

**Oyster River Cooperative School District
Joint School Board and Advisory Budget Committee Meeting
July 27, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. High School C120
Meeting Minutes (approved by ABC)**

I. Call to Order: Henry Brackett called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Anne Knight was appointed to record the minutes for this joint meeting between the School Board (SB) with the Advisory Budget (ABC) for reviewing the ABC's charge and composition.

Attendance:

SB: Henry Brackett, Jocelyn Quinn, Ann Wright, Ann Lane, Jim Kach, Krista Butts

ABC: David Proulx, Leslie Martin, David Taylor, Rob McEwan, Jenna Roberts, Anne Knight

Administration: Leon Levesque, Sue Caswell

Absent: Megan Turnbull (SB), Tom Merrick and Lisa Allison (ABC)

II. Discussion:

1. Review of Charge for ABC as devised Fall 2010.

David Proulx (DP) opened the discussion by noting that ABC's charge is very broad so that last year a great deal of time was spent finding its way. The ABC prefers to assist SB with budget development and review, thus requesting more clarity on what it should be doing vs what it was doing. Ann W noted that discussion on April 4 (6??) did not make anything clearer. Sue C noted that ABC needs more clarity about how to present the decisions and suggestions to the Board. Jim K asked if Administration (Admin) should be included in the ABC charge #2, especially in terms of information gathering, making ABC a liaison between Admin and SB. DP noted that it should be a two way conversation allowing Admin to bounce ideas off ABC. Jenna noted that we have tried to serve as resources to Sue C when possible. Ann L inquired about how we get feedback from the community so that we get more empathy for what the community is concerned about, which has not been part of the process to date. DP commented that community feedback has not been part of the process early in budget development. When Sue C suggested that Admin meet regularly with community members and town officials in Lee and Madbury (occurs in Durham already), Leon Levesque (LL) noted that he has begun the process of meeting with town officials in all towns and Sue noted how that has occurred in certain circumstances before. Jocelyn recommended that ABC provide research and track trends with other schools, as well as provide a budget analysis so that SB does not go through it line by line. Rob M noted that he already is doing some comparative metrics at State level but wants more guidance from SB about what analyses they want to see (such as for SPED, salaries and benefits, break-down by grade level, technology, etc.).

Copies of the original Composition and Charge document were available. **Henry moved that #2 of the Charge be changed to read “May serve as a resource to the School Board and Administration on budget issues.” Jocelyn seconded.** Krista suggested that budget goals be used as defining point for how the ABC serves as a resource. An amendment was added by Henry and seconded by Ann L to say, “as defined by the SB budget goals.” After discussion of the amendment, it was removed by 5-1 vote

with Ann W opposed. **The original motion was approved 5-1 with Ann W opposed.** Both LL and Sue C commented that they welcome ABC input on the budget.

Jocelyn moved that trend information and graphs be included in budget process as part of the ABC charge. Ann L seconded. Ann W asked the Admin to indicate what they would want. LL referred to David Taylor (DT) who had asked to step back and identify what the SB wants in terms of analyses. DT wants more clarity about how the ABC should approach the budget development process. Ann L suggested that the charge be vague so SB can ask for specific help when they need it and that Sue C could identify what is needed. DP noted that the ABC prepared a report last year without any direction from the SB but we want to know if that was the right thing to do. In particular the ABC would like to hear SB recommendations on how to improve the budget process, and the following comments were made:

- Henry suggested reports be made periodically with recommendations during the process.
- Krista agreed that things that the ABC did last year be added to the charge.
- Jim commended the ABC for its report last year with its framework and agreed a district strategic plan needs primary attention.
- Ann W noted that last year the SB worked closely with Admin and rejected specific ABC recommendations in order to adopt their own changes.
- DP reiterated the ABC suggestion that the SB set budget goals, Admin craft the budget, ABC work with Admin to understand and provide feedback on the budget, and ultimately the Admin present the full budget to the SB and ABC's report will reflect that they had worked with the Admin in order to avoid misunderstanding that occurred last year. DP suggested that final budget presented for a vote show "recommended by the SB and ABC".
- Ann L suggested focusing the discussion on the ABC Report recommendations
- Rob reiterated that we need to look beyond the community to the state and nation as ABC presents the data.
- Anne K urged the group to move beyond what happened last year during the process, and clearly define what we want as we move forward.

Jocelyn clarified her motion suggesting that #5 be added to the ABC Charge as: "Will provide periodic summations on budget areas as they are discussed and provide a written report at end of the budget process including any process and/or reporting recommendations for future years." Ann L seconded. Passed unanimously 6-0.

Jocelyn moved to change to charge #1 to say "May conduct in-depth analyses on spending best practices and local and national trends in specific budget areas." Ann L seconded and passed 6-0.

Ann L moved charge #2 from "May" to "Will." Jim seconded. Passed 5-1 with Ann W opposed.

Jenna noted that "Budget Advisory Committee" in title be changed to "Advisory Budget Committee".

Purpose restated: "To form an advisory committee that becomes educated about the ORCSD budget and provides recommendations to the School Board that meet the need of students, and is

fiscally responsible to taxpayers.”

Committee composition:

Bullet 1: Increase maximum of members from 7 to 9.

Bullet 5: Change = A chair, vice-chair, and secretary should be selected by the committee on an annual basis.

Bullet 7: added = a non-voting SB liaison should attend all ABC meetings.

2. *Review of ABC Budget Process Recommendations*

Discussion of Budget Goal Setting: DT wanted clarification of ABC's role in budget goal setting. Ann W does not want the ABC to change the budget goal amount or suggest cutting programs. Jocelyn suggested that goal setting begins with the Board but would like to see that the first meeting for Goal Setting include the members of the ABC. Henry agrees that ABC be included in the discussion of goals. Rob noted the ABC's concern of setting goals that include dollar amounts that ABC may recommend changing during budget development. Ann L suggests that the ABC find ways to save dollars by recommending areas for efficiencies.

DT wants clarification if the ABC must work within the confines of the Board budget goals. Jenna noted how factors change during the year that may change the goals so perhaps recommendations reflect changes that may be outside the goals.

DP reviewed ABC's summary of the key recommendations to budget process from its FY12 Report. Jocelyn suggested that all budget processes recommended by the ABC be undertaken.

Ann L focused on #4 to define ways to include the public in the budget process.

Krista moved that all recommendations in the ABC Report be adopted except #1 and #5 but Henry noted that a motion is not needed since these are only recommendations.

Ann L reported that Megan Turnbull stated from afar what areas need focus for this year and Henry pointed out the Areas of Focus for FY13 in the ABC Report. Everyone agreed the FY13 Areas of Focus need to be more selective.

3. *Business Administrator/Interim Superintendent's Guidelines for FY13 Budget Development*

Jocelyn explained to LL how the budget was developed in the past. Then Leon Levesque, Interim Superintendent, explained his budget approach for FY13 (see handout provided) as will be explained to the Admin team – including, expect spikes each year in certain areas; determine a 3 year average in order to establish what would be predictable and sustainable spending levels from year to year for staffing, supplies, etc.; and use new enrollment projections to make projections about staffing. All this data will be brought to the Board. He will identify hard costs about benefits by getting body count by buildings, in order to justify projects in each building. He will decide how to present the information to the public with help of ABC. He will meet with towns, look at expenses and revenues, and hopefully do predictable funding.

DP asked if the SB needs to present a budget goal number in order for Leon to do his job. Henry explained there are educational models that are being put in place but no dollar amount is necessary.

He suggested zero-based budgeting as an exercise for the school district.

Leon suggested a SB subgroup meet to formulate budget goals. Krista has kept a list of the goals from last year and they can be reviewed in August. **Henry and Krista will develop a draft of the Board budget goals that does not include a bottom line number.**

4. *Proposed Budget Calendar*

The calendar provided by Sue C reflects the process just discussed about the role of ABC to review each section line by line followed by SB budget workshop with periodic updates/reports from ABC.

5. *Other – None*

IV. Adjournment

Krista moved adjournment and Ann L seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Knight, Secretary ABC