

**EAST HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL BOARDROOM  
35 WHEELBARROW LANE  
EAST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06513**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2011  
6:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mrs. Maisano, Mr. DeNuzzo, Mr. Hennessey,  
and Mr. Palladino

**ARRIVED LATE:** Mr. Pompano (6:11 p.m.)  
Mr. Scalesse (6:15p.m.)  
Mrs. DePalma (6:40 p.m.)  
Mrs. Vineyard (6:46 p.m.)  
Mrs. Kluth (7:00 p.m.)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Serio, Superintendent of Schools  
Mrs. Forti, Assist. Supt. of Curriculum & Instruction  
Mrs. Acquarulo, Director of Pupil Services  
Mr. Lathrop, Business Administrator  
Mrs. Lewis, Finance Manager

**1. OPEN MEETING**

Mrs. Maisano called the Finance Subcommittee meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. in the Boardroom at East Haven High School.

**2. Review of the Proposed Operating Budget for 2011-12**

Mr. Lathrop started the meeting by handing out a one-page document. They had met previously and decided to bring the amount of monies up for the math textbooks at the Middle School and the library books.

Mr. Pompano arrived at 6:11 p.m.

He asked if there were areas they would like to cut to get to that number. He would defer to the Board as to whether they wanted to leave it at 2.17% or bring it down further. Mr. Pompano stated he was not comfortable with the \$957,000. He would like to see what they could do to get it down to just what the cost was for going with all-day kindergarten. The cost of all-day kindergarten was \$446,000. The difference was about \$500,000.

Mr. Palladino stated he had given everyone a copy of a proposal. He sat down with Paul Hongo and the Mayor and they offered to take over maintenance completely and keep our employees here. There was \$600,000 allocated for maintenance that they could use for all-day kindergarten. He thought it was a good way to go. They took care of all of the grounds and they could take care of all of the buildings. He thought they should sit down and make an agreement and try it for a year or two to see how it works out. They could not give the Board any less money this year than last year. Mr. Palladino stated they would like us to concentrate on education and not buildings and grounds.

Discussion regarding the Food Service part of things was also discussed and Mr. Palladino was not sure, but he would ask them about taking that over too.

Mr. Scalesse arrived at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. Hennessey stated that the State keeps the Board of Education separate for a reason as far as we have our own maintenance. He thought that maintenance should be under their control because of children being in the buildings. Mr. Palladino stated the custodians would still work under the direction of the principals. Our people would still be in our buildings. Mr. Hennessey did not think he was right. Once they had someone else that was not affiliated with the charge of those people, they could put them out on the plow crew one night. Mr. Palladino stated other towns had done this and Mr. Serio stated it was a nightmare.

Mr. Pompano stated the Town took over our grounds over 20 years ago and the Town had some of the best ball fields in the State of CT. A number of municipalities in this State house both the Town Hall and the Superintendent all under the same roof. Mr. Hennessey felt he was missing what he was trying to say and that was, we have to control it. That man (the Superintendent) says now here and it is done. Mr. Pompano stated that at any given moment, at any time, if we said you know what, this is not working, we as a Board could collectively take it back. Mr. Hennessey stated it was not

that easy, you have to fund it at that point. There was discussion on whether or not this could be taken back and whether the monies would come back to the Board if they wanted maintenance back. Mr. Hennessey stated the Board acted here as an agent of the State and protects the State's money because they fund half the system up here. Mr. Palladino stated the safe and best way to utilize that money was that all-day kindergarten was the way to go. Mr. Hennessey stated who knows; he did not agree with that. There was discussion on whether all-day kindergarten was the right way to go.

Mr. Pompano spoke about how the Town responded to an issue of leaking at the ice rink on Friday night and how by 10 a.m. the next morning all the persons were in place to assess and evaluate and go ahead with a hockey game at 1 p.m. Mr. Palladino spoke about the crack they found at Momauguin School and how by Saturday morning the engineer was there. Mr. Travaglino clarified that the Town had nothing to do with what happened at Momauguin School. He stated that Mr. Serio and he had contacted the building inspector and architect. His guys had shoveled the roof and when he personally asked Public Works to help them, they were too tired.

There was discussion on what the Town side had to do for snow removal compared to what the school personnel had to do with eight buildings for snow removal. Mr. Travaglino thought they should ask the Board of Ed employees who was there and who wasn't there, and who did the work and who didn't do the work. Mr. Pompano said the Board of Ed has one employee and that's the Superintendent of Schools and he told us he put a team together. Mr. Travaglino stated whom did he think that team was. Mr. Palladino told him to read the letter, which he had not received, and a copy was then given to him.

There was discussion on some of the issues that might transpire by combining two different unions with different seniorities, as well as when the Town and Board shared a Finance Director and how each paid him a portion of his pay. Mr. Hennessey stated that he worked for that man right over there (Mr. Serio) and what he was really saying was this was a serious move and they should seriously think about it. The State wants things set up like this. If you lose control of taking care of our buildings, it's a huge mistake. Mr. Serio stated they did not have to make a decision tonight, and Mr. Palladino stated it wasn't like they were going to vote on this tonight. He stated this was something worth looking into to save \$600,000 and utilize it for education instead of buildings.

There was discussion on the solar panels and how the Town would maintain them but the Board would benefit from all of the money that came back from them. Mr. Hennessey stated that solar panels were a terrible return on your investment. The comparison of houses to school buildings and return on monies invested was discussed.

Mr. Lathrop hoped that in this meeting they would get a consensus on what the Board of Ed wanted to bring forward to the Mayor as far as a request. Mr. Palladino stated they also had to think about if they received a zero, how do we get to that number and get our school system doing the things we want to do for the children of our community if the budget we get includes no increase whatsoever. This was probably what was going to happen because they were in a deficit. Mr. Hennessey stated they were \$400,000 in the hole this year and could not afford to do all-day K, so how would they be able to do it next year.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked Mr. Palladino if they received a 0% increase from the Town, did they have to scrap all-day K. Mr. Palladino stated he was not in charge of the finances. Mr. Pompano stated he would not support anything that did not have all-day K. He felt that strongly about the educational benefits of all-day K. Mr. DeNuzzo would love to have all-day K. Mr. Hennessey stated he would support nothing that included all-day K. He was fiscally conservative and this Town was broke.

There was further discussion regarding all-day K. Mr. Serio spoke about all the changes they had accomplished over the last two years even with a 0% increase, but they had had to find the monies somewhere and that had been in the reduction of staff. If they hadn't had the Jobs Grant to hire back the displaced teachers, they would not have been able to do that.

There was discussion about taking monies out of other departments in order to fund this, but eventually they would end up in the red. They had been in the red for the last three years. When they cut back on hours, they end up with a problem. They could start looking at non-certified positions and paraprofessionals.

Mrs. DePalma arrived at 6:40 p.m.

Mr. Serio stated they saw what a zero budget and a 1.1% budget looked like. Adding all-day K scared him in the other line items because he felt they were just making too many assumptions. They would be pushing that debt forward into the next fiscal year. It was difficult and he did not relish the idea of coming out of the box with another zero. There would be some expenses over the \$440,000 for all-day K and they would need some Capital Improvements to their buildings to house it.

There was discussion on how the monies would move forward into each year and the \$440,000 would need to be absorbed. These were tough decisions. They had been able to maintain and do things through some real difficult economic times. Mr. Serio had spoken with Mr. Palladino about wanting to be part of those conversations on how the plan would work with the Town taking over the buildings and grounds. Mrs. DePalma had some strong concerns. Mr. Serio stated you had to start looking at what the consequences were down the road and who you were affecting. It took everyone sitting at a table. It takes longer than one meeting to make something like that happen.

Mrs. Vineyard arrived at 6:46 p.m.

Mr. Serio worried about the extras like another World Language Teacher at the Middle School, an additional ELL teacher and two more Special Education teachers. That was close to \$200,000 right there and it adds up very quickly. They had closed two buildings and reconfigured the schools and if they wanted all-day K they would need portables for that. They needed to talk about the things they needed such as space at Ferrara school and more classrooms at the Middle School and they had to acquire the funding to make those programs work and revise the curriculum at the Middle School. They had to make wise decisions.

Mr. Pompano stated that Mrs. Maisano would take them through the line item by line item process as they did last year. They needed to get the ball rolling on the architectural designs, etc. and they needed to be made in advance.

Mrs. Maisano was concerned with where they were in the 10<sup>th</sup> hour on February 7<sup>th</sup>. They had no solid figures and this was the first time she had seen this letter and was a little confused as to what the exact amount would be for this. Was there money on here? Mr. Palladino stated they would take the money they currently had budgeted for maintenance in the amount of \$600,000. Mr. Lathrop went over the figures that were in the maintenance

accounts and what fell under them. Mrs. Maisano added up all the figures minus the salaries and it was \$1.2 million. Mr. Lathrop stated it was almost \$1.3 million. Staffing was \$327,000 which covered four maintenance men, one crib clerk and the Director of Building and Grounds. Mrs. Maisano said they were taking \$1.2 million out of the budget and adding in \$440,000. She stated the numbers still don't work. Mr. Pompano stated he thought they were taking the \$1.2 million out and then he thought they were just asking for what they got last year giving themselves \$300,000 off of their \$2.17 request. If you cut that down to the \$440,000, that's almost \$700-800,000 to our favor. Mr. Lathrop thought there were a couple of potential challenges to that. He stated Mr. Serio had reined him in to become more conservative. His recommendation, if they wanted to move forward with this, was to develop a shared service agreement between the Town and Board of Ed laying out what their responsibilities would be and what ours would be and add some numbers to it.

There was discussion on who would be responsible for the salaries of these employees should it be taken over by the Town.

Mrs. Kluth arrived at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. DeNuzzo stated that they were just contractual contracts and they would not really work for the Superintendent anymore, they would work for Ralph Mauro and the Town, so let them assume their salaries. Mr. Pompano stated these were conversations that would take place in a subcommittee meeting. Mr. Serio was completely on Board with this. Mr. DeNuzzo asked Mr. Serio if he was completely on board with this. Mr. Serio stated no. Mr. Pompano stated if Mr. Serio was completely on board with this, this was why sitting down with the Town at the table and discussing it out between all stakeholders would take precedence.

There was discussion on approving the budget tonight. Mr. Palladino stated when they went into the regular meeting, they could vote on the budget that they propose. This was only the first step of it and perhaps during the back and forth they could put this in and make it work.

Mr. Pompano stated that during the last couple of subcommittee meetings they discussed that they absolutely would not be taking money away from textbooks and anything of that nature. They had talked about some changes and did not associate any numbers with his statement. They were just looking

at some system changes to make those savings. Where and how they get there, he was not sure. That's what they needed to discuss collectively.

Mr. DeNuzzo stated they were still at the 2.17% these last two weeks and Mr. Pompano stated that 1.01% was for all-day K. There was discussion regarding what the total would be if they added in the textbooks and reading books.

Mrs. Maisano stated she did not feel comfortable taking that number as a plug number from the Buildings & Grounds; there was too many uncertainties. She thought they should go with the 2.17% and hope, wish, and pray they get it. Mr. Hennessey stated he agreed with her. Take it from there and keep meeting and finding a differential somehow. Have the Town come in and give us a plan. Mrs. Maisano was not objecting to giving some maintenance to the Town but they needed a clear plan.

Mr. Palladino stated the Mayor's office wanted to talk to them to get this to go. He had no problem bringing them in and discussing this. If the general consensus was we're not interested, it was not a problem telling them that either. His personal opinion was if they could save a \$1 million by not fixing buildings and having them do it, he was all for it. Mr. Pompano stated the letter did not have any numbers; it was an invitation to talk and they should be receptive to that. **Mr. DeNuzzo stated that as legal chair he would like to get a legal opinion as to whether they can even do this.**

Mr. Serio felt that when all parties discussed this and gets a feel for how this plan was supposed to look like, they would come against some stumbling blocks and controversy with the bargaining units. Mrs. DePalma stated that negotiations would be affected as well. They were in the middle of negotiating half of these contracts. Mr. Serio stated this letter was an invitation to engage in conversation from what he saw. Mr. Palladino asked if there was a general consensus from the Board that they were willing to talk to them about this. Most everyone seemed to be in agreement except Mr. Hennessey. He did not like the whole premise behind this. It was against our State mandate. There was further discussion on the control of the buildings.

**Mr. DeNuzzo stated they do set policy and procedure as a Board. There were many State statutes that govern education, that none of them here were aware of, that might have an impact on us. Before they step**

**forward, they should know if any statutes that prohibit them from doing this.** There was some agreement regarding this. The Board continued to talk about the pros and cons of handing over control of the buildings and who would ultimately have responsibility and say what was needed. Mrs. Kluth stated you don't give up control over anything. It would be a constant battle with them over the schools when you call them and ask them to something and they were too busy and couldn't get around to it. Mr. Pompano stated at any moment they could retake control with a vote to take control back. Mr. Hennessey told him that they could not get funding and they would never get it back.

Mrs. Maisano stated it was 7:15 p.m. and there was a room full of people and an enormous agenda. She asked for a motion to adjourn.

**3. Any other business that might rightfully come before this subcommittee.**

There was no other business this evening.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. DeNuzzo and seconded by Mr. Palladino. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**MRS. CHRISTINE MAISANO, CHAIRPERSON  
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**