

**BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Bristol Board of Education Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. via the zoom meeting platform.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners: Karen Vibert, Kristen Giantoni, Allison Wadowski, Jen Dube (6:34 p.m.) and Christopher Wilson **ALSO PRESENT:** Jill Browne, Dr. Catherine Carbone, Kim Culkin, Dr. Michael Dietter, and Amy Martino

**EXCUSED:** Commissioner John Sklenka

**Call to Order:**

Commissioner Vibert called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked attendees to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Meeting norms were acknowledged by the committee.

**1. Approval of Minutes:**

**January 13, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by A. Wadowski; seconded by K. Vibert the **January 13, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes** were **APPROVED** as written. Commissioner Giantonio abstained.

**February 1, 2021 – Special Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by K. Giantonio; seconded A. Wadowski the **February 1, 2021 – Special Meeting Minutes** were **APPROVED** as written.

**2. Public Comment**

No members of the public wished to address the committee.

**3. Update of 20-21 Budget**

Mrs. Browne presented the 20-21 Budget Update. This month's report is taken from the January 31<sup>st</sup> snapshot in the 2020-21 fiscal year, in which the operational budget shows an available balance of \$3,001,035. Overall, we are continuing to move through the year as expected. We are running below budgeted amounts in all areas of the budget, except for magnet school tuitions where we remain slightly over-budget with a current balance of - \$27,863. As a precautionary measure as we navigate through the pandemic, we have issued a spending freeze at this time to all departments. We have honored some special requests for student supports, but largely we will continue to approve only expenditures that directly support the curriculum, individual education plans, or required repairs and maintenance. We will now report revenue received each month. Though at the time of the Munis report, these receipts were not yet entered, Mrs. Browne manually adjusted the summary total to reflect the YTD revenues received.

## Update of 20-21 Budget – cont'd

### **ESSER (Elementary Secondary School Emergency Relief) Funding Update:**

Connecticut will be receiving an additional \$492,426,458 in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER II) from the federal level. This brings Connecticut's total ESSER funding to \$603,494,517. Bristol has been allocated a total of \$8,074,237 as determined on the basis of our respective share of funds received under Title I through September 30, 2023. CSDE has outlined the authorized uses of the ESSER II funds, to be utilized for the purpose of targeting, measuring, and erasing the educational disparities among our students that have been further exacerbated by the pandemic. Districts are urged to implement high-impact strategies to provide opportunities to students who were negatively impacted by the Covid closure, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, disengaged youth, or those with barriers to remote learning. BPS must submit a needs assessment with our application to receive the funds, and approval from the CSDE is required. We cannot supplant funds from our general fund budget or any other grants currently in place; this funding is strictly for the continuance of student services, technology and facilities equipment needed to keep school and programming in place during the COVID pandemic.

### **CARES Act Expands Employer-Paid Student Loan Debt Repayment:**

The CARES Act provision allowing employers to contribute up to \$5,250 tax-free annually to their employees' student loans has been extended to December 31, 2025. Employers need to create a process for employees to submit requests, and payments are to be treated as non-taxable to take advantage of this extended benefit. We are in the process of setting this up and will communicate to employees once ready for implementation. Mrs. Browne thanked Commissioner O'Brien for bringing this employee benefit to our attention. We are one of the first districts to implement this benefit for its employees. The benefit is not just for employees, this benefits the employer as well. Once it is set up as a tax-free 5250, a portion of the employee's salary where they can pay off any school loans that they have collected during their time in school.

#### **4. Cafeteria Report**

At this time, the cafeteria fund is running a deficit of \$171,325. This total includes State reimbursement funds via the Healthy Snack Program in the amount of \$32,587, and follows another volatile month with several pockets of school closures. Below is a comparison of monthly federal reimbursements, comparing FY2020 to FY2021:

	SEPTEMBER REIMBURSEMENT	OCTOBER REIMBURSEMENT	NOVEMBER REIMBURSEMENT	DECEMBER REIMBURSEMENT	JANUARY REIMBURSEMENT
2019-20	\$321,694	\$372,135	\$278,185	\$190,368	\$332,203
2020-21	\$249,260	\$299,479	\$159,857	\$115,747	\$144,886
Diff	\$72,434	\$72,656	\$118,328	\$74,621	\$187,317

The total difference in federal reimbursement funding to date is \$525,356 less than this time last year, yet we do not have a deficit in the program that approaches this amount. We have maintained compliance with the Governor's Executive Order and kept all staff employed throughout the pandemic, though we have mitigated the deficit by not filling vacated positions for a period of time. As of this date we are fully staffed in preparation for the Spring. We have also provided grab and go service for remote and hybrid learners, and delivered meals to strategic areas in the community to ensure students receive healthy meals.

During January, for students attending in school, we served 8,358 breakfasts and 16,958 lunches; for students picking up grab & go meals, we served 11,068 breakfasts and 11,068 lunches, giving us a total in January of 19,426 breakfasts and 28,051 lunches served.

Commissioner Giantonio inquired about the strategic drop-offs and how they were going. Dr. Dietter reported that after briefly piloting the strategic drop-offs. We determined that we were having much better participation at the BEHS and BCHS locations. There were several complications with the strategic drop-offs. We will revisit the program when the weather improves.

## **5. Appropriations & Transfers**

Mrs. Browne presented the Appropriations Transfers:

- Two transfers for \$73,511 from Teacher Salaries to Principal Salaries. At both WB and GH, 0.5 of an Asst. Principal's salary was moved from a teacher line to a Principal line to correct a coding error. The transfer corrects a salary coding error and ensures proper salary expenditure reporting
- \$2,905 in total was transferred from a district funding line to lines at IVY, STAF, MTV and CHMS for computer lease refresh.
- \$21,505 in total was transferred from various Instructional Supply, Office Supply, Prof. Svc. and Co-Curr. Stipend lines to support wrap-around services for student instruction.
- \$1,000 in total was transferred from a District Instructional Supply funding line to lines at GH, WB CH, and NE for additional novels for English Language Arts

## **6. Special Education Report:**

Kim Culkin, Special Education Director presented the Special Education Report. As of February 1, 2021, of our 8,086 students, 1,736 students identified as eligible and requiring special education programming; that is a 21.47% representation of the students eligible. As a point of reference at the end of last school year, Bristol's eligible population was 21.17 % and that was with a total of 1,772 students. Through the month of January, of all newly enrolled students coming to Bristol 20.69% came already identified for services. Since last April we have had six (6) newly enrolled students come to us already in programs out of district receiving their special education instruction. This past January two (2) came to us already enrolled in special education programs; outside of the public school. As of February 1, 114 of our students require out-of-district school placements for

special education programming and 76 students are attending out of Bristol public school programs requiring special education programming that we support.

## **7. Adjournment**

With no other business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned. (6:49 p.m.)

Respectfully Submitted:

*Susan Everett*

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Executive Assistant to the Board of Education