

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

100 Pocono Road, Brookfield - BOE Curriculum Room

MINUTES

- I. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm
- II. **Roll call:** Board of Education members Rosa Fernandes, Dr. Wendy Youngblood, and Robert Fischetto were present. Also present was Dr. John Barile - Superintendent of Schools, Kasey Diotte - Director of Business & Operations, Joan Reynolds - Accounting Supervisor, and Bill Roland, Director of Special Education.
- III. **Public Comment:** None
- IV. **Board of Education Financial Reports:**
 - Check registers - Over \$1,000 report
 - Committee members asked several clarifying questions regarding some of the checks but no follow up was necessary on any items
 - March YTD Financial Report
 - Mrs. Diotte summarized and the committee reviewed the March Financial report which detailed a projected net budget shortfall of approximately \$666,853. The change from the previous month's report (+\$51,235) was due to 3 primary factors.
 - The leave of an Assistant Principal at BHS, with pay, plus the cost to fill the leave in the interim (\$22,550).
 - A charge in liability insurance for CLES. This cost (\$23,736) is the net cost after a refund received due to the closing of HHES.
 - Changes in special education transportation (\$17,434) due to a one run needing to be split into multiple runs to the same location for student and driver safety reasons and a paraeducator added to another run. Bill Roland provided helpful context for this.
 - Though there are other contributing factors to this year's budgetary shortfall (e.g., short- and long-term substitutes, SPED tuition, and electricity), all of which are identified in the detailed financial report, the '23-'24 budget also recognizes *savings* in various accounts (e.g., leaves and vacancies, health insurance) which partially offset the gross budget exposures (~\$1.295MM in total) described above. Those savings, together with savings from a budget freeze of all non-essential purchases, yield a forecasted offset of approximately \$629,000.
- V. **Old Business:**
 - Continued discussion of the 2024-2025 budget
 - The committee reviewed the nearly \$791,000 in budget reductions that were required by the BOS and BOF.

- Much of the cuts to the BOE's original adopted budget were accomplished prior to the BOF's review. Those included reductions to the health insurance account (updated estimates, -\$301,843), electricity (ability to lock in better rate, -\$80,869), and Worker's Compensation insurance (updated estimates, -\$12,929)
- Special Education is always budgeted to-date and changes had occurred since budget adoption enabling a budget reduction in outplacement tuition (-\$33,177) and transportation (-\$98,148), which led to an estimated decrease in Excess Cost Grant revenue (-\$37,700)
- Further programmatic and personnel cuts were necessary to achieve the remaining amount required for reduction. All proposed cuts attempt to distance the direct impact to students as much as possible with a heavy emphasis on adjusting practices and "making-do" wherever possible. Collectively, these cuts total \$226,301 and are as follows:
 - (1) Eliminate enrollment study
 - (2) Eliminate Lexia
 - (3) Reduce library books at CLES and WMS
 - (4) Reduce WMS textbooks
 - (5) Eliminate BHS LinkCrew program
 - (6) Eliminate BHS laminator
 - (7) Eliminate mClass Intervention
 - (8) Eliminate Formative
 - (9) Eliminate 1.0 FTE Technology Integrator
 - (10) Eliminate 1.0 FTE Secretary
 - (11) Eliminate .05 Nurse
- There were also a few areas requiring budgetary increases - liability insurance (+\$26,159), salaries (+\$18,249), professional development due to the elimination of Tech. Integrator (+\$15,000), and funds for 3 students to complete ASL program (+\$2,700, this program will otherwise not be available for enrollment).
- Food Service RFP
 - The committee received notification that of the 8 vendors initially interested in the RFP, 3 vendors submitted proposals. A scoring committee will score each proposal and have the winning vendor selected by next week.

VI. **Miscellaneous Discussion:** It was noted that the town's budget referendum will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

VII. **Executive Session:** Rosa Fernandes moved and Wendy Youngblood seconded that the committee enter into executive session for the purposes of discussing strategy and negotiations as it relates to collective bargaining and unaffiliated salaries for the

2024-2025 school year. The motion passed unanimously and the committee entered into executive session at 7:38 pm. John Barile and Kasy Diotte were invited into this executive session. The committee exited the executive session at 7:59 pm.

VIII. **Adjournment:** The committee meeting was adjourned in public session at 7:59 pm