

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ellington, Connecticut

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

A special meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Ellington High School Library Media Center, 37 Maple Street, Ellington, CT.

Attendees:

Board of Education Members: Ms. Liz Nord, Ms. Jennifer Dzen and Ms. Jennifer Mullin

Administrative Team Members: Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; Ms. Lindsay Steller, Director of Food Service; Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology; Kelly Hany, School Nurse; Lynn Seypura, School Nurse; and Andrea Maningas, School Nurse.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Ms. Nord at 6:01 p.m.

Agenda Items:

1. Whitsons Food Service Contract

Mr. Greenleaf explained to the Finance Committee that we have a one year contract with Whitsons Food Service until year five then the district will need to go back out to bid. This coming school year will be our 4th year with Whitsons.

Ms. Lindsay Steller, Director of Food Service, made a virtual presentation to the Finance Committee with regard to school nutrition and the need for healthy options for students but also the need for students to return to a sense of normalcy in seeing the cafeteria workers and eating with other students.

The average daily participation sales increased dramatically when the district went from a hybrid model to full day model. This year breakfast and lunch were free to all students. Breakfast sales significantly exceeded the budget and were well over 100 students every day. The increase was also noted for the month of October for lunch and steadily increased over the course of the school year. We did not see that same increase in the a la carte sales. At the high school level we typically only hit an average sale of \$60 per day. This is well below the estimated budget amount of \$246. We also did not see an increase in staff purchasing meals – we tried several marketing approaches that were not successful.

Ms. Steller praised the work of the food service staff. During the COVID response all of the food staff adapted to the significant and ongoing changes that were made. Additional lunch waves, early dismissals on a weekly basis, packaging and delivering meals were just some of the

changes during this school year. They demonstrated teamwork, flexibility and dedication to this plan this year. We were able to internally promote two of our staff members to management positions and they have done a wonderful job. We also have a new administrative technician who is also a registered dietician. We did a lot of training for our staff this year. We were able to keep our menu relatively the same this year for the students but also added new innovative ideas that the students seem to really enjoy. We made an effort to become more comfortable with the computers by creating signage and google sheet forms as well as using infinite campus to communicate to parents. We were able to have some interns record nutrition safari videos that we sent to the elementary teachers as well as doing the smart choices program which is a lesson plan for the secondary students.

Mr. Greenleaf reiterated how amazing our food service staff was this year and the fact that we did not miss a single day in providing food to students. We have been doing the grab and go program and this will continue this summer and into the next school year. Financially this year our projection was to lose \$200,000 in revenue. That figure has come down significantly to less than \$75,000 due the sales that have offset the cost for the district.

The federal government has given the waiver to continue with the free lunch for the next school year on the SSO plan. This will also allow for us to serve breakfast and lunch this summer for any programs offered to students over the summer. The hours for our summer programming has been expanded from 3 to 5 hours per day.

A motion was made to recommend to the full board the Healthy Food Certification for the 4th year.

1st J. Dzen

2nd J. Mullin

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. Healthy Food Certification

Mr. Greenleaf explained that the Healthy Food Certification Program is designed to bring meals and snacks to a higher level of nutrition. This is a state specific program that goes above and beyond what the USDA requires. For participating in that program, the district will receive additional funds for the program. This additional funding has been important to maintain our break even status over the past few years and also better for the students from a health perspective. There is an option to participate or not and then two exemptions you can authorize outside the school day. The exemption applies to athletic booster and fundraisers where you can exempt the healthy food certification requirements. In the past the Board passed the exemption for both the beverage and snacks.

3. Personnel Salary Discussions (Anticipate Executive Session)

A motion was made for the Finance Committee to enter into Executive Session with the purposes of Personnel Salary Negotiations and invite the following people: Dr. Scott Nicol,

Superintendent; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology; Kelly Hany, School Nurse; Lynn Seypura, School Nurse; and Andrea Maningas, School Nurse.

1st J. Dzen

2nd J. Mullin

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. 2020-2021 Budget Update

Mr. Greenleaf indicated that he is working on the final projections and we are in good shape for the end of fiscal 2020-2021.

5. 2021-2022 Budget Update

Mr. Greenleaf indicated that the budget for the 2020-2021 school year has passed.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

1st J. Mullin

2nd J. Dzen

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Liz Nord
Finance Committee, Chair