

Newtown Board of Education
CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Minutes
January 13, 2022
Virtual Meeting

Call to Order: The BOE CIP Sub Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Mrs. Larkin

Participants: Jennifer Larkin, Sub Committee Chair & BOE Member, Deborra Zukowski, Sub-Committee Member & BOE Chair, Donald Ramsey, Sub Committee Member & BOE Member, Tanja Vadas, Director of Business, Robert Gerbert, Director of Facilities, Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent

Pledge of Allegiance

Item 1: Approval of October 14, 2021 Minutes

Mrs. Zukowski motioned to approve the minutes of October 14, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconds the motion. Ms. Zukowski stated there was a typing error on page 2 in the first paragraph of Item 3, in the first sentence with the word more. The sentence should read Mrs. Zukowski noticed that Newtown's budgeted amount was always 5-10% *less* than what EdSight reported. Mrs. Zukowski motioned to approve the minutes with the change. Mr. Ramsey second the motion. All in favor.

Item 2 Approval of 2022 BOE CFF/CIP Meeting Calendar

Mrs. Larkin presented the BOE CFF/CIP Sub Committee meeting calendar for 2022. She suggested moving the meetings to business hours to conduct on Thursday afternoons.

Mrs. Zukowski made a motion to accept the calendar as presented in the agenda. Mr. Ramsey seconds the motion.

Mrs. Vadas stated August 18th is important as she presents the year-end financial report. She then asked to take out the July 7 date as there is nothing to report.

Mrs. Zukowski moved to amend the motion to strike July 7 from the calendar. Mr. Ramsey seconds the motion. All in favor

Mrs. Larkin talked about the April 7th meeting and asked if this would be enough time since it is so early to present the financial report.

Mrs. Vadas said the April date would work and possibly the Assistant Director of Business would present this report.

Mr. Gerbert asked about the council chambers room listed on the calendar and noted that we can use the BOE conference room instead as this is a small group.

Mrs. Larkin stated she wanted to have the meetings virtually and during the day.

Dr. Rodrigue stated her calendar is the worse and has a lot of meetings during the day already.

Mrs. Zukowski suggested we could do a hybrid meeting during the evening and bring our laptops and the option would be there for anyone to work from home.

Mrs. Larkin agreed and asked if we should leave these meetings for 6pm and in the BOE conference room.

Mrs. Zukowski stated Thursday at 6pm and hybrid would work for everyone.

Mrs. Zukowski moved to amend the calendar that the meetings will be at 6pm and the place of the meetings will be determined by the chair in booking the room.

Mr. Ramsey seconds the motion.

All in favor.

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to accept the calendar as amended. All in favor.

Item 3 Review of 2021/2022 Facilities Projects

Mrs. Zukowski moved to table the discussion of the facilities project until after the discussion of the CFF/CIP responsibilities.

Mr. Ramsey seconds... All in favor.

Item 4 Discussion of CFF Responsibilities

Mrs. Larkin wanted to use this discussion to understand the expectations of the Director of Operations and the Director of Business within this committee. She then asked Mr. Gerbert if he attends monthly to these meetings whereas Charter states he only needs to attend on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Gerbert stated he has attended anytime the group has had a meeting. He stated everyone who is here now would be the regular participants excluding public participation. He stated he is happy to come every month.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mrs. Vadas about her ideas around how to view the financial report and how other towns report on the financial report.

Mrs. Vadas stated she has reached out to other districts. She stated that the financial sub-committee is used to understand the nuts and bolts of the movements of the financial statements and all of the detail. Detail is then brought to the board and the chair of the sub-committee will speak in detail to the board in conjunction with the Business Manager.

She said this is a good time to figure what she can do for the subcommittee, what she can offer and provide.

Mrs. Larkin asked we would use this sub-committee to do the deep dive into the financials and report out to the board with a recap and eliminate the business manager from having to go through a deeper dive into the financials and we could then field questions together with the board.

Dr. Rodrigue stated as long as the public gets a good understanding as we don't want to diminish the importance of this information. It might be better to recap in a different way.

Mrs. Larkin stated she did not know if that provided more efficiency for the business manager and asked if there is a way to do a single slide summary and provide the whole financials in the board packet. She then said aside from the board members being able to read the financial we would make sure what we report to the public is not to the in-depth that the business manager would present but a thorough recap of what we have discussed here in this meeting.

Mrs. Zukowski stated that this board needs to understand the finances thoroughly so that we can be the Director of Business's backup and ask questions and have a good discussion. In addition,

having the chair of this committee basically call out the salient issues that arose for the particular month to the board with the assistance of the finance director.

Mrs. Larkin asked about the presenting of the facilities.

Dr. Rodrigue explained how Mr. Gerbert currently reports to the Superintendent on the facilities which are put in the Superintendent report.

Mrs. Zukowski stated during the CIP meetings Mr. Gerbert would attend.

The discussion continued with how the CIP is prepared and the timeline.

Mrs. Zukowski asked to make a recommendation that this committee consider being the agency to provide board oversight of major projects. She stated an ad-hoc committee was made earlier in the year with a few members of this committee and now that committee is not necessary as this committee could have a member be the one to work with the agency to provide the board oversight in capital and other large projects.

Mrs. Larkin asked what the responsibility would be to assist Mr. Gerbert in this committee.

Mrs. Zukowski stated this person would be listening in on Public Bldg & Site meetings, doing walk throughs, getting a scope of the project and providing resources and information for Mr. Gerbert to do the job well.

Mrs. Larkin asked if we would have to bring this back to the board. Which would mean removing the ad-hoc committee.

Mrs. Zukowski will look into the timeline of when the ad-hoc committee was established and how it was established.

Mrs. Zukowski then asked about having a conversation to officially provide a liaison-ship to this committee for town boards that would have an interest in the types of things we are doing which could include the Legislative Council for anything related to appropriations. This would be a way to bring them in. We also might want to include the Board of Selectman since they are owners of the buildings. She also said if we had an official liaison-ship across with the other town boards we could address the communication issues that are at the heart of some of the problems. She also thought the more formal way to address this would be the other boards would designate an official to attend our meetings.

Mr. Ramsey stated that they are public meetings anyway and have access to agendas and would it not be possible to make that decision and attend the meeting as a participant.

Mrs. Larkin stated that would mean they would only be able to participate during public participation where as if they were part of the meeting there could be better dialogue.

Mr. Gerbert stated we would not need them monthly but only for the CIP talks. That would be the time to extend the invitation. This is the Board of Ed CIP and priorities need to come out of this sub-committee and should not be skewed by a visitor being present.

Dr. Rodrigue stated she agrees with Mr. Gerbert. She said we have invited them for historical purposes and there is a distinction having someone on the committee permanently or inviting them. We are asking for only one liaison and that one liaison does not represent the entire board.

Mrs. Zukowski stated the role of this person would be to gather the information and take that information back to their board and they should not be influencing our material of content. She also agreed that they would not need to come to every meeting but only regarding certain issues such as buildings and the CIP.

Mrs. Larkin stated from what she is understanding it should be driven by the agenda and not based on each of the sub-committee monthly standing meetings.

Mr. Gerbert stated in terms of the CIP the setting of the priorities should come from the membership of the sub-committee. He said we will present the information and give opinion on and where things should go but decisions will rest on the sub-committee and this is approach he wants to take.

Item 3 Review of 2021/2022 Facilities Projects

Mrs. Zukowski moved to remove from the table the review of 2021-22 facilities project. Mr. Ramsey seconds the motion.

Mr. Gerbert presented a spreadsheet of tracking the costs of the projects that were approved by the board in the operating budget last year. Total amount was cut by Legislative Council and was refunded by town non-recurring funds. He stated all projects have been completed except for gym floor at HOM which will be completed this summer. He stated he grossly underestimated the \$15K amount and the project came in at a \$30-\$40K range. He then discussed the projects that have been completed in detail.

He stated in the area at the HS f-wing there was a guidance suite reception area where they needed an office for an additional staff member and his staff did that in house which made the cost low. He stated we have an outstanding maintenance and custodial staff and when possible we try and do as much as we can with our own forces which gives us better control and cost savings and the staff love it.

He said overall we have balance of \$57K and reached out to original contractors for the gym at HOM to refresh their quotes for the summer time which is a 3-4 week project and couple that with any projects that are approved in budget cycle this year.

Mr. Ramsey stated noteworthy of the refurbish of f-wing administrative office and that Mr. Gerbert saved so much money he wondered if the town would use that as leverage to take back money from the budget.

Mr. Gerbert stated he has had to pick and choose what staff can and can't do as it is a staff of five. He said we don't want to put too much on their plate where they can't do it and comes back at us.

The discussion carried on regarding repairs and emergency repairs.

Mrs. Zukowski verified with Mr. Gerbert that we have \$57K left and we will need \$40-50K to finish up what is on the projects list.

Mr. Ramsey stated the distinction between emergency repair and something that is about to become an emergency if we don't repair it is a function of finesse on Mr. Gerbert and his staff kind of hold off until such a time that they need to do it so it does not become an emergency.

Mrs. Larkin noted that sandy hook needs nothing and is great to be a new building. Mr. Gerbert stated even though the school is still new there are a few things we need to start reviewing.

Item 5 Review of Financial Report

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial report and explained what happens for each month to build the financial report with discussion of the categories within the major drivers and objects and how it is all structured.

She then talked about the major movers for the month of December. We had 2 students out-placed which was a total of \$117K along with some other offsets that is driving the balance down.

Mrs Zukowski asked about the excess cost grant that we would be expecting and would that be changed due to this out of district tuition?

Mrs. Vadas stated we have to meet a threshold and she does not think we will meet that threshold.

Mrs. Vadas then turned to the transportation account. She stated we are seeing a credit from All-Star from Sept through December which is now at \$111K due to buses that have not run. She stated she has two options she would like to use the credit for. One being the i-Ready program. The cost of that is \$84K. The second is a new box truck. The current truck was purchased in 2004 and has about 150K miles on it.

The discussion continued regarding the credit and if it would be needed in an emergency before the end of the school year.

Mr. Ramsey stated opportunity is there because of uncertain economic conditions in the future that could prohibit the purchase of the box truck so he is in support of the box truck with the Hawley project coming up with moving classroom etc.

Mr. Gerbert explained the need for the truck right now with COVID supplies, ice melts for the buildings, and the town has used the truck a few times.

Mrs. Larkin asked how were we going to originally pay for i-Ready

Mrs. Vadas stated it is an annual subscription. It was in the 22-23 budget but was removed. We would pay next year's subscription now.

Mrs. Vadas went over the transfer she is requesting. We had 3 positions at the MS in SPED para union that are not being utilized and would like to move that money to cover some of the nurses' salaries from increases, also we moved a para over to Hawley and to cover a tutor which the total transfer would be \$49K

Mrs. Zukowski stated she supported the transfer. Mr. Ramsey agreed and Mrs. Larkin agreed. This will be added to the transfer request that will go to the Board.

Item 6 Discussion of Topics for Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Gerbert stated he is working with a group in town and they are building and inventory and can provide info of what is happening there. A lot of what we have from our buildings have a big role in this.

He also stated he would have some numbers for the gym floor for HOM and could have a quick discussion on that.

Mrs. Vadas stated she would discuss financials and should have excess cost grant numbers.

Public Participation: None

Adjournment:

Mrs. Zukowski made a moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ramsey second. Motion passes. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 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
2022 Meeting Calendar
6:00pm

Place/Virtual meeting will be determined when the Agenda is set

January 13, 2022

February 10, 2022

March 10, 2022

April 7, 2022

May 12, 2022

June 16, 2022

August 18, 2022

September 15, 2022

October 13, 2022

November 10, 2022

December 15, 2022

Newtown Board of Education
CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Minutes
October 14, 2021 6:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Call to Order: The BOE CIP Sub Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mr. Delia.

Participants: Dan Delia, Sub Committee Chair and BOE Vice Chair, Deborra Zukowski, Sub Committee & Board Member, Tanja Vadas, Director of Business, Robert Gerbert, Director of Facilities, Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent.

Pledge of Allegiance

Item 1: Approval of August 12, 2021 Minutes

Mr. Delia made a motion to approve the minutes of August 12, 2021 Minutes. Ms. Zukowski moved the motion. Mr. Delia seconded the motion. Motion passes to approve the minutes of August 12, 2021.

Item 2: Updates to 2021 Year-end Maintenance Plan, 2021 Summer Facilities & Maintenance and Items Included In The 2021-2022 Maintenance Plan.

Mr. Gerbert presented the committee with a spreadsheet that he used to track the 2021-2022 B&G projects that were approved in the budget. The spreadsheet was organized by school, and then shown the actual cost vs. what the budgeted amount.

Mr. Gerbert told the committee that they had to put a pause on fixing the gym floor at Head O'Meadow because the estimated cost was too high.

He also outlined some emergency repairs that needed to be done at NMS and NHS.

The remaining end balance of the budgeted amount for the B&G Projects is currently \$28,968.96.

Ms. Zukowski asked Mr. Gerbert to add in explanations in the "notes section" as to why some projects were not worked on. Mr. Gerbert agreed.

Ms. Zukowski also asked if the emergency repairs came out of the B&G budget or the Emergency Repair line item. Mr. Gerbert stated that the listed emergency repair items came directly out of the budgeted amount from B&G.

Mr. Delia suggested using the emergency repair line item for the stair treads damaged from a leaky roof. The monies spent on that could be transferred to use for the gym floors at Head O'Meadow. Mr. Delia asked Dr. Rodrigue for her input.

Dr. Rodrigue agreed with the idea of using the emergency fund for these projects.

Mr. Delia agreed with Ms. Zukowski about adding in notes to this spreadsheet, as well as shifting over any emergency repairs to the emergency fund line item so the gym floor can be replaced at HOM.

Mr. Zukowski asked how disruptive it is to repair the gym floor now that school is in session. Mr. Gerbert said it would be highly disruptive and they would have to start the project once school is finished. The project would take around 2-3 weeks to complete.

Ms. Zukowski shared her concerns about classifying the emergency projects as a maintenance item; the emergency repairs may be missed in the calculations for the budget.

After some shifting of funds for emergency vs. maintenance projects, the committee was able to add to the remaining funds and now totaled \$46,195.84.

Dr. Rodrigue stated that is very important to make sure all funds are displayed correctly because it can be confusing when we look back and try to figure out a proper budget for the following year.

Item 3: Discussion on how In-Kind Services Is Accounted For In State Reports

Ms. Zukowski asked Ms. Vadas for clarification on In-Kind Services and how it is reported. Ms. Zukowski noticed that Newtown's budgeted amount was always 5-10% less than what EdSight reported. When asked, Ms. Zukowski was told that the number includes money from In-Kind Services.

Dr. Rodrigue remembers this conversation and was able to obtain a list of the services in the "In-Kind Service". The services include: police protection, public works, fire safety, fiscal services and repairs and maintenance services.

Ms. Zukowski stated that she is more comfortable knowing that the 5-10% increases are an accumulation of things like grants as well as In-Kind services.

Ms. Zukowski asked Ms. Vadas to share this information with the Board. Ms. Vadas agreed.

Item 4: Financial Reports:

Ms. Vadas presented the committee with the financial report. Ms. Vadas started by stating that not a lot was happening because they are limited with their anticipated obligations. By next month, the report will show a much larger amount in that category.

Ms. Vadas included the pay raise for the District Substitutes that was approved at the last BOE meeting.

Ms. Zukowski asked if the \$343,080 in anticipated obligation category was for the increase in salaries.

Ms. Vadas answered by saying that it was not and she added a projection this month because she knew the number it would cost for the daily substitute pay increase and what the interns would cost the District.

Ms. Zukowski also asked for a clarification regarding the Transfers. Ms. Zukowski asked if the \$73,000 that was transferred out the Teacher & Specialist salary would be necessary to pay the early retirement package to the teachers.

Ms. Vadas answered yes.

Ms. Zukowski asked how many early retirees there were.

Ms. Vadas and Dr. Rodrigue said they planned on twenty but think only about fourteen teachers took advantage of the early retirement package.

Ms. Zukowski asked for Ms. Vadas to include these numbers in the Board report for other members.

Ms. Vadas reported that Special Education Out of District Tuition has a positive balance but it is very early and in the October report, you will see that number even out.

Ms. Vadas also stated that the “anticipated obligation” column will be filled at the next meeting.

Ms. Vadas said that she is able to do smaller transfers between the same object if need be.

Ms. Zukowski asked if she was obligated to make other transfers because of Newtown’s current policy. Ms. Vadas went to the policy committee meeting and make some edits to the policy so it was less stifflingly.

Mr. Delia and Ms. Zukowski did not remember seeing the updated policy. Ms. Connell, Central Office Project Coordinator, informed the committee that the edited policy was approved by the BOE in July and should be on the Newtown School website.

Ms. Vadas updated the committee with the Food Service account. The meal count actually soared. For the first time in many years, Newtown actually made a profit. Typically in August and September, there is a loss. This year the profit is \$46,000. The meal counts are soaring, about 20% higher.

Mr. Delia asked if they are running out of food with this volume of sales.

Dr. Rodrigue said that there were instances that were food supply issues. There was also a supply issue with snacks but it is not happening at this point.

Ms. Vadas said they are overwhelmed and understaffed and the meal count is extremely high.

Ms. Vadas is confident with Joe Stango and his team.

Ms. Vadas made the committee aware that the LC approved the water assessment in Fairfield Hills. This means there will be a yearly payment for all users which includes Reed School and the warehouse. The payment is minimal (\$2500) but the interest (\$11,000) is substantial.

Mr. Delia asked if it is wise to just pay it off.

Ms. Vadas would like to but will bring it to the Board.

Public Participation:

None

Adjournment:

Mr. Delia made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Zukowski moved the motion. Mr. Delia seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Connell

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SUBCOMMITTEE

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