

FINANCE MEETING MINUTES ⁱ

New Bedford Public Schools
Paul Rodrigues Administration Building
455 County Street, Room 119
New Bedford, MA 02740

Finance Subcommittee Meeting
August 6, 2020
4:30pm – 5:26pm
Remote via NBPS website

Present: Mr. Bruce Oliveira, Mr. Joshua Amaral, Ms. Colleen Dawicki

Also in attendance: Mr. Andrew O’Leary, Ms. Theresa Cormier, Ms. Rachel Bento
Absent: Mr. Thomas Anderson, Ms. Karen Treadup

The meeting commenced at 4:32 pm.

The minutes from the June 11, 2020 Finance Subcommittee Meeting were reviewed. Voted unanimously on a motion by Mr. Amaral and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to approve the minutes.

Mr. O’Leary discussed the COVID-19 Grants update. He indicated that we are still operating under the City Interim Budgets and grants (CARES Act/ESSER/COVID) and that ESSER can live into FY22 and could be helpful at that time. CVRF (COVID Fund) is where we are paying for such things as: consultant for air quality, PTE, increase in substitute rate, etc.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the Finance Reports and indicated there is not much new to report but that we are on target relative to the July interim budget.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the Grant Reports. He indicated that the COVID-19 related grants, ESSER and CVRF, are our biggest grants. He also indicated that we have not yet received Title I and IDEA funds, which will play a big role in the coming year and that we are trying to move personnel out of IDEA to avoid the MTRS charge.

Ms. Dawicki inquired what has been spent thus far relative to the School Committee, and Mr. O’Leary answered that it has been on memberships.

Mr. Oliveira inquired about the status of the Facilities Revolver Account and Mr. O’Leary answered that as of June 30, 2020, there was a balance of \$184K but that there was \$300K worth of expenses that year. He explained that at the end of the year we move money around, so if there is money left, we take those expenses that the Revolver hit in the Local budget and reimburse the Revolver. Ms. Cormier added that there was a service transfer of expenses back to Local. She further indicated that what was kept in the Revolver was anything that was charged as a capital expense (such as those related to the baseball field) but any extraordinary maintenance charges and such was service transferred back to Local. Mr. O’Leary indicated we are not doing indoor rentals this year due to COVID-19.

Mr. O’Leary presented and discussed the Transfers. He highlighted the oil transfer at Campbell School to which Ms. Cormier responded we were limited to where we could transfer money from for the interim budget, so we had to take money out of Utilities to supplement the schools’ interim budget but that we are going to turn around and reverse it. Voted unanimously on a motion by Mr. Amaral and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to approve the transfers.

Mr. Oliveira discussed his concerns regarding school buildings in terms of air and water quality. Mr. O’Leary responded that we are working on these concerns and that we are also going to be engaging with a specialized Massachusetts company called BALA to do an assessment. BALA is going to send a scope of work which includes assessing all of our schools in August and then create a report.

Mr. O'Leary discussed FY21 budget updates. He indicated we had a meeting with City Council the week prior regarding the budget strategy in terms of Ch. 70, grants, and health care and that we are preparing a report response to their questions from said meeting. He also indicated that we are planning to have a revised budget for the School Committee to vote on in September.

Mr. O'Leary also discussed the Central Kitchen updates. He indicated that we presented our RFP proposal to City Council in February or March 2020, as directed by Purchasing, to request people to submit their interest in providing us a property that meets our specifications. He also indicated that it would be addressed at the City Council meeting on August 6, 2020 and would be presented to School Committee to vote on the financial agreement in the future. He explained that the City would purchase the property with a bond which would pay for the acquisition and renovation of the property, and the School Department's USDA Program reserves would pay a lease to the City.

Mr. O'Leary also discussed our proposal for substitute teacher pay. He indicated the current base rate for building-based substitutes is \$85/day, and we are proposing a differential to a \$126 per diem rate which would be part of the COVID grant.

Mr. O'Leary discussed transportation capacity analysis for SY21. He indicated that on average, we have about 50/55 students per bus which is not feasible with the 3-foot distancing, so we are going to propose a limitation of 24 students per bus. He explained that current MA requirements is to provide transportation outside of 2 miles for grades K-6 students outside of and our policy is to provide transportation outside of 1.5 miles for grades K-5 students and outside of 2 miles for grades 6-12. He indicated that our proposed change to our policy would be to have the flexibility to transport outside of 2 miles for grades K-6 and 2.5 miles for grades 7 and 8, and no transportation for 9 through 12, which would most likely go into effect in October/November when in-person learning numbers begin to rise. He indicated that we would still consider hardships and work through those cases, that we will be doing parent reimbursements, and that we would revisit this policy as in-person learning changes.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:26 pm.



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

ⁱ The **Open Meeting Law** requires public bodies to create and approve minutes in a timely manner. A "timely manner" is considered to be within the next three public body meetings or 30 days from the date of the meeting, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay
