

Rochester Board of Education Finance Committee
March 9, 2004 at 5:30 P.M.
Minutes

Attendance: Commissioners Bowers, Perez, Porter, and Powell
Commissioner Bowers convened the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Discussion:

Motion to approve minutes of January 29, 2004 by Commissioner Perez, Seconded by Commissioner Bowers. Adopted 2-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

Discussion on Board Resolutions for March 2004

A. Empower contract resolution – Integrator for PeopleSoft

Commissioner Bowers asked if Commissioner Perez had any questions about the Empower contract resolution. Commissioner Perez indicated he had none.

Commissioner Perez motioned to accept the resolution and recommend it to the full Board for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Bowers. Adopted 2-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

Commissioner Powell joined the committee at 5:40 p.m.

B. 2003-04 Budget Amendment resolutions

Commissioner Bowers asked if there were any questions on the three budget amendment resolutions presented. There being none, Commissioner Bowers asked for a motion to recommend them to the full Board for approval.

Commissioner Powell motioned to recommend the three budget amendment resolutions, Seconded by Commissioner Bowers. Adopted 3-0.

C. Other resolutions – tuition rates, Rapidigm extension and request to authorize negotiation for new contract.

Commissioner Powell asked Mr. Marini to briefly speak to the tuition rate resolution. Mr. Marini said that the tuition resolution is separate from other resolutions. Commissioner Bowers explained that the resolution speaks to what the District charges people who are not City residents who send their children to city schools.

Commissioner Powell motioned to recommend the tuition resolution be approved by the full Board. Seconded by Commissioner Bowers. Adopted 3-0.

Regarding the first Rapidigm resolution, Commissioner Bowers asked Mr. Marini to explain the reason for the extension. Mr. Marini indicated that the consultant is already working at the District and to complete the project, he needs more time and therefore, more funds to finish the project. Mr. Marini stated the original estimate of time was not sufficient, but indicated that funds were available in cash capital to cover the cost of the extension.

Commissioner Bowers asked for a motion to recommend the resolution to the full Board for approval. Motion by Commissioner Perez, Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 3-0.

Commissioner Bowers asked Mr. Marini for a brief explanation of the second Rapidigm resolution. Mr. Marini noted that Cherry Road had originally been selected to complete the budget implementation but that there was no guarantee the same resources would be available to continue on the next phase – they were anticipated to return to RCSD in May if their contract was continued. The current Rapidigm resource has established credibility with the team and presents a significant cost savings for the District. There is, therefore, no incentive to continue with CherryRoad. The funding for these professional services is already included in the '03-'04 project budget.

Commissioner Perez asked what phase/year of the three year strategy approved by the Board in December this applied to? Ms. Conlon indicated it was part of Year 1, the “acquire” phase.

Commissioner Bowers asked for a motion to recommend the resolution to the full Board for approval. Motion by Commissioner Perez, Seconded by Commissioner Bowers. Adopted 3-0.

Discussion about March Financial Reports.

Commissioner Bowers noted that there is little to no change from the past month. Commissioner Perez asked what frequency does the committee receive and review these financial reports?

Mr. Marini stated the reports are prepared monthly. The District has a formal budget process on when to amend the budget. He asked Ms. Rohring to provide the specifics. She stated by Board Policy, the budget is amended in September, December and March. Mr. Marini stated this amendment will be the last major one for the 2003-04 budget. However, if there are any material changes, we will amend the budget further, but we do not anticipate any more federal monies or grants.

A discussion ensued on the small class size grant. Commissioner Bowers asked whether the District has received the \$5.2 million small class size grant revenue that was anticipated and budgeted for. There is some information coming forward that there is a question about which year will serve as the baseline year to determine district eligibility. The outcome could have a significant impact on the RCSD.

Commissioner Bowers asked whether the District received a Reading First grant? Mr. Marini verified there is a verbal commitment for \$500K to 1 million, but noted it has not been booked because the policy is not to put grants online until the District receives written documentation. Commissioner Bowers also asked whether or not this would be a district-wide grant/initiative or whether specific schools had been identified? If specific schools, how were they selected? He noted that he would provide several written questions on these grants and a couple other items to Mr. Marini and asked him to follow up.

Action Item:

- Commissioner Bowers asked if Mr. Marini would provide the committee with an update about the Small Class Size Grant at its next meeting.
- Commissioner Bowers asked Mr. Marini to follow up on written questions submitted regarding Reading First grant.

Commissioner Bowers asked for a motion to accept the financial reports and recommend them to the full Board for acceptance. Motion by Commissioner Powell, Seconded by Commissioner Perez. Adopted 3-0.

Commissioner Porter joined the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Discussion on Committee Jurisdiction/Role

Commissioner Bowers asked if committee members had a chance to review the document on Committee Jurisdiction and Role. Commissioner Perez indicated he was still working on his review and indicated he would provide comments to the committee chair or staff by March 12th. Commissioner Powell mentioned the parent involvement section and said that she is aware of a qualified individual who is a CPA and part of the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Group. She asked that some language regarding qualifications be added to that section.

Commissioner Bowers suggested it be referred to as "Parent/Community Involvement".

Commissioner Bowers mentioned that he wanted to check with legal counsel about the scope of the advisory role of a parent or community representative to the committee.

Action Item:

- The Committee asked Ms. Rohring to work with them to draft the qualifications for parent/community participation on the Finance committee.

Mr. Marini asked for clarification on the third point about developing a budget process timeline. Ms. Rohring said that it referred to the external timeline that is part of the budget policy.

Commissioner Perez said the Board governance committee has been establishing the baseline for committee roles and responsibilities. Commissioner Bowers suggested if the governance committee has recommendations, they can inform the committee.

Commissioner Powell motioned to recommend the Board Governance committee approve the proposed Finance Committee Roles and Responsibilities. Seconded by Commissioner Bowers. Adopted 3-0.

Discussion on Staffing and Enrollment projections for 2004-05

Mr. Marini explained that the projections are based on live births. From the tables, it's clear that elementary is trending downward and secondary enrollment next year will remain flat. The SDO's cannot yet provide enrollment on a school by school and grade by grade basis for next year.

Action Item:

- Andrew Wheatcraft will provide the Committee with a copy of the future enrollment projections used in formulating the capital plan. The Committee would like information from the last three-four years. They would also like the enrollment projections in the context of building capacity.

Commissioner Bowers noted that it would be helpful to develop projections in individual neighborhood schools and how the trends will change within zones due to zone choice program. Mr. Marini agreed that true managed choice will offer significant cost savings.

Action Item:

- Commissioners Perez and Powell requested an explanation about School #53. Andrew Wheatcraft has numbers on the space utilization issue.

Commissioner Powell noted that the Montessori school should be addressed in the Quality Assurance Committee as well as to whether the Board wants to change the concept of the model to a K through 6 v K through 8 school because of the numbers. She also said School Choice will impact enrollment in the future.

Action Item:

- Quality Assurance Committee to review the Montessori program for possible reform, K-6 v original K-8.

Commissioner Bowers stated the Montessori program needs to be revisited as part of the budget process, particularly in light of the enrollment and extensive capital needs.

Commissioner Bowers expressed his opinion that the committee needs to see the cost benefit of the Montessori program.

Commissioner Perez wants to look at enrollment in the redesign process.

Commissioner Bowers said that full utilization has to be the battle cry. He wondered how new programs might enhance and impact enrollment. With the Charter School of Science and Technology having so many problems and possibly losing its charter next year, parent dissatisfaction may increase enrollment in the District.

The goal is to anticipate unintended scenarios and create a contingency placement plan. Mr. Marini noted that there is a possibility with the situation at Edison, knowing issues for 2005-06, may drive an increase in applications for 2004-05.

Action Item:

- Mr. Marini and Ms. Rohring are to identify response dates for outstanding action items, particularly those from the January 29, 2004 committee meeting.

Commissioner Bowers asked to have the following information he has previously requested provided: evaluation component for the Dare to Care program; what was not funded to support the Dare to Care program.

Dr. Rivera stated there was \$3.5 million for extended learning opportunities, part of which is used to support Dare to Care. He will provide the evaluation component to Dr. Bowers.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Powell motioned to adjourn, Seconded by Commissioner Perez. Adopted 3-0 at 6:29 p.m.