

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie Ave., Flossmoor
December 2, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:46 a.m.

In attendance for all or part of the meeting were:

Members

Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Superintendent
Dr. Ariana Leonard, Board Member
Mr. Gerald Pauling, Board President
Mr. Chris Riedel, Board Finance Chair

Participants

Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Superintendent
Dr. Lawrence Cook, CSBO
Mr. Jim Patterson, Director of Operations
Mr. James Schmidt, Associate Principal

Dr. Norrell attended the meeting via telephone conference call.

A representative from the HF Chronicle was present. Members of the Leadership Team including Mr. Asa Gordon, Ms. Jalitza Martinez, Mr. Steve Richardson and Mrs. Erdey were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes. The October 7, 2025 Finance Committee meeting minutes stand approved as presented.

Monthly Financials

Dr. Cook presented a Financial Snapshot through October 31, 2025, as reported from the Bloom Township Treasurer's Office, that included the following:

- The Education Fund began the year at \$38.8M and ended October with \$31.9M.
- All Funds began with \$58.8M; the district collected \$10.5M in revenue and spent \$23.3M, resulting in an ending balance of \$46M.
- Monthly expenditures average \$5.8M, providing 7.9 months of reserves.

Revenue Update:

- Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) and federal revenues are trending similarly to last year.
- Last year, the district had received 47% of budgeted revenue by the end of October; this year, only 1% has been received due to delayed property tax bills. Once property tax revenues are received, overall revenue figures across all categories will increase.
- Corporate Personal Property Tax revenue increased from 30% collected last year to 40% this year.
- Interest income has increased significantly: last year none had posted by this time; this year, 32% of budgeted interest revenue has been received.
- Other state revenue increased primarily due to the \$2M NetZero grant received in early fall.

Expenditure Update:

- Budgeted expenditures are trending similarly to last year for salaries, other objects, and small equipment. Small equipment is always higher at the beginning of the year.
- Benefit costs are lower due to reduced claims.
- Purchase services increased due to required and approved professional development, online subscriptions, and contracted services (transportation, cleaning, food service, etc.).
- Out-of-district tuition increased 27% due to special education placements and services.

Mr. Riedel inquired about the projected change in Purchased Services. Dr. Cook reported that Purchased Services are currently driven by professional development needs and are expected to remain within budget. Dr. Norrell added that most travel costs are related to required IB training and the application process. She noted that she worked with Dr. Cook to align Purchased Services with IB-required training, collaborative training, and Advanced Placement, utilizing consolidated professional development funds through the curriculum budget to support these needs. Dr. Cook noted this was his first presentation of this kind and that updates will be provided again in January and March as the school year progresses.

Donations

Dr. Cook reported that alumnus Jack Savage recently donated \$10,000 to the Media, Visual, and Performing Arts (MVP) program. His office will work with Fine Arts Department Lead Candi Hesel to determine the appropriate use of the funds, which must be spent exclusively on the MVP program. Mr. Riedel noted that in Mr. Savage's communication to the district, he also referenced an interest in entrepreneurship and a potential future donation. Mrs. Erdey clarified that while Mr. Savage is interested in entrepreneurship initiatives in the future, this specific donation is designated solely for MVP. She also noted that Mr. Savage contributed \$5,000 last year. Mr. Pauling asked how the district is supporting and encouraging future alumni donations. Ms. Erdey explained that Victoria Koblick, Alumni Director, is actively cultivating relationships with alumni, aligning opportunities with district needs and the strategic plan, and coordinating with the Foundation to expand these efforts. Committee members expressed support for more intentional alumni engagement. Mr. Riedel emphasized the importance of proactively seeking opportunities to generate additional revenue to expand resources for students. Mr. Pauling suggested exploring the use of a development consultant in the future and potentially allocating funds for that purpose. Mr. Riedel added that seeking community members with expertise in this work may also be valuable partners. The Committee asked Mrs. Erdey to extend their appreciation to Mr. Savage for his continued generosity.

Comments. No comments were received.

Old Business:

Five-Year Facilities Plan Update

Mr. Patterson provided an overview of the Five-Year Facilities Plan, noting that projects are categorized on an accompanying spreadsheet as Completed, Top Priority, High Priority, Medium Priority, and Low Priority. He noted that the B Building Renovations (including HVAC controls replacement) and G Building Renovations (including HVAC controls replacement) remain on hold with discussions ongoing. He stated that he is reintroducing the A-Building HVAC Project, as a High Priority project, which he would like to bring to the board for approval in December. The total project cost is \$2.4 million. He noted that some flooring work will be required as a result of the HVAC upgrades, and plans include installing Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) flooring in A-Building and in a separate project Mr. Patterson will be asking for permission to complete 3rd Floor North Building flooring. Mr. Riedel inquired about the longevity of the proposed work. Mr. Patterson responded that the existing HVAC system is 30 years old, and systems generally have a 20-year lifespan with proper maintenance. He noted that flooring carries a 10-year warranty, and that replacing worn carpeting with LVT will improve cleanliness while maintaining sound absorption. He plans to bring two flooring projects to the board in December. The A Building project includes 15 classrooms, with work around unit ventilators in rooms that already have new flooring. Classroom flooring is included in the budget; hallway flooring will move to the 2026–27 budget year, with installation tentatively scheduled after July 1, 2027. Mr. Patterson reported there are 3 sections for 3rd Floor North flooring: Section 1 will consist of 19 classrooms

which has been priced out at \$86,820; Section 2 will consist of 12 classrooms for a total of \$69,750; and Section 3 includes all of the 3rd floor corridors at \$117,995. Dr. Norrell noted that this project stemmed from a 3rd-floor presentation to Dr. Alexander and herself, regarding wear and tear in the Social Science area, including feedback from teachers. The combined cost of all three of the sections is \$274,565 which is not currently included in the O&M budget and would be planned for the 2026–27 budget. Dr. Norrell added that of the three projects proposed for completion this summer, the district had originally projected \$500,000 for the tennis courts and anticipates savings that may be reallocated. Mr. Patterson recommended replacing all flooring at the same time. In response to questions from Mr. Riedel, he stated that while there is no substantial material savings, there would be labor cost efficiencies if completed as a single project of approximately 5%. Mr. Riedel expressed that the district should complete as much as financially feasible at the same time to avoid additional costs associated with phasing, and noted that some savings from the tennis court project may be applied toward the flooring work.

- Tennis Courts Project – Mr. Patterson reported that coring samples from both the North and South tennis courts showed strong base integrity, indicating no need to dig into the underlying layer. Estimated costs are approximately \$550–\$600,000 per court from start to finish. If approved, work would begin in March, starting with the South court, followed by the North court, in order to avoid impacting the athletic season. He will be asking for approval from the board in December to go out to bid before the end of December.
- HF Park district MOU – Dr. Cook provided an overview of the current 2008 - 20-year agreement with the HF Park District regarding tennis courts. Under the MOU, the district covers 60% of costs for repair, maintenance, or replacement, while the Park District covers 40%. The agreement also grants the Park District access to the courts for 10 weeks during the summer. Mr. Riedel inquired whether the Park District actively uses the courts, and Dr. Cook confirmed that they do. Discussion followed regarding responsibility for communicating with the Park District about upcoming repairs and associated costs. Dr. Norrell noted that the district maintains a monthly intergovernmental meeting with the Park District and suggested reporting back to the committee or Board President regarding the conversations related to the tennis courts after they occur. Mr. Riedel emphasized that board action is required before proceeding with repairs and noted the need to notify the Park District of their share of costs. He also stated that while the budget is approved, board approval is required to proceed with bidding. Mr. Pauling and the committee agreed to allow Dr. Norrell to manage discussions with the Park District, with Dr. Norrell confirming that conversations would occur with the Park District after the December 16 board meeting.
- Library and Technology Buildings Roofing – Mr. Patterson reported that he will be seeking the board's permission to go out to bid for the L and T Building roofs, which are connected. He noted that the project is budgeted at approximately \$700,000. He intends to release the bid in late December or early January, with work scheduled to begin this summer immediately following graduation. Mr. Riedel asked whether the project has been budgeted, and Mr. Patterson confirmed that it has. Mr. Pauling inquired if delays could impact the start of the school year. Mr. Patterson responded that multiple crews will be utilized to ensure the project is completed on time.

Mr. Riedel noted potential cost efficiencies related to the two HVAC projects that span out over the next two years. He suggested that, if feasible, consolidating the HVAC projects for Buildings B and G may provide long-term savings. Mr. Riedel added that, as these projects approach, the committee should evaluate and discuss possible savings through project consolidation. Dr. Norrell explained that the G Building HVAC project was being considered for a later timeline to align with the availability of bonds and to coincide with planned renovations. She added that the district is considering not spending the \$9.8 million allocated for this year, instead moving the work incrementally, with the funds remaining in the Education Fund rather than being shifted to

capital projects. After discussion, the consensus of the committee was to bring the updated five-year facilities plan, as presented by Mr. Patterson, forward to the full Board in December.

New Business:

Annual Financial Report

Dr. Cook presented the Annual Financial Report and noted that the audit found that the district maintains strong financial controls and is in compliance with all state and federal requirements. The district received a preliminary Financial Profile Score of 3.90 out of 4.0, placing it in ISBE's highest Financial Recognition category, a rating the district has maintained since Dr. Cook has been in his position as Chief School Business Official. This rating reflects strong fund balances, responsible budgeting practices, and solid creditworthiness, resulting in an excellent credit rating. Dr. Cook noted an action item will be presented to the Board in December to accept the Annual Financial Report, after which the full report will be posted on the district's website. Mr. Riedel, on behalf of the committee, thanked Dr. Cook for the report and expressed his appreciation for the work that contributed to the district's excellent financial rating.

Residency Update

Mr. Schmidt provided an update on the district's residency verification process. The district has shifted from a reactive to a proactive model to ensure residency compliance and support safety. He highlighted societal changes contributing to increased proactive engagement. He reported current enrollment of 2,691 students and noted 793 in-person residency verifications were conducted over the summer. Of these, 92 incoming freshmen were identified through the CLEAR verification falling below the 90% threshold, 391 returning students were also identified through CLEAR, 95 incoming freshmen did not adhere to the registration deadline, and 215 transfer students, with 131 denials issued, compared to 121 denials last year. Two full-time residency officers oversee the verification process and interact directly with all families flagged through CLEAR. McKinney-Vento students were moved to his office from the Social Worker's office to avoid conflict of interest, with current totals of 38 students, down from 46 last year. Mr. Schmidt confirmed coordination with feeder districts, though CLEAR does not currently share data across districts. Dr. Leonard asked whether HF and the feeder districts could streamline efforts by using the state McKinney-Vento database to coordinate and determine if the same families are being served across the three districts. Mr. Schmidt responded that they will look into that option. Mr. Pauling asked for the number of students on the watch list, and Mr. Schmidt reported approximately 253. Mr. Schmidt reported that last year, 7 families withdrew during the school year; this year, 10 have withdrawn, with one completed hearing. He added that residency investigations typically require 5–6 weeks. Dr. Leonard emphasized that residency is an issue in every district, not just at HF. Mr. Riedel requested comparative data on HF residency relative to other districts. Mr. Pauling asked if reports from the residency office could be prepared and shared with the full board on a quarterly basis. Dr. Leonard asked if it is possible to use state McKinney-Vento data that is available to streamline verification efforts. Mr. Schmidt agreed to compile and share the requested data with the board. Dr. Leonard noted that the data underscores the positive impact of the department's work. Mr. Riedel, on behalf of the committee, thanked Mr. Schmidt for his report and noted that the committee looks forward to the full Board receiving today's information, as well as quarterly updates moving forward.

Resolution – Property Tax Procedures

Dr. Cook explained that this resolution authorizes council, Petrarca, Gleason, Boyle & Izzo, LLC., to intervene in property tax appeals and tax rate objection cases. Dr. Cook explained that state law requires approval for Petrarca, Gleason, Boyle & Izzo, LLC., to act on the district's behalf for property tax appeals; without approval, the board would need to authorize each action

individually every time an appeal was received. Mr. Pauling inquired about the frequency of PTAB cases; Dr. Cook noted that any case over \$100,000 typically occurs six to seven times per year. Committee members discussed whether to authorize the firm to act on the district's behalf and if a term length of service should be added to the Agreement. Mr. Riedel noted timing challenges with monthly Board meetings, and Dr. Cook confirmed that monthly approvals would delay the process. Mr. Pauling expressed concern about open-ended authorization, suggesting a defined term for proper governance. The consensus of the committee was to extend the Agreement with Izzo for three years, with Dr. Cook updating the term before presentation to the board in December for approval.

Safety Audit Proposal

Dr. Norrell stated that they are recommending that Homewood-Flossmoor High School participate in the Vulnerability Solutions Group, LLC (VSG) Threat & Vulnerability Assessment. The assessment will be Part I of a safety and security assessment and mitigation plan. Part 1 will include the VSG assessment of the district facilities, security staffing, and safety drills and procedures. Part 2 will be included in a separate proposal that will be contingent upon the findings in the initial assessment. Pending board approval, the administration will work with VSG to determine the earliest available date for the assessment. The assessment report will be brought to the Board of Education for a complete review and administration will propose an action plan inclusive of a new proposal for remediating areas where needed. Findings will be presented in executive session. Ms. Martinez shared an example of a completed report from another district with the committee members for their review; the document was later collected. A funding proposal and project timeline will also be developed pending board approval to move forward. Mr. Riedel inquired about the duration of the site visit and internal resources required. Dr. Norrell noted the visit typically takes approximately five to six days on-site, depending on the audit scope, and confirmed the \$7,500 cost includes travel. She added that the auditors are from Pennsylvania, hold necessary certifications, and have experience auditing large facilities nationwide. At the committee's request, Dr. Norrell will provide a list of Illinois schools or municipalities previously served by the auditors for the December board meeting. Mr. Riedel expressed his support for presenting the project to the full board, noting it is necessary and reasonable in terms of cost. The committee reached consensus on moving forward and this item will be on the December 16 board meeting agenda for approval.

Funding Opportunities

Mr. Riedel stated that he and Dr. Norrell had discussed exploring additional revenue opportunities for the district. He noted that while the district currently receives funding from local, federal, and municipal sources, there may be untapped resources that could further support the district's programs and initiatives. He emphasized that identifying new revenue streams could also allow for more flexibility in revenues and expenditures and wanted to raise this topic for broader awareness. Mr. Pauling reiterated his earlier comment of engaging a development consultant to investigate potential funding sources and agreed that this is a good time to have a broader discussion regarding alternative revenue opportunities. Mr. Pauling stated that it should be noted that this conversation began in the Finance Committee and there will be a broader conversation with the full board in the near future.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m.