

Lehigh Area School District
Lehigh, Pennsylvania
Finance Committee Meeting
Monday October 9, 2017 at 6:00 PM
Lehigh Area High School

Minutes

Present

- ☐ Andrew Yenser Present
- ☐ Richard Beltz Present
- ☐ Stacey Duerst Present (arrived approximately 6:15)
- ☐ Brian D. Feick Present
- ☐ Tina Champ
- ☐ Jonathan Cleaver
- ☐ Gloria Bowman Present
- ☐ David Krause Present

Recording Secretary- Meghan Christman

George's Transportation Daily Run Bills for Approval (enclosure)

All attending Committee members agreed to pay the September 2017 transportation bill.

Request for Absence from Regular Duty Form Change (enclosure)

Mr. Feick explained that the Request for Absence from Regular Duty Form is a procedure for employees but not a board policy. When a staff member attends a school business trip, if the expenses do not exceed a total cost of \$250, an administrator is able to approve it without going directly through the board. Mr. Feick explained that enrollment for training is around \$150-180, with the additional cost of travel and food, the total for most school business trips is more than \$250. Mr. Feick suggested changing the amount from \$250 to \$500. Mr. Yenser asked for clarification that the form would still go through an administrator. Mr. Feick confirmed. Mrs. Bowman questioned what the average amount is for a school business trip and whether or not \$500 would be enough in most cases? Mr. Feick confirmed that he felt comfortable that \$500 would be

enough. Mr. Krause suggested a \$400 limit rather than \$500. Mr. Feick agreed to that amount. Mr. Yenser suggested implementing the Request for Absence from Regular Duty Form as a Lehigh Area School District Policy. Mr. Krause asked if these school business trips were all budgeted expenses? Mr. Feick confirmed. Mrs. Bowman asked when the upcoming policy meeting is and requested that the document revision date is updated on the bottom of the Request for Absence from Regular Duty Form. The next Policy Committee meeting is November 1, 2017 and Mr. Yenser recommended this to be implemented as a policy for board approval.

Timeline for Events Related to 2018-2019 Budget Process (enclosure)

Mr. Feick gave the committee members a brief overview of the budget process regarding the budget for next school year.

Lehigh School District SSAct1 Adjusted Index 2018-2019 is 3.3% (attachment)

Mr. Feick informed the committee members that Lehigh Area School Districts SSAct1 Adjusted Index is 3.3%.

Open Discussion:

Mr. Feick informed the committee members that he and Attorney William Schwab have been discussing several topics and Attorney Schwab would be presenting them to the committee. Attorney Schwab informed the committee there has been an offer for a long term rental for Franklin Elementary School. There would be an income to the school district of approximately \$90,000. The renters would be responsible for all building and maintenance care. Attorney Schwab informed the committee that the renter may be interested in Shull David Elementary instead. Mrs. Bowman questioned if the income would be the same for the district if they rented Shull David Elementary instead of Franklin Elementary. Attorney Schwab said that Shull David Elementary is larger than Franklin Elementary, therefore, the income would most likely be more for Shull David but nothing is in writing at this point for Shull David.

In addition, Attorney Schwab informed the committee that he and Mr. Feick have been considering a long term lease with a church who would like to rent the Middle School Auditorium and Cafeteria on Sundays while they are building their church. Mrs. Bowman questioned what time they would be using the facilities. Attorney Schwab stated they would be using the facilities from 8:30AM-12:30PM. Mrs. Bowman questioned if this would interfere with school related activities. Attorney Schwab and Mr. Feick both stated that any school activities would start at 1:00PM, therefore, this

would not interfere with student activities. Mr. Feick stated that the district would be charging \$100 per hour for the auditorium and \$25 per hour for the refreshment stand. Attorney Schwab also suggested that the district have a year to year lease, to avoid being committed to a long term contract if the it does not work out with the church. Mr. Beltz questioned if the middle school has gates in order to isolate the church group from having access to the rest of the school. Attorney Schwab confirmed that the middle school does have gates and they would only be allowed access to the auditorium and refreshment stand. Mrs. Bowman questioned if the church would have insurance. Attorney Schwab stated that the church would be required to have no less than a \$1,000,000 liability insurance policy and no food or drink would be permitted in the auditorium.

Attorney Schwab also informed the committee that there have been several interests in Mahoning Elementary and a bid was submitted for \$350,000. He also stated that if paperwork is submitted in a timely manner, the earliest auction could be November 1. Mr. Beltz questioned if the district could list Mahoning for sale instead. Attorney Schwab responded by informing the committee it is harder to sell a school as a private sale versus a public sale. Mr. Beltz stated that the district could potentially receive more money for the building if it is listed as a private sale. Attorney Schwab said that has not been the experience of other school districts who have tried to list a school as a private sale. Often times, the school is on the market for a long period of time and the value of the building tends to decrease due to the fact that there are no custodians taking care of the maintenance. Mr. Yenser added when talking to other school districts who have done similar projects, not putting the building on a private market was the best piece of advice he took from them. Mr. Beltz suggested that the custodians are contracted through the summer and could be utilized to upkeep the building while on the market.

Mr. Feick informed the committee that American Eagle has clothing donation bins that can be placed at the schools in order to gain income. The district would receive \$100 per month. The committee members all agreed that this was not a good idea due to the fact that many people donate as a way of disposing low quality clothing.

Mr. Feick also informed the committee that he is planning on having the preliminary budget for the 2018-2019 school year ready in November.

Mrs. Bowman questioned if any of the committee members saw the ballot in the local newspaper. Mr. Feick said currently local authorities are only able to eliminate 50% of real estate for Homestead Farmstead. The ballot referendum in November is to allow local authorities to eliminate 100% on residential property. This is one step closer to what may result in tax elimination. Mr. Feick expressed that he thought it was fair because the residents would be paying more in sales tax to compensate for it, but

commercial would continue to pay real estate tax. The first proposal by the state eliminated real taxes for everyone, which gave an unfair advantage to landlords and stores because they would not be paying sales tax.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Monday November13, 2017 6:00 p.m.
BDF/mmc