

FINANCE MEETING MINUTESⁱ

New Bedford Public Schools
Paul Rodrigues Administration Building
455 County Street, Room 224
New Bedford, MA 02740
Also remote via New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS) website

Finance Subcommittee Meeting
November 4, 2021
6:00 – 7:00 PM

Present: Mr. Bruce Oliveira, Ms. Colleen Dawicki, Mr. Andrew O’Leary, Ms. Rachel Bento-Cunha
Absent: Mr. Joshua Amaral, Mr. Thomas Anderson, Ms. Karen Treadup

The meeting commenced at 6:00 PM.

Minutes from the June 2021 meetings were reviewed. Voted unanimously on a motion by Ms. Dawicki and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to approve the minutes.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the October 2021 Finance Reports. Mr. Oliveira inquired as to the Human Capital Services budget under the General Expense report. Mr. O’Leary explained that the department purchased archival services for scanning records. Mr. Oliveira also inquired as to the Librarians-Media Direc budget. Ms. Bento-Cunha responded that she would examine it. Mr. Oliveira inquired about Employee Separation Cost. Mr. O’Leary responded that it includes sick leave incentives. Mr. O’Leary presented the Health Insurance report and remarked that it is 10% above but it is not an issue with the account balance because NBPS will acquire about \$1.5mil or more from the grants and some will be transferred out, however, it gives a notable projection for next year.

Mr. O’Leary discussed that the City has \$2mil left in CARES Act Grant monies and asked the School Department to assist in spending down. He indicated that he relayed to the City that the School Department could assist by purchasing PPE and technological needs, however, the City decided to put it toward the healthcare reserve. Mr. O’Leary indicated that the City was able to submit a CARES Act reimbursement for any cost for City-School health insurance for any Covid-related medical expenses from March to present and \$1.9 was paid out of this trust. Mr. O’Leary indicated we need to examine the trust process to see if the School Department can pay health insurance bills out of the trust.

Mr. O’Leary presented the Grant reports. Mr. Oliveira inquired as to the FY20 Grants report totals. Mr. O’Leary indicated that he would examine it. He noted that the report is missing grants such as IDEA and others. Ms. Bento-Cunha indicated she would examine. Mr. O’Leary discussed the CPPI Grant for collaborative partnerships where NBPS partners with Pre-K groups such as Northstar. Mr. O’Leary indicated that he spoke with Mayor Mitchell concerning ARPA, Pre-K, and childcare grant funding and DESE reimbursables. Ms. Dawicki mentioned there are Pre-K providers already set up and Mr. O’Leary indicated that NBPS could put out a Request for Proposals.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the Salary Reports. He noted NBPS is seeing a slight increase, but that we are still under max and indicated that it is unlikely to exceed the max as it projected that our enrollment will be up for next year. Mr. O’Leary indicated NBPS is on target for salaries as we are fully loaded.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the October 2021 Transfers. He noted the largest transfer was the NBHS Textbook line as New Bedford High School is purchasing digital textbooks and online subscriptions. Voted unanimously on a motion by Ms. Dawicki to approve the Transfers and seconded by Mr. Oliveira.

Ms. Dawicki inquired if ESSER would be discussed and Mr. O’Leary indicated yes as Finance Subcommittee members’ input as to how we want to look at it and report on it, as there is the accounting side, the DESE reporting, and the strategy document.

Mr. O’Leary presented the September 2021 Surplus Report and Donation Acceptance Request Form. Voted unanimously on a motion by Ms. Dawicki and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to approve the surplus as Excess Surplus for disposal and to accept the donation.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the FY22 Bristol County Agricultural invoice. He explained that in the context of vocational schools in Massachusetts, there are a couple of schools such as Bristol County Agricultural that are considered separate in that if student elects and gets accepted into such a school for a specialized career, the City is required to pay for it. Mr. O’Leary indicated that in addition to paying for tuition, we will now be paying for Massachusetts School Building Authority costs. He explained that Bristol County Agricultural decided on behalf of Bristol County to build a \$100mil project through the MSBA, there was a

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vote amongst the cities and towns of Bristol County where 25% had to be in favor, and the vote passed. Mr. O'Leary indicated it comes off the City revenue line but that we would examine it for more information and invoice details including reimbursement rates.

Mr. O'Leary presented and discussed the Alma del Mar and Acushnet tuition billing. He indicated Bristol County Agriculture and Alma del Mar expenses would be added to the next Budget Book.

Mr. O'Leary presented and discussed charter schools.

Mr. O'Leary presented and discussed the 2021 Capital Needs Assessment. Mr. O'Leary explained that the School Department is going to submit a list to the City Council for nominated school projects, including future MSBA projects and ESSER projects, the tennis courts at New Bedford High School, repointing the Paul Rodrigues Administration Building, new doors and windows at Trinity Day Academy, and MSBA elementary school projects. He expounded that if any projects are rejected, we plan to put them through the ESSER grant.

Mr. O'Leary presented and discussed the Special Education Stabilization Fund. He indicated that there is a Special Education Stabilization account in the revolving accounts which currently has a balance of \$159K, which can only be spent by virtue of a vote by City Council. Mr. O'Leary explained that we have funds that are excess from FY20 which came about as a result of the pandemic where we did not have special education transportation. He indicated that he would write a letter to the School Committee that the Finance Subcommittee requests to transfer some of the funds into the Special Education Stabilization Fund. Voted unanimously on a motion by Ms. Dawicki and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to approve the request.

Mr. O'Leary presented a summary document for how we may report on the ESSER grants. He explained that the first two ESSER grants encompass 26 million and suggested we can report grant spending online by way of summary categories. He indicated that the School Committee would need to vote on ESSER III in the future. Ms. Dawicki suggested also including a descriptive narrative with each category.

Voted unanimously on a motion by Mr. Oliveira and seconded by Ms. Dawicki to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.



Andrew B. O'Leary
Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations

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