



FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Committee Members: Dr. Camille Cerciello, Chair
Carol Hample, Michele Mencer, Justina Ryan

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent
Jason Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary
Don Race, Facilities Manager

1. Budget Update

- a. State Aid - Our district received an increase in state aid of \$269K, for total of \$2.4M
- b. Health Adjustment - \$305K allowance to increase local taxes above 2% cap
- c. Chapter 44 - \$47K detriment
- d. Banked cap remaining for future years - \$257K -
- e. Inflation pressures to consider:
 - i. School bus costs - \$30K increase in quoted cost vs. budgeted value
 - ii. Insurance - Expecting significant increases for health (April) and general liability (May), due to a surcharge for not being in State Plan
 - iii. Negotiations, substitute costs, bids, etc.
- f. March 14 - Presentation and preliminary vote by BOE to send draft budget to County Office
 - i. Budget Presentation includes - Revenues, appropriations, tax levy, enrollment, etc.
 - ii. Proposed budget includes the General Fund of approximately \$32.3 M and State Aid of approx \$2.4 M and tax levy of 2.6%
- g. April 25 - Vote by BOE on final budget
- h. May - Publication in newspaper on budget

2. Proposed Bus Driver Guide / Branchburg Settlement - Tabled to April - will also discuss incentives

3. Proposed Cafeteria Aide Guide - Cafeteria aides are funded through cafeteria funds. There is no impact to tax levy. Due to minimum wage increases and inflation, the new proposed salary guide included a \$1.25/hr raise. It was agreed we accept the new salary guide.

4. Proposed Substitute Pay Guide / Surrounding Areas - Due to minimum wage increases, inflation and competition from surrounding districts, it was proposed that we increase our daily substitute rate for teachers from \$110/day to \$125/day, paraprofessionals from \$95/day to \$105/day, clerical aides/secretaries/custodians from \$105/day to \$120/day and school nurses will remain the same at \$225/day. The committee agreed with these changes.

5. Solar PPA Attorney - Discussion regarding hiring CSG law group which specializes in renewable energy and sustainability and recommended by our trusted architect, Settembrino, at a cost of \$40,000, for services for our district-wide solar project. It was agreed that we move in this direction. This amount will be paid by the winning vendor for the project.

- 6. Climate Change Grant - \$6,660** - A Holland Brook teacher, Mrs. Adhikari, discovered this grant, which can be applied to any sustainability/outdoor initiatives and/or supplies, including butterfly gardens, gardening supplies and Lego kits.
- 7. School Bus Tracking App** - Committee agreed to not move forward with this idea due to negative feedback from a district which piloted the program, including unreliable tracking, poor cell service, safety concerns.
 - a. Costs likely \$14-\$25,000 annually, plus initial setup/hardware and long-term maintenance
 - b. Other considerations: reliability, cell service, safety, low-income, ESL, technology, budget
- 8. Finance Agenda Items / Bills List** - Budget presentation and resolutions, solar LRFP/state submittal resolution
- 9. Next meetings are planned for:** April 21, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. and May 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
Tentative Topics: Health insurance renewal presentation from Brown & Brown, night custodial bid results, Maschio's renewal and meal pricing, breakfast program (June), solar fee proposals, security plans, TBS boiler update, breakfast program (June)