Readington Township Public Schools
Together, Inquire and Inspire

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Public Minutes
Thursday, March 5, 2026
8:30 a.m.

Committee Members: Michele Mencer, Chair
Paulo Lopes, Rich Pieros, David Rizza

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent
Jason Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary
Don Race, Facilities Manager
Tony Johnson, Solect Solar
Jim Brown, EZEnergy
John Killian, EZEnergy

1. **Solect Solar Proposal**
   a. EZEnergy contracted with the district two years ago to expand solar at all four district schools, but due to issues with financing, Solect Solar has agreed to take over the contract from EZEnergy. In order for the project to qualify for 30% federal ITC credits, the project must have 5% or more of work completed by July 2026 and be fully completed by December 2027. Solect will be able to meet the July 2026 requirements. In order for the project to be financially viable, changes to the project structure were needed.
      - The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is the amount the district will pay to Solect over the life of the project. The amount was adjusted to ensure financing can be obtained.
      - The contract with Solect will have two options
        - District pays PPA amount for 15 years. At years 16 and 21, the district and Solect have a mutual option to continue PPA for another 5 years.
        - District pays PPA amount for 15 years. At years 16 or 21, the district can pay 20% to 25% of the then Fair Market Value (FMV) to purchase the equipment from Solect. The FMV is not known at this time.
      - Changes to the number of panels needed to generate the required kWh and location of panels were revised.
      - The flat rate the district will pay per kWh was modified but is still currently below the market rate paid by the district to the utility company.
      - At year 25, the district can keep the equipment or have it removed. The cost of removal and disposal is covered in the contract.
      - The maintenance for the equipment is covered for the 25-year period.
      - By locking in at a fixed kWh rate, the district will not be subject to increases (or decreases) in kWh prices for the next 25 years. This allows for better budget certainty by eliminating fluctuations in energy expenditures.
      - Expected cost savings occur in that the number of solar panels is expected to produce more kWh than needed and the district may receive reimbursement from the utility company for the excess generation. In addition, any cost increases in energy prices above the fixed kWh will be reflected in savings for the district.
      - Two options were presented in regards to panel location for WHS. Based on feedback from the administration, a third option was presented that would change the layout of the panel grids to continue to allow for students to use the outdoor area and also be more visually appealing. The third option was the preferred choice.
      - Grid layouts at TBS and WHS are aligned with the outdoor space projects in the bond referendum.

1. **2026-2027 Budget**
    a. The committee reviewed key upcoming dates for the budget process.
        - March 10th BOE meeting: Superintendent report will include an overview of the budget timeline
        - March 12th: District receives notice of state funding
        - March 23rd: A budget proposal for Board approval will be on the Board agenda
        - April 28th: Final budget adoption on the Board agenda

    b. The administration shared an article for the committee to review "Gov. Sherrill provides grim outlook on state finances ahead of budget speech"

    c. The committee reviewed staffing requests for the 2026/2027 budget.

    d. The committee reviewed the March 23rd superintendent budget presentation and made a few suggestions on slide content.

2. **Bus Route Efficiencies**
    a. The committee agreed to table the discussion and will revisit when the administration presents recommendations at a future committee meeting

3. **PreK-Grade 8 Nonresident Tuition Rate**
    a. The committee agreed with the administration's suggested rate of $4,500.
    b. Capacity constraints for preschool are close to being reached due to continued high demand and the district will offer a discount with private providers.

4. **Finance Agenda Items –**
    a. Revised SEMI projection from State
    b. UDL Grant – the $36,000 fee for UDL is being partially offset by the grant in the general fund for $20,000 and also frees up funds in the ESSA grant.
    c. Fees associated with and funded by the referendum including Bond Attorney and Finance Company
    d. Bond Sale, Referendum Contract Awards
    e. Preschool ROD Grant Award
    f. E-Rate Grant & Award (40% Federal Funds),
    g. Sustainability Grant(s),
    h. PreK-8 Nonresident Tuition Rate
    i. Budget Resolutions, Direct Install, LED costs
    j. Solect Solar PPA

5. **Bills List** - Standard
6. ***Next meetings are planned for March 20th, 2026 (if needed) and April 24th, 2026.***