

MINUTES OF THE 4J BUDGET COMMITTEE

School District 4J, Lane County, Oregon
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

May 16, 2022

6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Josh Burstein, Chair; Dakota Boulette, Gary Campbell, Tom Di Liberto, Anne Fifield, Ericka Thessen, Juan Carlos Valle, Appointed Committee members; Alicia Hays, Judy Newman, Maya Rabasa, Keerti Hasija Kauffman, Michelle Hsu, Board Committee members; Cydney Vandercar, Andrea Belz, Brooke Wagner, Kerry Delf, Misael Flores Gutierrez, Larry Williams, Andy Dey

I. Call to Order

Mr. Burstein called the 4J Budget Committee to order.

I.1. Roll Call

Mr. Burstein called the roll and a quorum was established.

II. Agenda Review

Mr. Burstein reviewed the agenda and noted there would be an opportunity at the end of the meeting for committee members to raise any additional questions and offer suggestions for the next budget process.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Burstein described the procedures for providing public comment.

Sheree Houck, Churchill High School College and Career Readiness Program Manager, expressed her appreciation for 4J students and her job with the District. She said it was imperative to consider all classified employees in the committee's discussions. She said classified employees were a diverse group that brought a breadth of knowledge, experience and skills to their positions. Their contributions were immense and long-lasting. She asked the committee to consider three things:

1. Classified employees deserve a living wage regardless of position
2. Classified employees deserve the same respect given to their certified colleagues
3. If classified employees had the skill set, knowledge and experience to perform a job, let them do it and pay them accordingly

IV. Items for Information

IV.1. Prevention Services Overview

Ms. Wagner said the District had been able to repurpose some funds from the Student Wellness and Safety Department to focus on establishing a Prevention Services unit that would gather services under one umbrella, including hiring a Prevention Services leader to work with mental health specialists, social workers, behavior safety and suicide prevention staff. The position would report to the assistant superintendent supporting instruction. The intent was to unify strategies and streamline communications internally and with community partners.

IV.2. Equity and Inclusion Highlights and Enhancements

Mr. Williams said goals at the beginning of the year included strengthening structures that were already in place. He said affinity groups existed at many of the high schools, some middle schools and a few elementary schools. Five affinity group coordinators were hired to support groups that existed and create groups where none existed. Current affinity groups were the Black Student Union, Latino Student Union, Native American Student Union, Asian-Pacific Islander Student Union and Gay-Straight Alliance Student Union. Once those groups were operating in all high schools and middle schools, four regional equity managers were hired. Equity managers had a more holistic approach than the affinity group coordinators.

Mr. Gutierrez said the District had also created a hate and bias response team, strengthened the child care program for young parents, created an equity section on the 4J website, was developing a newcomer program for emergent bilinguals and revamping a discipline matrix for K-12. He said a wraparound program began two years ago was now housed in a separate building and known as the 4J Family Welcome Center. A full description of the one-stop services for families was on the 4J website. He listed the third-party partnerships that were in place and briefly described the services that were available.

Mr. Williams reviewed the professional development for teachers and staff that focused on building capacity for equity and inclusion work.

Mr. Gutierrez described efforts to support student and staff learning, including use of the same curriculum district-wide to support emergent bilinguals and provision of professional development for EL teachers. An equity library was in the process of development and would be operational in the next school year, allowing staff from across the District to access materials. An equity newsletter was published monthly and also included resources and professional development opportunities. Also in support of emergent bilinguals, the District had purchased phones for newcomers with applications that helped translate in real time.

IV.3. Post-secondary Supports for Students to Succeed in Life After High School

Mr. Dey said the District was investing in new CTE programs and strengthening existing programs so students could choose to go into high wage/high demand jobs after high school. The District was working with industry to determine how existing programs could be enhanced and what investments could be made. Other opportunities available to students seeking college level credits were access to teachers for study sessions to prepare for tests and participation in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program. AVID services included assistance with college applications, applications for federal aid and scholarships.

IV.4. Budget Committee Discussion

Mr. Burstein thanked staff for providing such comprehensive information on programs and services in which the committee had expressed interest. He called for comments and questions from committee members.

Mr. Valle thanked staff for the information on equity and inclusion programs and services and encouraged the District to make sure the community was aware of what was available to students and families. He asked how the hate and bias response team supported teachers of color in the District. He also asked which community groups were engaged by the District and whether any civil rights organizations were included. Mr. Williams said the hate and bias team was formed to provide support in incidences of crisis and explained how a committee was formed at a school when warranted by an incident to provide ongoing support and assistance,

both to staff and students. He said meetings with community partners did include civil rights organizations to obtain feedback on 4J's efforts and ways to improve equity and inclusion work.

Mr. Gutierrez said the District was also looking at ways to better publicize its efforts to the community.

Mr. Valle urged the District to assure it was working with all civil rights groups in the community and encouraged consideration of including micro-aggressions and unconscious bias in its training programs.

Mr. Di Liberto commented that community engagement was a critical factor, as demonstrated by the involvement of community members on the Budget Committee. He hoped that the Budget Committee could be part of community outreach efforts and help determine what the public liked or where improvements could be made.

Mr. Burstein agreed with Mr. Di Liberto and said the possibility of beginning the Budget Committee's work earlier next year could be discussed at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Campbell said he was somewhat hesitant to see the committee schedule many more meetings during the year and felt there were opportunities for members to acquire information about 4J operations, programs and services through the staff presentations at Board meetings. That could also avoid having staff make duplicate presentations.

Mr. Burstein stressed the importance of engaging with the community and learning what people needed from the District. He invited staff to highlight any of the information staff had provided in response to questions raised by committee members at the previous meeting.

Ms. Belz explained there were different ways to implement an \$18/hour minimum wage, as set forth in the staff responses to committee questions. The cost to the District would depend on how that minimum wage was implemented. She said typically compensation was a part of negotiations. The Board's designated negotiator met with union representatives and discussed what was important to each side with respect to compensation, benefits or other aspects of employment. Once proposals were exchanged and agreement reached by both sides, the agreement went to the union for ratification and then to the Board for approval. This happened after the budget was adopted, which was why local budget law included a provision for a supplemental budget. At the conclusion of negotiations, typically October or November, the District calculated the additional cost to be implemented as a result of all negotiation factors. That additional cost, as a supplemental budget, was presented to the Board, which then amended the budget to recognize the additional spending and how it would be funded, typically through reserves.

Ms. Belz explained the schedule for adoption of a budget. The District was required to take certain steps prior to the Board's first meeting on the proposed budget. That meeting was scheduled for June 1. A summary presentation of the proposed budget had to be published at least five days prior to that meeting to provide the public with a high level view of the budget; the complete budget was available on the 4J website. In order to meet the publication deadline the committee's work had to be concluded by May 18. The public would have an opportunity to present testimony to the Board at the June 1 meeting, with the Board taking action at its June 22 meeting.

In response to a question from Mr. Burstein, Ms. Belz said that public testimony on the budget could be provided at the June 1 and June 22 Board meeting. The public hearing at the June 1 meeting was required by law.

V. Items for Action

V.1. Approve Meeting Minutes - April 25, 2022, and May 2, 2022

MOTION: Mr. Di Liberto moved, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to approve the April 25, 2022, and May 2, 2022, Budget Committee meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously, 12:0.

V.2. Approve 2022-2023 Proposed Budget

MOTION: Mr. Valle moved, seconded by Mr. Boulette, to Approve the Budget Total for All Funds, including the General Fund Total of \$270,328,481 and the Other Funds Total of \$277,587,598 and forward it to the Board for consideration.

Ms. Rabasa asked if the proposed budget included the pilot project for additional librarians as previously discussed by the committee. Ms. Belz said ESSER funds were available for those positions in the proposed budget if the Board so chose.

Ms. Rabasa noted that the budget included \$75,000 for ArtSpark and asked if the budget would need to be amended if \$25,000 was added for that program and how that would be communicated to the Board. Ms. Belz said funds from the community engagement would provide the additional resources ArtSpark required to operate a full program. She said in the past ArtSpark expenditures averaged \$60,000, but the budget included the amount ArtSpark had requested, although additional funds were available if needed.

In response to a question from Mr. Boulette, Ms. Belz said that universal free lunch would be supported through the General Fund in the proposed budget.

The motion passed unanimously, 12:0.

V.3. Declare Tax Rates and Debt Service Levy

MOTION: Ms. Thessen moved, seconded by Mr. Valle, to Declare the Tax Rates and Debt Service Levy for the General Fund tax rate of \$4.7485 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of the district, and for the Local Option Levy tax rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of the district, and for the Debt Service Fund tax levy of \$40,609,690. The motion passed unanimously, 12:0.

VI. Housekeeping and Next Steps

Ms. Vandercar asked for direction from the committee on presenting a recommendation for the pilot program involving additional librarians, such as the number of new positions and the schools to which they would be assigned. She also asked for recommendations to be presented to Board leadership regarding earlier involvement of the Budget Committee in the process of developing the budget.

Ms. Rabasa said she would work with Mr. Lafer to develop specific information about the librarian pilot program.

Mr. Burstein encouraged community members who were interested to submit their applications for Budget Committee membership. He invited comments and questions regarding the committee's work schedule for the next budget cycle and the possibility of beginning earlier in the year.

Ms. Thessen suggested a future discussion of formalized and established restorative or transformative justice programs in the District at all levels to address or preempt violence in schools. Those types of programs benefited everyone in the District and community. She agreed with beginning the committee's involvement in the budget process in December because of the complexities of public education and the things that were occurring in the region and nationally over the past couple of years.

Ms. Delf said the seven community members of the Budget Committee served on a rolling basis and every year the terms of two or three of them expired. Budget committee members could apply for another term as there were no limitations on terms and the Board would consider them along with any other applicants. To be eligible, an applicant had to be a resident of the District, a registered voter within the District and could not be a staff member of the District or a charter school within the District. The two members whose terms would expire at the end of June were Mr. Valle and Mr. Boulette.

Mr. Campbell said if the meeting schedule for the Budget Committee was moved forward it might be necessary to also move forward the schedule for membership applications. He expressed some concern about the amount of federal funds that was being used for funding staff. It was important to recognize that decisions would need to be made about how positions would be funded when those federal dollars were no longer available in 2024. Declining enrollment rates would also impact the budget and the District should be planning for that decrease in available resources. He also thanked the staff for their support of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Valle acknowledged Sheree Houck for her comments regarding classified staff. Regarding the future, he wanted to learn more about dual-immersion, bilingual programs, including the definition of those programs, what programs were available, were all programs receiving full support and were the same materials available in all the programs. He also hoped to see the librarian pilot program in place and asked if equity meant bilingual, bicultural librarians and mitigation of language barriers. He also wanted a discussion of mental health counselors and needs within the District.

Ms. Fifield asked about the logistics of how ideas proposed by the Budget Committee could be incorporated into the budget if the process began earlier in the year. Ms. Vandercar said committee members would need to be appointed sooner by the Board in order to begin an earlier meeting schedule.

Mr. Valle thanked committee members and staff for a very robust and respectful discussion of the District's budget and operations.

Mr. Burstein thanked community members for their contributions to the budget process and Board members for creating a structure that involved the community in the process. He also thanked staff for providing information in response to the committee's questions.

Ms. Newman, speaking for the Board, expressed her appreciation for the involvement of

community members on the Budget Committee. She felt beginning the process earlier next year could make it more meaningful and less frustrating.

VII. Adjourn

Mr. Burstein adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)