

CROSBY-IRONTON SCHOOLS  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY  
April 22, 2025

Item 7.2a

The finance committee met in the Forum Room on April 22, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. with the following present: Tommy Sablan, Mark Taylor and Hannah Wesner. Jamie Skjeveland, Rick Aulie, Taylor Demuth, Angela Bray and Bill Tollefson were also present.

2024-2025 Enrollment – The committee reviewed the year-to-date enrollment and changes since the last enrollment report to the School Board. Enrollment continues to decline, with the first Friday in April enrollment at 930 K-12 students, down from 934 the previous month. The average enrollment for the year is 947 K-12 students, converting to a weighted pupil unit of 1,035. This will be the figure used to calculate the 2024-2025 Revised Budget revenue.

Operating Referendum Election – November 4, 2025 – The committee was asked three initial questions: 1) should the School Board go out for an operating referendum election on November 4, 2025; 2) if so, for how much; and 3) what is the timeline associated with that decision? The committee consensus was to endorse going out for an operating referendum on November 4, 2025 and, following discussion, to ask for \$1.5 million, which is the same as the request on the ballot in November 2024. The timeline provided is currently acceptable. Thoughts on process involved discussion on: needing to do a better job of convincing voters of the need; to do more listening sessions; to publish prior budget adjustment ideas and acknowledge that those were heard and considered, even if not adopted; and the need to get community groups onboard to support the need for an operating referendum. In regard to a communication strategist, the committee consensus was to continue to use Rapp Strategies, who helped with the 2024 communication process, and to wait until July for Rapp to begin. There may be other things done between now and July to enhance communication of the need and to enhance collaborative listening activities.

Increase School Board Size to Seven Members – The committee discussed the concept of increasing the size of the School Board from six to seven members. This would create an odd number of members, thus reducing the chances of tie votes, in which case the motion fails. More importantly, there would be “more voices” on the Board, creating greater representation from the school community. The process would involve having a ballot question on a school election, potentially November 4, 2025, and if the question passed, then a fourth Board member position would be added to the ballot on the next general School Board member election in November 2026 with the additional member to commence service on the Board in January 2027. The committee consensus was to move forward with discussions to add a seventh member and begin the process for making that happen.

2025-2026 Pre-School Program and Staffing – The committee had previously received information regarding the plan to restructure pre-school. This will include expanded opportunities that include two sessions for full-day, five days per week, programming that will require two teachers and two paraprofessionals. It will also include one additional teacher and paraprofessional that will provide several other groups at shorter duration during the week. The hope is that plan will create a beneficial educational and developmental base for students to enter kindergarten, as well as alleviate parents needing to balance part-time pre-school opportunities with the need for daycare on the non-school days. A budgetary template was reviewed that shows that, prior to any adjustment to tuition, expenses will exceed existing revenue sources by an estimate of \$155,000. There will be tuition increases to cover the cost of the added programming, with the hope that parents will experience a transfer in cost from pre-school and daycare to just pre-school cost, with limited increase in overall cost. There is a June 30, 2024 fund balance in pre-school programs that will cover the shortfall; but, depending on the level of the shortfall, might only be enough for one year, after which plans will have to be made to adjust programming levels at more sustainable cost levels. Additional research will be taking place to determine if to- and from-school transportation opportunities might be able to be offered. There was excitement to be able to offer this level of programming and the program will be rolled out to parents.

2025-2026 Enrollment Projection – The committee received an update on the process for setting the enrollment projections. For the current year revised budget, the enrollment projection is based upon the monthly average for year-to-date. For the subsequent year preliminary budget, the most recent weekly enrollment is used, advanced a grade, and every other grade is reduced by one student to accommodate the

historical enrollment decline that happens over the course of the school year. Using this process, the enrollment projection for 2025-2026 will be at 1,028 pupil units.

Other Staffing for 2025-2026 – The committee was provided with an update on staffing for 2025-2026. Budget reduction included a reduction of one elementary classroom teacher and a .57 f.t.e. secondary Social Studies teacher. The one elementary teacher position will be reassigned to the restructured pre-school program, moving the cost from the General Fund to the Community Service Fund, pre-school funding sources; thus creating the reduction to the General Fund. The secondary Social Studies position involves the use of Student Support Aid, which was established by the 2023 State legislature, but has been unable to be used due to the constraining rules associated with the aid. A Social Studies teacher is currently enrolled in a program that will allow them to receive licensure as a school counselor before the start of the 2025-2026 school year. With that new license and new job duties, both in compliance with the rules of Student Support Aid, half of that person's day will be spent doing school counselor time and the other half will remain performing ADSIS duties. This will mean that the .57 f.t.e. position will need to be increased to full-time at 1.0 f.t.e. to provide a teacher for all required Social Studies classes. The budget reduction will occur through the shift of expense from the General Fund to Student Support Aid, which is a reserved fund balance program. With that plan in mind, there will currently not be a need for the School Board to take action to non-renew any teachers.

2025-2026 Budgetary Review Reductions (to-date) – As a part of ongoing budget preparation protocols, the budget is reviewed each cycle to compare prior year budget-to-actual and also to review for areas that may receive a budgetary allocation that is not being used. At this point in budget preparation, several items have been identified as budget reductions for 2025-2026, currently totaling to about \$85,450. Another groups of items that has been identified as changes to the 2024-2025 Revised Budget are currently adding anticipated costs of just under \$60,000. Finally, there was discussion about budgetary items that will be left at the same budget level but which may come in under- or over-budget, but the budget amount will not be changed. For example, snowfall for the winter of 2024-2025 was unusually light, so there will be a budget savings, but that savings cannot be considered a budget reduction as the winter of 2025-2026 might include more normal or higher levels of snowfall which will require more snow removal costs to be incurred. The current analysis includes only expenditures to-date, as revenues are still being calculated and will be the other side of the overall budget calculations.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by William Tollefson