

LWV OBSERVER REPORT FORM

Board or Commission: West Hartford Board of Education

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2010

Members present: All (Bruce Putterman by phone)

Nature of meeting Routine X

Special _____

Called to order (time): 7:04 p.m.

Adjourned (time): 7:47 p.m.

Action taken:

The main item on the agenda was presentation of the superintendent’s budget, which the board voted unanimously to accept for review.

By way of background, Superintendent Karen List told the board that the average budget increase for the past four years, including the current year’s zero increase, has been 3.8%. During that period, the district cut 6.3 certified positions, plus 18.3 full-time and 31 part-time non-certified positions. A wage freeze for administrators and some union employees saved \$330,000 this year, and cuts to the supplies budget saved another \$864,000. Total savings over the past four years amounted to \$4 million. West Hartford currently ranks 97th among the 169 Connecticut towns in per pupil spending. Her proposed budget for 2010-11 calls for a 4.37% increase to a total of \$126.7 million and contains no new programs or positions. This bottom line breaks down as follows:

- “Roll-forward” budget (maintains all current services) +5.72%, +\$6.95 million**
- Salaries (includes reduction of 5.8 elementary and 2 high school staff positions due to lower projected enrollment) +3.3% , +\$2.71 million
 - Benefits (+12% medical costs, required contributions to pension and retiree medical reserve fund) +14.3% , +\$2.98 million
 - Services and Supplies (driven by Special Ed Excess Costs, Magnet Tuition, textbook purchases) +.9%, \$1.25 million

New Initiatives 0

Reductions (including 19 Full-time Positions) -1.35%, \$1.64 million

- Elementary World Language Program 11 FTE, \$718,000
- World Language & IT Dept Supervisors 2 FTE, \$196,000
- Supplies \$141,000
- Pupil Services 2 FTE, \$134,000
- 1 Maintenance, 1 Clerical Staff 2 FTE, \$132,000
- Alternative Middle School Reduced to 1 School 2 FTE, \$80,000
- Other (including increase in pay-to-play to \$125) \$237,000

Total +4.37%, +\$5.3 million

The meeting schedule for reviewing and adopting the budget is as follows:

Wednesday, March 10, 2010 - Budget Work Session #1 - Regular Instruction including Supervision of Instruction

Thursday, March 11, 2010 - Budget Work Session #2 - Special Instruction, Pupil Services, General Support Services

Thursday, March 25, 2010 - Public Hearing
Budget Work Session #3 - Immediately following Public Hearing - Budget Review

Tuesday, April 6, 2010- Regular Board Meeting - Adoption of the 2010-2011 Budget

All will begin at 7:00 p.m. in room 314 at Town Hall.

The entire budget document is available on the WHPS website at <http://www.whps.org/whps/budget>.

Dr. List announced that Ellen Stokoe, principal of Morley School, is a finalist for the elementary principal of the year award from the statewide principals' association and that Duffy Schools is a finalist for a national School of Character Award.

The next regular board meeting will take place March 16 at 7:00 p.m. in room 314 at Town Hall. Preceding that meeting at 6:00 p.m. will be the Education Liaison Meeting between the board and the town council. That meeting is also open to the public, though no public comment is allowed.

Observer name: Kathy Wilson