

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT

Finance Committee of the Trumbull Board of Education

Minutes

December 20, 5:45 p.m.

The Finance Committee met at the Long Hill Administration Building on December 20, 2016. Members present: Paul Lavoie (Chair) and Sean O'Keefe. Invited guests included Dawn Perkins (BOE Transportation Manager).

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

1. The Committee approved the minutes from the November 22, 2016 meeting by unanimous consent. Mr. Lavoie made a motion to add an agenda item to discuss and approve the calendar for BOE Finance Committee meetings in 2017. This was approved by unanimous consent and added to the agenda as item 2h. Next, Mr. Lavoie motioned to move agenda item 2d to the first topic. This was approved by unanimous consent.

2. New Business –

a.) November 2016 Financials - Mr. O'Keefe reviewed the Financial Reports through November 30, 2016. Mr. O'Keefe also highlighted several accounts and responded to a number of questions from Mr. Lavoie regarding the BOE accounts, Food Services and BOE Special Programs.

b). Transfers – there were no budget transfers in November 2016.

c). Centralized Purchasing function – Mr. O'Keefe reviewed the results of survey which he conducted with his peer Business Administrators within CASBO. Based on the results, Mr. O'Keefe recommended that with regard to Office Supplies and Classroom Supplies, he would gather and publish a list of vendors for the schools and divisions to use that would result in benefits including preferential pricing, volume discounts and free shipping. The list would also include cooperative purchasing organizations and companies with state contracts. With regard to centralizing purchasing of classroom and office supplies within the Business Office, the results from the CASBO survey were overwhelmingly opposed to this as it would actually cost money to staff, would end up slowing the process down and the incremental savings vs publishing a preferred vendor list would be negligible at best.

d). Schedule for Transportation RFP – Mrs. Perkins reviewed the typical process for going out to bid for the Transportation contract and discussed what could be done to

start the process earlier to facilitate a reasonable 2018-19 budget estimate by mid-November. Mr. Lavoie asked Mrs. Perkins to develop a side-by-side timeline of the normal process and an expedited process which will provide the pro's and con's of each method which will be reviewed by the full BOE.

e). Bridgeport Magnet Tuition update – Mr. O’Keefe summarized a meeting he attended with Marlene Siegel (Bridgeport Public Schools Chief Financial Officer) along with Business Administrators from Stratford, Shelton, Milford and Monroe. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the financials of the Fairchild Wheeler and Discovery Magnet Schools and why Bridgeport felt it was necessary to commence charging tuition in 2017-18 of \$3,000 per student to the suburban towns. For Trumbull, it would result in an incremental expense of \$288,000 in the 2017-18. Several of the suburban districts including Trumbull attempted to clarify whether the tuition charges (amounting to \$1.8 million in 2017-18) would be used to cover projected deficits at the Magnet Schools or if they would go to Bridgeport’s General Fund to offset a \$15 million budget gap. Mr. O’Keefe inquired about the \$10.5 million that Bridgeport reported that they pay in addition to the \$8.4 million they received in grants. He stated that the vast majority of the amounts reported were allocations from the Bridgeport Public School General Fund and not incremental spending related to the operation of the Magnet Schools. For example, included in the allocations was a \$1.2 million charge for District Administration which he concluded was simply a “left pocket right pocket” and the beneficiary of the allocation was the Bridgeport General Fund which currently has a \$15 million budget gap. Ms. Siegel responded that that was Mr. O’Keefe’s interpretation. The discussion continued and at the end Ms. Siegel asked the suburban Business Administrators if they had any other options to discuss. In the absence of any ideas, Mr. O’Keefe suggested looking at Bridgeport only charging tuition for the incoming 2017-18 freshman and phase in to subsequent classes. This approach would potentially save each of the suburban districts 75% of the proposed tuition charge in 2017-18. Ms. Siegel appeared to be very interested in that approach and stated that she would take that idea back to her Superintendent and BOE. Mr. O’Keefe reminded Ms. Siegel that time was of critical importance given that budget reviews are already taking place and in some towns, the BOE has already made a decision regarding transportation of Magnet students. Ms. Siegel acknowledged that an action like this could have a devastating impact to the continuation of the Magnet Schools given the 30% suburban participation rate which is required to obtain any State funding. The meeting ended at that point. Meanwhile, Stratford has obtained the services of a litigation attorney to reverse the Commissioner of Education’s decision to allow Bridgeport to charge tuition and is looking to share the cost (based on % of enrollment) of approximately \$10,000 with the seven districts that account for more than 90% of the non-resident enrollment at the magnet schools.

f). DECA/THS Musical Marketing Plan - Mr. O’Keefe provided an email to Mr. Lavoie from Todd Manuel (C-House Principal at THS) describing the DECA Club marketing and promotional activities that are planned for the THS Musical in the spring. Mr. Lavoie

was very pleased with the progress and the creativity shown to date and continues to offer his assistance with the group to share ideas and provide additional guidance.

g). Discussion of Public Act 16-2 regarding the 2.5% cap on 2017-18 Town/BOE budgets – Mr. O’Keefe and Mr. Lavoie exchanged information and findings related to the language regarding the 2.5% budget cap. Additional clarification is required regarding how the exclusions are applied by year and what the base year is for the year-to-year calculation that determines the difference vs the 2.5% cap.

h). 2017 Calendar for the BOE Finance Committee – Mr. Lavoie proposed the 2017 calendar for the BOE Finance Committee and it was approved unanimously and will be posted on the website accordingly. Dates are listed below.

All meetings begin at 5:45PM

1/17

2/21

3/21

4/18

5/16

6/20

7/18

8/22

9/19

10/17

11/21

12/19

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.