



FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

8:30 a.m.

Committee Members: Michele Mencer, Chair
Dr. Camille Cerciello, Ellen De Pinto, Justina Ryan

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

- 1. 2024-25 Capital Projects:** All projects are advancing as planned and the timing is on track for completion as expected. Projects include RMS Main Office/HVAC, Nurse Suite & Furniture, IT Switch & Access Point Project, First Responder Radio Enhancement and the WHS Art Room.
- 2. Referendum / Expiring Debt:** The Referendum planning is well underway and this topic will be on the November 12, 2024 BOE meeting to educate both the Board and the public. The architect will assess ongoing needs and projected costs are expected to be available in November. Final expense additions can be added in December. During the period of Nov through Dec, the Board will evaluate suggested projects to include in the Referendum as well as evaluate what has successfully been included in prior referendums. The plan is to create a comprehensive list of projects and prioritize what will be included in the referendum vs. what expenses can be covered by reserves. The Board is deliberately engaging the public early to create awareness about this opportunity to invest in our school district. An open public forum on the referendum is planned for December 3rd, 2024.
- 3. Solar Expansion Proposals:** The Board discussed comparison of the solar expansion proposals from EZNergy and Exact Solar. EZNergy offers a lower year 1 rate, has knowledge of the prior system since they built and currently service it, and would provide a single point of contact, if selected, for both the prior and new system. A fixed rate is offered by EZNergy which will result in projected savings over the next 10 years. The Committee recommended approval of EZNergy for vendor selection due to the strength of their proposal.
- 4. Health Insurance Transition Update:** Challenges have been encountered with the health insurance transition including ID card and backend data issues. Approximately 10% of enrollees have had a transition challenge that was raised to the administration's

attention. Protocols are in place to mitigate future issues and the administration is actively addressing in partnership with the Union. The backend data issue remains unresolved and the administration has escalated to Brown and Brown.

- 5. Transportation Update:** The district was mostly fully staffed prior to the start of the school year however staff attrition occurred unexpectedly and on Day 1, the district was short 6 bus drivers (due to attrition and onboarding / training for new hires). The staffing shortage has resulted in full utilization of backup and mitigation plans and coverage for all routes presents a daily challenge for the district. The Committee discussed potential mitigation strategies, including possible communication to parents, to lessen the burden on the district.
- 6. Low-Income Population / Assistance:** There has been a large increase in the low-income population which is expected to continue growing as a result of a state change that allows Medicaid eligible students to be automatically qualified for low-income status. The state threshold to qualify for low-income is also increasing which allows more children to qualify for this status. The benefits of this change are the district can provide free lunch and breakfast for students as well as receive more financial support for the district (title 1). Staffing adjustments are being made to ensure the expanded student population is properly supported.
- 7. NJDA Cafeteria Audit:** Listed on the agenda but not discussed.
- 8. PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes):** The Board discussed the background and implications of the PILOT program as well as what opportunities there are to communicate with the public on the impact of these programs and how to best partner with the Township. No decisions were taken at this time.
- 9. Electric School Bus Grant:** The committee discussed the possibility of additional grant funding for electric school buses. More information is needed and meetings will occur with OEM and Fire to be prepared for electric vehicles.
- 10. Finance Agenda Items / Bill List -** An overview of the bill list was reviewed including, comprehensive maintenance plan and the IDEA/ESEA carryover funds.
- 11. Next meeting(s) are planned for:** October 18 at 8:30 a.m & November 20th at 8:30 a.m.
Tentative Topics: referendum, capital projects, electric school bus grant, solar