

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

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

A meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Budget & Facilities Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, November 17, 2021. Subcommittee Chairperson, Sheila Ellsworth, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:04 p.m.

Present: Subcommittee: Sheila Ellsworth, Chairperson; and Tara Thibaudeau; Nicky Piper. **School Committee and Administration:** Diane Sanna, Ph. D., Assistant Superintendent; Thomas Wood, Director of Facilities; Anthony Ferrucci, Chief Financial Officer; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Rose Muller, IT Director; Brenna Toland, Director of Student Support Services; **Guest:** Amy Bratsos, COZ Coordinator.

I. DISCUSSION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Approval of the Minutes of October 20, 2021 Meeting

MOTION: Motion was made by Ms. Piper to approve the Minutes of the October 20, 2021 Subcommittee meeting; seconded by Ms. Thibaudeau. Motion was approved unanimously.

B. FY22 Capital/Facility Projects

• **Capital/ Facility Project Status**

Mr. Wood presented a new spreadsheet that summarized the budget information for Capital/Facility Projects. He pointed out the budget for projects that had received prior approval, including bathroom at HG, roof replacements at Guiteras & HC and pavement replacements at HC. He is asking that A&E Engineering fees be allocated by project. Mr. Ferrucci agreed that this would be an appropriate way to track the fees.

New Proposals for additional services:

- \$13,975 for civil engineer to survey, re-design, bid packages, and construction administration of Colt Andrews entry sidewalk redesign project at Andrews.
- \$15K for Engineering costs to finish the proposal for submission to RIDE, manage the bid process, and construction administration, for the School Committee approved \$235K Rooftop project at KMS.
- \$21,150 for design, bid submission, bidding process, review with RIDE, and administration for security camera infrastructure upgrade project.

These costs are necessary to ensure that the District is in compliance for

reimbursement from RIDE. Majority of projects are already well under development.

Mr. Wood further explained that the Security Camera and Security Camera infrastructure project had already gone through RIDE for approval, but needed to be revised to adjust the scope of the project for each school. After reviewing the project needs at each school, in an effort to reduce the scope/cost of the project, it was found that there could be reductions at the elementary schools, but that the high school and middle school needed more cameras, which will increase the budget requirements for this project. The bid process will be broken down by buildings separately, so that some work could be deferred if necessary. This should be ready to go out to bid on this project within a month.

Mr. Wood reviewed additional projects he is working on: entry security of exterior doors at Colt, ADA improvements in the boys locker room, and ceiling paint at Colt auditorium. He, along with Mr. Ferrucci, are investigating the use of the Town's Colt Fund for the Colt building.

He continued to provide updates on other projects on the summary. He will use the summary sheet to provide updates to the Subcommittee each month.

- **Facility Rental Fee schedule and process**

Chairperson Ellsworth explained that she is looking to review and develop a new rental plan and process for the use of school facilities. She would like to develop a stronger process and to review the fee rates to address damage that can occur when facilities are used. She pointed out the fee rates of neighboring Towns' rates. Mr. Wood agrees that there is a need to review the rates as there is more interest in using the District's Facilities fees. Mr. Wood pointed out that there are fees to cover janitorial personnel but not for the use of the rooms themselves.

Ms. Thibaudeau disagrees that fees should be charged for use of facilities. She pointed out that some groups cannot afford these fees, since these groups represent taxpayers who are paying for the buildings. Chairperson Ellsworth agreed that there should be a multi-tiered fee schedule for non-profit, for-profit organizations, and out of district groups. There also needs to be a priority for use of facilities by local organizations over outside groups.

Mr. Wood will take the lead on reviewing and making recommendations for changing the Facilities Use Policy.

- **Baseline Field issues**

Mr. Wood explained that recently there have been some conversations about upgrading

the baseball field at Guiteras. He wanted to understand the funding priority for it by the Subcommittee. He stated that the Baseball team is concerned about keeping the field in compliance. The Team has been successful in the past few years - moving up to Division I - and are concerned that the quality of the field is not suitable for Division I competition. Some requirements are over-seeding the grass and repairing the irrigation system, as ordinary maintenance that should be done routinely. But there are additional requests, including adding supplemental materials to the in-field to raise the elevations of the baselines. This could cost \$8-10K for materials and installation, based on Mr. Wood's sources.

Chairperson Ellsworth asked about the netting over the baseball cage that was damaged by DaPontes Landscaping when they mowed the lawn. There are also concerns about birds getting caught in the nets. The netting over the batting cage is usually maintained by the team. There's a question on who is responsible for it. Ms. Thibaudeau pointed out that the batting cages are used off-season, but not as sanctioned activities of the Athletic Dept. There were questions on who manages the use of the field. This will be considered when working on the Facility Use Policy. Mr. Wood will investigate this issue further.

- **MHHS Boys Locker Room**

Chairperson Ellsworth would like a timeline for this project. Mr. Wood noted that there are two private areas that can be used for students who request them. Assistant Superintendent Sanna stated that these private areas are being used, but this effort is to find a way for this to happen as part of the regular locker room configuration. Mr. Wood is investigating this and will come back with a recommendation.

- **Update on move to Reynolds**

Mr. Wood provided an update on the move to the Reynolds building. He explained that a requested change to the HR Dept to provide more privacy coincided with the eventual needs of the Town for the building, so the Town has agreed to cover the costs of those changes. The Town will also cover the costs of changing the keys for the building rooms.

The shredding of old documents continues. The State will be looking at some of the books in storage, looking at their historical value and whether or not they want them in the State's own historic archives.

When asked, Mr. Wood projected the move to take place at the end of December. Chairperson requested that the Subcommittee and the Town be kept apprised of the move date and process.

C. Grant Proposals

- **ESSER II**

Ms. Thibaudeau asked about ESSER II changes. Chairperson Ellsworth asked about the change to add a line item for HVAC systems at MHHS, Hugh Cole, Guiteras, and Colt Andrews. Mr. Wood commented that some are upgrades/maintenance to existing systems (Colt Andrews) and Hugh Cole. Others will be replaced.

Ms. Piper asked about posting the ESSER II and III on the website and community engagement. Assistant Superintendent Sanna stated that she will follow up and have them posted on the website. For stakeholder engagement, there are several ways of community engagement, through assessment process, school improvement plans, and the strategic planning process.

- **ESSER III**

Assistant Superintendent Sanna presented the preliminary budget for ESSER III, which is not on the RIDE site yet. She explained that the budget continues some activities of ESSER II, as well as additional needs that were identified after the start of the school year. The application continues to focus on specific core needs: enhancing core instruction as it's aligned to standards, strengthening multi-tiered systems of support to address learning loss and to close achievement gaps - this includes funding for social workers to help students with social-emotional support, and extended learning and items related to school re-opening.

Chairperson Ellsworth asked about the positions that were approved for Student Services. Assistant Superintendent Sanna stated that the 3 facilitators were not included because they are considered a long-term expenditure. Attorney Carroll explained that there are other Special Education funds, such as, IDEA funds could cover these positions. It was agreed that they would be covered, but not necessarily from ESSER funds. Chairperson asked that the subcommittee be kept apprised of the status of the Student Services needs.

Attorney Carroll asked when the application needs to be submitted. Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that the District has been advised to be ready but that the actual submission date has not been disclosed, though the amount of funds has been communicated. Some positions are being posted in anticipation of approval, so that they can be filled as soon as the application is approved. Chairperson Ellsworth is looking for understanding of what has already been spent, noting that some positions have not been approved by the subcommittee.

Assistant Superintendent Sanna answered committee questions about some of the line items in the proposed budget about staffing and support systems. Ms. Piper asked if

there is room to add \$50K in funds for an SRO at the middle school.

Assistant Superintendent Sanna summarized that the District Administration Team will:

1. Add special education positions to ESSER III budget or identify the source of funding for them, if it's elsewhere
2. Identify the Expenditures already spent out of the ESSER III budget
3. Add funding for an SRO for KMS, after discussing with the Town of Warren about their plans for funding next year
4. Breakdown the costs of HVAC systems
5. Providing information on costs of Infrastructure and technology.

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the amended ESSER II funding budget and to forward them to the full School Committee for approval; Seconded by Ms. Piper. The motion passed unanimously.

- **RIDE School Support plan Implementation**

Ms. Toland brought the Subcommittee up to date on the RIDE School Support Plan and her efforts to work with RIDE on assessing the needs for the District. As part of that work she is focussed on reviewing IEP best practices and procedures and planning for professional development and support for the to-be-hired Special Education Coordinators, to ensure consistency and development of measurable goals. The District will be able to apply for funds through this grant in February.

MOTION: Ms. Piper made a motion to approve the RIDE School Support Implementation grant application and forward it to the full School Committee for approval; Second by Chairperson Ellsworth. The motion was approved unanimously.

- **RIDE Middle School math**

Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that RIDE, in support of communities in providing support for implementation of high quality curriculum, is providing funding for substitutes and stipends for teachers to attend after-school training. These funds will be used for Grade 6 teachers who are implementing the new Ready-Math program.

MOTION: Ms Piper made a motion to accept the grant funding for substitutes and stipends for teachers attending after-school training classes, in support of the Ready-Math implementation, and to forward the request to the full School Committee for approval; Seconded by Chairperson Ellsworth. The motion passed unanimously.

- **COZ Childcare Stabilization Grant**

Assistant Superintendent Sanna, along with Amy Bratsos, COZ Curriculum Coordinator,

explained that the stabilization grants provide funds to support childcare workers to ensure they don't lose any money during COVID and to cover any extra responsibilities added because of COVID.

MOTION: Ms. Piper made a motion to approve the COZ Childcare Stabilization grant and to move it to the full School Committee for approval; Second by Ms. Thibaudeau. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. FY21 Annual Audit Update

Mr. Ferrucci explained that the audit is a bit behind because the closing of the books was delayed this year. The Auditor is expected to begin work by the end of November. By State law, the Audit Report is due to the State Auditor General by December 31, 2021. The District will be seeking an extension to, at least, January 31, 2022. We are striving to have the report completed by the end of January 31, 2022. If not, then mid-February would be the latest.

He reminded the Subcommittee that he provided them with a detailed analysis of the District's fiscal position for FY21 in August 2021. At that meeting, it was reported that the District projected a surplus of \$338,000. The updated Fiscal Report presented to the Budget Subcommittee that the surplus projection was reduced by \$58,000, as Revenue increased by \$198,000 and Expenses increased by \$256,000. Increased costs were due to how Salaries were accounted for at Year End and FY 2021 outstanding bills that were not identified until September 2021.

Chairperson Ellsworth thanked Mr. Ferrucci for all the hard work and long hours that he's been putting into the District's budget and Finances.

E. Standardize Monthly Financial Reports

- **Grant Financial Report**

Mr. Ferrucci provided a report that he plans to provide to the Subcommittee quarterly going forward.

- **Cash Disbursements**

Mr. Ferrucci provided the Cash Disbursements report.

As part of this report, Mr. Ferrucci asked how the Subcommittee wanted to handle revenues from gate receipts. There are discussions about how the funds are used. There is no budget provided on how the funds are spent. Should the gate receipts have a budget for how the funds are spent within the same fiscal year? Chairperson Ellsworth asked to have this topic put on the next Agenda.

Referring back to the Grant Financial report, Ms Piper stated that she finds the Executive Summaries on these standard reports to be helpful and requested that future Grant reports include it as is customary with other Financial Reports. Mr. Ferrucci stated that he would, in this case it was just a matter of a lack of time to prepare it.

Discussion ensued as to where Revenue and Expenses per grant was adequate information. Everyone agreed that adding Fund Balance and Cash Position would be helpful in future reports. Mr. Ferrucci stated that the changes would be included in future versions.

F. Bids / Proposals Review

There were no Bids/Proposals to be reviewed.

G. POs/Requisitions \$5000 and over

Mr. Ferrucci answered some questions about some of the items.

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approved the POs/Requisitions \$5000 and over and to move them to the full School Committee for approval; Seconded by Ms. Piper. The motion passed unanimously.

II. ADJOURNMENT

I. Adjournment - 7:47 p.m.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Thibaudeau; 2nd by Ms. Piper, at 7:47 PM. All approved the motion. Chairperson Ellsworth adjourned the meeting at 7:47 pm.

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

/dbc