

Newtown Board of Education
BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Minutes
February 16, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mrs. Larkin called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Participants: Jennifer Larkin, Deborra Zukowski, Alison Plante, Chris Melillo, Superintendent, Tanja Vadas, Dir. of Business, Bob Gerbert, Dir. Of Operations, Lisa Kessler, Legislative Council, Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

Item 1: Approval of January 12, 2023 Minutes

Mrs. Plante made a motion to approve the BOE CFF/CIP Minutes of January 12, 2023

Ms. Zukowski seconds the motion. Mrs. Plante asked to make the following change. In the section of Middle Gate Playground the statement that the Art program will contribute is incorrect. The statement should say the ARPA program.

All in favor, motion passes to approve the BOE CFF/CIP minutes of January 12, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Report and Transfers - DRAFT

Mrs. Vadas presented the January financial report and stated the anticipated balance changed by \$2,500. She stated everything is holding steady. However, there may be changes to this draft before presented to the Board. There were some changes in our salaries. She stated the non-certified salaries are still driving the balance due to a lot of unfilled positions. Certified salaries are in the negative by \$50K while non-certified is in the positive of over \$500K. She stated we still have unfilled positions of 16 paraprofessionals, 5 behavioral therapists and one network specialist and a high school tutor.

Mrs. Larkin asked how we advertise open positions such as paraprofessionals. She asked if we have considered posting similar to what we do with bus drivers. She thought with paras we might find parents from the town who would want to participate.

Mr. Melillo stated he would work with the HR director to see about getting information out more.

Ms. Zukowski asked about putting an advertisement out in The Bee.

Mrs. Vadas stated with benefits there is a deficit in our pensions so she will ask for a transfer of \$12K from medical benefits and \$12K from the educational assistant account to cover the short fall.

She stated with contracted services we had a big deficit in the prior month due to the lack of behavioral therapists. She stated we do have some grant funding opportunities of \$132K that we are going to transfer out of the general fund and into the grant. Mrs. Vadas stated this is outside services.

She stated transportation is holding steady.

She said out-of-district tuition is currently showing a negative of \$454K which has increase over the prior month. This increase is due to anticipated additional costs in special education and out of district tuition. She also stated she is aware of an additional \$150K cost due to a mediated agreement that is not included in this report.

She stated we do have another legislation that is on the table right now. She stated we had a three tiered excess cost grant reimbursement at 70%-80%. The legislation is making an adjustment to try and address that gap and provide districts with more funding. If we come in at an 85% reimbursement we could be looking at an additional \$400K in grant funding. She stated she thought she would know on this within the month.

Ms. Zukowski stated the bottom line is our special education out-of-district tuition is going up by about \$600K for next year and this funding could possibly cut this down to \$200K or so.

Mr. Mellillo stated he would reach out to see if he can find any definite information on this.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the accounts that are pushing our budget up this year and if they could affect our proposed budget for next year.

Mrs. Vadas stated it is a possibility.

Mrs. Vadas stated we did receive a credit for our excise tax for alternative use of propane fuel which came in at \$36K.

She stated she is asking for two transfers. One to cover the pensions for the \$25K and the other is to transfer over to the Board of Education contracted services line to cover the balance of the Strategic Plan. She is requesting that this come out of our transportation line since we have a bit of a surplus there. She stated we have a surplus in transportation from the 6 buses that came off line.

Smart Funds Lunch Program Update

Mrs. Vadas stated the bill was signed this week and the state will be extending the free lunch program to the end of the school year. She said it will be seamless for our students. Our free lunches are going through March 3rd and we are just waiting for guidance from the state and we are anticipating that the program will start March 1st.

Mr. Melillo stated we will announce this as soon as we get the guidance from the state.

Mrs. Larkin stated she has been getting feedback from parents with concerns for expired milk and what is on the menu is not what the students are getting. She asked Mrs. Vadas to check into this with Chartwells.

Mrs. Vadas stated she has provided a 6 month review of Chartwells performance at the Board meeting. Mrs. Kessler mentioned also that students are confused as to what is free and what has a cost. Mrs. Vadas stated that the first meal is free, second meals and a la carte items are at a cost. Mrs. Vadas stated she would look into possibly adding some signage in the cafeterias.

Transportation Update

Mr. Melillo stated the transportation committee met and talked about where they stand as a committee. Right now we have worked with All-Star to get 5 substitute drivers from other yards. We were informed this week that they will keep the drivers on with Newtown until the current class of trainees come through. He stated the last two weeks we have not had a call out and all bus runs have gone through. He further said Mrs. Vadas will followup with All-star to ensure that the sub drivers will continue to show up.

Mrs. Vadas stated All-star does have sub drivers from other districts that include New Milford and Washington. Washington will stay here indefinitely. New Milford has to go back in another two weeks. She said All-Star has had many interviews in the past month. They have 9 potential drivers that are actually training right now.

Mrs. Larkin asked when we can expect the driver graduates to be on the road.

Mrs. Vadas stated 6 weeks from the middle and end of January.

Mr. Melillo stated middle to end of March.

Mrs. Plante asked if we would still keep the subs.

Mrs. Vadas stated New Milford will have to go back in a few weeks but said that All-star has a few drivers that can jump in if need be.

Mrs. Larkin asked if they will be able to cover the sports routes as well.

Mrs. Vadas stated yes if they come through with all of these drivers.

Mrs. Larkin asked what about right now.

Mr. Melillo stated we are better. We have asked them to reschedule events and have shared with other districts the costs with charter routes.

Mrs. Larkin asked when we will get rid of the charters and get back to usual.

Mr. Melillo stated maybe in the spring. He stated we also have our vans and coaches are going through the process to get their licenses.

Ms. Zukowski asked Mr. Melillo if they were still looking into consolidating buses.

Mr. Melillo stated they will continue to work on routes.

The discussion continued around the transportation committee researching and studying and conversing on additional ways to tighten the bus ride times for students.

Hawley HVAC Update

Mr. Gerbert stated Hawley is doing great. He stated the big push is in the 21 section of the bldg. where a lot of the duct work and units have been added in the attic. The work in the 48 and 97 wings is nearly done. Downs is now bringing in people to do inspections which looks at duct work, insulation, etc. He stated the 48 and 97 wings have been fully inspected. Downs is expecting by end of March or early April to be pulled out and have everything to a point of substantial completion.

Mrs. Larkin asked about the switch gear. Mr. Gerbert stated we are still looking at the end of May. When they get word that it will be coming they will remobilize and get the electrician in and the other subs they need to facilitate the work and see if Eversource will follow with the new primary circuit from the pole.

Mr. Gerbert stated he has the same moving company who helped with the move out and they will walk around and look at RIS, SH, HOM and walk through Hawley so they can get re-familiarized with what is going on. We will then look to get a quote from them and lock that in.

Mr. Gerbert presented the overall same summary he has been providing showing where the budget stands and the contingency balances.

Mrs. Kessler asked what moving company we are using.

Mr. Gerbert stated Siracusa from New Britain.

Ms. Zukowski asked about Hawley having access to two circuits as a backup.

Mr. Gerbert stated he did not think so and that would not be included in the current work that is being done. He stated history with outages in the town when power was out for up to a week, Hawley was back up in 24 hours and that area comes back quickly. He stated that strip on Churchill Rd seems to bounce back quickly.

Mrs. Kessler asked about the lighting at night at Hawley and why it is all lit up.

Mr. Gerbert stated there is a lot of exterior lights at the school which are operated on a photocell and when the sun goes down they come on. A lot of what is going on is temporarily construction lighting which is on all of the time. The 21 wing still has a long way to go so the lights will remain on as a safety issue.

Propane RFP

Mrs. Vadas stated the RFP (Request for Proposal) is still in draft format and that the contract will probably be about \$170K. She stated it is a one year contract with a one year extension. A couple of changes are our usage to 15% vs 10%, we added performance damages and default and added information about some of our equipment which was not in our prior contract.

Mrs. Plante asked who our current vendor is.

Mrs. Vadas stated Hocon.

She stated we would be sending this RFP out to all of the local vendors and adding it to the town website.

She stated we also increased the amount of our storage for propane.

Mrs. Larkin clarified that this is propane RFP is all for buses.

Mrs. Vadas stated yes.

Mrs. Larkin stated we are locking into the rate and not the amount of propane.

Facilities Update

- **Middle Gate Playground**

Mr. Gerbert stated the PTA approved their \$10K contribution. The ARPA committee is willing to contribute \$35K.

Mrs. Plante asked if this was a done deal.

Mr. Gerbert stated it is in committee and still has to go through the Board of Finance and the Legislative Council so it still has 2 more hurdles to clear.

Mrs. Larkin asked if all goes well then when can Mr. Gerbert place the order for the play equipment.

Mr. Gerbert stated it could be ordered right after the Legislative Council approves it. He further stated that the target would be to install during the summer.

Mrs. Kessler asked if this was for a total playground and what the total cost would be

Mr. Gerbert stated \$65K but does not include the demo which he stated we would do ourselves.

- **High School Pipe Burst**

Mr. Gerbert stated it was an unfortunate event that happened during the deep freeze. He stated at the high school he said its nearly a 24/7 operation where there are events going on all of the time. He stated there were no events on that Sunday and it just happened that we had that deep freeze and there was no one at the high school.

He stated Belfour restoration came out on Monday and they started immediately. He said for our benefit, the building is all concrete block instead of drywall which prevented extensive repairs.

We were able to get pretty much everything cleaned up in one day and dried out and only lost school on that one day. The culinary and a few classrooms on the ground floor, the science lab on the first floor and a bank of 4 classrooms on the second floor got hit the hardest.

He said we had Belfour in the school this week to start repairing and all through the President weekend to continue to work.

Mrs. Plante stated she wanted to commend Mr. Gerbert and Mrs. Longobucco and the team on how fast everyone jumped into action. She said it was an incredible team effort.

Mr. Gerbert stated the chiller (a/c) on the roof is a self-contained cooling tower. He stated it should not have been there and typically these are drained and winterized.

The conversation continued regarding adding sensors, costs for these sensors and ways to prevent this in the future.

Non-lapsing Fund Discussion

Ms. Zukowski presented the history of the non-lapsing fund policy and how the Board of Education made recommendations to the appropriation process which was accepted by the town.

She further discussed now the Board of Finance wants to make a few recommendations in the language of the Non-Lapsing Education Fund policy.

Mrs. Larkin stated due to time constraints and that this committee is not prepared to make a recommendation we will add this to our agenda for next month for further discussion and possibly with a recommendation to the BOE policy committee.

Superintendent Update

Mr. Melillo announced that Mr. Gerbert, Director of Facilities for the Board of Education will be leaving and taking a position with the University of New Haven. Mr. Melillo stated this is a great loss for us as Mr. Gerbert has done a tremendous job. Mr. Gerbert will be leaving in about a month.

Public Participation

None

Adjournment

Ms. Zukowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Mrs. Plante moved the motion. Ms. Zukowski seconds the motion. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BOE CFF/CIP SUB COMMITTEE.

Newtown Board of Education
BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Minutes
January 12, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mrs. Larkin called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Participants: Jennifer Larkin, Deborra Zukowski, Alison Plante, Chris Melillo, Superintendent, Tanja Vadas, Dir. of Business, Bob Gerbert, Dir. Of Operations, Ed Schierloh, Board of Selectman, William DeRosa, Legislative Council, Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

Due to the Superintendent's schedule any Superintendent updates will be part of the current discussions.

Item 1: Approval of December 15, 2022 Minutes

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to approve the BOE CFF/CIP Minutes of December 15, 2022

Ms. Zukowski moved the motion. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion.

All in favor, motion passes to approve the BOE CFF/CIP minutes of December 15, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

Transportation Update

Mrs. Vadas presented updates from All-Star pertaining to drivers and things that are in the queue. There is a new driver that started who is fully licensed and will be driving bus 27. She stated bus 14 has had some COVID and illness issues. The driver is back but Mrs. Vadas was not sure on the PM run for that bus.

For bus 11, the driver has been very sick and Mrs. Vadas is not sure how long the driver will be out. She stated All-Star has been trying to pull drivers from other yards.

She stated that the good news is on January 17th, 4 people will be starting the class and if everything goes well and they get through the entire process we could have 4 new drivers by March 1st.

Ms. Zukowski asked if those drivers would be getting the full incentive package to join. Mrs. Vadas stated they would not get the bus driver bonus as the bonus was a one-time longevity payment for drivers that were coming back. It was also for new drivers who signed on before September 1st which was at the discretion of All-Star as they did not want to leave this bonus open-ended. She did state that All-Star was looking at their referral bonus program.

There was discussion around the bonus retention program and clarification of who was to receive the retention bonus and the time frame of new drivers starting.

Mrs. Vadas stated up until September if they signed up for the class they were considered a new driver.

Mrs. Larkin stated we are still having a problem attracting new drivers.

Mrs. Vadas asked the committee if they would like All-Star to go farther and with anyone who signs up would get a sign-on bonus. She stated we could offer it to All-Star but it is up to them for the decision because they have contracts and unions to deal with.

The committee further discussed the contract and service.

Ms. Zukowski stated she would like to see a list up to the month of December of what All-Star has done to encourage new drivers to come in.

Mrs. Vadas stated All-Star was against leaving the bonus retention open ended due to operational reasons.

Mrs. Larkin then asked about bus 38 and 22.

Mrs. Vadas stated one of the drivers had to be let go. She stated All-Star has been pulling from other yards to cover bus 38.

Mr. Melillo stated they do not have a driver for 38 at this time. He further stated that if someone walks out then it becomes a 6-8 wk turnaround to get a new driver.

Mrs. Larkin stated she was trying to get a feel for what buses are currently open.

Mrs. Vadas stated bus 27 was open and was filled.

Mrs. Larkin asked about what they are doing for the families of bus 38. Mrs. Vadas stated she would look further but thought they were pulling drivers to make it work.

Mr Melillo stated we are offering our coaches the opportunity to get the public passenger endorsement so they can drive vans for our athletics.

Mrs. Larkin asked if there was anyone taking up on that endorsement.

Mr. Melillo stated yes, and we are paying them to do it.

Mrs. Larkin asked what was involved to get the endorsement.

Mrs. Vadas stated it takes about 3 weeks.

Mrs. Larkin stated she would like to know the timeline of when we will see this initiative.

Mr. Shierloh stated it could take a while to get the results of fingerprints back.

Mrs. Plante asked how large of a van are we talking.

Mrs. Vadas stated an 8 passenger van.

Mrs. Larkin asked where are we getting the vans from.

Mrs. Vadas stated they are our vans that we use for the NCP program so when they are not using them we can.

Mr. Melillo stated he reached out to Fran Rabinowitz to ask if she could enquire within her network and also push in Hartford as we are not the only district dealing with these issues. He stated she will be the advocate for Hartford. He also talked with the Commissioner of Education, Charlene Russell-Tucker, and she is going to connect him with Eric Scoville who is the Director of Communications and follow-up with him on transportation partners who may be available to help us out. He further stated he called in a favor to a friend who is the Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, and spoke with him and wanted to know if the shuttle government is getting involved with this as it is across the country. He stated that the only thing they have done so far is relaxing the CDL license requirements by taking the 'under the hood' off the table which is part of the licensing. He stated our Purchasing Director is working on a RFP (Request for Proposal) for our athletic teams we could guarantee transportation for our athletics and we also have a vendor in house that we could leverage.

Mrs. Vadas did state that if we go out for another RFP for the athletics we will have to amend the current All-Star contract and amend that scope of work.

Ms. Zukowski stated if we have another contract that states it all yours to bus company B then we have to say to All-Star you don't have any hope of getting any runs and take that out.

Mrs. Larkin asked if they have to agree to that.

Mrs. Vadas stated a conversation has to happen with All-Star.

Mrs. Vadas stated we do not have the drivers for out-of-district right now.

The conversation continued around the contract, costs.

Mrs. Plante asked for a Point of Order as the conversation was veering elsewhere.

Mr. Melillo stated he investigated some outside solutions such as 'ride share' but ride share works more for urban areas. He stated we would be sending a survey out to families because we have families that are choosing to drop off and pick up their children at school and he wants to see if they would choose to take their kids off the bus and thus we could consolidate routes and run with a leaner force.

He stated he reached out to the American Legion to see if there are any veterans with CDL licenses that would be interested in stepping up to drive a bus. He also stated he also sent letters of support to Tony Wong and Mitch Belinski to do their work in Hartford to push as this is not just a Newtown issue but a statewide issue. He stated other states such as the Governor of Massachusetts used the National Guard to drive school buses and he would like to see some help from Hartford with this as it is not only Newtown but again a state issue.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the number of buses and the number of routes and what was being done about the buses that seem to be absent the most.

Mr. Melillo stated there is language in the bus drivers' union contract regarding additional work and driving additional buses.

Mr. Shierloh stated what could really help us temporarily is the survey and if All-Star could do another ridership of how many students are on the buses. He stated we could possibly temporarily cut two buses in the morning. He stated with Mr. Melillo's survey and re-do the routes and get all-star to agree to drop two buses or whatever the number is that would help tremendously.

Mr. Melillo stated we are currently working on the survey and technically he needs to have a seat for each child and if he gets parents' permission to pull kids off because they are driving them.

Mrs. Larkin stated if you are going to drop a bus then you need to do it in both tiers to even the counts.

Mrs. Larkin asked the question regarding setting up a working committee outside of this committee regarding this topic. She stated we only meet once a month with the CFF committee and this topic seems to be taking over the meeting. She stated we need to be dialoging on a more regular basis so that we can work at fixing some of these transportation issues.

Ms. Zukowski recommends that this would be a subcommittee that serves at the pleasure of the Superintendent and we can request certain number of seats for particular slots of positions of people that we might want to have.

Ms. Zukowski asked Mr. Melillo what his thoughts were.

Mr. Melillo stated it makes sense to put a committee together weekly.

Mrs. Larkin stated there is an opportunity to move quickly and she would recommend this and use this CFF committee less as a working committee regarding the transportation.

The discussion continued around who would be on this committee.

Mrs. Larkin stated she would follow up with the Superintendent outside of this meeting and we could put together some frame work.

Mrs. Plante suggested since this is not a board committee them maybe the Superintendent could mention this in his Superintendent updates as a committee to look at this and dialogue.

Ms. Zukowski stated we should at the recommendation of the board at least one board member with substitutes and at least one representative of the town.

Mr. Shierloh then discussed the ridership survey that took place in the past and that bus drivers for the first 2-3 weeks of school would write down how many kids on each bus and how many times they rode the bus. After that period of time the routes would then be adjusted.

The conversation continued around an opt-out waiver and the radius for walkers and buses.

Mrs. Larkin then suggested the committee move forward with the rest of the agenda items.

Hawley HVAC Update

Mr. Gerbert stated Hawley's continuation of the process is as reported. He said everything has been going smooth in terms of schedules and hitting their targets. He stated the focus now is on the C bldg. which is the 21 wing and finishing up the duct work, plumbing, electrical.

He stated in the 48 wing a lot of the stuff is complete in terms of rough work and they have started with the ceiling contractor putting up the ceiling grid, duct work insulation has been pretty much complete.

AVS our control vendor has been using 3-4 man crews in getting controls in place and installed.

He stated the next big push is in the attic of the 21 wing and they have done some preliminary work and eliminated the 3 dog house dormers. They will be getting ready to lift those units in place and finish up with final carpentry. They are expecting the balance of the HVC units to arrive at the end of this month.

Mr. Gerbert stated in terms of budget we are still doing pretty well with contingency both for owner and CM contingency. He stated they are expecting to hit their target and finish by April except for the switch gear which still remains delayed and is expected to show up the later part of May.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mr. Gerbert when it was expected to start moving all of the stuff from Reed back to Hawley.

Mr. Gerbert stated we are still working on the plan and it is all contingent with the last day of school.

Mr. Gerbert stated the move would happen in June.

Facilities Update

Middle Gate Playground

Mr. Gerbert stated there is a sale on the playground equipment which the vendor gave him a pamphlet of what is on sale. In that pamphlet there was equipment that was very similar to what was proposed for Middle Gate and was listed as a \$18K reduction in price. He stated he is waiting for a quote to get the new number and he stated the original quote was initially at \$82K and with the reduction of the \$18K we are looking at around \$60-65K range assuming that other items have not moved up in price.

Mrs. Plante asked how much of that is covered by the district budget vs what we would be asking the PTA to put in.

Mr. Gerbert stated there was \$20K in our operating budget. The Grants Specialist was going to go to the ARPA Committee to see if any money was available.

Mr. Shierloh stated it was brought up with the ARPA Committee and the First Selectman was going to communicate with Mr. Gerbert or vice versa.

Mr. DeRosa asked Mr. Gerbert what he expected the anticipated cost to be. Mr. Gerbert stated if no other items have increases then it would be in the \$65K range.

Mr. DeRosa said it seems reasonable. Mr. Gerbert stated the sale prices run through June.

Mrs. Larkin stated this is a slippery slope not to have Middle Gate contribute something. This will give them time to come up with a fund raiser. She would recommend to them to form a fund raising committee for this playground. She further stated she does not believe the Board of Ed should have to pay for the entire cost.

Mrs. Plante said it would be a shame if we lose out in the sale. If we can get \$30K in ARPA Money and \$20K from district budget that would put \$15K for the PTA.

Mrs. Larkin asked who is communicating with the MG PTA president. Mr. Gerbert stated he is.

Mrs. Zukowski stated she has been in touch with the MG PTA president and will continue communication in regards to the MG PTA contributing to this fund for this playground.

Mrs. Larkin asked when we would see this on the agenda again.

Everyone agreed for next month for more updates.

Mr. Melillo left the meeting at 7:05

Mr. Gerbert then talked about other facility updates. He stated we completed the swap out of roof top units at the High School. We now have our control vendor upgrading all of the controls to the AC units in the A-wing.

He stated the parking lot lights were completed over the thanksgiving break and we are still waiting for 5 fixtures that were back-order. He stated this was for the full parking lot. He stated the lights have a photo-cell which switches off and on based on when the sun goes down and an occupancy center which they can then dim to a lower level if people are moving around.

Ms. Zukowski then asked about the conversation in the past regarding salvaging the coolant. Mr. Gerbert stated they received a delivery of 4-30lb jugs of R22 coolant. So there is 120lbs in reserve. He thought it should have been 190lbs and he is looking into the difference and if we are expecting more to be delivered.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the Chiller since we have the money in our non-lapsing account. Mr. Gerbert stated it is on the CIP plan for year 4 and if there was a desire to do that now he could move it to year 1. He stated what is on the CIP is for 2 chillers and some ancillary control upgrades. Ms. Zukowski stated we have \$120K in our Non-lapsing and if the chillers get put into year 1 then we would start this and asked if that was the plan. Mr. Gerbert stated we can stretch it if we want to leave it in service. He also stated if there was going to be a leak it would have done so by now since the units are 20 years old.

Mrs. Plante then asked about when we would hear on the State HVAC grant.

Mr. Gerbert thought they would be making an announcement in January at some point but he has not heard anything.

Mr. Gerbert left the meeting at 7:16

Update on Current and Upcoming Grants

Mrs. Vadas presented a current list of grants for the 2023-24 school year. She talked briefly about the new grants specialist Judit DeStafano who was previously on the Legislative Council and was hired in October 2022.

The grant list consisted of current and future grants. She stated the IDEA and Title I, and Title II grants are re-occurring grants that come up every year and are entitlement grants. These grants are in our budget and they support staffing and other needs within the schools. She talked about additional grants and grants that are fading out.

Mr. DeRosa asked if there was a committee that decides what grants to write for. Mrs. Vadas stated there is no committee per se, but internally they are decided upon. She stated the grants are specific for their needs.

Ms. Zukowski asked for more of a structure to the spreadsheet of the grants. She requested to Mrs. Larkin that we have a pass on this and discuss it again at the next meeting.

Mrs. Vadas stated she will have the Grant Specialist revise this list to better understand.

Ms. Zukowski stated we have a charter for our legislative council which we have a section that says all grants are to go through the Financial Director for the town which he would do a financial obligation. She further stated we are a line item on the town budget and its up to the school budget how they handle the finances.

Mr. Shierloh stated when we approve the grants the Town Financial Director prepares a budget sheet which would state if there is an additional cost for the town for the grant. He stated most of the time there is not a cost.

Mrs. Larkin stated that is what we need for information in addition to the spreadsheet of grants.

Mrs. Vadas stated she believes that the majority of these grants are funded at 100%.

The discussion continued on how this spreadsheet can be presented with more information to better understand all of the aspects.

Mrs. Plante stated grants are a good thing and we have to be careful that we are not setting ourselves up for obligations that we don't want to be signed up for and we have to be wary about fiscal clips and such.

She further stated she is happy that these grants offset things in the budget and she is happy we have a grant writer who is going out to find these things and providing services that we probably would not have otherwise.

Financial Report and Transfers

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial report for December.

She stated good news over the prior month our balance has only changed with an increase of about \$10K. This month all of the transfers that came through last month were done to try and align our budget.

She stated we still have a big balance in our certified salary accounts. With employee benefits there is a small deficit which is driven by our 401A plan. There is a small balance emerging out of our purchased property services and that is coming mostly from our water and sewer accounts. Other purchased services which contains transportation, contracted services, special education and out-of-district tuition has a large negative number.

She stated, in our supply accounts a good thing that is happening right now is our virtual net metering program which has been booming. This program is offsetting all of our energy costs. She stated we were told not to budget for it because we had no idea what it would produce. She said this year because CLP energy costs are increasing and supply costs are increasing we will probably cap out on our credit. The cap is \$495K but that does not mean it is all of our money, but it is the first year because Eversource is going up on their kilowatt hours. She talked about the formula of how this is calculated. She stated the credit we are receiving on our bills is almost \$0.07 per kilowatt. We use about 8M kilowatts. She stated it was a great program.

Mrs. Vadas stated in our certified salary accounts we have an anticipated negative balance of \$54K with the driver being from the turnover account.

She stated the main driver behind our balance is salaries. She stated pensions are in the hole a little bit with a transfer request in the near future. Professional services are looking good and building and site is looking good with a \$250K balance now which is more than half of the budget for this time of the year. Contracted services will become positive once we revisit the sped grants.

In transportation, we are requesting a transfer of \$68,300 for the balance of the bus driver retention bonuses.

Tuition is holding steady at a negative \$330K.

Mr. DeRosa asked what was the anticipated balance for July.

Mrs. Vadas stated the anticipated forecast is \$439K as of now.

2023 CFF Sub-Committee Meeting Schedule

Mrs. Larkin presented a proposed schedule of future CFF meetings for 2023 and asked if there were any concerns with the dates listed.

The committee discussed a few dates.

Ms. Zukowski moved to accept the calendar of the CFF Mtng schedule for 2023 as presented with amendment with April 17th as a meeting date which is replaced from April 6th.

Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. All in favor.

Public Participation

None.

Adjournment

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Mrs. Plante moved the motion. Ms. Zukowski seconds the motion. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:50.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BOE CFF/CIP
SUB COMMITTEE.

February 10, 2023

Hawley Elementary School – Air Quality Improvements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Budget:

The GMP Established for the project is **\$7,491,086.00** as approved by the Town of Newtown. Revisions to the GMP and the Construction Managers Contingency are summarized below.

Approved GMP:	\$7,491,086.00
▪ Approved Owner Change Orders:	<u>\$149,209.00</u>
Total Revised GMP:	\$7,640,295.00
▪ Pending Change Order Proposals:	<u>\$67,625.00</u>
Total Projected Final GMP	\$7,707,920.00
Construction Managers Construction Contingency	\$212,865.00
▪ Approved Change Order Proposals	<u>\$20,289.00</u>
Remaining Contingency	\$192,576.00
▪ Pending Change Order Proposals	<u>\$6,868.00</u>
Projected Contingency Balance	\$185,698.00
Owner’s Contingency	\$350,000.00
▪ Approved Change Order	<u>\$149,209.00</u>
Remaining Contingency	\$200,791.00
▪ Pending Change Order Proposals	<u>\$67,625.00</u>
Projected Contingency Balance	\$133,166.00

Schedule Update:

Mechanical piping, ductwork, plumbing and electrical rough installation is ongoing in Area C. The indoor AHU’s were delivered and rigged into the attic area. Ductwork and piping in the attic area immediately commenced. The Area C mechanical shafts and work at the Area C Attic is the focus for the month of February. The (5) remaining RTUs were additionally delayed but a hard ship date of 2/27/2023 has been provided, this will not impact the startup. The acoustical ceiling grid is ongoing in Areas A/B and will move into Area C in mid-February. Installation and re-installation of the lighting, registers, grills and diffusers and other special systems will follow in all areas. There is no change in status of the switchgear ship date in May 2023. The Town has elected to not pursue a temporary startup of the HVAC units due to cost implications. Since the switchgear will not arrive until late

May/early June it is Downes Construction’s recommendation that the project be “postponed” in the months of April and May and opened back up in June for the switchgear delivery and installation, permanent power and HVAC startup activities. This recommendation will be with the review, approval and collaboration with the Town of Newtown, Board of Education, Public Building & Site Commission, design team and the subcontractors. Downes will provide additional information and documentation of all activities taking place before and after the proposed project postponement.

90 Day Look Ahead

Activities for February 2023:

- MEP Rough Installation Area C Attic
- MEP Shaft Installation
- MEP Shaft Framing and Drywall
- Ceiling Grid
- Lighting
- Registers, Grilles and Diffusers
- Fire Alarm
- RTU Delivery

Activities for March 2023:

- Complete MEP Rough Installation
- Painting
- Complete Ceiling Grid
- Complete Lighting Installation
- Registers, Grilles and Diffusers
- Fire Alarm
- Above Ceiling Inspections

Activities for April 2023:

- Prepare for project re-open, switchgear delivery and HVAC startup.

Critical Items:

- Electrical Switch Gear Procurement
- HVAC Equipment Startup

Non-Lapsing Fund current status, moving forward, and history

A cross-board Non-Lapsing Fund Policy was adopted by the Board of Education on November 3, 2021 and by the Legislative Council on November 17, 2021. The Board of Finance had previously approved a different, though substantively the same, version of the policy in October 2021 but is now revisiting the policy. As part of that effort, the Board of Finance is suggesting three edits. The first of which is related to the work of the CIP/Facilities/Finance Committee. The other two look to be procedural. The edited version of the current policy is attached below.

A history of the events that triggered the creation of a cross-board policy for the Non-Lapsing Fund is included below. In short, there appear to have been two triggers. First, in June 2020 the Board of Education expanded the scope of the fund beyond its initial practice of using the funds for “extraordinary or emergency expenditures” and second to ensure that the roles amongst the three boards were well understood. A Board of Finance Work Group was formed that provided a draft policy. Unfortunately, the policy was released prior to legal review. The Board of Finance approved the initial version while the others approved the policy as edited by Board of Education Counsel.

The policy, as provided by the the Work Group, clearly provides for the roles of the three Town Bodies but does not address the first trigger. There may be something that we can suggest to address the concern that the use of the Non-Lapsing for planned expenditures might be “circumventing through the appropriation process,” as expressed in History #1. Doing so, would likely help ensure more cooperative relations in the future.

History

1) BOE CIP [CFF] Committee Minutes, April 30, 2020

https://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/theme/files/Board%20of%20Education/BOE%20Subcomm/2019-2020/4_30_20_BOE_CIP_Minutes_attrev.pdf

BOE edits Policy 3171.1 Non-Lapsing Education Fund, adding word “planned”:

*“The Board may designate these funds for a specific purpose. The Board will expend these funds for such previously designated specific purpose except that they may also be used for other **planned**, extraordinary or emergency expenditures which may be necessary but not otherwise budgeted.”*

BOF member expresses concern about the edit:

“Ms. Roussas stated we are all in agreement with the account and that there should be money in the account. Only concern is money in the account being circumventing through the appropriation process that is already in place. We just have to be careful and respectful that this is taxpayer money.”

The Board of Education approved the change at its June 2, 2020 meeting.

2) BOF Minutes, September 14, 2020

https://www.newtown-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3546/f/minutes/bof_9-14-20_minutes.pdf

BOE request to transfer ~\$1.3M in unexpended funds to the Non-Lapsing Fund fails.

3) LC Minutes, September 16, 2020

https://www.newtown-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3546/f/minutes/lc_meeting_minutes_09-16-20.pdf

LC has a broad discussion about the BOE Non-Lapsing Fund, calling out the need for a cross-board policy:

“Mr. Lundquist replied that we can get legal council if need be. This can lead to a coordinated cooperative discussion on policy between us and BOF and BOE depending on whether we even have a role in it. He believes there is desire for clear policy as it relates to allocation of unspent funds and where it ends up at the end of the year.”

Per a September 20, 2020 letter, town counsel legal opinion determines that LC, not BOF, is the body that makes the final decision re: transferring BOE unexpended funds to the Non-Lapsing.

4) BOF Minutes, December 8, 2020

https://www.newtown-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3546/f/minutes/bof_12-8-20_mins.pdf

BOF suggests tri-board effort to create a policy governing the Non-Lapsing Fund:

“The First Selectman noted the best policy is a simplified one and recommended a contingency account for the BOE with a percentage of the BOE budget. Mr. Gardner agreed with this suggestion. Mr. Simpson responded by saying an agreement between the BOF and among the Boards that this would be an emergency contingency fund needs to be discussed further. Mr. Simpson supports an appropriate contingency and there be a cap. Chairman Alexander recommended the LC, BOE and BOF come together to discuss this idea of a contingency account.”

5) March 22, 2021

First meeting of the BOF Joint Work Group

**A Policy Agreement between:
Board of Education, Board of Finance & Legislative Council**

Section 1. Deposits into Non-Lapsing Education Fund.

The Board of Education may, subject to the approval of the Legislative Council, deposit into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund all or a portion of any unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education for the Town, provided that the amount deposited into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund shall not exceed the amount set forth in Section 10-248a of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Legislative Council shall consider the recommendation of the Board of Finance, if any, prior to approving the deposit of funds into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund. The Legislative Council may authorize deposits into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund in each fiscal year such that the total amount in the Non-Lapsing Education Fund may accumulate over time if not expended. **If at the time that a request for a deposit is made the Board of Education is carrying a balance in its Non-Lapsing Education Fund of greater than 5% of its annual budget, then the Board of Finance and Legislative Council shall apply a higher level of scrutiny to the request.**

Section 2. Timeline for Consideration of Deposits into Non-Lapsing Education Fund.

No later than the first week of September, the Board of Education shall send notice to the Legislative Council and the Board of Finance of its request to deposit all or a portion of any unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education for the Town into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund.

The Board of Finance and the Legislative Council shall hold a joint meeting to discuss the Board of Education request to deposit funds into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund.

*placeholder
Sentiment is that it is high likely between 2-5%*

Section 3. Expenditure of Funds from Non-Lapsing Education Fund.

The Board of Education may, subject to the approval of the Legislative Council, authorize expenditures from the Non-Lapsing Education Fund for any expenses that the Board of Education determines are necessary to support students or that are in the best interests of the Newtown Public Schools. The Legislative Council shall consider the recommendation of the Board of Finance, if any, prior to authorizing the expenditure of funds from the Non-Lapsing Education Fund.

If the Board of Education requests an expenditure from the Non-Lapsing Education Fund to pay for all or part of the costs of an approved Capital Improvement Plan ("CIP") project, then such request shall be deemed approved when the Legislative Council approves the CIP as part of the annual review process.

Section 4. Educational Purposes.

The Non-Lapsing Education Fund shall only be used for educational purposes as required by Section 10-248a of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Section 5. Annual Reporting Requirement.

The Board of Education shall review the fund balance and revenues and expenditures of the Non-Lapsing Education Fund on an annual basis and provide a written **accounting** to the Legislative Council and the Board of Finance at the time a request for deposit is made.

of the fund-balance funds of the prior year" or current

Section 6. Review

This policy shall be reviewed by the Board of Finance, at minimum, on a biennial basis during the month of January in each odd numbered year. Recommendations for change, if any will be presented first to the Board of Education for adoption and then to the Legislative Council for approval.

Approved by Board of Education: 11/3/21
Approved by Legislative Council: 11/17/21