

BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 9, 2022

The regular meeting of the Bristol Board of Education Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Bristol Board of Education Auditorium and via the Zoom meeting platform.

PRESENT: Commissioners: Dante Tagariello, Kristen Giantonio (arrived at 6:06) Karen Vibert (virtual), **ALSO PRESENT:** Jennifer Dube, Christopher Wilson (virtual); Jill Browne, Dr. Catherine Carbone (arrived 6:08), Dr. Kimberly Culkin, Dr. Michael Dietter (arrived 6:12), Orlando Calfe (virtual), Molly Goodine (virtual), Cathy Cassin (virtual), and Mayor Jeff Caggiano (virtual)

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Tagariello called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Reading of the meeting norms was waived by Commissioner Tagariello as they appeared on the screen for the public.

2. Approval of Minutes: January 12, 2021 – Regular Finance Committee Minutes

Motion Passed: with a motion by Karen Vibert and a second by Dante Tagariello.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public wished to address the board.

4. Update of 21-22 Budget

Mrs. Browne presented the 21-22 Budget Update. Mrs. Browne reported that the January 31st snapshot for FY22 shows an available balance of \$273,429. A considerable amount has been requisitioned in the Special Education Tuition lines during the month of January, a total of approximately \$745K. Mrs. Browne has asked the Special Services Department to reconcile purchase orders for every outplacement at this time, and close POs for any student no longer receiving services from Bristol Public Schools. During the closure process, we have identified \$260K that will become available in the general fund. We have approximately \$300K in expenditure adjustments for programming supplies and professional services to be processed that will be allocated to the IDEA ARP grant, once that is complete that will bring the special education balance to an overall positive \$310K. We are closely monitoring Special Education Services and we continuing to identify students within the district requiring outplacement, with particular attention to Tuition and Professional Services lines. Later this month, the administration may make a recommendation to hire additional staff in the Destinations Program which could eliminate the need for out-of-district placements for some students. Dr. Culkin and Dr. Carbone will discuss this further under the Special Services report.

Update of 21-22 Budget – cont'd

The Connecticut State Department of Education Revenue Estimate page, which details grant amounts for Special Education Excess Cost shows our first installment will be \$2,494,836. Historically, this grant is received in two installments occurring in February and May. Our next update will include this revenue, thus improving our bottom line significantly. Additionally, we are continuing our work with Compuclaim to maximize reimbursement available via Medicaid and mitigate the growing costs of special education services.

Our budget freeze continues to be in effect, Only items that directly support the curriculum, special education requirements, or facility repairs and maintenance are to be approved for expenditure from the general fund budget.

During the second half of the year, we will be reporting on revenue sources from Rentals, Tuitions and Medicaid.

5. Cafeteria Report

Mrs. Browne provided the Cafeteria Report. The Cafeteria program is successfully operating with a snapshot balance of \$454,027 as of the end of January. During 19 school days in January, we served a total of 30,284 breakfast meals and 76,317 lunches. Our participation is holding steady, exceeding our 70% daily goal. We have yet to receive reimbursement amounts from the Connecticut State Department of Education. These funds are expected soon and will improve our year-to-date balance even more. The biggest challenge in the Café at this time continues to be the availability of food and supplies. Though we are looking to expand our selections, in many cases we are unable to do so simply because the items we would like to add are not available. Our Director has done an excellent job of monitoring inventory and ordering as items become available.

With regard to availability, we are no longer partnering with Guida-Seibert Dairy. A hearing with the City of Bristol Purchasing Committee was held on January 25th, 2022, and a decision was made to debar Guida Dairy for a two-year period based on a failure to perform a public contract, specifically relating to the provision of milk and dairy products. This is in response to several issues that were reported over the past couple of months. While debarment was effective as of January 26, 2022, deliveries with Guida Dairy will continue until February 18, 2022, when the contract will be terminated. Wades Dairy will be taking over delivery to Bristol Public Schools after February 18, 2022.

Questions and discussion followed regarding the district being held to the same standard of food offerings despite the food availability issues; positive feedback for Mrs. Browne and Mr. Foulds for the work they have done to move the cafeteria to its current standing; the Guida milk matter and how the new milk vendor was selected and the status of purchases that were approved in December.

6. Appropriations Transfers

There were no transfers exceeding \$10K for the month of January.

7. Special Education Report

Dr. Kimberly Culkin presented the Special Education Report for the month of January. As of February 1, 2022, 1,697 of 8,097 Bristol students are identified as students requiring Special Education programming. This represents a 20.96% identification rate of the total BPS student population.

During the month of January, 8 of the 47 newly registered students were identified as students with special needs at the time of registration. No students newly enrolled in Bristol Public Schools were receiving their programs and services through an out-of-district special education school program at the time of enrollment. As of February 1, 2022, 121 of our 1,697 identified students require out-of-district placements at special education school programs and 71 students require special education programming services at other public out-of-district schools such as magnet schools. These numbers reflect 11 additional private out-of-district program placements and 15 fewer public school placements as compared to overall out-of-district placements the previous month. We are looking at pending out-of-district placements that may be necessary for students attending schools within Bristol but who are currently under consideration for programming in an out-of-district therapeutic school setting. In analyzing students' needs and our resources we are identifying whether or not their needs would best be met in their homeschool environment. If we increase our resources here within the district we would be able to provide for them according to their individualized student needs. This is especially true with our youngest scholars. Dr. Culkin will keep the committee apprised of any changes to the programs.

8. Discussion of Superintendent's 2022-23 Recommended Budget

Mrs. Browne opened the Discussion of the Superintendent's 2022-23 Recommended Budget. She reviewed the general fund budget request presented during the budget workshops, and highlight the changes brought to the commissioner's attention last week. After finding an error in the calculation of benefits, we are recommending the following changes to mitigate the increase.

Listed here is a summary of the components of the general fund budget:

- Bargaining unit obligations for staff currently in place yields a 1.81% increase, we have lowered this number by adding an offset of \$500K for anticipated retirements as we transition from FY22 to FY23.
- There are general fund savings in the cost of employee benefits of 0.94%, though not as much as presented after finding an error in the original calculation.
- There is an increase in Utilities, Supplies, and Equipment supporting the new facility, and increased transportation costs reflective of a new budget contract and new climate for school bus drivers and the directly related expenses that are driving the costs. There is a \$20K difference here, as we updated Professional Services for Athletics. Due to COVID-19, we have monies remaining in our athletic official account and so we have made an adjustment there.
- Decreases in Out-Placement Tuitions offset the increase to Professional Services, allowing the opportunity for reimbursement for service covered by Medicaid.

Discussion of Superintendent's 2022-23 Recommended Budget – cont'd

- School Supplies & Materials district-wide was decreased by approximately 130K. Mrs. Fortin was able to revisit costs supplies for programming supplies and move some requests over to grant-funded sources.
- We have not changed any anticipated revenue sources over last year; we anticipate \$282K more in revenue over last year.
- The requested new positions for staffing BAIMS, moving two On-Track Coordinators to the general fund, and adding 1.5 Special Education teachers as a result of a 0.78% increase to the budget.

Overall, our budget request total is a 2.20% increase over the prior year.

In review, the materials, resources, and personnel impact on the general fund across all four goals within the FY 23 budget include; additional staffing of 1.5 SpEd teachers, 2 On-Track Coordinators, additional instructors at Bristol AIMS; and the increase in year 1 of our 4-year bus contract, utilities to support a new building facility. The total of these additions and innovations is \$1,908,631.

The additions we would like to add to Grant Fund Allocations are:

- a Social Worker at BAIMS
- 2 Behavior Interventionists at the high schools
- 5 Campus Climate & Safety Supervisors and
- 1 Dean of Special Services
- Utilize ESSER ARP funding for our staffing levels at Edgewood to be maintained, for staff allocations for a School Psychologist, Social Worker, Instructional Coach, Instruction Support Specialist, Speech and Language, Head Secretary, and four (4) Paraprofessionals. Additionally HVAC projects at CHMS and Hubbell, site work at various schools, maintenance equipment, AC for data rooms, and increased security.

In total budget offsets and grant projections total, \$12, 418, 712.

Mrs. Browne reminded commissioners that the costs to the general fund would be significantly higher if we did not strategically and thoughtfully plan for:1) the closing of Edgewood as an elementary school; 2) shifted a number of staff within the middle grades to best utilize staff across all middle grade programs, 3) and maximize grant sources to best meet the needs of our scholars and district.

The total recommended general fund budget for FY 2023 would be \$124,328,000 which reflects a 2.20% increase from the current budget of \$121,650,000.

If the city wants to apply the 2% set aside surplus funds from last year which is \$2,380,440 that would be an additional allocation from the city of \$297,500.

There were no questions, Commissioner Giantonio read the motion into the record; Commissioner Vibert seconded the motion.

Discussion of Superintendent's 2022-23 Recommended Budget – cont'd

It is recommended that the Board of Education Finance Sub-Committee accept and approve the Superintendent's Recommended Budget for the 2022-23 school year in the amount of \$124,328,000, which represents a 2.20% increase to the current operating budget, and forward to the full Board for discussion and possible action at the next Regular scheduled meeting of the Bristol Board of Education on March 2, 2022.

Following a roll call vote of the committee; three (3) commissioners (Giantonio, Vibert, and Tagarillo) voted **IN FAVOR** of the motion as it was read.

9. Adjournment

With no other business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned. (6:28 p.m.)

Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Everett

Executive Assistant to the Board of Education