

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH  
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
Monday, May 5, 2008**

**Chairman Long called the Town Council Workshop to order at 8:00 p.m. and thanks the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools for their attendance at this meeting.**

**The following were in attendance:**

**Chairman James Long  
Vice Chairman Shawn O'Neill  
Councilor Roxanne Frenette  
Councilor Robin Dayton  
Councilor Sharri MacDonald  
School Board Chair Kay Dutton  
School Board Member Dennis Robillard  
School Board Member Deborah Evans  
Superintendent of Schools Eric Matthews**

**The Chairman introduced the purpose of the workshop and thanked the School Board and Superintendent of Schools for the courtesy of their participation. He then introduced Gary Curtis who has been knowledgeable and helpful in budget considerations. Mr. Curtis indicated that in conversations with Jim Rier of the Department of Education (DOE) that the DOE, with concurrence by the Attorney General's office and the Maine Municipal Association (MMA), is that after the Council votes on a final approved number for the school budget, it is up to the School Committee to fill in the eleven cost center allocation sheets in the column so provided, with new numbers that add up to the Council's approved number, if it differs from the School Department's requested amount. The laws provisions are to insure a more transparent School budgeting process and to provide the voters with the fullest information possible. The law also states that once the approved amount is determined by the Council, the eleven cost center reallocation(s) must be filled in the final column of the polling place information sheet and delivered to the Clerk by the next day after the Council approval.**

**Chairman Long then asked if members of the Teacher's Union might present the budget considerations they presented to the School Board a few weeks ago but the Chair of the School Board, Kay Dutton, expressed her opinion that this was taking the authority away from the School Board. The Chair said that was not the reason for the request but rather an opportunity to encourage the School Board to consider another option than the \$10.2 million they are asking for the budget. The Chair also indicated that the Town Council, present and past, has done the most to see that the tax rate not increase and that with the economic considerations that all citizens are facing with food, energy, gas and other**

increases in costs that the Council's objective is to keep the tax rate where it presently is. In response to a proposal by the Town Manager, Steve Gunty, which would reduce the school budget to \$9.5 million from the \$10.2 million being requested by the School Board, the School Board asked the Education Association to present their consideration. The School Board's budget proposal was heavy on cutting teacher positions while the Education's proposal would cut more administrative personnel. The Association members present said that under their proposal administrative positions that would be cut could be reinstated on a regional level after the School Department consolidates with the Town of Dayton and the City of Saco.

Councilor Roxanne Frenette, Shawn O'Neill and Chairman Long said they were interested in the Educator's Association proposal and praised the teachers for coming up with the plan. They showed it is possible to save eleven teachers and the consensus of the Council appeared to be the desire to save teacher's position. Chairman Long applauded the teacher's proposal and said he was all for saving teachers positions. Councilor Sharri MacDonald said that the proposal was no good. It was a tough proposal to look at she indicated. She said she was opposed to consolidation and hoped the Town voted it down. By cutting administration positions, the proposal did not protect the students during the consolidation because there would be no administrators to help with the transition. Councilor Frenette said that there will be a region wide transition team elected to help with the transition. Councilor Robin Dayton said she was disappointed with the division between the School Board and the Education Association and the fact that the plan assumed consolidation.

It was pointed out by several that consolidation is mandated by the State and that Old Orchard Beach would face penalties if it did not comply with it. Dean Plante said that he had confidence in the School Board that they would develop a decent final proposal. Superintendent of Schools Eric Matthews said that he had encouraged an alternate viewpoint from the education staff and he was confident that at the next School Board meeting on May 14, the two groups could develop a plan together. Councilor O'Neill, Frenette and Chairman Long said that they would be in favor of the reduced school budget to keep taxes down. Councilor Frenette said that if teachers were cut, she supported a \$9.5 million budget, but if teachers were saved then she would support the Council trying to find more funding for the School. Councilor Dayton said that she would support a \$9.9 million budget.

Comments from members of the School Board included encouragement to the Town Council to give a number on which they can base their discussions. The Chairman indicated that votes are not taken during Workshops and that the School Board needed to consider the Education's proposal as well as their own and attempt to consider the number given by the Town Manager. The Education Association pledged their willingness to work with the School Board

**but also acknowledge the reality of the economic decisions having to be made for many groups.**

**The Chairman thanked the School Board for coming to this workshop and appreciated the input of the School Board, the members of the Education Association, the teachers in attendance and encouraged everyone to look at the economic situation facing our community, the budget that we have to work with, and the needs of the children as well as the citizens of our community.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**V. Louise Reid  
Town Council Secretary**

**I, V. Louise Reid, Secretary to the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, do hereby certify that the foregoing document consisting of one (1) page is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Workshop held on May 5, 2008.**

**V. Louise Reid**