

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 27, 2021 @ 6:00 PM – TEAMS Meeting

Attendees: Al Howland, Brian Cisneros, Michael Williams, James Morse, Sue Caswell, Josh Olstad, Jim Rozycki

Visitors: 0

Al Howland began by stating that he believes that if any future meetings are held remotely that we need to read the preamble. He then welcomed everyone and asked if there were any changes to the agenda

Dr. Morse suggested that since the finance committee did not have a chance to deliberate or discuss the proposal for electric buses could it be added to the end of this meeting.

Overview of adopted charge

Al Howland stated that since the charge was adopted by the Board there were two questions he wished to pose. How much money is in the sub lines and where we were in terms of hiring?

Dr. Morse stated that right now there has been 2 hires at the elementary level and 4 at the middle school which are Board authorized and that Suzanne is actively recruiting for her para-educator positions and possible has 1 of these positions hired.

Sue Caswell stated that the amount needed is \$173K assuming a January start.

Dr. Morse clarified that these positions would be with a single insurance plan. Sue confirmed.

Al clarified that these positions were until June. He then asked about summer programming.

Dr. Morse stated that he hoped to use the ESSER Funds and that he estimates that the Oyster River portion should be in the range of \$100K to \$120K. He stated that if this comes through and with the funds already budgeted, he hope to establish a robust summer program. He went on to state that in the past this program has been very low key and now wants to offer a more robust program and it will be the first time at the elementary level.

Brian Cisneros asked if there would be more credit recovery offered.

Al Howland stated that as we are a high performing district, his worry would be for the sophomore's coming up with AP prep courses and junior's with foreign language.

Dr. Morse stated that the administration will make sure and put kids in the right place.

Al Howland stated that he had a meeting with Rachel from Durham Parks and Rec last evening and Rachel stated that the REACH program is looking at the opposite program selections from the year before and that anything virtual is not being chosen and that outside activities are the preferred programs. He also stated that he wanted to look into any ways the two other towns could help with the funding and/or staffing.

Dr. Morse stated that he can investigate with the three towns for funding options. He also stated that Todd and Rachel have developed a fantastic working relationship combining the two programs together.

Michael Williams asked how much money we would need to come up with.

Al Howland stated that Todd and Rachel will need to work on that.

Michael Williams asked if a university model could be developed which allows us to charge more.

Dr. Morse stated that we try to charge what the program actual costs and we usually end in the black. He went on to state that we have students in district that we subsidize, and that Sue works with Todd to do that.

Al Howland stated that in Rachel's program last year she only lost about \$7K in revenue. She is looking for a part time person now with the possibility of extending that position to 40 hours per week to assist with the summer program. He believes that parents will be looking for a well-rounded summer program.

Dr. Morse stated that he will also speak with Doris as in the past her providing meals during the program has been very successful.

Al Howland asked if there were any additional questions.

Michael Williams stated that Sue Caswell's memo did not address Article 5.

Brian Cisneros clarified that the 400K is built in and does the \$125K for the solar array still come out of it. Sue clarified the \$125K comes out first.

Dr. Morse stated that he is confident in the \$400K and \$125K and is thrilled that we always end up in the black.

Dr. Morse wanted to update the finance committee on the food service program.

Al Howland asked what the bad news is.

Dr. Morse stated that the loss is still significant and could be in the range of \$250K - \$350K. The change in the middle school plan resulted in revenue and the new proposed model at the high school will help as it will be bringing kids in full days providing an opportunity for lunch.

Al Howland asked if there was damage to Doris's staff.

Dr. Morse stated that Doris has been pretty strategic and has keep the head cooks and hourly personnel, she did reduce hours so that she wouldn't lose more. She had 1 retirement, and her staffing is down to bare minimum.

Sue Caswell stated that every day we are looking for ways and is encouraged by the middle school program.

Dr. Morse went on to state that the new high school model will provide lunch in the safest way possible and that Suzanne proposes that juniors and seniors go home at lunch time, not to hurt Doris but to lower the population.

Al Howland moved to the technology needs update for the new middle school.

Josh Olstad stated that he has provided a rough estimate of costs for wireless access points, switches (by data closet), and battery backup system to provide power between the list of power and the generator turning on.

The access points are covered by ERate so we get 30% of what we spend back as a refund. Switches and battery backups are only partially covered based on what we connected. An example would be is a switch is half connected to wireless access points and half connected to phone, only half the switch cost would be ERate eligible.

Any refunds would be used towards the purchase of the rest of the network equipment. Our consultants are filing the paperwork now for our current year to get some additional funds, but we do not know the total amount we are expecting.

The finance committee asked about connection of the new middle school to the IT Building, running the conduit to the school. The possible use of contingency money to make this happen.

Brian Cisneros stated that a lot of the contingency money is for the removal of the existing middle school. Concerned that existing furnaces are asbestos, and, in the past, they poured concrete around it and the other concern is that the furnace sits higher than the field so we will not know until that time.

Dr. Morse stated that the best insurance would be to sit on it and wait it out.

Al Howland asked Josh when he needed to purchase and if some could be ordered now and some in July.

Josh stated that the RFP is out for the ERate and will go to the Board in mid-March and then the plan is to purchase as soon as possible to get the rebate.

Brian Cisneros asked if we would need to encumber funds this year.

Josh stated that he is waiting for the bids and hopes that the information that he provided is the worst case scenario and that once the bids are in hopefully we will be able to file for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year.

Michael Williams asked about the current fiber connection from the middle school to the IT building.

Josh explained that we have a contingency with UNH and pay a fee so that we can use their network.

Brian Cisneros asked about other systems, i.e. phones.

Josh explained that he hopes to keep the same system host. The only different thing would be that at the new middle school that they purchase new phones.

Al Howland asked if there was any advantage to have all on same phone system.

Josh stated that we already are, the new middle school has no servers, it will run into the IT building. We will have a consolidated network. We will need server upgrades, but that is in the strategic plan.

Al asked if there were any additional questions.

Josh stated that at the middle school we will double the number of cameras and the wireless will be double the speed and the security will be more robust.

Brian asked about larger trays for the future to keep up with technology.

Josh explained that trays are very expensive and that we are doing J hooks.

Dr. Morse stated that we are doing both but largest is J hooks.

Al Howland moved the meeting to the CIP.

Dr. Morse reviewed the graduation happenings from last year but suggested that we try for something different this year. We have a beautiful field and suggested we have graduation on site by obtaining bleachers. This is part of the CIP 3-4 years out. He also stated that Suzanne has made inquiries about tent rentals and they run about 20K - 30K and they can't hold all of the seniors.

Brian Cisneros suggested that with the construction at the Whittemore, why we can't use half of that.

Dr. Morse explained that UNH is not opening to outside organizations, but he can contact Chris.

Al Howland asked if there was enough time to purchase and install to be ready for graduation.

Jim Rozycki stated that he has been in contact with the company and it would take 16 weeks to get the product and then one month to install.

Brian asked if we would be required to get an occupancy permit from the town.

Jim R stated we would need a permit and a certificate of occupancy when completed.

There was additional discussion surrounding seating capacity if still requiring 6' distancing, is there enough time if we move forward.

Finance committee agreed to allow Jim Rozycki to move forward with obtaining additional information and exact numbers.

Al Howland moved the meeting to the added agenda item of electric buses.

Brian Cisneros stated that even though the engine is different everything else is the same, will still have wear and tear and it will still get old.

Dr. Morse stated that if this is approved, do not go beyond an 8-year warranty.

Finance committee felt that they fixated on the money down, concerned that with technological advancement we would miss out. It is too soon and do not want to be the first to try this out, and that we do not really know what the bus costs. They felt that it was a great idea but the wrong time.

Sue Caswell will communicate with the bus company and inform them that we would not be interested at this time.

Michael Williams shared his screen and showed the committee a budget bridge that he developed and went on to explain the graph.

The meeting ended at 7:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy L. DiFruscio