

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BUDGET/FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

A meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Budget & Facilities Subcommittee was held virtually on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, via Zoom Conferencing. Subcommittee Chairperson, Sheila Ellsworth, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present:

Subcommittee: Sheila Ellsworth, Chairperson; Tara Thibaudeau, and Nicky Piper
School Committee and Administration: Marjorie McBride, Jonathan Brice, Ed. D., Superintendent; Diane Sanna, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Anthony Ferrucci, Chief Financial Officer; Thomas Wood, Director of Facilities; Lee-Ann Beaupre, Human Resources Manager; Rose Muller, Technology Director; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Diana Campbell, Recording Secretary

I. Discussion and/or Possible Action

A. Approval of the Minutes of April 14, 2021

Motion was made by Ms. Thibaudeau to approve the Minutes of April 14, 2021; 2nd by Ms. Piper. Motion was approved unanimously.

B. Approval of the Minutes of April 26, 2021

Motion was made by Ms. Thibaudeau to approve the Minutes of April 26, 2021; 2nd by Ms. Piper. Motion was approved unanimously.

C. Requisitions for Approval

Superintendent Brice listed the Requisitions to be approved: Simpson Arts Scholarship, \$5000, Scholarship, \$5000, invoice for Senior Prom Caterer, \$11,898, LTRS Training for K-2 teachers, \$25,992, Professional Development Services for Barrington Schools, related to Title III Consortium (Bristol Warren acts as fiscal agent for the Consortium), \$6,774, Athletic Sports, \$18,058, RISAS Student Assistance Contract Services, \$22,400.

Discussion:

Ms. McBride pointed out that these requisitions should come through as Purchase Orders, with the line item identified for the source of the funds in the Budget. Chairperson McBride agreed that this list should go forward to the full School Committee for their approval, but would like to see Purchase Orders (POs) going forward. It was agreed that, going forward, that's what will be done.

At this point in the meeting, Superintendent Brice introduced the new Chief Financial Officer for the District, Anthony Ferrucci.

Mr. Ferrucci stated that he is happy to be with the District. He was with Coventry, then most recently with the Warwick School District, where he was also on their Building Committee. He feels confident that he will be able to address all the financial issues facing the District.

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Ms. Piper asked about scholarships, inquiring why some scholarships come directly from the outside, but some come through the District. Superintendent Brice explained that it depended on how the Scholarships were set up. Sometimes they come through a Trust that specifies who will manage and distribute the funds. For these two requisitions, the related Trusts specify that the District will distribute the funds directly. These scholarships have already been distributed.

Motion was made by Ms. Piper to approve the listed requisitions and forward them to the full School Committee; 2nd by Ms. Thibaudeau. Motion was approved unanimously.

D. Monthly Financial Reports

Chairperson Ellsworth pointed out that the reports are just Drafts. They will need to be reviewed for corrections.

Chairperson McBride stated that the reports seem to be missing funds that were spent last summer. She asked for a report on stipends and substitutes. Superintendent Brice will send out a report of every expenditure by month.

E. FY22 Budget

Chairperson Ellsworth provided a status of the FY22 Budget. She reported that Diane Brennan is reconciling the FY21 Budget and will work with Mr. Ferrucci to make sure that it's correct and properly corresponds with the FY22 Budget. She reported that before August 1, there will be a meeting of all the Directors to review their Budgets so they understand their budgets for the next fiscal year.

F. Operational Review Action Item

Chairperson Ellsworth presented the findings and recommendations from the consultant, Mary King. She expects that the final report will consist of three separate reports: Action Items that have been closed, Action Items in process, and Action Items that are still Open.

Superintendent Brice provided an update on specific Action Items in the areas for Facilities and Technology.

G. COZ

Chairperson Ellsworth introduced the item by explaining that in the prior year (2019), COZ funds were used as a one-time transaction for Student Support Services at Kickemuit Middle School (KMS). Ms. King identified that this was not the correct use of funds. The Committee needs to move the amount back into the COZ account. The amount is \$684,000 and should be moved from Unassigned in the Fund Balance back to the COZ account. This request needs to be approved at the next full School Committee.

Motion was made by Ms. Thibaudeau to authorize the transfer of \$684,000 from the

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Unassigned account within the Fund Balance back to the COZ account, and forward this request to the full School Committee for approval; 2nd by Ms. Piper. The motion was approved unanimously.

H. ESSER Funds

Assistant Superintendent Sanna provided an explanation of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, how much they are and for what they need to be used. She stated that the ESSER funds are given to districts to address learning loss and other factors as a result of COVID. For the first round (ESSER I), Bristol Warren received \$1.8m, and for the next round (ESSER II), the District anticipates receiving \$4m.

She reviewed her draft budget for the ESSER I funds. There are two overarching uses of ESSER funds: 1. Extended Learning, including summer and after-school programs, targeting the academic and social emotional needs of students, getting them re engaged in school and ready to learn; 2. In-school learning, to improve curriculum to meet the needs of all students, professional development, addressing the social-emotional needs of students, and creating a healthy learning environment for students. The District's ESSER I application will center around 5 key areas: Enhancing core instruction, Social-Emotional Learning, multi-tiered systems of support, summer learning and creating safe and healthy schools.

Chairperson Ellsworth clarified the role of the Budget Subcommittee to review the budget part of the application to make sure that funds are spent properly.

Assistant Superintendent Sanna stated that the application will be submitted after July 1. She recommended that the application be submitted all at one time because the approval process could take several weeks and she wouldn't want to go through it for each category. She recommended that the application be submitted in its entirety. She noted that changes can be requested later as amendments.

Chairperson Ellsworth asked about the infrastructure portion of the application. She asked if the plan can be submitted if it's not clear on how much specific items will cost. She allowed that the District may need to make changes later as we learn more about the actual costs through the amendment process.

Chairperson Ellsworth asked to see financial reports on the ESSER funds each month. Ms. McBride wanted to make sure that there are no missing costs that will result in the District not being able to pay for some of the programs that are not entirely represented in the ESSER budget. Superintendent Brice provided information on the missing items, such as transportation and lunches for the Summer program. He also reviewed the number of students from each school that will participate in the summer programs. Ms. McBride wanted to ensure that the children with the greatest learning loss will be included in the programs before students who did not have any learning loss.

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Superintendent Brice stated that the flyers are being directed at the students in greatest need first. Ms. McBride asked if there is a contingency if the School Committee does not approve of the company that will provide the program at the elementary level. Answer: No.

Following up on that, Ms. Thibaudeau asked for the costs of summer programs of the past. Superintendent Brice did not have that information but promised to provide it to the Subcommittee.

Ms. Thibaudeau asked if Faculty costs are in the ESSER budget or if the company (for the elementary summer program) is covering those costs. Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that at the High School level, District staff will be covering the program, at the Middle School level, a majority of the program will be covered by the District with STEAM activities covered by the program. At the elementary level, internal staff are exhausted and not willing to work the summer. She stated that there has been success with the program with the company providing the artists and STEM instructors and contracting for local teachers for some of the academic portions of the program last summer. Chairperson Ellis asked about Title I tutoring. Principal Roman stated that the Title I programs are separate and will still happen.

Ms. Piper asked about the ESSER categories and if they are derived from the Strategic Plan. Assistant Superintendent Sanna stated that the Strategic Plan includes a Needs Assessment which will be included in the ESSER application. Ms. Piper followed up to ask if it would be beneficial to create higher level categories to provide some flexibility to move funds around within the budget. Assistant Superintendent agreed and stated that the categories that she described are part of the narrative, but that the budget is divided into high level categories for purposes of flexibility.

Ms. Piper asked if the COZ camp, which is fee driven, can be opened up for students out of the District for a fee. Superintendent Brice stated that that is not possible as all of the available seats are filled from within the District.

Chairperson Ellsworth asked how many children will receive instruction through the elementary program. Answer: 50 per week. She followed up with how many children are in each classroom. Mary Cabral explained the breakdown of students in the classrooms and how the programming is organized to meet individual needs.

Ms. Thibaudeau asked how many teachers are included in the summer program in each classroom. Will there be additional costs for teachers? Will there be additional building costs? Superintendent Brice responded that there are no extra costs associated with the buildings.

Ms. Thibaudeau stated that she wanted to make sure that our proposal is a good use of our funds. Superintendent Brice replied that the program is attractive enough to draw

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students, who may be tired after a long year of school. Assistant Superintendent Sanna added that the District will also be providing tutoring for special needs students.

Chairperson Ellsworth asked about stipends for the KMS programs, including the Bridge Program, to make sure that there is enough money allocated to support them.

Ms. Thibaudeau asked for clarification on what the \$35,000 in the budget covers. Assistant Superintendent noted that the funds are for summer tutors. Principal DiBiase explained that 75 students will participate in the Summer Bridge program, that there is room for 450 students in Summer Academy (credit recovery), and that the College and Career Boot Camp will cover up to 30 students. She noted that some of the costs of the Summer Bridge program are covered by the Bristol Warren Education Foundation (BWEF). Ms. McBride reminded the subcommittee that the Bristol Warren Education Foundation (BWEF) cannot be used for curriculum. Principal DiBiase stated that BWEF has funded the Summer Bridge program for 4 years, this budget is for a supplemental expansion of that program, to be covered by the ESSER fund. Ms. McBride stated that the goal is for the District to pick up the funding for the long term, not relying on grants.

Ms. McBride asked about Ever Fi. Principal DiBiase explained that it's a platform that is used to bring free educational self-directed course modules to students who may want to take them. They are used primarily for the Business Department. Ms. McBride asked about Financial Literacy courses as part of the program. Superintendent Brice asked Principal DiBiase to add a financial literacy module to the District's offering.

Chairperson Ellsworth requested that curriculum information, along with the budgets and number of students served, be provided to the full School Committee at their next meeting.

Superintendent Brice thanked all the Administrators that are present for their time and hard work.

I. RFPs

Chairperson Ellsworth asked for the status of RFPs that were due on April 15. Answer: Superintendent Brice explained that the RFPs need to be approved by the Building Committee. Attorney Carroll will check on the status and deadlines for each RFP.

J. Facilities

Chairperson Ellsworth asked for a timeline on the move out of Oliver and into Reynolds. The Reynolds building is not ready at this time. It is anticipated that we will be able to move by September 1. An RFP for a phone system will be needed.

For summer work, there will still be the usual routine cleaning and training for staff to address safety certifications and inspections. The School DUDE application is being reinvented so that issues in each classroom and maintenance of HVAC systems, etc.

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are identified and addressed.

Chairperson Ellsworth requested a tour of all the buildings for the Budget Committee. Superintendent Brice will follow up on this request.

II. Adjournment - 8:28p.m.

Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Ms. Piper. All approved the motion. Chair Ellsworth adjourned the meeting at 8:28 pm.

**Sheila Ellsworth, Chair
Budget/Facilities Subcommittee**

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