

Date: 2/3/99
To: Members, Board of Education
From: Chris Manaseri
Subject: Backup for February 9

It's a crazy week here, and I have to start this memo to you earlier than normal just because of the way my Thursday and Friday are shaping up. Hope it ends up looking something like the actual meeting does.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

1.0 CBO is still in the news. Waterloo said yes, Seneca Falls said give us a week to chew on this still. Larry Driscoll went to their meeting to help try to promote it, and I spoke to him the next day. He was concerned still, that Jerry and Mike were not pushing their Board in any direction at all now, and the Board seems to be floundering instead of steering itself. God, I appreciate you guys! We'll know more on Tuesday and I'll be able to give you the latest update at that time. In looking at our budget and at the CBO studies, I had concerns because of our upfront costs. I ended up sending an hour with Larry and Deb Goff at BOCES Wednesday afternoon about the actual upfront costs we will need to include in our budget. We had eliminated Pat Conover's spot since the studies were done, so they both compare last year's costs rather than current year. Also when we add money to the BOCES line under finance that shifts money away from computer services and employee benefits that we get to deduct there. Bottom line looks like we will spend about \$16,000 more in order to make \$46,000 in aid. Hey, \$30,000 is a teacher!

Bonnie and Gloria are in the know, and I've assured them that once we know whether it's two or three ways, we will get Larry and others down here to smooth the transitional waters. I would really LIKE it to be a three way so we can go to the Office Building and have less of a sense of being swallowed up by one larger district, without any hassle.

2.0 Capital Project: I meet with the architect on Thursday morning to review plans they hope to send to Albany by the end of the month. Bernie Donegan's office called with a concern that we might not have contracts signed by a year from now - that's the concern they have for the State Ed bottleneck. They wanted to know whether or not to go ahead and borrow money now, or whether to wait. I told them to go forward with the borrowing. The worst case scenario I can envision is SED taking until October or November with our plans and us not being able to bid work until December of '99. That still allows us to borrow now and sit on the money for a good long time, earning interest.

There are some new hurdles SED has put in place which might effect our cash flow on this one, too, and you should know about these. One of them is a new rule that you have to let SED know that you're doing something A YEAR AHEAD of when you plan to get aid on it. That is, they would have liked to have us tell them on the forms which were due in their offices September 1, 1998, that we plan to execute a project in 1999 that will effect the money they're going to owe us in 2000! Ridiculous! BUT, Mark Wagner faxed me a revision to our SA100 that had to be in Albany by February 1 to qualify to get us our aid in June of 2000. We should be okay, and if we're not, Mark tells me we'll get the money in September instead of June, though it will still be bookable for 99-2000 schoolyear. This is important because we have to show the debt service payment and the accompanying aid in the budget we propose this spring (as you will see).

3.0 Kidspace: Barb and I met with Roland Smiley from SED, Bonnie Nicastro from BOCES, Phyllis Powers the Regional Associates from VESID, and representatives from Kidspace Wednesday afternoon at Newark. Mr. Smiley is about to approve their education program for the youth home they propose to have running by September. We want to make

certain that all the T's are crossed and the I's dotted when it comes to any programmatic or cost factors we might have to pick up for any of their kids including the most probable candidates for outside contact- the transitioning population.

After a two hour session, it appears that we will see no financial impact, nor are we likely to see any kids in our programs. It does appear that we'll have to spend some time on communication and that we may have to test any of their residents for State exams - private schools can't give Regents or other State tests? Aside from that, everyone seemed relatively assured of a successful and uneventful welcome to the community.

Kidspace project is still officially under wraps, but once the announcement has been made, I have invited them to attend one of our BOE meetings to discuss their program. They seemed very willing and eager to do so.

4.0 Worker's Comp Claim: I need to testify at a hearing on Monday regarding one of our retirees - Tommyanne Carlson - remember the sick day payback scenario of two years past? Tommyanne is now trying to get disability benefits from social security and is claiming she left us because of a work related injury! Aren't people amazing?

5.0 EPC work is still underway here, they have all their parts, and should be in elementary classrooms this coming week, making their lights go off automatically, too.

6.0 Big easy Update: I met with Lori Leenay Wednesday afternoon, too, to begin planning the presentation that Dr. Uebbing, Lori and I will be making in New Orleans on the 21st. We have a Sunday morning at 8 a.m. time slot - imagine the crowd that'll help us draw. Please note that ALL expenses for this trip will be born by XEROX and you are not paying cent for it, except the fact that I'm on your payroll for Thursday and Friday when I'm at the conference. This might be important to taxpayers as budget season rolls around. I will NOT be accompanying Rural Schools to meet with the Commissioner on Monday the 22nd, however, in large part because I'll just be getting back Sunday night. That's probably just as well, though, considering how it went last year when I spouted off. I have not heard from Mike and Harvey about legislative visits yet though, and will plan to lobby with them when the time comes.

7.0 FL Regional Health Systems has a community advisory board and I've been asked to sit on it for the coming year. This will mean quarterly 7:30 a.m. meetings and the possible promotion of RCS as a potential site for a school based wellness clinic, IF the Geneva Board opts to participate in this sort of outreach. The fiscal bottomline on these centers is usually not good for the Health systems involved, and they usually therefore rely on grant money. We'll see. Just planting the seed for the future....

8.0 Regional Curriculum Sharing is on CSO agenda for this Friday and I will be making a presentation with Jack McCabe on the work we've done at RCS and through the Title III grant to put teachers together electronically. Fits in with New Orleans and Rural Schools.

9.0 Career Day at RCS was a huge success last Friday with Sally Covert deserving large kudos for making it all work so well. Teachers were great about sharing their time, presenters were wonderful, and our kids were pretty darn good, too! Nice job, nicely done.

10.0 BOB OAKS will be in the RCS auditorium on Wednesday from 6-7 p.m. to visit with his constituents at his request - one of several whistlestops. We should plan to have some of you here to talk about school aid and the Governor's numbers. Mark your calendars!

11.0 Superintendent evaluations are all in and I'll get them tabulated for you for a potential executive session on Tuesday night.

AGENDA ITEMS:

0.0 You MIGHT have a presentation of a POW-MIA flag from the Ovid VFW. I spoke with Allan Fox of that organization this morning, and if they can arrange to have the Ovid Gazette cover our meeting on Tuesday, they'll be here with flag in hand. I suggested a ceremonial presentation to the Board (not them) as it might draw some coverage from the Finger Lakes Times. (They said they had trouble getting the Times to pay attention to them, too). I thought if we did it at a meeting it might work. If they can't get Neil Chaffee here this coming Tuesday we'll try for next time out.

1.0 Routine is.

2.0 Discussion of Governor's Budget proposal. I've included the run of proposed state aid which didn't make the papers this time around, based on the Governor's budget. I note some interesting things. One- transition aid is gone - lumped in with CORE Operating Aid. At least it didn't go away. A new category of aid is included called educational improvement - this may be the block grant approach that others are concerned about for their Universal Pre-K. In any event it is more money. Building aid is wrong again. What we should receive now that we have a new project is substantially higher. BOCES aid is down a lot, because he's still attacking BOCES. As my paycheck memo alludes to, the Governor proposes that BOCES aid be eliminated entirely by 2001. Supposedly he would make that up to us with another new category of aid, or additional dollars in other categories - yeah, right. Gives us Upstaters something to fight for and be given. When all is said and done we'll end up considering it a victory just to maintain BOCES aid at all. Also of interest is that the run compares increases over both a one and a two-year period. This suggests that somebody recognizes that we can't keep getting nothing forever and that there is some recognition of the inequity of increases last year.

The biggest concern should be the fact that the Governor proposes a 2/3 majority be required to pass a school budget that calls for more than the cost of living as its increase! With last year's reforms limiting us to two votes, we could well end up either cutting program back to meet the 1.9% limit for a regular pass at 51%, or in alternative propose and lose a budget asking for more and requiring 2/3 yes votes. If that went down, we would be forced to limit spending to 1.9% on top of last year's levels in all but capital portions of the budget. In other words make cuts in both teaching and administration! Not a pretty picture.

Reaction?

1. Oppose the proposition that 2/3 be required. Allow us to try to squeak through the improvements we need to help our kids meet the new standards the STATE is requiring of us and them.
2. Advocate for more money from Albany. Unless we're going to get a real, non-expenditure-driven increase in State aid equal to the cost of living, we can't keep our budgets and their tax impacts below that level.
3. Oppose the reduction in and eventual elimination of BOCES aid. This is a must for rural and smaller Upstate districts.

The legislature has room to add money to the Governor's proposal and they should. Our problem will be in keeping some of the additional funds coming to Romulus and not just to the Big Five. I don't expect a whole lot of support or sympathy from Mike Nozzolio as he's too busy being George's best friend. Bob Oaks may sympathize, but he's powerless to do much about anything. That doesn't mean we shouldn't bend his ear, though, on Wednesday night.

3.0 RCS Budget for 1999-2000 Draft One: Enclosed you will find a printout of the entire budget line by line for Harold, a summary sheet showing both the expenditure and the revenue side of the budget for you, and a listing of areas you might want to consider in reducing the proposed expenditures. Some notes for you:

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- Budget must include the expense for borrowing the BAN to pay for the new capital project and the offsetting revenue in building aid. That's why my far right column on the Revenue Side shows planned revenues, not just the Governor's numbers.
 - By April and third draft time, we may have different budget numbers to show in State aid, as the legislature should see increased pressure for an on-time budget with the State-wide vote date the 3rd Tuesday in May and they usually add money to the pot.
 - Non-capital project costs are up 5.73% in the proposal for draft one. That's not too bad.
 - CBO costs appear high because the current plan calls for us picking up a share of both John Baker and Kate Cooper. Remember the study showed Pat Conover as an existing cost that we eliminated last year. The BOCES number shows a shift in computer and employee benefits costs, which should allow me to cut those back by \$30,000 in draft two. (Larry showed me where).
 - This budget includes added staff as follows: School Social Worker, Secondary Reading/remediation teacher, additional part-time math (.5 to 1.0 FTE), and moving to an 80/20 split with BOCES on Sally Covert's time. These are *almost* all negotiable items. We must have the math position. We are doing without the others now and seem to be okay for the time being. New Regents Regs are not yet cast in stone on remediation of kids who don't pass State exams, so we might be able to hold off on added remediation position until the regs are more clearly defined.
 - This budget has some wish list items on it like a pole barn to replace the OSHA condemned white building, paving sidewalks and the small lot by Barb's office, replacing the old station wagon and the truck with plow, replacing cafeteria tables, etc.... Hey, that's what first drafts are for.

At tonight's session we do not have to suggest or make any cuts, we are just scheduled to review the first draft budget. We call for discussing changes to it NEXT time and we will. (Because I'll be out of town the Thursday and Friday before our next meeting, I'm trying to get you the cut stuff now - and to also allow you time to think about these things.

We should also note upfront that we can manipulate the revenue side of the budget a little bit to help control the tax levy impact. As I've told you, we can expect (so far) an okay fund balance year this current year, which would allow us to hold our fund balance roll-over at \$399,000. That would reduce the tax levy required. Also we can pretty safely show a \$10,000 grant item for Title III to offset the increase in staff development. We also could choose to show an interfund transfer from debt service to continue to fund the EPC local share. If we did all three we would be below a 4% tax levy impact WITHOUT any expenditure reductions. I suggest we consider both sides of the budget, however, and make both reductions to cost AND play with revenues somewhat.

As we do both, however, please remember that the closer you call the shots on both sides, the less fund balance you will create as available for rollover in 2000-01. In an ideal world, one budgets \$100 for every \$98 you really need to spend, and one plans to receive \$98 for every \$100 you really think you get. That way you never run out of cash. We tend to shave things right down to actual dollars and end up lucky most of the time.

I've always said I'd rather be lucky than good.

4.0 Approval from BOE to participate in a sportsmen's club scholarship. They request BOE approval although we don't usually take these things to your level. We would not be establishing a fund or holding any money, they would merely allow RCS kids to be eligible with your permission. Rather than appear uncooperative or officious, why not? Let's make sure RCS kids have every chance to get money that any neighboring school kids can get. See letter enclosed.

5.0 Barb and Mike will update you on their areas.

6.0 We have an unusual **personnel** action - a termination. Things did not work out with one of our cleaners and we decided to cut bait before he became a permanent status civil service employee.

7.0 In our usual pattern of allowing **leaves** from one job to protect an employee's interest in another position within the district we propose allowing Dorothea Snyder a leave from bus monitoring to try out cleaning full-time for the remainder of this year.

8.0 We have some additional **personnel appointments** to make, including spring coaches as recommended by Mr. AD Midey.

Expect an exec if you need one to discuss the Superintendent Evaluations. Otherwise...

That should be our Valentine's Day edition, allowing you to get home in time to spend some time with your significant others... See you Tuesday!

CM/CM

Attachments