

Regional School District No. 17

Board of Education

Finance/Facilities

Subcommittee Minutes

Chair: Peter Sonski

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Finance/Facilities Subcommittee was held on February 23, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in Room A116 located at HK High School.

Subcommittee Members Present: Chair Peter Sonski, Jennifer Favalora, Shawna Goldfarb (remote), Hamish MacPhail (remote), Suzanne Sack (remote)

Subcommittee Members Absent: Prem Aithal

Also present: Superintendent Wihbey, Director David Solin, Director John Mercier, Rob Albert, Brianna Hill, First Selectwoman Nancy Gorski of Killingworth (remote), Selectwoman Kate Anderson of Haddam (remote), Jeffrey Wyszynski from Tecton (remote), Antonia Ciaverella of Tecton (remote), Tomas Kowalchik of Eastern CT Health & Medical Cooperative

1. Call to Order/Opening of the Meeting: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Peter Sonski (Chair)

Mr. Sonski postponed action on the approval of previous minutes to accommodate the many guest attendees.

2. Facilities Master Plan (publicly recorded):

Mr. Sonski introduced attendees and outlined the history of the District Master Plan project. He invited Mr. Wyszynski to outline the project scope, calendar, and goals. Ms. Sack noted subgoals outlined in a previous meeting as well as the need to assign key roles for the efficient management of the project.

A theoretical discussion followed regarding plan scope and financing. Mr. Wyszynski pledged to be able offer more specifics as the plan advances.

The facilities/finance subcommittee will continue to steer the initiative with its monthly meetings being the chief touchbase points. Common calendars from the district, towns and Tecton will be examined to determine a project schedule with key public meeting dates

defined. The target date for public referendum is January 2024.

3. Approval of Minutes

No changes or corrections were noted to the minutes of the January 24, 2023 or February 10, 2023 meetings.

4. Operation Director's Update

Director Mercier reported on the following:

- The lighting projects at BES and KES were on schedule to be completed by February 28th. An assessment has been completed and he is awaiting a proposal for lighting updates at HKHS.
- The first of two boiler replacements at KES was completed February 21st and the boiler is operational. It will be commissioned in the coming months. The second boiler replacement is anticipated during the summer break.
- He presented a proposal on behalf of the KES PTO to install a tribute walkway of pavers, recognizing KES playground donors, and installation of a perennial garden in the vicinity of the playground. Committee members posed questions about the project costs, method of installation and continuing maintenance. The Superintendent was instructed to evaluate the proposal with the KES principal regarding its merits and timing before proposing it to the BOE.
- Mr. Mercier also reported that the Town of Killingworth conducted a public information session regarding the PFAS contamination in the town center. The confirmed source of the problem was the fire department's training area. The municipality is responsible for the cleanup. Presently, KES is functioning on one of two wells due to high PFAS levels. Potable water is provided for drinking and food preparation.

5. STA Transportation Contract:

Superintendent Wihbey reported that after multiple negotiating sessions, Student Transportation of America's final offer was a three-year contract with 17%, 9% and 5% percent successive yearly increases. Despite the significant cost hike, the daily rate per bus is still lower than many comparable districts.

Motion made and seconded (Goldfarb/Favalora) to recommend the Board of Education approve the STA contract offer for the academic years 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.

Approved 4-0.

The Superintendent was asked to supply BOE members with an advance copy of the contract and fleet inventory before board consideration.

6. District Health Insurance Plan

Mr. Kowalchik was present to inform the committee members that the Eastern CT Health and Medical Cooperative (ECHMC) board had voted to extend participation to RSD17 and two seats on its administrative board. He answered several committee member questions about costs, coverage and plan management. He indicated a decision from the district was required by April 15, 2023.

ECHMC offers a PPO administered by Anthem, with identical networks and coverage options to the district's current CT Partnership Plan. ECHMC also offers a high deductible plan option. Superintendent Wihbey indicated the ECHMC 2023-24 rates were more favorable than the Partnership Plan. He also indicated receptivity, in conversation with some bargaining unit representatives, to RSD17 exploring the ECHMC plan. Finally, he also saw merit in gaining voting authority on plan pricing and administration through the two board positions.

Committee members sought to gain assurance of the coverage comparison, and bargaining unit certifications. The Superintendent should also consult BOE counsel regarding a plan change.

7. Finance Director's Update

Director Solin reported that the FY 2021-22 audit is nearing completion. His staff has to produce - and will ultimately have to enter - data that had not been included in the recent financial management software conversion. He shared that 2022-23 budget revenue projections are approximately \$90,000 ahead of the original estimates but the year-end budget balance projection is approximately \$53,000.

8. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

