposed budget.

Mr. Clouette requested that the Board be cognizant of the need to explain to the taxpayers why when enrollment is declining staffing is not declining as quickly. Mr. Schimmel commented that the proposed new positions are crucial for the development and coordination of teachers and have been needed for a long time. Mr. Clouette noted that on page 4 "increase" should read, "decrease".

Ms. Koehn requested figures showing the difference in salary and benefits between the eliminated staff and the proposed staff.

Mr. Hawkins raised the issue of regionalizing all of K-12 as suggested by the Ashford First Selectman. The Board expressed some concerns that the political and budget processes in the other two towns are different and might not be beneficial to Mansfield schools. Mr. Simpson noted that all three schools are making an effort to better coordinate their programs so students arrive at the high school similarly prepared.

Responding to some concerns regarding foreign language exposure from Ms. Redding, the Superintendent stated that currently French, German and Spanish (starting in second grade) are offered. Ms. Lin informed the Council that Mandarin

Chinese is offered in an after school program.

In a discussion about energy conservation and the schools, Ms. Koehn commented that she would like to see more from the Board, as well as from the Town, to promote conservation. Mr. Schimmel enumerated some of the programs currently in the schools.

Daycare

The Daycare Board sets the budget for the Center.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A motion to move into Executive Session was made by Mr. Paulhus, seconded by Ms. Redding and passed by all.

Present: Clouette, Haddad, Hawkins, Koehn, Paterson, Paulhus, Redding, Schaefer  
Also Present: Peter Curry

PERSONNEL ISSUES

A motion to move out of Executive Session was made by Mr. Paulhus, seconded by Ms. Redding and passed by all.

V. ADJOURNMENT

- A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Paulhus, seconded by Mr. Schaefer and passed by all.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk