



Board of School Directors Committee Meetings Minutes Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Members present: Courtney Barbieri, Nick Braccio, Bill Brong, Janet Flisak, Matt Holliday, Ken Keith, Tom Kwiatkowski, Stephen Nelson, Donna Scheuren

Others present: Elisa Ball, Renai Cardillo, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Brian Pawling, Walt Salvesky and Megan Zweiback

1. Finance Committee

Mrs. Scheuren called the Finance Committee to order at 6:35 P.M.

1.1 2020-21 Budget Update

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Pawling, shared his screen and reviewed a presentation on the 2020-2021 Proposed Final Budget.

Mr. Pawling began the presentation by giving an overview of the current 2019-2020 budget and its projections. Those projections reflected a decrease in revenue as a result of the actual April collections for local taxes as well as additional reductions for future months. It also reflected adjusted interest projections, and adjusted state revenue for Social Security and PSERS based on salary projections.

On the expenditure side of the current budget a slight decrease was shown as a result of lower salaries and fringe benefits than originally projected. In addition, a full transportation savings was included from the Transportation Services, Inc. renegotiation.

Overall Mr. Pawling indicated that lower expenditures had been offset by lower revenues in the 2019-2020 budget.

A slide was presented that updated the 2020-2021 Budget. It reflected the development of the proposed budget from the previous Finance Committee Meeting on April 15, 2020. Mr. Pawling outlined staffing changes that netted a \$463,404 savings and assessment changes netting \$42,488 in increased revenue. There was also a \$500,000 savings from the capital reserve account to serve technology/debt service. Mr. Pawling also noted that some proposed facilities projects, scheduled to occur in the 2020-2021 school year have been deferred or moved to the capital reserve account, saving \$400,000 in the proposed budget.

Mr. Pawling indicated that those facilities projects being deferred included parking lot paving and gym-floor resurfacing.

This particular slide also displayed the impact to the proposed budget with real estate tax increases ranging from 2.6% to 0.0%

Mr. Pawling reviewed a slide showing potential expenditure adjustments that could be gleaned from staffing retirements, continued review of curriculum, technology, facilities, pupil services and special education budgets. He also noted that the school district is continuing to investigate grant revenue sources from PEMA (PA Emergency Management Agency) and the ESF (Education-Stabilization Fund) as a result of the CARES Act.

Mr. Pawling also indicated that staff professional development and travel for the 2020-2021 school year may be reduced as well as reductions to the building budgets.

Mr. Pawling stated that the unpredictability of the current circumstances make it unusually challenging to develop the 2020-2021 budget. Patterns that are typically used for budget development are not applicable and guidelines that may be implemented in the new school year, make it hard to project costs.

Dr. Gallagher commented that there is discussion within the Pennsylvania State budget that it may be approved in six-month intervals. He also indicated that this is not an option for school districts.

The next slide that was presented was Real Estate Options as pertaining to the collection of real estate taxes. The slide presented the current protocol for collection; with discounts, installments and penalties. Mr. Pawling explained

that if the school district would elect to change the current procedure that Board Action would be required at the May 28 meeting in order for revised tax bill printing to occur in a timely manner.

A discussion occurred about the rates of collection of taxes by individual municipality. Mr. Pawling noted that according to Montgomery County reporting, the unemployment rate in the County had increased from 4.6% to 6.1%.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about a recommendation from Administration and Mr. Pawling and Dr. Gallagher responded that the Administration proposes an increase to the discount period for tax remittance, as well as adding an installment to the payment plan. Mr. Pawling noted that adding an extra month to the discount period would shorten the penalty phase by one month.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the logistics of the proposed changes to the tax collection procedure. It was agreed upon by the Finance Committee to move forward a resolution that would change the current collection procedure in an effort to offer some relief to the tax-payer community.

Dr. Gallagher initiated discussion regarding the reform of charter school funding, noting that the need for reform has never been stronger. Mrs. Scheuren thanked Dr. Gallagher for his advocacy on behalf of the school district.

Mrs. Scheuren also inquired about the status of school district medical claims as they relate to the medical fund and budget projections. Mr. Pawling indicated that analysis is underway, but believes that the district will be close to its original projections. Dr. Hey indicated that while there have been medical closures, many electives have been placed on hold and the expectation is that they will still occur within the projected budget.

Dr. Gallagher stated that this was not the last Finance Committee Meeting prior to final budget approval, and that additional meetings could be added as needed.

A collective discussion occurred about the current COVID-19 crisis environment and the ability to plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Gallagher noted that a decision will be made locally, on how best to protect and serve the students, faculty and staff of the Souderton Area School District. Several concerns were expressed including the rapid availability of plexiglass and personal protective gear as needed by the facilities department. Mr. Pawling noted that the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit currently has a bid out for those items, of which the school district could utilize.

Mr. Kwiatkowski expressed concerns for the need for purchasing new technology (both devices and software) to support virtual learning. Dr. Gallagher responded that it is the intention of the district to earmark Ready To Learn and Title monies for those purchases.

Mr. Brong expressed concern for an increase in transportation costs should a blended learning environment be established where students would attend school for half days. Dr. Gallagher acknowledged that elementary scheduling under that scenario would be more challenging, as it may also result in additional childcare needs for families.

Mr. Keith reiterated the frustration felt by many, of mixed directives from our leaders on how best to mitigate the current environment.

Mrs. Scheuren adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:45 P.M.

2. Operations Committee

Mr. Brong called the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 7:46 P.M.

2.1 Approve Board of School Directors 2020-2021 Meeting Calendar

The proposed schedule of **Committee Meetings** on the **second Wednesday** of the month and **Board Action Meetings** on the **fourth Thursday** of the month is maintained with the following exceptions:

- November Board Action Meeting will be held one week earlier due to the Thanksgiving holiday.
- The Board Reorganization Meeting will be held separately from other meetings, on the first Monday in December.
- December Board Action Meeting will be held one week earlier due to the Christmas holiday.
- June Committee and Board Action Meetings will be held one week earlier due to Act 1 requirements.

The entire calendar will be publicly advertised in accordance with School Code requirements.

The Committee agreed to move forward to May 28 for Board Action.

Dr. Gallagher commented on the high school graduation celebration that is scheduled for Saturday, May 30th on the campus of the high school. It will be a drive-through commemoration of the senior class giving each student the opportunity for individual recognition. In addition, he noted that a virtual ceremony would be held on June 10th. This virtual ceremony would include student speeches, the reading of graduate name and a photo. Dr. Gallagher thanked members of the community for their willingness to support this celebration.

Dr. Gallagher also noted the Indian Valley Education Foundation fundraiser titled *Soudy Strong*. He indicated that information was available on the IVEF website.

Mr. Holliday thanked local business Sinn Painting for giving congratulatory yard signs to any graduate who wanted one.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 7:52 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Pawling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Brian R. Pawling
Board Secretary/Director of Business Affairs