

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Discussion on Proposed 2010-2011 Budget**  
**Special Meeting of Budget Committee - March 24, 2010**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**Forbes School**

**CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order by Ms. Cogswell at 6:04 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

Attending from Board: Susan Cogswell, David Oliver, and Ellen Hoehne

Also Present: Frank Rubino, A. Bates Lyons, Ken Traub, Paul Cavagnero, Chris Leone, Sue Domanico, and Bill Joslyn

**Public Speaker & Topic**

Jennifer Dion spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She explained in detail the roles that the Library Media Specialists play in the schools.

Marjorie Pettersen spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She is not in favor of decreasing these positions to part time.

Debbie Calabrese spoke in support of Mr. Leone's decision to add a Literacy Support teacher to Southeast School.

Jackie Guido spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She states taking library time away from students is hurting them. William Guido, an elementary student, also spoke about the good things he has experienced in regards to the Library Specialist.

Barbara Hengstenberg spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. Their many skills support both the students and the teachers.

Marilyn Hoitt spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She stated that she thinks they are especially valuable in the areas of technology and collection development.

Mr. Leone addressed Ms. Hoitt's concerns regarding technology. He stated there will be technology CEUs offered in professional development prior to the school year. The other option will be to allow people to gain CEUs by taking the State standard.

Mindy Hobson spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She wants to keep library books in the students' hands.

Barbara Bourque spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists because of their positive effects on student's learning skills and achievement.

Michelle Anderson spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She works as the Coordinator of the Family Resource Center at Vogel-Wetmore, and she stated that one of their main priorities is early literacy, literacy for all, and family literacy, and that is where the Library Media Specialist collaborates greatly with the team.

Cheryl Ann Martinotti spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She stated that her daughter thrives with the support of the Library Media Specialist at her school.

Susan Pelchat spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She feels cuts here will affect the foundation of education that is already built into place in Torrington.

Mary Lee Quinn spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She believes Mr. Leone has given people hope about a better future with technology, and she encouraged him to look at the entire program before making these cuts.

Morgan Kolukisa spoke in support of full-time Library Media Specialists. She is a student who has benefitted from the support of a Library Media Specialist.

Chris Leone thanked everyone for their comments. He stated that there are numerous hard decisions that will have to be made, and he believes next year will be even harder. If the 6 Library Media Specialists were maintained, with no paraprofessionals, between \$80,000 and \$100,000 would need to be increased or reallocated. For 6 Library Media Specialists and 5 paraprofessionals, an estimated \$250,000 to \$280,000 would need to be reallocated. Under current considerations, 1 extra guidance counselor would cost about \$75,000 plus benefits. The projected benefit number increase is \$1.88 million, depending on where claims finish for the rest of the year and the staffing number for next year. Mr. Leone also gave a number in the range of \$875,000 for keep staffing as it is today.

BOE members asked questions and commented about how access to the media centers will be impacted if the reduction in staffing is implemented, contractual inferences in regards to a paraprofessional being able or unable to perform certain specific duties, if the line item for professional development covers part of the salaries of the library media specialists, impact of going half time with the paraprofessionals when the media specialist is absent, how the contractual elements of the media specialists restrict more instructional time for the students, opening up dialogue in regards to getting help outside of the traditional union contracts, looking at what \$100,000 for the additional media specialists really means to the Torrington taxpayer in 2010, and the need for parental support for the budget.

Mr. Leone cautioned that what lies ahead is very uncertain economically, especially in regards to state aid and local revenue. So getting too much now makes continuing and sustaining impossible, and it makes the impact more dangerous and severe for the students. It's not a perfect budget, but it's a tradeoff. He tried to hold class size and technology needs as a standard.

Ms. Cogswell announced on Wednesday, March 31, there will be a meeting of the entire Board of Education with recommendations from the budget committee. The full Board then needs to make a full recommendation to the City of Torrington by April 15, 2010.

Mr. Leone asked that Board members email him any questions that they have in advance of the March 31st meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m. All were in favor.