

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Finance Committee
Committee Meeting
Friday, October 25, 2024, 8:30 am - 9:30 am
49 Charles Avenue
Middlebury VT
05753**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Chip called the Finance Committee meeting of ACSD to order at 8:44 am.

1. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Matt Corrente, Ellen Whelan-Wuest, Chip Malcolm attending.

Chip noted we may not have a quorum today, but we won't make any decisions without quorum. Just discussion.

B. Public Comment - Agenda Items

No public comment

C. Committee Discussion:

1. Budget Feedback Forums

Focus of the meeting is to evaluate the feedback of the surveys that were circulated to members of the public, as well as feedback that came from individual meetings at schools on Tuesday, 10/22.

Matt noted that we received good feedback from the listening sessions and the surveys. We received 129 responses from the survey.

Chip noted that there was good discussion at the Weybridge school, which is the listening session he attended.

Matt explained we need to determine how to incorporate the feedback and results we received, including open ended or qualitative responses into the budget process.

There is original tone and emotion in the survey responses, so if we turn those responses into a 1 or a 0 then you lose that.

Question for the committee is- what would we like to see this feedback become? What should the administration prepare as far as a summary? How can it be a useful tool for the

school board.

Ellen suggested sharing the raw data, as it were, with the school board because there is a lot of value in reading through all of the responses.

Ellen noted that this data will help the board to see where there are pervasive narratives driving people's perceptions of what is driving budget increases, and how the board can work to communicate other realities that people may not be as aware of, including increasing health care costs, and others that are less well known.

Chip noted that there are disincentives to go above a certain number that has to inform our budget making, even if people disagree with that approach.

Matt noted we have to be careful to not trim the budget without knowing what we may need, which informed the strategy of index budgeting for the last couple of years. This year, internally the district is approaching things differently to look at zero basis budgeting, start from scratch and consider what do we need in each building and starting there.

Matt explained that he and Wendy are working on creating the most feasible and necessary budget for voter consideration, and then within that larger amount are the individual plans at the school level that are designed to meet strategic plan goals and our district priorities.

Matt noted that he and Emily have been working to put together all the information and feedback from the surveys, and it's hard because there is a spectrum of where people fall around major themes. And even identifying the themes is difficult, or they end up reading a lot like the strategic plan. A challenge that we're dealing with is how much to present at the upcoming board meeting versus saving it for a couple of weeks from now, so that the longer budget discussion about budget prices can remain the focus of the board discussion.

Ellie pointed out that it would be likely that if we present the survey responses at the end of the 50 slides about budget costs, it will be a lot to try and discuss at a single board meeting. Ellen agreed that it will be challenging for the board to really focus and absorb the dense and important information from the first part of the budget presentation and also give enough time to the community responses, or the community responses will dominate and we won't focus on the other pieces.

Ellie asked if we should structure it as the budget presentation with discussion first, and then a presentation as the preview of community survey feedback.

Matt laid out his plan for budget presentations over the coming months.

The committee talked about the small number of responses, and how that represents a very small percentage of voters, but it also has value because it's like a conversation with 129 people we would not otherwise have had.

Emily noted that there is a lot in these responses that identifies people's perceptions or misperceptions of different issues and problems.

Emily also pointed out that these are not public comments to the board. Ellen reiterated she thinks the board should read all of the responses because then Emily and Matt's analysis will help guide how the board processes all of it.

Matt said he thinks he and Emily have a good strategy for moving forward. Next steps are to take what we've done here today and bring it to Wendy and the executive committee, and place this information we're presenting on Monday in context of the next few months of work.

Emily asked if the Finance committee and Communications and Engagement committee have worked together. Ellie is on both committees and said that the focus of the Communications and Engagement committee is on creating strong communication tools and approaches, including on the website.

Next meetings are 11/4 and 12/2

D. Public Comment - Any Topic

No public comment

E. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 am

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Status: Passed

***Public Comment Guidelines:**

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.