

**Robbinsdale Area Schools
FINANCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC)
MINUTES FOR November 10, 2020
(APPROVED January 12, 2021)**

Present	FAC Members
X	Gregg Fishbein
X	Lennie Kaufman
X	Greg Kugler
X	O. Barry Rogers
X	Howard Schwartz
X	Terry Swanson
	School Board
X	Sherry Tyrrell, Treasurer
	District 281 Staff
X	Stephanie Burrage, Interim Superintendent
X	Greg Hein, Executive Director of Finance

Other Attendees: Lowel Holtz (Director of Operations and Safety), Molly Lopez (Accountant), Karylann Marchand (Business Office Manager), Amy O’Hern (Executive Director of Human Resources), Kelly Smith (Baker Tilly), Toya Stewart Downey (Executive Director of Strategic Communication, Equity & Inclusion), Virginia Verbrugge (Assistant Finance Director), Marti Voight (Interim Assistant Superintendent), Kristine Wehrkamp (Executive Director of Community Education).

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM on November 10, 2020 with the Council members noted above in attendance. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic this meeting was held virtually with all members attending via the Zoom platform.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introductions:

2019-20 Chair Gregg Fishbein opened the meeting welcoming the attendees. Recently reappointed O. Barry Rogers and newly appointed Greg Kugler were introduced.

Agenda Item 2: Acceptance of Agenda:

The Agenda had been distributed to the members prior to the meeting as a link to the Zoom meeting invitation. Future attachments will be managed in a similar fashion (as opposed to receiving e-mail attachments). FAC members will be able to access all links so identified within future agendas which will be located in each member’s Google Drive. A motion was properly made and seconded to accept the distributed Agenda. This motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Approve the July 14, 2020 FAC Meeting Minutes:

A motion was properly made and seconded to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2020 meeting as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Selection of Chair and Recording Secretary:

In accordance with FAC Bylaws, the Council appoints a Member of the Council to serve as Chair for this fiscal year. Gregg Fishbein was properly nominated and seconded to serve as the 2020-21 FAC Chair. There were no other nominations. Gregg Fishbein was unanimously elected. In addition, the Council informally appoints a Member to serve as Recording Secretary. Howard Schwartz was properly nominated and seconded to serve as the 2020-21 FAC Recording Secretary.

Agenda Item 5: Selection of Two FAC Members to Serve on the OPEB Advisory Committee:

Greg Hein reviewed the resolution establishing the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Advisory Committee. Committee membership includes two FAC members. O. Barry Rogers and Greg Kugler volunteered to represent the FAC on the Committee. Both Mr. Rogers and Mr. Kugler were unanimously approved by the FAC members.

Agenda Item 6: Finance Updates:

Greg Hein recommended that those FAC members who were not able to attend the October 8, 2020 webinar presented by Tom Melcher and Paul Ferrin could find it on the District web site. It covers a number of issues raised by the FAC last year, including open enrollment policies, procedures, and revenue concerns.

Greg Hein introduced the *District Financial Update* now available on the District web site, and provided *Finance FAQ* information as well as a *Let's Talk* initiative that factually answers finance questions raised by the community throughout the year. The *District Financial Update* in hard copy format is also e-mailed to families with children attending schools in the District. Howard Schwartz requested that this Update also be sent to FAC members. Sherry Tyrrell urged the FAC to become active communicators, correcting financial misinformation circulating in the District as well as working to engender greater trust in District financial management.

Greg Hein reviewed several of the update issues. Lennie Kaufman inquired about the projected deficit in the nutrition lunch program. Greg Hein suggested that the FY2020 deficit was slightly over \$900,000. However, the unpaid debt was not significantly growing because the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) summer feeding program is underwriting the marginal cost. Presently, the District has served hundreds of thousands of meals under this program. The October issue of the *District Financial Update* also provided factual information regarding Bond refunding and reissuing, the truth regarding Statutory Operating Debt (SOD), and other finance concerns raised by District residents.

Greg Hein presented information regarding the COVID-19 impact on District's finances. The District has been approved for reimbursement up to \$3.3 million from CARES federal funding channeled through the State, and \$3.8 million from CRF (COVID Relief Fund) federal funding also channeled through the State. Both funding sources can only be used to cover expenses above and beyond current budgetary expenditures necessary to subsidize special COVID related costs (e.g., increased custodial staff, sanitizing supplies). Whereas the CARES funds can be used for FY2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, the CRF funds expire and must be used prior to December 31, 2020. The latter is problematic since the need to improve and pay for superior

air turnover in the school buildings—as an example—may not be able to be accomplished until after 2020 due to limited availability of HVAC service companies to do the work. Transportation costs are down (\$800,000 usually spent each year) despite the need to transport the children of critical care workers, high school students to activities and sports, and Special Education students to District 287. Enrollment projections have also been depressed by a 216 (~50%) student decline in kindergarten. Finally, the FY2020 audit will most likely validate the \$1.1 million Unassigned Fund Balance reported.

Agenda Item 7: District Updates:

Marti Voight gave a COVID-19 update that the District will continue with Distance Learning as positive COVID test numbers are on the increase. The new District *COVID-19 Dashboard* is available on the District web site and provides current data on quarantined staff and students as well as confirmed COVID cases. The data is reviewed weekly to assist anticipation of necessary student and staff services. From a financial perspective, the availability of CARES and CRF funding has helped to provide a positive net effect for our District.

Dr. Burrage indicated that the School Board will be meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, for a work session. A finance presentation is scheduled for 7:00 pm during that session. Ms. Nicol Sutton will be sending out Zoom invitations to FAC members.

Toya Stewart Downey spoke to the Equity in Education series webinar—*What is Equity and Why Does It Matter*—being broadcast by the District during 2021 on January 21, March 18, and May 20.

Agenda Item 8: Other:

Greg Hein announced that FAC member Thomas Klick has resigned. With his position now open, Gregg Fishbein queried whether the District is actively promoting the opening, and whether former FAC member Earl Hoffman might be interested in the position.

It was moved, seconded and approved to schedule the following FAC meetings during 2021: January 12; March 9; and May 11..

Agenda Item 9: Adjournment:

After a proper motion was made and seconded to adjourn our meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Minutes submitted by Howard Schwartz