

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Thursday, January 21, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center/Virtual

PRESENT: Gundersen, Heinrich, Hughes, Luna, Meggers, Pattacini, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT: Patterson

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Darryl Thames, Snr., co-chair of the Personnel & Finance Committee.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Geary reviewed the Board of Education proposed budget, going into detail in the salaries and benefits sections. The blueprint for 2021-2023 will be Respond - Recover - Reimagine. Mr. Geary also noted that employee health and wellness relative to the stress brought about by the pandemic will be a priority.

Important factors considered in creating this budget include:

- Local economic impact of the pandemic.
- CT is in budget year 1 of a new 2 year budget.
- CT has a small budget surplus currently and a decrease in the projected budget deficit over the next two years (1billion per year vs the original 2billion) and there is approximately 3.1billion in the rainy day fund.
- Alliance Funding is in a 10 year phase-in and should mean an additional \$1,695,521 for Manchester.
- Both the recently passed and new proposed Federal Relief Packages.
- Potential BOE savings for the 20-21 School Year.
- Covid vaccine timeline *(currently available for those over 75 years old).

To review, the 2021-2022 proposed budget amount is \$121,042,676, which represents a 2.78% increase over the current budget amount of \$117,774,174. Considering the Alliance funding expected that increase drops to a 1.3% increase over the 20-21 budget.

Key cost drivers for the budget remain:

- Intervention/acceleration - certified and non-certified contractual salaries.
- Outplacement and magnet school tuition - special education.
- Board policies that require a certain percentage of the budget for capital repairs and computer equipment.

Mr. Gundersen asked for clarity about the additional 15 staff members. Mr. Geary reviewed that he left the additional 15 staff members, hired this year to help facilitate remote learning, in the budget. The intention is that either they will still be needed for remote learning, or if we are 100% in buildings, they will be used to help recover learning loss in grades K-1-2, keeping class sizes small to help those students build foundational skills.

In reviewing salaries, Mr. Geary went line by line through two schools as examples, Bennet and Bowers. It was pointed out that the Alliance Grant pays salaries for many staff, including librarians, PLC leader stipends, assistant principals, behavior techs, FRC leaders, STEM specialists, reading consultants and instructional coaches. Mr. Gundersen wondered why we are where the funds to pay specific lines come from. Mr. Geary explained that the grants and BOE budget flow together to support the Board budget overall, but it is important to realize where funding comes from and the impact it has on our district. Without Alliance funding we would have to reevaluate our needs and either increase our budget or lay off many positions. Mr. Geary pointed out that when we first received Alliance funds the amount was unpredictable, and it was more difficult to budget.

Mr. Geary reviewed the benefits section next. He explained that if we have less employees choosing the family plan (or choosing not to take insurance) it means less of an increase in our budget and is unpredictable. All of the Board of Education is now on the HSA plan and we pay the town the premiums as the town is self-insured.

Non-certified staff have either a defined benefit (commonly called a pension) or a defined contribution. New staff over the last several years all have the defined contribution, which is a 6% salary match and costs the Board less money. As people retire eventually all will be under the defined contribution section. The object code for health insurance is 5270, which includes our cost plan and our contribution to HSA and major medical.

Mr. Geary asked Board members to email him any questions they have prior to

the next budget workshop so he may prepare answers and address those at the start of the next budget workshop. He also noted if Board members prefer paper instead of electronic documents to please ask in advance since we are all participating from home.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

E. CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Thames reviewed the next budget workshops are Thursday, January 28 and February 4th, both at 6pm in the same location, and restated that if Board members have more questions on tonight's presentation they are asked to submit them in advance if possible and they will be addressed at the start of the next workshop. Mr. Thames also noted that the Board of Directors has been responsive to the needs of Manchester's children in the past.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m. by Mr. Thames.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary