

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ellington, Connecticut

Finance/Operations Committee Meeting Minutes

The special meeting of the Finance Committee met on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in a teleconference format.

Attendees:

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

Administrative Team Members: Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations, Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent and Ms. Jennifer Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Human Resources Coordinator.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Ms. Liz Nord at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

1. 2020-2021 Budget Update

Mr. Greenleaf presented an updated object summary as of January 12, 2021. This update still shows a positive bottom line. This of course will change as purchases continue throughout the year. Mr. Greenleaf will be working on year end projections in the coming month. Mr. Greenleaf was asked to separate out the certified salaries from this spreadsheet. Mr. Greenleaf explained that part of the decline with the Administrators was due to an interim Principal and Assistant Principal at Windermere School which equates to the difference between Administrators and Certified staff. Currently the certified staffing is at a positive of \$170,000 in the Boards favor primarily due to staffing not being paid at this time, positions not filled, and the loss of staff due to early retirement at mid-year.

Medical reserve account has been approved and fully established with the town. Mr. Greenleaf indicated that discussions will take place on Friday with the Town Finance Office regarding the transfer of \$223,000 from last year's medical reserve account, monies related to COVID and also monies in the reserve dental health insurance fund into the medical reserve town account in hopes of building the self-insured fund.

Dental insurance maximum out of pocket is currently at \$1,500. At this time the dental reserve account is at approximately \$200,000. Annual expenditure for dental insurance is \$375,000 the Board's total expenditure is \$325,000. This would equate to more than 50% reserve on this dental account.

When speaking with ConnectiCare, the anticipated increase in the next school year could be as high as 19%. This increase would impact the overall budget by 2% for the upcoming school year. This increase would definitely impact the decision to remain fully insured or go to a partially insured and use the established medical reserve account.

2. *COVID-19 Planning Update*

The second round of COVID relief funds to various towns was approved in December through the stimulus package. The funding allocation to Ellington is expected to be 3.5 to 4 times the amount of funding received with the first stimulus package which would equate to \$175,000 - \$200,000 in additional funding.

Mr. Greenleaf presented the COVID count summary which shows where we are to date regarding COVID expenditures. Year-to-date we have spent approximately \$500,000 for COVID related items which include salaries, equipment, services and supplies. Of the \$500,000 in expenditures, \$51,000 was offset by the ESSER original funding and \$140,000 for the Coronavirus Relief Fund. This would leave the district with a balance of \$263,000 plus an additional \$100,000 of encumbered expense for a total of \$360,000. The intent is to use the \$200,000 in additional funding from COVID stimulus as well as any other unused account funding to bring this deficit to a zero balance. At this time, there are no immediate expenditures related to COVID with the exception of the possibility of needing to purchase additional sanitary wipes for the district.

Ellington Public Schools would fall under Group 1b which is the next COVID vaccination group. Mr. Greenleaf indicated that he has already completed the preregistration form which would allow Ellington to gain access into the VMAS system with the State of Connecticut with regards to obtaining the vaccinations. At this time, we have received emails from the state that there is a current backlog in processing the preregistration forms. In preparation, the district has sent out a survey asking for those that are interested in getting vaccinated to respond to the survey. As of today, we have approximately 300 staff members interested which equates to 60% of our staff. The number is expected to increase as the end date for completion of the survey is Friday, January 15, 2021.

Mr. Greenleaf has reached out to North Central District Health Department to work on setting up clinics in our district to administer the vaccinations. The district also has \$10,000 from the current insurance provider to promote wellness for the district. Some of this allocation has already been used to successfully put in flu clinics already this school year. We would like to set up the same clinics for the COVID vaccinations and are currently looking at getting our nurses trained to administer the vaccinations. Ellington is slotted to get 180 doses per week which would mean that we would need to prioritize staff. Mr. Greenleaf is looking at several options with prioritizing staff with the hope of getting those who are interested in the vaccination, immunized with the first vaccination within a two week time period from the date of getting the actual vaccinations.

3. *Discussion of 6th Class Stipend*

Under the current contract, full time teachers are required to teach 5 classes per day. The district does provide additional pay to those teachers interested in teaching a 6th class. The current pay increase is 1/8 of the teacher's current pay.

Discussion was raised as to the cost effectiveness of the 6th class stipend rather than hiring another teacher. Typically the additional classes taught by a teacher are not in one particular subject area. It could be 6 teachers doing a 6th class and teaching all

different subject areas. So it would be difficult to justify hiring an additional teacher if the needs for an additional teacher is in different subject areas.

Mr. Greenleaf indicated that in the past the 6th class pay was assigned to specific teachers for budgeting purposes but do the fact that the teachers change from year to year he has listed the entire amount as one line item in the budget. If the 6th year class is paid as part of a teachers' salary and not a stipend it is subject to TRB. So teachers are currently being paid the 6th class pay as a stipend amount.

Motion was made at 6:35 p.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss salary negotiations and to invite Dr. Scott Nicol and Mr. Brian Greenleaf.

1st Jen Dzen 2nd M. Underwood

4. Anticipated Executive Session – Salary Negotiations

The committee exited Executive Session at 8:08 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Liz Nord, Finance Committee, Chair