

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET AND FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 12, 2015

PURPOSE

The Superintendent has established the Budget and Finance Advisory Committee (BFAC) for the purpose of providing guidance and counsel on matters of budget and finance as may be determined by the district administration. The Committee is comprised of representatives from the community, charter schools, principals, at-large, and central office.

Agenda

1. Purpose, Goals and Parameters
2. Calendar and Timeline
3. Recap of Board Presentation
4. Considerations
5. What's' Next and Final Comments

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Community** - Youlanda Carr, Tammy Dixon, Felecia Josey, Mark Rebillot, Toni Terry,
- **At-Large** - Marshall Norseng, Cynthia Micklebury
- **Principals** – Robin Robins, Demarcos Holland, Buck Greene,
- **Central Office** – Robert Morales(CFO), Lisa Bracken, Nicole Lawson, Sherry Davis, Panya Yarber-King, Olufemi Aina, Sedric Smith, Wendy Angelety, Eugene Herrington, Cyrus Tolbert, Evangeline Britt

Committee Members Absent

- Elwood Duckworth, JaTawn Robinson, Cynthia Dumas, Clay Elrod

DISCUSSION

The meeting started with a word of welcome by Robert Morales (CFO), as host of the meeting. Robert Morales opened the meeting with greetings and a brief introduction of himself. Mr. Morales stated that he had never been a part of an Advisory Committee before and that he was excited about working the committee. Each member was provided a copy of the presentation to follow during the meeting.

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He then gave an overview of the agenda.

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Mr. Morales discussed the purpose of the Budget and Finance Advisory Committee. He stated that the committee will be tasked with reviewing the parameters that guide budget development, including revenue assumptions, fund balance targets, and expenditure goals; identifies process and presentation recommendations that provide transparency in linking goals, outcomes and district spending plans; and develops monitoring procedures that hold the district accountable for executing the budget plan.

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He then identified Lisa Bracken to discuss the committee's goals. Mrs. Bracken gave a brief introduction of herself and her experiences and also introduced the Budget team. Mrs. Bracken explained that she was also new to Atlanta Public Schools and that she was also excited about working with the committee. She then went on to discuss the goals of the advisory committee. She spoke of having a transparent budget development process and communicating early and often in order to set clear expectations and also, to include as many funding sources as possible in the initial budget release.

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Mrs. Bracken then asked that each member tell something about themselves and state what their goals and expectations were for the committee. Each member's statements are as follows:

- Cynthia Micklebury stated she wanted to help guide Atlanta Public Schools vision and to be an asset to the district.
- Toni Terry stated that she wanted to make sure we were utilizing the funds appropriately.
- Felicia Josey stated that she wants to learn and help guide the committee.
- Tammy Dixon stated that she was interested in fidelity and how we can better explain the budget process to stakeholders.

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- Buck Green stated that he would like to bring clarity to the system. He explained that as a new principal the budget process was unclear.
- Mark Rebillot stated that he would like to break apart the black box and have decisions be made clear. He also stated that he would like to see more forecasting.
- Youlanda Carr stated that she would like to use her expertise to assist where needed.
- Marshall Norseng stated that he would like to see data-driven decisions and ensure that resources were allocated where they were needed.
- Sherry Davis stated that she was interested in seeing what the site-based budget would look like and learn how to align school strategy with resources.
- Panya Yarber-King stated that she wanted to better serve her internal stakeholders.
- Robin Robins stated that she wanted to ensure that we have equity with the schools. And that we review the budgeting with H.R. to ensure that the schools are able to hire early and compete with other districts for the best teachers.
- Demarcos Holland stated that he wanted to offer his support and assist with ensuring that the information and decisions reached the schools. He also wanted to make sure that the budget process was efficient and equitable.
- Olufemi Ani stated that he wanted to learn how his department fit into the budget and how they could ease the burden on schools involving technology.
- Nicole Lawson stated that she wanted to make sure that the schools have what they need to acquire talent.

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Mr. Morales then discussed the budget parameters. He explained that the millage rate had not been increased since 2008 and that it accounted for about 70% of the district's revenue. The current millage rate is 21.64%. Mr. Morales explained what a fund balance was and stated that the district's fund balance was currently around seventy-one million dollars. He explained that a low balance would be fifty-two million and a high balance would be one hundred and five million. Mr. Morales also discussed intergovernmental agreements and explained that the district is currently owed forty-two million dollars and fourteen million of that is from the Beltline. He mentioned that we would be asking Ms. Youlanda Carr for her assistance on building the district's multi-year budget. Mr. Morales also discussed the budget parameters regarding expenditures. He went on to explain that the district has obligations that must be met and we have no control over it. For instance, the district has a fifty-two million dollar obligation to pay pensions. And also, an obligation for benefit rates.

Mr. Morales discussed raising the pay for Pre-K teachers in order to retain talent. And, reclassifying SST teachers as full-time in order to offset the cost of overtime. Mr. Morales then spoke about the districts key strategic priorities.

Nicole Lawson stated that H.R. needed assistance with funding sources in order to hire teachers earlier so that Atlanta Public Schools would be more marketable and able to compete for the best teachers.

Mr. Morales stated that allowing the district to hire teachers early could be done with the Boards approval.

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He also gave an overview of the FY2017 Budget Development Calendar. He stated that he had sent invitations to the Fulton County Tax Commissioner and the Fulton County Chief Assessor Board asking them to present to the Board. Mr. Morales stated that he had received confirmation from the Tax Commissioner.

Mr. Morales made everyone aware that the Superintendent would be presenting the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget to the Board for tentative adoption on April 11, 2016 and that the final adoption will be presented on June 6, 2016.

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Mrs. Bracken then briefly discussed the budget development timeline. She informed the committee that the budget templates were sent to the Department Chiefs on November 1, 2016. She informed the committee that there were four meetings before the tentative adoption of the budget.

Conclusion

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The initial meeting was an overview of expectations and goals from both the committee and the budget team. The committee was very interested in looking at moving forward and provided guidance and sharing their ideas with the committee.

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Next Steps

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The committee members will review the presentation and provide feedback on any expenditures they felt had been overlooked. They were also asked to consider any additional recommendations for discussion and consider how their professional expertise could aid in the budget development process.

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Next Meeting – December 17, 2015

We look forward to working with you and your support in our efforts to improve community involvement and transparency in the District's budget process.

Thank you.