

Finance, Facilities, Technology Committee

Agenda

July 3, 2020

Board Members:

Thair Joshua – Finance Chair

Anthony Mazzocchi

Johanna Wright

Kamal Zubieta

Administration

Dr. Ronald Taylor, Superintendent

Paul Roth, Business Administrator

Keith Bonds, Technology Director

Discussion Items:

- Review Policies
- Security Award
- Custodial Award
- Pest Control
- Summer Transportation
- Summer Maint Projects
- End of year finance update
- Re-opening planning update

Finance, Facilities, Technology Committee

Minutes

July 3, 2020

Members Present:

Thair Joshua, Johanna Wright, Kamal Zubieta, Dr. Ronald Taylor, Paul Roth, Keith Bonds

Review Policies

Reviewed policies 6423, 6450, 6470, 6510, and 2363. Strauss Essmay did not recommend language changes to the policies. Edits were made ensure the policies were inclusive and references to pupils were changed to students.

6510 Payroll Authorization

Policy says to include salary guide in resolution. Change to list the step and name of the salary guide. HR needs to update the format of personnel resolutions to comply to the policy.

Policy states to list non-renewals on the resolution. Update language stating the board will be provided a report of staff that is non-renewed.

6470 Payment of claims

Change pupil to student on page 2, 2nd paragraph, 2nd line.

6450 Choice of Vendors

No changes

6423 Expenditure for Non Employee Activities, Meals and Refreshments

Change pupil to student. There are 6 occurrences of "pupil".

2363 Student Use of Privately Owned Technology Equipment

Policy is out of date. It does not address new devices such as smart watches. Recommend to push policy back to administration to research best practices.

Security Services Contract Award

Security services was competitively procured. The procurement provided all existing staff first right of refusal to move to the new management vendor and provided a wage increase from \$11 per hour to \$15 per hour. The new vendor met with existing staff to introduce themselves and provide direction for staff to change employment. Three staff members did not wish to change

employers. The new vendor was able to provide a full staff. It is noted that new guards will require time and support to learn the environment (buildings and students)..

Custodial Award

A vendor participating in the procurement process is taking a position that they should have been awarded the contract because the lower bidder did not provide a bond with an original signature. The bid responses were reviewed by legal before the award. There is no law or case law that requires an original signature. Electronic copies of signatures are accepted and upheld. Before the award of the contract, the original sign bond was received. This will appear in the legal briefing to the board.

Pest Control

We have been informed by the health departments that several municipalities are experiencing an increased infestation of rodents. Rat borrows are appearing on private property across the area. Recently rat borrows were discovered at Underhill field. The nests are being treated and monitored in coordination of both South Orange and Maplewood Health Officials. The facilities department was directed to have the district's pest management vendor perform an inspection of all school grounds and treat the area if additional nests are discovered.

Summer Transportation

This summer, the district has around eight students that require transportation to their out of district schools for extended school year programs. A protocol was developed following State Guidance and reviewed by local health officials. The protocol includes PPE, disinfecting routines, and daily health checks of staff and students. Thursday, July 2nd, Transportation staff will be provided training on updated protocols when providing transportation for our students. Transportation is scheduled to begin next week.

Summer Maintenance Projects

Summer cleaning and maintenance project began this month. The projects are focused on providing for a safer environment for school to resume in September.

Planned work includes:

- Remove carpeting from the seconds floor hallways in the elementary schools
- Remove carpet from the hallways in central office
- Create a separate break room for maintenance workers and transportation workers
- Pave the South Orange Middle Parking Lot
- Pave Seth Boyden Parking Lots
- Install plexiglass barriers in the cafeterias, main offices, security desks.

Finance Update

Due to organizations shutting down, paperwork is just starting to come in to process payment for goods and services. This will result in a larger than normal reserve for encumbrances

carrying over into the 20-21 school year. The district is receiving discounts on contracts, such as transportation. This will result in a larger amount of surplus as of June 30th.

Re-opening planning update

A task force to plan for September is assembled and held its first meeting today. It is anticipated that the first week of August, the work will be completed and shared with the public.

Additional Topics Discussed

Background Checks

A question came up on the vendor that was used for background checks. I was asked to check into this. Statewide Risk Management located in Whippany New Jersey performed background checks this year.

Salary Freeze

During the June FFT meeting it was reported that bargaining agreements must be honored and can only be changed through negotiations. District administration reached out to both ASCA and SOMEA asking if they would consider reopening negotiations to partner with the board in navigating these difficult times. Verbally it was relayed that if the district was subjected to severe cuts the bargaining units would be willing to discuss; however, nothing was received in writing to date agreeing to open negotiations.

During the July FFT meeting, administration was asked if a salary freeze was requested. It was clarified that local municipal officials were asking if the district was looking to freeze salaries as a result of the COVID shutdown and that district administration asked for the bargaining units to re-open negotiations due to increasing unemployment rates, loss of state aid, and delay in state aid payments. Bargaining units relayed that revenue information is not fully available and therefore, there is not sufficient information to begin discussion; however, they would consider opening discussions at a future time if the district was facing severe staff reductions.

We discussed the procedure for SOMSD to decrease its legal costs demanded by the state. We still need to respond to the state.

Placement of staff on the salary guide

Concerns were received that employees are not always placed properly on the salary guides. At times there are discrepancies between an employees prior job experience and guide placement.

Legal Costs

Prior to the COVID shutdown, it was discussed that district legal costs were above state average and state code requires cost reduction measures to be put in place. As the new budget cycle begins, the district has to implement procedures to reduce legal costs.

