



COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Colchester, CT

BUDGET COMMITTEE - SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, October 7, 2021
BOE Budget Committee Meeting 9:00AM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Morozowich, Joanne Rose

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Burt, CFO Maggie Cosgrove, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Kathleen Perry, Director of Educational Operations Mario Hurtado, District Nutrition Program Coordinator/Cafeteria Manager Leanne Ranheim

OTHERS PRESENT: BOE Chair Mary Tomasi, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Amy Trinnaman

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Morozowich called the meeting to order at 9:02AM.

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

3.1 Public Comment

None.

4. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 Approval of September 9, 2021 Minutes

Motion by: J. Rose

To approve the minutes of the September 9, 2021 Budget Committee meeting

Second by: J. Morozowich

Vote: Unanimous

Roll call: J. Rose, J. Morozowich

5. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Food Supply Chain

The company that delivers produce through the USDA has suspended delivery until further notice due to supply delays/shortages. At this time our produce and other items are being purchased through Thurston for market value, which means we are paying out of pocket and not able to utilize our government funds. Leanne does not see a tremendous impact financially on this as typically we run out of our government funds in early spring and switch to Thurston for the remainder of the year. The thinking is, this year our operations will be flip-flopped and we'll utilize Thurston now, and have USDA

funds to carry us through the end of the year once this situation is rectified. This is a country-wide issue of supply/demand as we are seeing everywhere. Leanne is doing everything she can and welcomes any advocacy efforts the Board can do to bring more attention to this issue. At Jessica's request she will also look into seeing if it's financially feasible to work out a deal with local markets, or possibly Costco/BJ's, to purchase produce locally/regionally instead of relying on Thurston, but it's unlikely a local chain would be able to provide similar pricing. Leanne also mentioned the shortage of Cafeteria workers right now, but has a few applicants she hopes to get in place quickly.

5.2 2022-23 Budget Priorities Discussion

Superintendent Burt shared initial budget priorities for 2022-2023: Strengthen, Grow, Sustain.

Strengthen: Through ESSER and ARPA grants, we were able to fund staff to assist with pandemic-related educational needs. The grant funding will sunset, but the educational intervention needs of our students will continue for years to come. Personnel hired with grant funding will need to be added into future budgets. Title I grants do assist with these needs, but ultimately greater success will come from the supports put in place with ESSER/ARPA grant funding. Social and emotional needs also require these wrap-around services, and will stay as a budget priority.

Grow: Public education has grown beyond academic needs into more of a community service. The needs of society have shifted educational priorities significantly over the last 50 years. Continuing to prioritize buildings and facilities is needed to avoid more costly fixes in later years. Grant funding does have a “cliff” for staffing needs. While the funding source was ARPA initially, ARPA is only a three-year plan, and the costs of these staff will have to be included in the budget in coming years. Planning and transparency are necessary. Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funding reductions need to be planned for; this is a tri-board discussion with the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen, not just a BOE discussion.

Sustain: long-range safety and security, capital improvements, and funding existing facility needs are priorities for the 2022-2023 proposed budget.

Superintendent Burt shared additional draft budget assumptions. Estimates are currently underway based on historical costs, needs, and obligations. The Superintendent's 2022-2023 Budget Priorities will move to the full BOE for review and discussion on October 12, 2021.

5.3 Capital Improvement Plan Update

The oil tank at Bacon Academy is under discussion; at some point BOE will need to go to BOF for an appropriation request, to be funded by prior years' BOE budget unexpended balances. Security and safety plans are being reviewed by new SRO Craig Scheel, who is recommending updates to our security systems.

5.4 Hybrid Technology for BOE Meetings

The state has recommended virtual meetings through April 2022. However, the District is exploring hybrid meetings, which will allow both in-person and at-home participation, and this option will require new technology.

6. BUDGET REPORTS

6.1 Monthly Budget Reports

CFO Maggie Cosgrove presented the September 2021 budget report. No major changes since last month, but there are some items currently charged to the budget that are possibly going to be shifted to be covered by the ARPA grant. Social workers are an example. Employee benefits line is overexpended due to retirement payouts that were not part of the budget. Upcoming budget transfers will adjust personnel budgets due to staffing changes including new hires and internal transfers. Insurance lines are renewals; worker's compensation payroll data for FY 2020-2021 is currently under audit.

6.2 Cafeteria Fund

CFO Cosgrove presented the Cafeteria Fund reports for July 2021 and August 2021. She highlighted that the federal reimbursement rate was significantly different than in past years because we were operating under a different meals program (currently the Seamless Summer Option of free meals) with a higher reimbursement rate. Superintendent Burt shared that we expect the meals program will generate revenue this year from a-la-carte sales.

6.3 Health Insurance Reserve

CFO Cosgrove presented the health insurance reserve for August 2021. The significant drop may be due to delays in processing billing or the impact of an increased number of participants in the high deductible health plan.

6.4 Special Education Excess Cost Report (Not at this time)

6.5 Use of Schools (Not at this time)

6.6 Capital Reserve (Not at this time)

6.7 Budget Transfers Under \$5,000

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.1 Update on Federal Grants

A more detailed report will be presented at the October 12, 2021 BOE meeting, but the Superintendent shared that what would have been an additional \$50,000 for Pre-K transportation was able to be included in the existing contract.

7.2 Goodwin College Early College Advanced Manufacturing Pathway (ECAMP)

Superintendent Burt met with the new Goodwin University Superintendent Sal Menzo regarding a proposal for a partnership that will provide an early college advanced manufacturing pathway for Bacon Academy students. In addition, Bacon Academy would become a nexus for the community to develop a manufacturing training facility for adults in our community as well. Training for unemployed or underemployed persons

wanting skills in manufacturing would be able to train at the Bacon Academy facility. ARPA grant funding could provide additional supports for our students and our community. Colchester businesses could potentially play a role in developing this program. Director of Educational Operations Mario Hurtado is exploring the HVAC and other systems necessary to sustain a program of this kind. This program is still under development and in discussions; no formal plan has been approved. At minimal cost to the District, the potential for broad benefits is encouraging. Superintendent Burt is exploring barriers to participation. This will be discussed with the full BOE on October 12, 2021.

8. *NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW ISSUES RAISED OR SUBJECTS DEVELOPED

9.1 Public Comment

10. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:26AM.