

Monday, April 28, 2003 – Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting

April 28, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Finance Chairperson, Katrina Murray, called a Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the committee room at city hall at 6:35 p.m., for approval of billrolls and discussion of the FY04 budget.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Mayor Gay (arrived 7:15 p.m.), Alderman O'Donovan, Ms. Bauer (arrived 6:47 p.m.), Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Murray, and Ms. Rossetti.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Marie B. Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration, and Mr. Anthony C. Caliri, Human Resources Manager were also present, along with approximately eight members of the audience.

III. Approval of Billrolls

After discussion:

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to approve the FY2002 Billrolls as presented this evening. The motion was approved by voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Harris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, to approve the FY2003 Billrolls as presented this evening. The motion was approved by voice vote.

IV. FY04 Budget Discussion

Before FY04 discussion began, Board of Alderman President, Mr. O'Donovan reported that Mr. William White, Finance Chairman will be having a Public Budget Hearing on Tuesday, May 13, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Alderman Chambers. Mr. O'Donovan invited school committee members and the public to attend.

FY04 Discussion:

Dr. Argenziano provided information regarding the FY04 Budget Analysis along with the summary of projected cuts for 2003-2004 budget previously discussed at the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting on March 24, 2003. He discussed the differences between the Governor's Budget and the House Budget that was released last week. The Superintendent presented and discussed the following reduction options as they relate to Salaries and Operations and the impact of these options on the school department. They are as follows:

- A) FY04 Proposal (March 2003)
 - \$39.5 Salaries
 - \$10.7 Operations
 - \$50.2 Total (3.5% Reduction from FY03)

- B)
 - \$39.0 Salaries
 - \$10.2 Operations
 - \$49.2 Total (5.3% Reduction)

IV. FY04 Budget Discussion (cont.)

C)	\$38.5	Salaries		
	\$ 9.7	Operations		
	\$48.2	Total	(7.3% Reduction)	
D)	\$38.0	Salaries		
	\$ 9.7	Operations		
	\$47.7	Total	(8.2% Reduction)	
E)	\$37.5	Salaries		
	\$ 9.7	Operations		
	\$47.2	Total	(9.2% Reduction)	

In March 2003, Administration presented a FY2004 budget of \$50.2 million dollars to the School Committee that included layoffs. Last week's House budget cut \$9 million from the City of Somerville. The school department, usually one third, could anticipate a cut of \$3 million. Dr. Argenziano outlined what would happen if you take the \$3 million reduction from the figures listed in items A through E, above. In discussing item #B, he explained that a 5.3% reduction would bring us to a \$49.2 million total, a figure that we cannot go below. The Superintendent wanted to prepare the committee if we do go below this. It will affect our class size and the Question 2 Implementation Plan that was presented. Our Kindergarten choices will be extremely limited and we may even have to reconsider going back to half-day Pre-Kindergarten and half-day Kindergarten. There will be more layoffs. One or more buildings may be affected. The Superintendent stressed he is holding to the \$49.2 million figure as it will be devastating to take any other option because if we do so, what the Somerville Public Schools is truly about, will be gone. After completing his presentation, lengthy discussion followed and Dr. Argenziano answered questions asked by school committee members.

Ms. Murray expressed concern regarding from which budget scenario the Mayor is considering taking the cuts. After bringing the Mayor up to date on tonight's conversation, the Superintendent asked Mayor Gay if the school department was to take one third of the proposed House \$9 million reduction from \$52 million or \$50.2 million? Mayor Gay responded it would be \$50.2 million. When asked by Ms. Murray if she could give the committee a figure to work with, Mayor Gay stated she could not do so at this time, and after what has been explained this evening, it seems we are looking at the figures that total between \$47.7, (Option D) and \$47.2 million, (Option E). The Mayor stressed nothing further will be known until the Senate presents its budget. Mayor Gay reported that Mr. McGinn will be in attendance at the May 5, 2003 Finance and Facilities Committee meeting to further discuss this issue, as there may be additional information to report at that time.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary