

TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting
October 22, 2020
7:00 PM

Teleconference via Webinar Link

Call to Order

7:04 Chairman Todd McCormick opened the meeting of the Timberlane Regional School District Budget Committee Meeting with the reading of the Written Letter from the Governor that states the following: Check list to ensure meetings are compliant with right to know law during the State of Emergency. As chair of TRSD Budget.Com board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of Covid19 Pandemic in according with governance emergency order #12 pursuant to executive order 2020-04 this public body is authorized to meet electronically. There is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's emergency order. However, in accordance with emergency order, I am confirming that we are:

A: Providing public access to meeting by audio and video utilizing a zoom webinar platform where all members of the board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during the meeting. The public has access to contemporaneously listen and view by logging into www.timberlane.net/zoombudcom.

B: We have given notice to the public of necessary informative for accessing this meeting. This information has been provided along with agenda and posted to the board website. www.timberlane.net.

C: We have provided a phone number for public to alert public body during meeting if there are problems with access. That phone number is (603) 382-6541 extension 3955.

D. We will adjourn the meeting and reschedule if public is unable to access the meeting. Additionally, all votes that are taken during this meeting should be done by roll call vote. We will begin meeting by roll call attendance. When member states presence they must also state if anyone is in the room during this meeting which is required under the Right to Know Law. That concludes.

Peter Bealo – Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call taken by Jhalise Morales

Present: Kristi Auclair, Peter Bealo, Brian Boyle, Michael Mascola, Todd McCormick, Susan Sherman, Phil Sherwood, Maria Watkins, and Interim Superintendent Brian Cochrane.

Not in Attendance: Alan David, Cathleen Gorman, and Julie Hammond.

Administrators Present: Geoff Dowd, CFO/Business Administrator

Approval of Minutes – October 8, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion:	To accept approval of minutes for the Regular Meeting on October 8, 2020. By, Peter Bealo, 2 nd by Phil Sherwood. The motion passed unanimously 7-0-0.
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Correspondence – None

Delegations and individuals – None

Administrative Report – Geoff Dowd-Special Education Census history report added to packet.

Reports of Committees:

Susan Sherman-CIP meeting planned November 04,2020.

School Board Representative-Brian Boyle – Discussed plan to bring all students back while managing expenses. Local Rockingham County numbers place District in hybrid range which can be viewed on the TRSD website.

Unfinished Business:

Geoff Dowd-Out-of-District placement requested numbers from the last six years presented.

Sue Sherman-These numbers do not accurately depict rising out-of-district placement tuition costs. I want the budget committee to understand these costs.

Todd McCormick-Requests clarity on financials when Special Education is presented.

Geoff Dowd-Increased out-of-district costs is trending up and vary by needs.

Todd McCormick-Are we under-budgeting this line?

Sue Sherman-I believe we are as the numbers do not reflect the changes.

Geoff Dowd-We may count on a net for potential changes that can impact the budget.

Dr. Kimberly Farah-The School Board has hired a Special Education consultant to analyze why costs are trending and she is assisting.

Phil Sherwood-Is the consultant comparing similar districts?

Dr. Cochrane-Nationally and Regionally, trends are going up in Special Education. The District was at 13.5% for identified Free & Reduced Lunch but are above the state average for Special Education. In some cases, there is a trend with Free & Reduced Lunch and Special Education. The Board did approve

\$10,000.00 for consulting services to look at the larger picture to make improvements to benefit students and be proactive.

7:20- Julie Hammond joined the meeting.

New Business:

Athletics Budget Presentation-Angelo Fantasia presented Athletics 2021-2022 proposed budget. Proposal includes an increase of \$3470.50 due to an increase in game expenses and police details for games. Extracurricular activities require uniform updates in Field Hockey and Girls' Basketball. Health Curriculum software is re-located to Athletics. Software to livestream games comes with a subscription fee so the community does not have a fee to livestream games. Decrease in equipment due to need from last year's budget. Transportation is an annual 3% increase.

Music Budget Presentation- Tony DiBartolomeo presented Music 2021-2022 proposed budget. Proposal includes an increase of \$398.00. Decreases due to fewer instrument repairs and prior expenditures and needs. Increase due to music software pricing rising per user. Smart Music is for grades 5-12. Quaver is for Elementary classroom to utilize music in current teaching mode. Increase for new instruments and uniforms.

Todd McCormick- How has the music program been dealing with remote and what is the plan for the amazing concerts and performances that have come out of the Performing Arts Center?

Tony DiBartolomeo- I wish I could tell you exactly, but I can't. My staff has been working diligently to deliver the best instruction in a tough situation. We have three cohorts and trying to deliver similar services. As far as the concerts, we have several contingency plans depending on future learning plans. We are exploring to find the best option via technology and space limitations. The important thing is that students get a performance. It will be anything but normal. The kids have been fantastic, I have not had to ask one kid to put a mask on or sanitize their hands and their chairs and equipment.

Todd McCormick- How are private lessons being handled, are those being done remotely, are we doing private lessons?

Tony DiBartolomeo-Yes, we are doing private lessons just like this meeting. We have some staff that do an outstanding job delivering one-on-one instruction. They are doing a great job.

Phil Sherwood-Music is very communal, and the technology can be expensive, and I understand why it is going up in cost. I have seen first-hand, even before we went remote, the value of this technology blew my mind. This year in particular, I am incredibly impressed how your staff has adapted. My son has got a lot of value thanks to the technology and educators. I know this is being used every single day.

TRMS Budget Presentation- Maegan Koelker presented TRMS 2021-2022 proposed budget. Proposal includes a decrease of (\$29,203.00) due to a decrease in Language Arts, Chamber Theatre eliminated. IXL Pre-Algebra adaptive digital math tool paid through 09/02/2022. Removed flexible desks and seating

due to accommodating to the current year. Increase in PE ropes. Decrease in periodicals and increase in audio books and e-books. Decrease in new equipment.

Todd McCormick-Quite a reduction. Flexible seating is great but not for this learning format.

Maegan Koelker-We will re-evaluate next year.

Technology Budget Presentation- Ken Henderson presented Technology 2021-2022 proposal budget. Proposal includes an increase of \$13,741.00 due to remote learning information access fees related to COVID accommodations. Budgeting as we will be remote next year and increase in Chromebooks and one-time Google license fee per Chromebook. Decrease in Adobe licensing. Decrease due to one-time PAC projector from prior year. Decrease due to one-time firewall costs from prior year.

Business Services Budget Presentation- Ken Henderson presented Business Services 2021-2022 proposed budget. Proposal includes increase in \$54,080.52 due to data maintenance for school cameras that is IP based storing to a cloud and high definition. Increase in information access fees due to COVID accommodations such as PandaDocs which enables online E-signatures. Decrease in IV maintenance. Increase in staff replacement computers due to COVID.

Todd McCormick-Are those Chromebooks the staff are using?

Ken Henderson-Yes, we are moving away from laptops to touchscreen Chromebooks for even teachers as we moved PowerSchool to web-based application so there is no need for a Windows laptop and can be run on any browser. We are looking to move for every staff as it is less maintenance.

Todd McCormick-How is the bandwidth holding up?

Ken Henderson-We are 100% fiber in the district and we are doing good. We monitor the capacity daily and the most we have seen is hitting 30-35%. If I saw it hitting 60-70% I may want to up it, but not hitting 50% I am not going to incur costs if we do not need it. It is easy to call up Comcast Business.

Todd McCormick-I watched when you addressed individuals who had trouble connecting and is there much we can even do if you are in a place without a cell signal?

Ken Henderson-We can certainly give knowledge around home WI-FI troubleshooting. We sent out a message to everyone in the district and posted to the student-parent page when having issues with their connection. We do not authorize line repairs but have advised families to call Comcast and have troubleshoot take a look. We have sent out a few WI-FI hot-spots by Verizon to take the cell signal and turn it into a WI-FI signal. Even the lowest cost internet services will be better quality as there is latency. We are more than willing to send these out to assist families.

Todd McCormick-I commend you. Thank you for everything you're doing, you're doing a fantastic job!

SAU Budget Presentation-Dr. Kimberly Farah, Brian Boyle, and Geoff Dowd presented the SAU 2021-2022 proposed budget. What can we present from the SAU #55 unit into the TRSD allocation budget expense line look like at 76.5%? Proposal includes a decrease of (\$255,409.00) we can see what we have going into next year and it is not really apples to apples. I think this is good perspective to look at what we have and after this year you will never see a budget like this again. Some positions that have been proposed are not familiar to the current SAU. Some of these lines will not carry over to the new SAU. My goal is that this document put everything into one document for review.

Todd McCormick-The positions starting from Business Operations Coordinator down to HR Coordinator, are they showing up somewhere else or will they be in a salary line in the regular Timberlane Regional budget?

Geoff Dowd-No, that is a non-budgeted item, anywhere in the budget.

Todd McCormick-Ok, do we not need a Transportation Coordinator anymore?

Dr. Cochrane-The mapping out of the bus route is built into our contract with First Student, they provide that. We will take much of the position and responsibilities and slide it into another position. We believe we can get that out of a change in position. Most districts do not have that position, in fact Salem has a similar situation where it is split between two responsibilities.

Phil Sherwood-Are these positions you're referring to private contractors or all in house?

Dr. Cochrane-No, it is a Salem employee in the SAU office.

Todd McCormick-As it pertains to how we will incorporate the former SAU budget to the one single budget, some of these lines such as audit and School Board expense and legal services, will that now be a part of the School Board legal line?

Geoff Dowd-Yes, there would just be one line.

Dr. Kimberly Farah-The School Board is recommending we increase the legal line in the School Board Budget by \$30,000.00. I don't anticipate we will have the same legal fees as a single district. Currently, we have four bargaining units and legal COVID questions.

Todd McCormick-I did see that in the School Board budget, and I have done analysis on my own on the last five years. It looks like we have been under budgeting that line, especially last year when it was 175% over what was budgeted. I think as a committee, we will want to take a historical analysis because I do not like under or over budgeting things.

Dr. Kimberly Farah-I agree, but the issue I have is that as A board member, a lot of what goes on at a legal level cannot be shared publicly and you have to take it on faith that the past two years was an anomaly. We are burning through \$10,000.00-\$12,000.00 a month in legal fees at the Timberlane level due to COVID, union bargaining, and Special Education.

Todd McCormick-I completely understand and COVID adds a different element to predict the future across the entire budget. It is noted.

Brian Boyle-The legal line is so unique and is hard to look at a historical perspective. It is incomparable to different years.

Todd McCormick-I agree but we took a few lines that haven't been looked at in a historical context. It is not just legal, as a committee I try to avoid under budgeting and be representative as to what it might be.

Phil Sherwood-One comment, stating the main drivers of the legal lines is COVID and the unions. I do not think that is close to accurate.

Dr. Kimberly Farah-I said they were part of the issues that are driving the spend rates. There were other issues, especially at the SAU level.

Phil Sherwood-To say the cost driving are the collective bargaining units, I have to draw a line. There are other cost drivers that are higher.

Dr. Kimberly Farah-That is not a blame, that is a fact. It is all a matter of public record.

Todd McCormick-We will take every presentation under consideration as we move forward to wrapping up a solid, responsible budget, that rewards the taxpayers as well as the education as every year.

Geoff Dowd-We had the School Board Budget as a separate budget, but we really only have one budget. Some of those areas are captured in other areas and how the integrate.

Other Business-None

Future Agenda and Dates:

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Thursday, December 10, 2020

Motion:	To adjourn meeting – motion made by Michael Mascola, 2 nd by Phil Sherwood. Motion passed unanimously.
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Respectfully submitted,

Jhalise Morales
Recording Secretary

The meeting can be viewed by following this link:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/255893/video/471247419>

Approved by the Budget Committee on 11/12/2020.