

**Finance Committee Meeting Notes
Crescent Lake School
November 17, 2022 6:00pm**

Present:

GWRSB Finance Committee: Jack Widmer – Team Leader, Brodie Deshaies, Stefanie King

Administration: Superintendent Caroline Arakelian, Business Administrator Kathy O’Blenes, Kelly Mask, Paul Michalski

Other: Dana Streeter

Not Present: Committee Member – Jim Pittman

Subject Matter

Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2024 – General Fund

Budget Overview/Discussion

- Kelly Mask presented the proposed budget for special education with an increase of 2.13%, which applies exclusively to tuition line items. The District has 331 Special Education students, approximately 14% of the total student population. Ms. Mask described several legislative changes and Medicaid rule changes that will potentially impact the District. She explained that the rates for services and programs are expected to increase across all grade levels for both public and private schools. An increase in DCYF placements results in an increase in the private tuition lines. Anticipated difficulty in staffing of the Extended School Year positions is reflected in the increased cost of this line. Ms. Mask is recommending that a 60% speech pathologist position be increased to 100% to increase the likelihood of filling the vacant position.

Ms. Mask is recommending an additional full time school psychologist who could potentially provide counseling services across the district. She also reviewed the district’s significant need for paraprofessionals across the district, noting approximately 26 actual and anticipated vacancies that remain unfilled this school year.

Ms. Mask answered questions from the committee and Mr. Widmer thanked her for her thorough presentation.

- Paul Michalski presented the proposed budget for technology with a 75.23% increase. He described the most important accomplishments of the past year included connecting all of the schools with new cabling, access points, and firewall security, resulting in the elimination of licensing fees. The inventory record keeping system is current and there is a ticketing system in place to tract support requests. He discussed safety measures, software updates and

replacement equipment needs for Chromebooks, laptops, PowerSchool server replacement and a replacement intercom system for the Kingswood Complex as part of his budget request. There was substantial conversation regarding the replacement of PCs for the Tech Drawing and Design classroom. Mr. Michalski explained the limitations of the current hardware and volunteered that the PCs can be built in-house at a savings. Ms. King expressed concern about expending the cost for this item.

Mr. Michalski answered questions from the committee and Mr. Widmer thanked him for his presentation.

- Kathy O'Blenes presented the proposed budget for the School Board/SAU Office with a 12.25% increase. The largest increase is attributed to the new cloud-based financial software for payroll and absence management.
- The committee reviewed the proposed general fund budget and made recommended cuts.

Adjournment: 9:00 pm

Recorded by,



Kathy Lagace
School Board Secretary
Approved by School Board: **12/5/2022**