

APPROVED REPORT – 2/7/12

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2013 OPERATING BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Tuesday, January 17, 2012
Ridge Ruxton School

The hearing was called to order by President Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esquire at 7:02 p.m. In addition to President Schmidt, the following Board members were present: Mr. Michael H. Bowler, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Mr. George J. Moniodis, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Ms. Valerie A. Roddy, and Mr. David Uhlfelder. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, staff members, as well as media, were present.

The following persons offered testimony:

- 1) Mr. David Basler, Chief Shop Steward and Trustee, AFSCME Local 434 – Urged the Board to support the proposed FY13 operating budget. Mr. Basler asked the Board to support the funding of salaries as well as appropriate increases in staffing positions to maintain new facilities. He also asked the Board to retain training and continuing adult education (cohort) within the budget. Mr. Basler stated that, as the state seeks to shift state pensions to the county, AFSCME will continue to oppose the shift of this responsibility in support of bus attendants.
- 2) Ms. Kathleen Cave, President, Parents and Performing Students (POPS), Hereford High School – Asked the Board to add \$17,000 in the operating budget for digital light in Hereford High School's auditorium. Ms. Cave presented a petition of over 600 signatures of parents and constituents in support of the new lighting. She stated that renovations are on hold and that students are performing in the dark. Ms. Cave asked the Board to use carry-over funds from the FY12 operating budget, if available, to purchase and install the new lighting.
- 3) Mr. Tom Brush, Vice President, Parents and Performing Students (POPS), Hereford High School – Asked the Board to add funding in the budget to upgrade the lighting system in the school's auditorium from analog to digital. He stated that if the Board would not approve the addition of funds, the next step would be to reach out to the community for their support on this project.
- 4) Mr. Philip Doccolo, Parent, Towson High School – Asked the Board to support funding of Chinese V and VI at Towson High School. Mr. Doccolo stated that there is a teacher at Towson High School that is willing to teach Chinese V by moving her from 0.7 FTE to 1.0 FTE.

- 5) Mr. Michael Voelcker, Parent, Towson High School – Asked the Board to fund Chinese V and VI at Towson High School. He stated that the students stepped forward when offered the program and would like it to continue beyond Chinese IV. He stated that this unique situation requires unique attention by the Board.
- 6) Ms. Mary Anne Docolo, Parent, Towson High School – Asked the Board to fund Chinese V and VI at Towson High School. She stated her son was involved in a two-month exchange program and was able to advance from Chinese II to Chinese IV. Ms. Docolo expressed concern that when her son returns from China this year, he will be unable to advance since Chinese V is not available. She stated that the students were promised a six-year program.
- 7) Ms. Abby Beytin, President, Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO) – Applauded efforts to maintain funding levels for school budgets. She stated that allowing the number of necessary teachers to be hired and keeping class sizes as reasonable as possible is a paramount for the school system's continuing strength. Ms. Beytin thanked the Superintendent for his willingness to fund step increases, while ensuring that there would be no furloughs and no layoffs of bargaining unit employees. She stated that TABCO is ready to work with the school system to urge the County Executive and County Council to fully fund the FY13 proposed operating budget.
- 8) Ms. Nancy Ostrow, President, PTA Council of Baltimore County – Expressed concern about the shifting of teacher pension costs from the state to counties. She requested that careful consideration be given to the testimony provided by individuals, PTAs, and other organizations. She stated that PTA Council requests that the school system continue to take the appropriate measure to prevent or minimize the duplication of programs and initiatives and that existing programs are analyzed to ensure that funding currently in place is achieving the goal of increasing student academic performance. Ms. Ostrow stated that the PTA Council would appreciate clear communication as to why certain programs or expenditures cannot be budgeted.
- 9) Ms. Jessica Paffenbarger, Chairperson, Citizens Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education – Asked the Board to take into consideration the needs of the county's gifted and talented students. All students deserve access to the same opportunities to reach their maximum potential, which is outlined in the *Blueprint for Progress*. She stated that challenging curriculum and adequately trained teachers and administrators are critical to fulfill the mission for these high-ability students.
- 10) Ms. Deborah Schwengel, Parent, Towson High School – Asked the Board to fund Chinese V and VI at Towson High School. She stated that the students are excited about continuing in the program.

- 11) Ms. Jean Suda, Parent, Dulaney High School – Asked the Board to consider reversing the high school student allocation ratio from 20.9 to 19.9. She stated that Dulaney High School would have received 88.32 FTE; a reduction of 9.35 FTE, which could increase class size. Dulaney High School’s PTA is scheduled to vote on this request at its meeting on Friday, January 20, 2012. Ms. Suda stated that, after approval from the PTA, a copy of the graph with the data would be provided to the Board.

- 12) Mr. Douglas Dunkle, Teacher, Franklin High School – Applauded the proposed budget to increase staffing by 123 teachers and that cuts are wide-ranging and removed from the classroom. He encouraged the Board to talk to teachers, principals, and department chairs who implemented the cuts this fiscal year. Nine positions were reduced at Franklin High School for this fiscal year. Mr. Dunkle stated that seniors are allowed to leave school early if they have completed all of the required courses instead of remaining in a parallel enrollment program. This discourages students from continuing studies, and teachers are losing an opportunity to teach the students.

The hearing was concluded at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

JAH/bls