

Newtown Board of Education
CIP/Facilities/Finance (CFF) Sub-Committee Minutes
January 11, 2024 6:00 pm
BOE Conference Room

PRESENT: Alison Plante, Shannon Tomai, Christopher Melillo, Tanja Vadas, John Barlow,
Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance
1 Public

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Tomai called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

BUSINESS:

Mrs. Plante made a motion to approve the minutes of December 14, 2023. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passes to approve the CFF minutes of December 14, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS:

Financial Report and Transfers:

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial report for December 2023. She stated the salaries account changed by -\$22,869. Benefits have gone down by -\$6,319, Purchased property services balance is going up by \$6,900, Other Purchased Services have gone up by \$21,939 and supplies have gone up by \$42,500 over the prior month. In total we have increase our balance by \$40,379 for a total projected year-end balance of \$581,648.

In certified salaries we are doing well and we currently have 3 positions open. Non-certified has been challenging filling para positions. Despite the equity adjustment in December we are still looking at a \$284,976 balance. Some adjustments have been made and with tweaking encumbrances and this balance could change next month.

In discussion of the sub accounts, security currently has a negative balance of -\$7,757. We had budgeted for 3 of our security guards to go over to 8 hrs/day but we actually have 6 guards going over to the 8 hrs/day which is higher than we anticipated because we have 3 at the high school doing traffic duty. Mrs. Tomai asked why they normally don't work 8 hours. Mrs. Vadas stated they have always been 7 hrs/day but with the traffic duty there is wrap around time where they have to come in a bit early and stay a little bit later. That is the reflection in the negative balance.

Mrs. Plante asked what is the current snapshot of Paraprofessionals. Mrs. Vadas stated there is around 20 positions still open.

Moving to Benefits there are currently no changes. She stated she would keep an eye on the 401a account and right now this account is not showing any balances and is projected at zero.

With unemployment we are catching up but we are still in the negative. Next month she will have a better projection.

In Professional Services she is not anticipating a balance and anticipates to have a full spend of this budget.

Purchased property services is showing a balance of \$21,939.

Bldg and Site is doing okay for this time of year. Repair accounts are anticipated to be fully expended.

Other Purchased Services includes contracted services which is looking good.

Transportation we had to add an additional aide for in-district runs. We are looking at a small surplus in our out-of-district runs.

Out of district tuition is doing good and holding the line and she indicated she is anticipating a flat balance.

In the Supplies account electricity has a \$119K surplus. This is due to the virtual net metering. We are receiving a lot of credits for the Reed school.

Fuel for vehicles again we budgeted higher because we did not have our contract in place and she anticipates to use the entire 150 gallons of propane.

Property and equipment we anticipate a full spend.

She stated there are no transfers this month.

Transportation Update:

Mrs. Vadas stated transportation was doing great. We have all of our regular routes filled with drivers. We now have 8 spares and All-Star is now running all of the athletic routes as well.

Facilities Update:

Mr. Barlow stated the facilities study went out to RFP (Request For Proposal). There is a building walk through coming up and will encompass of about 3 hours time for any perspective bidders.

Mrs. Tomai asked if the RFP includes a requirement that they not only do an analysis of how the facilities are operating but also includes a requirement to make recommendations for the changes and what the budget might be. Mr. Barlow stated yes and its very detailed. He stated we used a lot of language from another RFP from another district and included our own language in it.

Mr. Goodridge confirmed that it is a facilities study and a functional study. Mr. Barlow stated yes. He stated once it is awarded there will be a series of meetings with building administrators, superintendent, and facilities which is all part of laying the ground work. It will take about 3 months before the actual study will come out.

Mrs. Plante asked the timing of when the selection will take place. Mr. Barlow stated the first week of February.

Mr. Barlow stated we would need to do some revamping of the CIP with that report.

Mr. Barlow stated coming up this year with the CIP there will need to be some readjusting concerning roof issues. There are some large roof issues at the High School which includes the entire roof. The roof

was completed in 1997 and restored once but it is at the end of its usable life. There are significant leaks in the building and have expelled on the plus side of \$30K in repairs this year.

The roofing contractor will be out again to do more repair work and at this point from a rough estimate prospective he stated we will have to make adjustments to the CIP because this is a non-bonding year, he is saying a rough estimate on the roof replacement is \$4.5M.

He did state that he would apply for DAS grant which would be about a 35% reimbursement.

Mrs. Tomai asked if it makes any sense to phase the roof work. Mr. Barlow stated there is enough significance in the roof leaks of the building that it does not make sense to phase the work.

Mrs. Plante asked if we had something for roof repairs in the CIP. Mr. Barlow stated yes, but it was more partial and after significant reviewing of the roof that will need to be readjusted.

Mr. Barlow stated the Public Works Dept. contacted him to relay that they received an approval for putting solar panels on HOM roof. The project would be funded through a grant through the state that Public Works has been involved with. He stated we have 3 years to put the panels on the roof.

Mr. Barlow stated to Mr. Hurley in Public Works that he did not think the roof was stable enough to put the solar panels on. He said he brought the roofing manufacturers rep out to look at it. The roof was put on in 1991 and has had a restoration. Although there is no significant leaks in roof right now, it was determined that it would not be responsible thing to put solar panels on this roof that is that old.

He is working with Public Works as he thinks they may have extra money built in to what they have received for the grant for solar panels so it could be possible that we might be able to do a portion of the roof where the solar panels would go. More discussions are to come.

Mr. Barlow said the rest of the district is in good shape.

Mr. Barlow then talked about the HVAC. In September the State of CT mandated that there was going to be a required inspection and reporting every 5 years of entire school facilities HVAC system. Inspection is required to be done by a TBA (Test, Balance and Adjust) adjuster. The average cost is \$75-\$150 per opening. The opening is where the air comes and this would be for every single room in each facility and this report has to be completed by January 2025. There is no funding from the State of CT. Roughly the estimate for completing this is about \$250K. He stated some communities have put in \$0 towards it and others have put it into their capital plan for next year. This is something he is looking into.

Mr. Barlow stated the second mandate from the State of CT was that air quality control reports need to be completed for each facility and would be due into the State by January 1st, 2024. The only program you can use for air quality is Tools for Schools. The State sent out an additional notice giving an additional month to complete this. Mr. Barlow stated he should have all of the schools completed within the next week or two to meet the deadline.

Mr. Goodridge asked about Hawley since it had a new HVAC system put in. Mr. Barlow stated it would not matter as there is no waiver for a new building.

The conversation continued on the States mandates and the lack of funding.

Superintendent’s Update:

Budget books have been distributed to all Board members. The budget is at an increase of 4.99%. It aligns with our strategic plan and meets our budget priorities set by the Board of Education. It is a good budget and addresses SpEd, class size, and it meets the needs of all of our students as well as it supports our students to ensure they get what they need. He is an advocate of this and realizes the budget increase is high, but knowing that we have deferred payments on grants last year and understanding we are dealing with inflationary rates over a 3 year period where our dollar is not stretching as it use to. He stated he does not think this is the time that Newtown should cut education but enhance and invest in education. Comparatively he is hearing same or higher budget numbers from surrounding districts with 5% or higher. He stated he thinks that this is both taking into account the fiscal needs of our town but more importantly the educational needs of our students.

Approval of BOE CFF Schedule of Meetings for 2024

Mrs. Tomai presented the schedule of the 2024 BOE CFF schedule of meetings. There were a few dates that needed to be changed and the schedule was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Plante moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

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
CIP/Facilities/Finance (CFF) Sub-Committee Minutes
December 14, 2023 6:00 pm
BOE Conference Room

PRESENT: Alison Plante, Shannon Tomai, Christopher Melillo, Tanja Vadas,
Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Tomai called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

BUSINESS:

Mrs. Plante moved to accept the minutes of November 16, 2023. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. All in favor of the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Financial Report and Transfers:

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial report for November. She talked about what was captured and spent for last month and with looking at variances she stated we are on point with the previous month with a slight change in the balance of just over \$12K. Our projected balance stands at \$541K. She went on to say that there was a large change in our salary accounts which is still the major driver with a projected balance at \$372K. There were small changes in employee benefits, other purchased services, purchased property services and supplies which were all pretty much consistent with last month.

Salary accounts continue to drive our budget which is coming from the Paraeducator Union. Certified salaries carry a small balance in our teacher staff account and we did a realignment of our encumbrances which accounts for teachers on leave and transfers. She requested a transfer this month of \$87K to cover our contracted services BT's which would come from our teacher accounts. We have included projections in the teacher account for a MG sped position, Hawley Psychologist position, and two leaves coming up in Jan-Feb which would account for the turnover. She stated we have 20 sped para positions and 4 classroom positions open.

All accounts in benefits are in alignment with the budget. Our 401A plan is a moving target. New employees go on this plan so when we budget we never know what this number is going to be. She stated we pay 5% towards this plan and the defined benefit is an annual payment.

She mentioned unemployment and that the state is no longer sending bills and we are finding out we now have to go on-line. We have had some turnover in our accts/ payable dept. so we did not get caught up with this until lately. We recently received a \$26K quarterly bill and our budget is \$30K for the year. In the prior year when we were budgeting we did not have that much in unemployment costs. So we will be watching this account.

The Professional Services account includes attorney fees, psychological testing, and all of staff development and training. We are on target right now to spend all of our budget in these educational services.

Mrs. Tomai asked if the psychological testing was considered sped.

Mrs. Vadas stated it is a sped service that is captured in this object...She stated there is a lot of departments that go into this one object as part of government accounting.

Purchased Property Services are accounts at the building level. This is showing a small balance emerging in the water account and is hard to predict because our irrigation costs can be very high.

In the building site and emergency repairs, we have spent 40% of the budget and we are on target for this time of year. In emergency services we have only spent \$3,800 thus far and the remainder has been for general building maintenance.

Other Purchased Services includes contracted services, transportation, insurance, communications and out-of-district tuition. In contracted services we just hired a new firm to help with BT costs and they are providing reduced rates which are much lower than last year. Currently we only have 3 BT openings. This financial report does include a transfer of \$87K from our certified salary surplus to cover the BT contracted services for the remainder of the year. We also have IDEA money of about \$60K which is grant money. We currently are down 3 BT's and we budgeted for 25.

With the Out of district tuition we have readjusted all encumbrances and we are currently showing a negative balance of \$37K. Projections are in place for about \$250K and we have the excess cost grant so we are hopeful to break even.

In supplies we have a balance emerging in our virtual net metering. Next year we will be more in alignment and may not see as large credits with more data available.

The propane fuel for buses was budgeted at \$1.40/gal and it came in at \$1.27/gal.

Mrs. Tomai asked if we were paying separately for the fuel.

Mrs. Vadas stated we have always paid for fuel for the buses even when it was diesel. Propane saved us a lot of money not to mention we can apply for a credit.

Mr. Melillo stated it also meets the requirement of the State's need to have buses be green. Propane is a clean burn. A lot of districts are looking at electric buses but electric buses are \$500K each. The propane buses meet the required law.

Mrs. Vadas stated we are on schedule to use all of the gallons it is just coming in a little bit less.

Mrs. Vadas wanted to discuss the Excess Cost Grant and stated that we did submit our first estimate of \$1.8M to the State which went on December 1st. The total estimate was just over \$1.824M and our budget was just over \$1.832M. We are only short \$7,300 based on our estimate.

Mrs. Plante asked to get an explanation of what the Excess Cost Grant is.

Mrs. Vadas stated it is a State grant that reimburses us for 70% of the high costs for out-of-district tuition and transportation that are above an amount known as our basic contribution. The basic contribution and the remaining 30% are the obligation of the district.

Transportation Update:

Mrs. Vadas stated we have the same amount of drivers and we are in a really good place. We have 6 spares with another one coming on. She stated last year we had to outsource all athletic trips. Last year at the end of November we had 118 trips. Out of those 118 trips, only 44% was completed by All-Star due to lack of drivers. This year we have 115 trips and at this time 73% have been completed by All-Star.

Facilities Update:

None

Superintendent's Update:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Tomai made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Plante moved the motion. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

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

Newtown Public Schools BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub Committee

2024 Meeting Calendar

BOE Conference Room – 6:00 p.m.

January 11, 2024

February 13, 2024

March 14, 2024

April 11, 2024

May 16, 2024

June 13, 2024

July 2, 2024

August 15, 2024

September 12, 2024

October 9, 2024

November 14, 2024

December 11, 2024

January 9, 2025