

Mt Greylock Regional School District School Committee Finance Subcommittee
Date: July 29, 2020 Time: 11:00 AM
Location: Zoom Remote Meeting

Open Session Agenda

Present: J. Art, C. Greene, A. Terranova (enters late), J. Bergeron, R. Putnam

I. J. Art calls meeting to order 11:02 am

II. Reorganization of Subcommittee - C. Greene moves to appoint herself as finance subcommittee secretary. J. Art seconds. C. Greene notes that A. Terranova indicated at the last meeting he did not want to take notes. Greene aye, Art, aye. Motion passes.

Mr. Terranova enters the meeting.

III. Terranova moves July 16, 2020 meeting minutes. Greene seconds. No discussion. Art, aye, Greene, aye, Terranova, aye. Motion passes.

IV. Review of warrants

Payroll - no discussion

Accounts Payable - J. Bergeron anticipates there will be another clean-up warrant for approval at the next Fin Com meeting.

IV. Initial discussion of out-of-budget costs for reopening. J. Bergeron indicated much of the cost might be within budget, depending on how we navigate the remote-hybrid options. He ran through possible expense buckets the administration had been discussing, including staffing, professional development, facilities/operations, food service, and technology. Details were still being worked out in terms of meal delivery, cleaning protocols, training. We are looking into tents, additional desks (since students can not sit at tables together). We are acquiring PPE, hand sanitizer stations, disinfectant for hallways and stairwells. We are looking into carts for classroom meal delivery and Lexan panels for bathroom separators.

Students are already 1-1 for chromebooks. Teachers will soon be 1-1 with laptops (though this means maintaining the technology line in the WES budget). Video speakers may need to be acquired. All fits within existing spending.

Transportation cost is unknown. An AM/PM schedule would increase bussing costs, adding runs if ridership is high. COVID spacing limits us to 23 students/bus (down from 71). 40% of those surveyed who used buses last year said they would not use them this year. But do we need to provide for them anyway? Need clarification from the state. We are legally required to provide transportation to all who resided more than 1.5 miles from the schools. We have pick-ups within 1.5 miles as well.

Will need a new lunch ordering/tracking process.

Much about the budget will become clear only after decisions about how we are delivering education are made.

R. Putnam notes the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) is pressuring schools to go with entirely remote learning; we could be forced into a remote learning situation

J. Bergeron explains the current plan is to purchase supplies now for in-person for the first few months. If we go with (or shift to) remote, that will ease up on demand.

J. Art: We will hear options for re-opening tonight. Where does negotiation with the local union fit in? R. Putnam says he received a demand from the bargaining unit two weeks ago and that C. Conry and R. Dilego delegated negotiations to him. He met with the unit leaders yesterday and they indicated support for starting remotely. J. Bergeron notes that all union members have been willing to participate in planning for the fall, but that the time crunch makes it tough. R. Putnam notes that collaboration with any association is key to success, and MGEA is a dedicated and thoughtful group.

J. Art says he understands the anxiety but notes that local prevalence of COVID-19 in the school-age population is very low. R. Putnam indicates they are monitoring this and have met with Town Managers. As of July 22, there have been zero cases in the previous 14 days in the two towns. Looking at cases per 100,000, we are in neighborhood 10 per hundred thousand people for Berkshire County. (European schools are looking at 5/hundred thousand before opening.)

J. Bergeron and R. Putnam note that Williamstown has partnered with the Broad Institute (currently doing the testing for Williams College) for community testing at \$50/test, and he has \$740K CARES Act funding to use toward testing Williamstown students at WES and MG. MGRSD can cover Lanesborough students with ESSR funds. The idea would be to use a random sampling approach in the 1-2 weeks prior to the start of school.

Professional development would need to ramp significantly if we go remote. There may be ten days at the start of the term for PD.

C. Greene asks about any additional costs for Special Education and whether we have Circuit Breaker to cover those. J. Bergeron indicates that if we are remote but need to have a group of higher-needs students in school, we are not expecting to need additional staffing, since we would have had this staffing in place for a normal year. An in-person model is more complicated.

According to J. Bergeron, between the ESSR/Cares Act and Coronavirus Relief Fund, we should have \$360-\$370,000 for COVID-related expenses. There is potential for Federal Funds in future as well. It looks like Chapter 70 funding may not be cut after all, though this has not been confirmed.

VI. Other business not anticipated by the Chair within 48 hours of the meeting - none

VII. Motion to adjourn 12:02pm Terranova moves, Greene seconds. Terranova, aye, Art aye, Greene, aye.

Approved 8.13.20