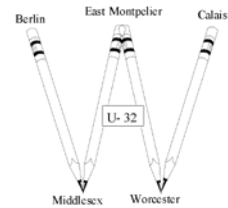


Washington Central Unified Union School District

WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

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Jennifer Miller-Arsenault
Interim Superintendent



WCUUSD Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approved 1.11.22 8:30-9:30 a.m. Central Office, 1130 Gallison Hill Rd., Montpelier Via Video Conference

Committee Members Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Jennifer Miller-Arsenault, Kari Bradley, Scott Thompson, Susanne Gann, Chris McVeigh, Chris O'Brien, Jeff Forward, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Ursula Stanley

1. **Call to Order: Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.**
2. **Approve Minutes of 12.14.21: Kari Bradley motioned to approve the minutes of 12.14.21. Scott Thompson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
3. **Informational Reports**
 - 3.1. **Monthly Reflections:** Susanne advised this month's reflections highlight the budget and tuition calculations as well as the work Michelle did regarding the equalized pupils with the AOE. She gave an update on the ARP ESSER funding from the AOE and the availability of the Phase 2 application approved by US Ed. The deadline to submit the Phase 2 application is March 29, 2022. The District received several large payments in December from the AOE. Susanne thanked Matt Kittredge for all his work. She also thanked Virginia Breer for all her work on open enrollment and payroll after the first of the year. W-2 forms were sent to employees. Penny, Matt, and Susanne worked on tracking the capital projects.
 - 3.2. **Annual Report Informational Facts and Figures:** Jen advised that the board had asked for some information in the December meeting surrounding class size, enrollment etc. The leadership team worked to put the information together that is included in the packet. Chris McVeigh advised this was helpful. He asked about math teachers showing as 0.0. Jen explained that there are some math teachers dedicated in some of the schools depending on class configuration. Jen advised some of these positions used to be absorbed in Title funds and it is no longer permissible, therefore, it is being absorbed in the general budget. Chris also asked if instructional coaches track Title funds. Jen advised instructional coaches are funded in two different ways: Title funds and local money. Kari suggested that seeing the enrollment data percentage would be helpful (4 years prior) in the presentation and a column for total district. Kari asked why EMES enrollment is growing. Flor advised that folks are moving to East Montpelier but she is not aware of other reasons. Chris asked if we could perhaps track building permits in town. Flor advised this information would be available in the annual town reports.
4. **Discussion/Action:**
 - 4.1. **Energy Project Consultant Report and Net Metering Contract Approval:** Chris welcomed Jeff Forward from Forward thinking. Chris advised that board authorized Jeff to review the net metering opportunities for the district. Forward Thinking has completed the review of the proposal from Kingsbury Hydroelectric and the electric bills from Green Mountain Power for Central Office, U-32, Berlin, and Doty. They have offered recommendations presented in the packet. The recommendation is that the proposal from Kingsbury is fair and reasonable with an estimated savings between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year in utility costs. It is unlikely the district could find a better deal now or in the near future and should lock in this agreement by signing a 10-year extension for the net metering agreement with Kingsbury Hydroelectric.

Advice from Jeff of Forward thinking is that the district should wait to explore net metering opportunities for the schools in the Washington Electric Coop service territory, which is Calais, East Montpelier, and Rumney. Renewable energy policy is in flux both nationally and in Vermont. Proposed bills at the state and national level may increase federal tax credits and state incentives for renewable energy projects for schools and municipalities. It is possible that the state and federal polices will improve the return on investment for renewable energy development for schools in the future and were advised not to lock into any long term agreements at this time. Recommended board action is to authorize the Superintendent to sign the 10-year net metering agreement with Kingsbury Hydroelectric. **Scott motioned to recommend that the board authorize the Superintendent to sign the 10-year net metering agreement with Kingsbury Hydroelectric. Kari seconded.** There was some discussion. Chris McVeigh asked if there was an option for 5 years as opposed to 10 years. Jeff Forward responded that the flux in the state and federal levels is more around solar as opposed to hydro. He advised that no one is going to give a better opportunity for hydro as renewable energy; you would most likely get solar rather than wind or hydro. He also stated that other than being the best deal the district will probably get right now even over a 10-year period, it comes with other ancillary benefits. **The motion passed unanimously.** Scott Thompson asked about Washington Electric territory and if there are any opportunities for renewable energy. Jeff advised there are not any good opportunities right now.

4.2. FY 23 General Fund Budget

4.2.1.FY 23 General Fund Budget – Draft # 3: Jen advised that she and Susanne worked with the leadership team on the budget presentation that is in the packet. Jen and Susanne gave an overview of the budget presentation. Jen advised this draft includes everything that was in Draft 2A and they have invited principals to speak from particular schools where changes will occur. The following Position changes /additions are in Draft # 3:

- U-32 Social Studies Teacher , .60 FTE Increase
- EMES Music Teacher, .20 FTE increase is related to an increase in enrollment
- Art .20 FTE will impact the elementary schools
- CES/Berlin Music Teacher .10 FTE increase
- District Special educator increase 1.0 FTE (Berlin)
- EMES Classroom Teacher , 2.0 FTE increase (offset with fund balance)
- Equity Scholar in Residence, contracted service (offset with fund balance).

Jen advised that they believe the need for the Equity Scholar in residence will continue beyond next year. Susanne went over the costs associated with new programs/service requests. The leadership team is requesting \$263,526.00 from the general fund, which has no offsetting revenue. They are also requesting an additional \$180,449.00, recommending fund balance to offset. The team is proposing \$59,397.00 in ARP ESSER funds to support a Doty para-educator position .38 FTE, and Calais literacy interventionist .5 FTE. They are also requesting \$91,760.00 in Title IV Grant for a U-32 RISE Coordinator 1.0 FTE. Kerra will be presenting on Act 173. Susanne gave an overview of the Special Education Funding Model. She also went over Expenditures, Revenues, Net Education Spending, and equalized pupils. There was discussion surrounding equity and how to address it going forward.

4.2.2.FY 23 Tax Rate Projections – Draft # 3: Susanne gave an overview of the Tax Commissioner's scenarios. She stated that nine students are equal to one cent on the tax rate. Jen gave an overview of the School Board Parameters.

4.2.3.Fund Balance Reserve Recommendations/Approval: Kari motioned that the committee recommend that the board authorize the use of up to \$325,468 of the general fund as offsetting revenue for the FY 23 General fund budget. Scott seconded. There was some discussion. **The motion passed.**

4.2.4.Communication Plan – Annual Report, Website, Other: Jen advised that they wanted to talk with the committee about all the ways that we want to communicate once the budget is passed. A lot of the information is in the Annual Report; perhaps a video could be created. Flor advised it will go to the town clerks for the town reports, and she suggested similar to last year a presentation, the annual report, and the link on the website.

4.3. FY 23 Grant-funded Programs/Services: In the presentation.

4.4. Review Town Meeting Items:

4.4.1. Town Meeting Warning – Draft # 3: Susanne advised this is a draft. It was sent to the WCUUSD Clerk for feedback. Flor advised no recommendation at this time until we receive feedback from Rosie.

4.5. Set Announced Tuition Rate for FY 23: Scott moved that the committee recommend that the board announce the FY 22-23 district tuition rates as \$21,253.00 for elementary tuition and \$20,338.00 for secondary tuition. Chris seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5. Next Meeting Date and Future Agenda Items

- 5.1. Next Meeting January 18, 2022
- 5.2. FY 23 Capital Improvement Project Update
- 5.3. FY 23 Capital Improvement Project Bid Awards
- 5.4. Clerk of the Works Contract
- 5.5. Five-year Capital Improvement Project Plan
- 5.6. Extent of Board Involvement/Best Uses
- 5.7. Future Uses of Fund Balance
- 5.8. Articulating purpose of the Finance Committee/Timing of Meetings

6. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Tuller
Administrative Assistant