

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

Monday, May 4, 2020

A meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Budget & Facilities Subcommittee was held virtually on Monday, May 4, 2020, via Zoom Conferencing. Subcommittee Chairperson, Brian Bradshaw, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Present:

Subcommittee: Brian Bradshaw, Chairperson, School Committee Treasurer; Sheila Ellsworth, and John Bento

Subcommittee: Brian Bradshaw, Chairperson, Sheila Ellsworth, and John Bento
School Committee and Administration: Erin Schofield, Adam Ramos, Victor Cabral, John Saviano, Carly Reich, Marjorie McBride, Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Jonathan Brice, Ed.D., Superintendent; Diane Sanna, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Tina Fogell, Esq., Chief Operating Officer; Edward Clarke, M.Ed., Director of Student Support Services; George Simmons, Director of Facilities; Rose Muller, Director of Information Technology, Kathryn Brown, Recording Secretary
Guests: David Milner and Laura Frazier, NuGen Solar

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mr. Bento made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2020 meeting; seconded by Mrs. Ellsworth. Chairperson Bradshaw stated that due to the lack of context in the meeting minutes around a statement he made about being billed for \$800,000 for students, he had no issue approving the meeting minutes if this statement was removed.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION NUGEN SOLAR

David Milner, CEO, of NuGen Solar presented an opportunity to BWRSD to take part in a solar project. NuGen won the bid for solar projects in the Town of Bristol and Barrington. This opportunity that was presented to BWRSD to participate in is a utility scale project located at a closed landfill site in Bristol that cannot be used for anything else. This site will have 18,000 solar panels. It is expected to be ready in spring of 2021. We hope to have an educational component to the project. The supply piece does not change this as the solar energy will be against whatever entity issues the bill.

A discussion ensued.

III. DISCUSS CURRENT STATUS OF THE MODIFIED NECESSITY OF CONSTRUCTION

A. What projects are completed/which are still ongoing?

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- B. How much has been spent on each project compared to what was planned for all projects started and/or completed in 2019-2020? Three phases of construction at MHHS.
- C. Expected reimbursement for completed projects to RIDE due June 2020
- D. Timeline for the RFP to select an Ed consultant and engineering firm
- E. Current update about buildings

Dr. Brice discussed the NOC and shared the draft document detailing the current status of each project.

The security camera installation project is on hold as well as the MHHS boys locker room project as there is still information being collected on the cost of the projects.

Dr. Brice discussed Phase 1, 2, and 3 at MHHS.

Mrs. Ellsworth mentioned she wanted to know the percentage of completion for each project and what we have received from RIDE reimbursements.

Dr. Brice responded that we have received \$590,000 to date and will be submitting for the remaining \$700,000. He indicated we will update the Necessity of Construction to a google sheet and share it.

Mrs. Ellsworth indicated that there is an excel spreadsheet from November 2019.

Dr. Brice discussed that Phase I is ninety percent (90%) completed. There were some issues with the quality of work to complete that phase of the project.

Mrs. Ellsworth asked if we will go out to bid and if the school committee will be able to get that information.

Dr. Brice stated that we are discussing how we plan to proceed in the future.

Mrs. Ellsworth stated that she is concerned because School Committee members are not always told about where we are in the project. She stated they want to know about cash flow issues and other issues affecting the projects.

Dr. Brice indicated that this is one of the reasons we are going out to get an educational architect.

Mrs. Ellsworth asked if they would be able to approve the bid.

Dr. Brice stated that she is asking them to change the procedure. The Necessity of Construction is the vote. He indicated that he understands they are looking for information and we are in the process of making improvements.

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Mr. Cabral stated that the high school project looks great. It is fertilized well with geese crap. He stated they should be talking about artificial turf.

Mr. Saviano asked if the camera project is on hold.

Dr. Brice stated that in order to put in cameras, we need to increase the fiber. We are waiting for a decision on eRate. It is our priority to maintain a level of effective technology and safety in our buildings.

Regarding Phase 2, we are at one hundred percent (100%) completion and we have been paid in full. We have also been fully reimbursed from RIDE.

When discussing Phase 3, there are approximately \$170,000 in outstanding invoices. The plan is to be completed shortly. We will update the committee in early May.

Chairperson Bradshaw stated that we need to make sure we are being good stewards of the taxpayer's funds. If we are over budget, over schedule, in jeopardy of losing reimbursement, the sooner the school committee is notified the better.

Dr. Brice stated that we will be issuing an RFP. It will be on the street by August of 2020. Then it will be presented to RIDE by September 15, 2020. We will submit a plan for the next five (5) years, which is due by February 2021.

Mrs. Ellsworth asked who awarded the bid.

Dr. Brice responded that the School Committee, but we need to make sure we comply with RIDE requirements.

Chairperson Bradshaw stated he would like to see the RFP out sooner.

Dr. Brice responded that he understood, but that we are worried about reopening. We will add it to the list.

Dr. Brice explained that we are in good shape and are working through the list. The items that remain on the list are awaiting parts, etc. We are in the process of painting the hallways at all the buildings.

IV. BUDGET STATUS

A. Recap of March end of month dashboard

Dr. Brice reviewed and discussed the March end of month dashboard report.

B. Discussion of April end of month dashboard

Dr. Brice reviewed and discussed the April End of Month Dashboard report.

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C. Projected savings/losses from COVID-19

Dr. Brice reviewed and discussed the memo he sent to all school committee members on May 3, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 Potential Savings/Losses. There are three areas of savings - transportation, substitutes and food service.

Projected Savings	Transportation	\$1,602,197.57
	Substitutes	\$155,518.98
	Foodservice	\$478,533.89
	Total Projected Savings	\$2,236,250.44
	(Will change with May and June costs)	

Projected savings will decrease as we continue using substitutes and food service through May and June. Any potential savings will need to be used to offset an expected revenue shortfall in state and local aid unless a federal stimulus bill is provided for state and local government. Additionally, state and local aid may be delayed due to a change in the deadline for taxes from April 15 to July 15th.

Projected losses: We don't know what increased costs BWRSD will incur to re-open traditional schooling. Early ideas include summer school, additional transportation cost, longer school year, alternative school schedules. Funding from the CARES Act and other emergency funding may be available to offset increased cost but the extent of funding for BWRSD is not known.

BWRSD will continue to monitor potential savings and losses and update COVID-19 potential savings/losses each month for the remainder of 2020.

Mr. Bradshaw mentioned that they may have to take different actions or in regards to the usual policy of the surplus going into fund balance at the end of every year.

Dr. Brice mentioned that he is worried about the reduction in state and local aid.

Mrs. Ellsworth mentioned that the report by object code needs to be looked at regarding encumbrances and that BWRSD is taking full advantage of all funding that is available from state and federal aid in regards to COVID.

Mrs. Ellsworth asked about state aid and the plan for free and reduced lunch to make sure the district is taking full advantage of the program and not losing money.

Dr. Brice stated that families are hurting and the district has sent information about the free and reduced lunch program and will continue to do so in the 2020-2021 school year.

V. RESULTS OF THE JFC AND FY21 PLANNING

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Dr. Brice discussed the results of the JFC and that the full budget was approved minus \$300,000 for health care savings. The weeks and months after the approval, COVID-19 happened and there is concern that the budget will not be fully funded due to cuts in local aid. The plan is to operate until there is information about any changes. We are working on a plan that considers reductions of 10%/20%/30%.

Mr. Saviano mentioned that he is concerned about the deadline for teacher layoffs.

Dr. Brice answered that they are awaiting guidance from the state about the layoff date being suspended/moved to a later date in the summer. The current deadline is June 1.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND ACTIONS

A. Nugen Solar

Mr. Bradshaw opened discussion in regards to NuGen Solar and the presentation from earlier in the meeting.

Mrs. Ellsworth stated that they should get more information from the town of Bristol.

Mr. Ramos stated that he has worked with energy evaluations in his law practice and has negotiated contracts like the one NuGen Solar presented tonight. He stated that he understands the program and requirements and is a resource on this matter to the school committee if needed. He does not have any relationship with NuGen Solar.

Mr. Bento asked if there was a possibility to get references from customers to learn more about this type of project and if there are other school districts that have used these kinds of programs?

A discussion ensued regarding the project.

Chairperson Bradshaw recommended more follow-up to be done in getting documents regarding the bid proposals from the town of Bristol for further information. Reminded school committee members that Mr. Milner from NuGen Solar mentioned that anyone can follow-up with questions to him directly about the project.

No further action taken.

B. Transportation Bid(s)

Mrs. Fogell provided a summary of the transportation bid opening that she attended on Thursday, April 30, 2020, at the Portsmouth School Department's Administrative Offices. Also in attendance at the bid was Richard Labrie, the transportation consultant, Christopher Diluro, Portsmouth School Department's Finance Director, and representatives from First Student and Ocean State Transportation. Bristol Warren Regional School District only received one bid from First Student.

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The total bid award is \$2,227,213.09. This represents a cost per bus per day of \$369.29. For comparison, the last contract's bid price was for \$334.32 per bus per day and a total bid award amount of \$2,080,411.65.

A brief discussion ensued regarding next steps. Attorney Carroll mentioned they will continue conversations with the transportation company and that Mrs. Fogell will forward the formal recommendation from the transportation consultant regarding the bid when received. There are some concerns regarding contract suggestions and/or modifications that First Student has included in their bid response, but more information regarding this will be available once the consultant has produced his recommendation.

No further action taken.

C. Disposal of Vehicles

Mr. Simmons discussed that there are three (3) vehicles that we are interested in disposing. There is a van, which is not inspectable and not roadworthy, a bus, which is past its life cycle of about ten (10) years and is too costly to repair, and a 2012 bus, which the lift does not work, the windows are broken, and is not worth the repairs.

Mr. Bento asked about the value of each of the vehicles.

Mr. Simmons responded that the van is worth between \$100 to \$200, which is basically junk value, the bus is valued between \$500 to \$600, and the other bus is valued between \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Mr. Cabral asked when the last time the van was on the road.

Mr. Simmons responded in 2015.

Mr. Cabral asked when the last time the 2005 bus was on the road.

Mr. Simmons responded about 3 years ago.

Mr. Cabral asked when the last time the 2012 bus was on the road.

Mr. Simmons stated approximately two years ago.

Mr. Cabral asked if the vehicles were in storage.

Mr. Simmons stated they have been in storage since September of 2019.

Mr. Cabral asked if the windows were broken while the bus was in storage.

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George Simmons stated they were broken on our campus.

Victor Cabral stated we have been paying insurance and registration for more than we should have been. It is a waste of money.

Mr. Bento asked how many trucks are in our fleet.

Mr. Simmons responded that there are five trucks total.

Mr. Bento asked about the process so this does not happen again.

Mr. Saviano stated he had the same question.

MOTION: Mr. Bento made a motion to sell all three vehicles; seconded by Mrs. Ellsworth.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Ms. Schofield mentioned that the disposal of vehicles is under a school committee policy.

Attorney Carroll stated that there should be three separate motions.

MOTION: Mr. Bento made a motion to sell the 2000 van; seconded by Mrs. Ellsworth.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

MOTION: Mr. Bento made a motion to the 2005 bus; seconded by Mrs. Ellsworth.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

MOTION: Mr. Bento made a motion to sell 2012 bus; seconded by Mrs. Ellsworth.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

D. Purchase of Truck for Chartwells

Mr. Simmons explained that we are looking to purchase a box truck. He found one at Tasca Ford in Rhode Island for \$52,400. It has a liftgate.

Ms. Ellsworth asked if the purchase needs to be approved by RIDE.

Mr. Saviano asked what responsibility we undertake if we purchase a truck. Do we also need to provide a driver?

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Dr. Brice explained we do not need to provide a driver.

Mr. Simmons stated that the district would own the vehicle.

Ms. Ellsworth asked if we are paying for the lease.

Mr. Simmons stated that we are not paying for the lease.

Ms. Ellsworth indicated we needed additional information.

Dr. Brice said we would gather more information and bring it back after we research the questions.

Mr. Ramos asked where the notion of purchasing a truck for Chartwells came from.

Mr. Simmons stated that the previous Finance Director made the decision. We needed to pay down the monies in our food service account and they came up with a plan to do that with equipment and the truck.

Mr. Ramos asked if that was her idea to spend it down.

Mr. Simmons said that was correct.

Mr. Bento stated that he is troubled by the liability.

Mr. Saviano stated he would like to purchase more equipment for all of the schools. We should not be purchasing a truck for Chartwells.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that it is not a responsible ask. We should be outfitting the schools with machines and come up with more creative ways to spend the money.

Mr. Simmons stated that we installed new dishwashers in three locations and also installed tops for all the waste receptacles.

Mr. Saviano stated that we should have the best lunchrooms in the State of Rhode Island, that is where the money should be spent.

Mr. Bradshaw asked if the Chartwells contract allowed them to drive district vehicles.

Mr. Bento stated we should table the item.

Mr. Saviano asked if the Trust allowed this vehicle on our insurance.

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No further discussion or action taken.

VII. ADJOURNMENT - 9:28pm

MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Bento made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:28pm; seconded by Mrs. Ellsworth.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Brian Bradshaw, Chair
Budget/Facilities Subcommittee**

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