

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 2, 2005

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Wednesday, February 2, 2005, at 5:03 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Tim Steele, presided.

Board Members Present: Tim Steele, Crystal Kennedy, Jeff Friedman, Jake Metcalfe, Mary Marks, Macon Roberts (arrived at 5:04) and John Steiner (arrived at 5:07).

Others Present: Jan Christensen, Enid Hunter, Mike Henry, Patricia McRae, Jerry Sjolander, Gail Opalinski, Eric Tollefsen, Janet Stokesbary, Marie Laule, George Vakalis, Loretta Nabong, Ray Amsden, Pam Chenier, Stan Syta, Steve Kalmes, Brent Rock, Mark Mew, Larry Petersen, Mike Klawitter, Rhonda Gardner, Michelle Egan, Larry Wiget, Robin Siegfried, the press, and other interested people.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Tim Steele Presiding

B. SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Crystal Kennedy announced that the Legislative Subcommittee is scheduled to meet this Friday at 11:30 a.m. in the Administration Building.

Jeff Friedman announced that the Policy Subcommittee is scheduled to meet this Thursday at 8:30 a.m. in the Administration Building.

C. CONSENT AGENDA

FY 2005-2006 PROPOSED FINANCIAL PLAN (REVISED) (SECOND READING)

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to prepare the Anchorage School District's FY 2005-2006 Proposed Financial Plan as set forth in the projected revenue and expenditure schedules in the memorandum (Attachment B). The total budget recommendation is \$569,575,515. This includes individual fund budgets currently projected as follows:

commented that this is an example of how the assumptions frequently change.

Tim Steele stated that the Administration did an excellent job on this budget and things are changing and will continue to change. Also, Mr. Steele commented that he thinks that the fact that we have not heard a lot from folks is a sign that the District did a good job on it.

John Steiner noted on the day of the first reading he had a column in the local newspaper inviting people to comment and he received one email questioning the new position in testing and assessment. The concern was does the testing and assessment department promulgate the tests, collect the data and report to the public and if so, why is a new position needed. Mr. Steiner responded by explaining that the reason for the new position is to begin the process of doing the data analysis to determine which students are scoring a certain way, what kinds of programs and curriculum materials they are getting, and eventually we would like to tie the scores of the students to the kind of professional development the teachers are receiving so we can see if teachers who get a certain type of development have students who tend to score in a higher or lower range. If it turns out there is no difference then we will have to assess whether that is valuable professional development. It is a very complicated thing to do because there are so many things that can affect a student's scores and so many inputs may be variable so it takes people with high level skills to do the analysis. Ms. Comeau confirmed that his reply is accurate. Mr. Steiner added that not everyone will like every aspect or size of the budget but people did have an opportunity to comment and if they don't speak up there is not much we can do to accommodate their concerns. Mr. Steiner hopes that it indicates that the public by and large is satisfied that we are doing as good a job as we can with the resources that we have.

Mary Marks stated that she had questions on the music instrumental usage fees and wanted to raise the fee five more dollars, but after getting information back from the Administration it helped her understand the broad picture of it. Most of the PTAs pay for the fees for the families that cannot afford to pay for the instruments. Not all of the PTAs are very active and so for the families not to have the opportunity to be accessible to the different instruments it can damage a child's learning ability, especially if their heart is really into doing those types of things. Ms. Marks stated that she changed her mind and did not bring forth the amendment for raising the fee an additional \$5.00. A lot of the money comes out of the teachers as well as the PTAs, and that's a lot of money coming out of our teachers, especially after they were asked to cut the

supply funds. So you can begin to see the red flags coming up and we really do need some assistance from the community and different organizations to step up to the plate and help make sure that our kids will be successful and have that opportunity to be able to play in a band, or orchestra, and begin to learn music. Ms. Marks added that she appreciated the staff giving her a broader perspective of how this works.

Carol Comeau responded to Ms. Marks that every 6th grader who wants to participate in band or orchestra may do that. However, we need to continually ask the community if they may have an instrument just gathering dust in their homes that they would be willing to donate to the District, which would be a tax deduction for them. Some PTAs are in a position to assist but it is our responsibility to try to find instruments for those children whose families cannot afford to buy one. We continually encourage the community to donate instruments if they can.

Tim Steele cautioned everyone that this is not the end of the budget process - there is still a long way to go. The budget goes to the Assembly on March 29. We are still looking to the legislature for what level of funding they will provide. It will probably be June before we make final adjustments. Mr. Steele thanked everyone for the tremendous effort they put into this budget.

VOTE:

Ayes: Metcalfe, Kennedy, Marks,
Steele, Friedman, Steiner,
Roberts

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED

Ms. Comeau thanked all staff at the department level and school level for their support in working through this budget process.

John Steiner noted that on February 12 the legislative caucus will take public testimony. They will be talking about education and Ms. Comeau will tell them that the District based the budget on the level of funding promised from the Governor, but it still did require cuts. It would be helpful if the public would also go and let the legislators know that we are depending on at least that level of funding coming through and we could use more in addition to that from the state level. The Board could certainly use that support.

Macon Roberts announced that he made a mistake at the first reading of the budget on January 27 when he advocated for an endowment. Mr. Roberts said it would possibly produce 10 percent on the investment. After further review, Mr. Roberts found it is from 4, 5, and 6 percent and obviously, the lower the investment the lower the risk, so an endowment would be a low risk possibility. It would still produce a mere \$50 million a year. Tim Steele agreed and added that in his mind we do need some mechanism to give education a stable and adequate funding source. An endowment is one way to do that.

Mr. Steele announced that five Board members will be going to Juneau the week of February 12 to speak to the legislators, and tell them what our needs are, what we cut and did not cut, and to ask them to treat us well. Carol Comeau added that a copy of the District's budget memo is also being provided to the legislators because there is a lot of good back-up information in it regarding how the budget was built.

D. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of February 2, 2005, was adjourned by unanimous consent, at 6:30 p.m.

Tim Steele, President

Jeff Friedman, Clerk

Robin Siegfried, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved