

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Fiscal Committee Meeting
Approved Minutes of November 12, 2020
Remote/Electronic

Committee Members Present:

William Oros, Fiscal Committee Chair
Mary Kortmann
Barbara Pare
Jennifer Beausoleil, Board Chair

Town Representatives Present:

Matthew O'Brien Town Council Finance Committee Chair
Lisa Thomas, Town Finance Committee Member
Richard Williams, Town Finance Committee Member
John Elsesser, Town Manager
Amanda Backhaus, Town Finance Director

Also Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

I. Joint Meeting of the Board Fiscal Committee and Town Finance Committee - 6:00 p.m.

II. Call to Order

W. Oros called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

III. Discussion: COVID-19

A. Current Status

Dr. Petrone began by reviewing the current instruction model [full in-person] and noted the number of positive cases so far this school year. He added that the challenging part will be when they won't have enough staff to cover students when full in-person. Mr. Carroll noted the budget overage so far is \$310,000 to \$320,000.

M. O'Brien asked about the temporary salaries account. Mr. Carroll said it is made up of [to name just a few] the temp custodian for the year; temp technology technician, Kelly Services (building subs); and overtime charges due to COVID-19.

B. FEMA Submission

C. Coronavirus Relief Funds - Educational

D. ESSER Funds

Ms. Backhaus talked about the FEMA reimbursement that the Town received.

M. O'Brien asked if any word has come from the State on next steps. Ms. Backhaus said she heard that there should be a second round of FEMA funds. M. O'Brien asked if CRF money needs to be allocated or spent before the end of the year. Mr. Elsesser said there is one pot that expires on December 31, not all has to be encumbered by December 31, and there are more funds coming. Dr. Petrone confirmed he heard the same.

Mr. Carroll talked about allocation of funds that won't be fully expended until the end of June 2021. Mr. Carroll added that the ultra violet lights were a large expense that have been received and paid for. Dr. Petrone added, the technology needed to have teachers teach remote learners was also a huge expense.

The Committees discussed the need for stipends and overtime during the current situation. Dr. Petrone said he does not see a huge expense for overtime going forward, with the possible exception of the nurses.

B. Paré asked about the tasks of the Coronavirus Liaison. Dr. Petrone said it is a variety of different tasks, including ensuring the district is following the plan in place.

M. O'Brien asked if any projections have been done if we have to go full remote. Dr. Petrone said the biggest savings is transportation, if we can do what we did in the spring and only pay 49%.

M. O'Brien asked about athletics. Dr. Petrone said there was not a savings in the fall, as we thought there might be. He said, while football wasn't played, the coaches were paid to provide conditioning support for the students. He continued and talked about the winter sports program.

F. Review/Access Town Fund

W. Oros asked for suggestions going forward.

M. O'Brien said we would wait to see what other reimbursements will be available and also see how the year plays out, as it is early. He added, as the need is there, the Board can send a letter to apply for assistance from the Council.

Dr. Petrone asked for the best way to keep the lines of communication open regarding this. He stated if we stay all in person, the costs will be significant. M. O'Brien said he is available at any time. Dr. Petrone said they are willing to provide any other information the Town Finance Committee would need. M. O'Brien said if money is released from the Town it might not be reimbursable, so we must be very careful to be sure all funds are sought out.

E. Other Available Revenue

M. O'Brien noted the cafeteria fund. He said he believes any excess funds are COVID-19 savings that could be addressed right off the bat. Mr. Carroll said at first they thought the income for that program would cease; additionally, the state announced the summer seamless program, which allowed the program to continue through the summer and generate income. M. O'Brien said the Board may consider that these funds are not

not indicate how much or how many hours were paid. The Committee expressed their displeasure with the information provided.

Mr. Carroll said a statement from the Union president would work, or a list of name with the number of hours.

W. Oros said he would not approve what has been given as is. B. Paré said if a service has been provided, we want to pay; we would not want to find loopholes. She added that appropriate documentation needs to be provided to ensure payment.

M. Kortmann said she does not think what has been given is enough; weekly information needs to be provided.

Dr. Petrone said, if agreeable, he will go back to M&J and say it is not a hard no, but will ask for testaments from the drivers.

B. Paré said she liked that idea, and maybe they will come back with another idea as well; it shows collaboration.

The Committee agreed.

Mr. Carroll talked about the special education outplacements and the agreement with EASTCONN transportation. He said they would like to continue with the agreement that was made in the spring as needed.

The Committee agreed.

Mr. Carroll said Cheney Tech is going to half days on Wednesdays, and we are required to provide transportation. He said it is an extra expense on these half days, due to extra buses needed. Dr. Petrone said we don't want to get into a situation where we are providing a service that would become a precedent.

Dr. Petrone said they will look into additional options and we will report back.

VIII. Financial Reports for October 2020

A. Management Report

B. Encumbrance Reports

C. Food Service

E. Capital and Special Funds

F. Preschool Fund

Mr. Carroll said \$31,000 in CRF was included as an offset to the expenditures in the Management Report.

Mr. Carroll said with just the COVID expenses we are at -\$323,000. He noted the certified and non-certified salaries line and the Medicare and social security lines where there is a savings because there are not "little extra hours."

Dr. Petrone talked about various scenarios in play. He said what really has his attention is the temporary salaries line; but the expense is essential.

B. Paré asked what constitutes a COVID expense. Dr. Petrone said it is an item we are purchasing or a service we are paying for that we would not usually have, but have to have during the pandemic.

D. Special Education Tuition/Excess Cost

Mr. Carroll noted that the official Excess Cost figure came in and it was lower than what was budgeted, which is good news.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: To Adjourn the Fiscal Meeting at 7:31 p.m.

By: B. Paré

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: December 10, 2020