

## **FALL RIVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **PUBLIC HEARING to discuss the Proposed FY15 School Budget**

**Monday, May 19, 2014  
6:30 PM**

**Morton Middle School  
1135 North Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720**

### **MINUTES**

At 6:37 PM Mayor Flanagan called to order the public hearing for the 2015 FY Budget of the Fall River School Department in accordance with MGL Ch. 71, Section 38N. He noted that copies of the budget were available for public review at the Fall River Public Library and the School Administration Building.

The Mayor then read the Open Meeting Law and led the salute to the flag.

Mayor Flanagan announced that there were three citizens signed up to speak.

1. Rebecca Cusick, FREA President

Ms. Cusick thanked the Committee for adopting the \$99M operating budget and that their advocacy is appreciated. The next task before them was to help others understand that they are at a crossroads and need to choose the right path. The Department of Education feels that they no longer need a state appointed monitor; however, if they do not fully fund their schools, class sizes will increase, programs will be cut and they will lose the progress they have made. She is hearing that the city cannot afford to fully fund the schools and she asks "how can we afford not to?" Schools are not a financial drain; they are an investment with the potential to draw businesses and middle class families to the city which in turn gives a higher tax base and a greater quality of life. Education is an economic issue and it must be messaged as such but talking about how important education is is meaningless if the students do not get the education they deserve. As a teacher, parent, and tax payer, she has a vision for our schools. She wants schools to be places filled with joy where students love to learn and teachers love to teach. She wants them to be innovative and creative and for students to leave high school ready to pursue whatever dreams they may have. In closing, she asked that they do everything they can to not go backwards.

2. Omaida Montanez and Joseph Correia

Mr. Correia introduced himself as a graduate of the Gateway to College (GTC) program at Bristol Community College (BCC). He was there on behalf of all the students in the program to thank the Committee for their continued support of the program. He pointed out that with

him today were a few of their foundation semester students in GTC. The program is designed to give students a second chance at achieving a high school diploma but he feels it also changes lives. He was accepted into the program in 2012, when he was 16-years-old. He explained that the traditional high school model did not work for him and that GTC is a program like none other. It provided him with a nurturing, caring, yet challenging environment which he attributes to him becoming an honor roll student who earned a high school diploma and college credits at the same time with no cost. He has started working as an Assistant Manager to a large business retail establishment while also enrolled full-time at BCC in the Human Services Program. He interns for the GTC program and is able to give back to the program that did so much for him. He said he spoke for all past, present, and future students in the program by saying "I don't know where I would be if Gateway to College didn't find me."

Ms. Montanez said she believes GTC is one of the greatest programs the city has. It has changed high school students into college students as well. She thought it was great that they kept the program and said it was an honor to be in the program. She has graduated and is a full-time student at BCC as well.

Mayor Flanagan said he did not see any further names listed to speak and asked if there was a motion to close the public hearing.

Mr. Costa asked through the Chair if there was anyone who came in and did not realize the procedure and wished to speak.

Mayor Flanagan asked the audience if there was anyone who wished to speak that had not signed up. No one came forward.

**MOTION: Mr. Maynard – Mr. Costa: To close the Public Hearing.**


**All were in favor**

**None opposed**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM**

Mayor Flanagan said that closed the public hearing on the FY15 School Budget and the Committee would reconvene at a later date in order to vote on a number to send to the City Council. The date would be posted.

Respectfully submitted,



Interim Administrative Assistant for  
School Committee Services

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Interim Administrative Assistant for School Committee Services.