

Special Finance Subcommittee Meeting – Draft Minutes

August 18, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

via ZOOM

Attendance:

Jenny Emery	Present	Jordan Grossman	Present
Mark Fiorentino	Absent	Anna Robbins	Present
David Peling	Present	Shannon Sullivan	Present
Melissa Migliaccio	Present	Mike Guarco (guest)	Present

Meeting commenced at 6:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

1. Public Comment: BOF Chairman, Mike Guarco was welcomed as a guest.
2. Approve Minutes from the June 17, 2020 Meeting: Dave moved, and Jenny seconded approval. Passed unanimously.
3. Leaves of Absence: Jordan reviewed his recommendation to approve requested unpaid leaves of absence for one year for two teachers: Jennifer Ferrigno and Lila Falkenberg. Provisions in the CEA contract allow for this, and past precedent is for the Superintendent to make a recommendation to the Finance Committee. The situation has been reviewed by legal counsel, and the Jordan advised that the absences can be accommodated with one-year replacement teacher contracts. Jenny moved, and Dave seconded, endorsement of the leaves. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Reopening: Anna and Jordan presented a detailed accounting of expenses related to school reopening in the Covid-19 environment. Approximately \$200,000 was spent on hard goods which were identified and ordered before the closure of the 2019-20 budget (June 30, 2020), after which some \$900,000 will remain to return to the Town. This was a change from the discussions in early June, viewed as reasonable given the clearly identified need, the opportunity to save money by acting quickly, and the final increase in the expected surplus. A full and final accounting will be presented to the BOE, including final approval of inter-account transfers within the overall approved budget, at a full BOE meeting.

Additional unbudgeted expense has been incurred in the 2020-21 fiscal year for “consumables”, (such as PPE and equipment to make sanitizer) of approximately \$74,000. Additional recommended expense was discussed, as follows:

- Approximately \$243,000 for temporary custodial staff to meet recommended cleaning protocols; and
- \$258,000 for bus monitors to assure kids follow the masking and seating protocols.

In both cases, these estimates are conservative, in that they assume the additional resources are needed all year, while this may not be the case. In addition to allowing us to meet recommendations for health and safety, these resources also contribute to building the confidence needed throughout the school community. Jordan and Shannon noted that the custodians have been very accommodating in working with the administration. Anna explained that she is working with both the State and FEMA to seek reimbursement for all Covid-19-related expenses, but that most of the external funding would be going to high-need districts.

Discussion ensued regarding additional significant expenses that might be anticipated; Dave asked specifically about instructional expense. Jordan indicated we believe we are in a good place in this regard, and again noted the excellent cooperation we have had from the teachers, thus far. He also noted that our “best case scenario” is that we are able to keep kids learning in the buildings, and therefore should expect additional expense will emerge, especially as it regards cleaning supplies. While savings from other budgeted items may emerge to help offset these unanticipated (when the budget was developed) expenses, we should expect that funds beyond the approved budget will be needed.

Jenny noted that it is unprecedented for us to be spending money beyond the budget except in Special Education, where a protocol is in place with the Board of Finance. Mike Guarco commented that it appears we are taking the right steps, and that we should continue to communicate with the BOF, which will need to act to support funding these unbudgeted expenses. Jordan noted that the Finance Subcommittee may need to meet more often as the situation unfolds.

After additional discussion, the BOE Finance Subcommittee expressed its support for the Administration’s planned unbudgeted expenditures, as presented thus far.

With no other business, Dave moved and Jenny seconded adjournment at 6:53 p.m.