THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Special Meeting - May 27, 2003

MINUTES

The School Board of St. Lucie County held a special meeting in the teachers’ lounge at Southern Oaks Middle School that began at approximately 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: DR. JOHN CARVELLI, Chairman

Member Residing in District No. 3

MS. CAROL A. HILSON, Vice Chairman

Member Residing in District No. 2

DR. SAMUEL S. GAINES

Member Residing in District No. 5

MRS. KATHRYN HENSLEY

Member Residing in District No. 4

DR. JUDI MILLER

Member Residing in District No. 1

ALSO PRESENT: DR. WILLIAM VOGEL, Executive Officer/

Superintendent of Schools

WORKSHOP TO REVIEW STAFFING BUDGET 2003-2004

Chairman Carvelli started the meeting and Mr. Tim Bargeron, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, reviewed a spreadsheet detailing the recommended staffing changes and related budget impacts for 2003-04. The spreadsheet contained all staffing change requests (additions, reclassifications, reorganizations, etc.) to ensure that all requests had been considered. The requests that survived the multiple internal reviews were listed in the right three columns L, M, and N. Those “Phase 3” recommendations had been further divided into categories: budget; on hold, and reserve. The net budgetary impact of each column was provided on the last page of the handout (line 140).

The $1,737,472.28 was made up of

a) Additions - 1 new AC foreman (OPPAGA), 10 new bus drivers, 9 new ESE teachers, 11 new elementary school teachers, 3 new middle school teachers, 14 new high school teachers, the Director of Staff Development, and the Executive Director of Zone 1 (OPPAGA).

b) Reductions - 2 warehouseman positions, 3 security positions, 6 middle school deans (OPPAGA - transfer to classroom positions).

c) Other - Reorganize the Medicaid and Student assignment functions, and reinstate the 2002-03 contract lengths of various instructional-support positions (originally reduced during last year’s budget cuts).

The $66,351.33 “On Hold” column was made up of

a) Additions - MIS Network Support Technician (OPPAGA)

b) Other - Reorganization of the Maintenance (OPPAGA) and Transportation departments

The $2,374,227.30 “Reserve” column was made up of

a) Additions - 10 new bus drivers (growth), ½ year overlapping salary for the new Director of FTE/Position Control, 1 new school psychologist (growth), 1 ESOL program manager (growth), 40 new teachers (growth), 1 new custodial position (growth), and 1 new secretary (to support the new Zone 1 Executive Director).

Mr. Bargeron related some late budget information he had received late in the day from the state level. On a statewide basis, the district was looking at 4.56% total money per student (unweighted FTE) when the class size reduction was backed out. The total increase statewide was $837.4 million. Of that, $468 million was class size reduction with some other categoricals mixed in (lead teachers, summer reading program) . Mr. Bargeron was trying to give a clear picture of what was occurring with funding, e.g., the statement “school districts were getting over 6% new money” was a valid statement but when class size reduction, growth, other categoricals were pulled out, it was actually .88% increase per student. That figure did not take into account the fixed costs that the district has to support with the .88% increase. Mr. Bargeron indicated he received information that showed the district would get $12.7 million in new money next year. In looking at the categoricals statewide, there was 44.1% of the statewide budget that was discretionary revenue. Applying that 44.1% to the $12.7 million, Mr. Bargeron calculated the district would receive $5.2 million in discretionary revenue.

Dr. Gaines asked if there would be a statewide backlash since the state was taking more funds instead of coming up with more funding. Dr. Vogel stated until more information was received, he was not sure what the penalty would be to get the reduction of 2 students per classroom. Mrs. Hensley stated another concern was the money the state found for this year would not be there to support education next year because it was out of trust funds.

In comparing growth and fixed costs to the district revenue of $5.2 million, the 973 students that the state was projecting for growth in St. Lucie County, the district would hire at a 25 to 1 ratio a total of 39 teachers at the current average totaled $20,028,000. Total fixed costs of $6.4 million meant the district would not have enough to handle growth and fixed costs. The district’s class size reduction amount was $5.6 million for operating costs. The Department of Education was expected to come out with the district’s target number where it needed to be in October. The Department of Education did not have the data--they did not know what a particular school’s ratio currently was.

Discussion continued on state funding and future potential problems. Board members were concerned about proposed cuts pertaining to deans, but the need for more teachers was a pressing matter also and Dr. Gaines suggested waiting to see where the district was financially before making cuts.

Ms. Clara Cook, President of CTA/CU stated she saw several reclassifications that she was not sure about--they were not in the classroom. Dr. Miller indicated the budget wasn’t balanced so far so something would have to give and the Board may have to go back and take another hard look.

Ms. Hilson was very disappointed about the deans and security positions--the number one priority was safety for students and teachers and she was not willing to sacrifice them. Dr. Gaines concurred and mentioned there were some problems in the way they operated that made it hard to justify the numbers of security staff. Dr. Miller agreed and mentioned the OPPAGA report that suggested the Board take a look at those areas but if cuts affected students and their safety, that would be a problem.

Discussion ended and Chairman Carvelli adjourned the May 27, 2003 budget workshop at approximately 5:40 p.m.