

Newtown Public Schools
BOE CFF Sub Committee Meeting
October 15, 2024, 6:00 pm
BOE Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

BUSINESS

Item 1 Approval of BOE CFF Sub Committee Minutes of September 17, 2024

NEW BUSINESS

- Financial Report
- Transportation Update
- BOF Budget Workgroup
- Facilities Update
 - Update on Facilities Study
 - MGS HVAC Status Update
 - NMS HVAC Status Update
 - Discussion of Bid Results for Reed Intermediate School Variable Speed Drive Replacements and Installation 2025

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

ADJOURNMENT

Newtown Public Schools
CFF Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2024, 6:00 PM
BOE Conference Room

PRESENT: Shannon Tomai, Alison Plante, Tanja Gouveia, Anne Uberti, John Barlow, Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Tomai called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

BUSINESS: Mrs. Plante made a motion to approval the BOE CFF Sub Committee minutes of September 3, 2024. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion to approve the minutes of September 3, 2024. All in favor. Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS
Financial Report and Transfers

Ms. Gouveia stated there are no transfers for the month of August. She stated there has not been any changes since the last finance report. We did included some additional tuition income that gets applied directly to expenses from Prek and the NCP program (Newtown Community Partnership). She stated there are 3 students that come here from out of district and they pay a full tuition along with billable hours for job coaches who are with those students. This revenue goes in to directly offset those expenses in their categories. The pre-school revenue goes towards the teacher salaries.

Ms. Gouveia talked about the local tuition revenue we get and how that goes back to the town. Mrs. Tomai stated it seems inconsistent with the concept of charging tuition and turning it over to the town.

Ms. Gouveia stated as a Board of Education we are not supposed to take in revenue.

Mrs. Tomai stated it is the board who is paying to educate the students.

Mrs. Uberti asked how much it was.

Mrs. Gouveia stated about \$35,000 yearly. This amount typically comes from employees paying the employee tuition rate.

Mrs. Plante stated she agreed with Mrs. Tomai and if it is revenue that we are generating then we should get to realize it but she also does not understand the offset against expenses.

Mrs. Gouveia stated it could be something we discuss with the town.

Mrs. Gouveia then talked about the mandate for the feminine products. She said that for grades 3-12 we will have to provide feminine products in all girls bathrooms, 1 boys bathroom at each building and all gender/neutral bathrooms.

Mrs. Plante asked if we had budgeted for that.

Mrs. Gouveia stated we have not but it is not a lot of money. We will use our operating budget in increments.

Mrs. Plante asked if we have the dispensers in place. Mrs. Gouveia stated not yet.

Mrs Uberti stated we have gender/neutral bathrooms and stated it is now the law and we will comply.

Mrs. Gouveia stated we will need a total of 109 units to complete all bathrooms 3-12.

Mr. Barlow stated the way the law reads feminine products are to be installed in every female bathroom and any gender/neutral bathroom, 1 neutral bathroom and 1 male bathroom in each building unless the wings are on opposite ends.

Mrs. Gouveia stated this year we will need a 1-to-1 nurse which is not budgeted. We will use our medicaid funds and the BT services will be starting again. She stated that the one vendor we are using now is \$73.50/hr. She stated we are short 5 BT's.

Mrs. Uberti stated it is a problem and the previous vendor we had did not have the staff and therefore is no longer available. She said the BT salary is much more substantial then the salary of a Para. She talked about the issues with Paras not wanting to leave the union and that the BT's are not in a union. She said this is a problem as these students can't really function without that person and it is not a job for just anyone. No matter how much money we throw at it unless you have a calling for that kind of work.

Mrs. Gouveia stated we have \$30K in our IDEA grant which will probably be used up quickly and we can use our medicaid and non-lapsing fund.

Mrs Uberti stated we will keep trying to hire.

Mrs. Plante stated the earmarked money in the non-lapsing would be spent for these BT's. Mrs. Gouveia stated yes as they are special education.

Mrs. Gouveia talked about the building projects in the budget for \$455,911 and that these projects were going to be funded by the town's non-capital reoccurring fund. Typically this is recommended at the Board of Finance level. Once they accept it and it then gets moved to Legislative Council. Somewhere along the line the town now is only funding \$404,000 from the non-capital re-occurring for our projects so we are now short \$51,000. She stated that the Facilities Director is aware and that we may have to pull back on some projects.

Mrs. Plante wanted to bring up about the Joint Budget Workgroup that the Board of Finance is putting together.

She asked Mr. Goodridge to give a brief overview of the committee and the goals.

Mr. Goodridge stated we currently get information from all boards and have a very short period to review the budgets. They would like to get more information ahead of time and with this joint committee which would consist of: Board of Selectman, 2 members of Board of Finance, 2 members of Legislative Council and 2 members of the Board of Education. The goal would be to present information and issues ahead of time so that the boards can get a better understanding and therefore make better judgments. He further stated it is not mandatory but is an offer out to all.

Mrs. Plante stated she felt it was a BoE CFF responsibility to participate and the committee will decide which two members will be selected to attend the 3 meetings with the Director of Business and the Superintendent. She stated the 1st meeting is set for October and will talk about the goal, in November, the town would present what they know so far and in December the BoE will present what we know at that point about the 25-26 budget and what we expect to be the budget drivers.

Mrs. Gouveia stated December is a good time to know what will be driving our budget.

Mrs. Tomai stated between the 3 CFF members we will decide who will attend the meetings.

Mrs. Plante stated she thought it was a good stop gap solution and ultimately we as a set of board members across all boards think that the budget process outlined in the charter does not work and we should amend the charter. That is where she thinks this should head because ultimately the charter is what dictates how we move through the process.

Transportation Update

Mrs. Uberti stated she and Ms. Gouveia met with Steve Gardner from All-Star and the General Manager from STA (Student Transportation America) which is the parent company of All-Star. STA bought out All-Star and now the original owners from All-Star want to pull away and retire. STA is looking to be more collaborative which could benefit us in terms of driver shortages. Mrs. Uberti stated some of the current issues with our buses stems from communication. This has been a big problem and during their discussion with STA they have agreed that this needs to be resolved. She indicated the current All-Star depot manager is resigning. She indicated that they are currently in the process of interviewing and may have a candidate soon.

The committee talked about some of the issues including combining routes which leads to overcrowded buses, behavior issues on buses and long rides home. She stated all of these problems except for communication stems from driver shortages and is happening with other transportation systems and school districts as well.

Mrs. Uberti stated All-Star had spare drivers but just before school started they had 5 bus drivers quit. She stated this has happened to other districts as well. She indicated that STA has drivers from other towns that have pulled out due to the ending of contracts. Those employees want to stay with STA so STA has started a 'travelers' group which consists of bus drivers. STA would bring these 'travelers' to Newtown and the benefit is these drivers would only need to undergo 14 hours of training to adhere to company policies and to learn Newtown. These drivers are already trained so we would not have to wait the two months. She thought the meeting with STA was very informative. Mrs. Uberti stated she would like to include in her weekly updates regarding the need for bus drivers and to get the message out to the community more.

Discussion of CIP

Mr. Barlow presented the BoE CIP. He stated this CIP has changes made from the discussion at the last board meeting. The year we care about right now is the 25-26 school year. Relooking at the plan and the immediate needs of the school district, the sheer size of two projects that we need to do we are looking at a \$5.5M request for the 25-26 year which includes the HOM roof. This would be a restoration and not a replacement so the dollar amount is lower and primarily the town has the solar panel grant. By adding the solar panel on the roof we need to do the restoration which will give us a 20yr guarantee on the roof.

Mrs. Tomai asked if we will need to spend the money within a specific time. Mr. Barlow stated we have 3 years to spend it.

Mr. Barlow stated he kept the MS redundant boilers in the CIP as he feels this is important considering what we went through last year with bringing in the portable boiler and the fact that we don't need a redundancy. He stated at the last board meeting he talked about issues that having the potential to close doors at a building, needs to be a high priority. He feels that this does have the potential to close the doors to the building if not addressed.

Mrs. Tomai asked what the cost was for the portable boiler. Mr. Barlow stated the cost was about \$82K out of pocket and we were reimbursed \$63K.

Mr. Barlow then discussed the High School roof. He spoke at the last board meeting that this number is a large number and one of the reasons is because it is so bad that there is a fair amount of insulation that needs to be replaced. He talked about a nuclear testing. A company out of VT will come and map out where all the wet spots are and where we would have to remove and replace insulation. We don't want to do this now because this money will not get approved until April and at that point we can start non-priority grant from the State which will give us a 35% reimbursement on the total number. So on \$4.3M we would get the 35% reimbursement of the eligible costs back through that grant. The requirement of the grant is that we would have to meet current R-value standards of the State which is R30 right now. We would have to replace the insulation that is bad and increase the level of insulation which will be sustainable and help with energy costs. The \$4.3M is an estimated number from a roofing manufacturer.

Mrs. Tomai asked if that included the additional insulation that is required and Mr. Barlow stated yes.

Mrs. Plante asked if it was the full roof of the whole building. Mr. Barlow said no it is everything except the gym, the roof over pool and roof over F-wing.

Mr. Barlow talked about an ADA study in year 26-27 which will look at accessibility at the MS and HAW. Mr. Barlow said that Reed has the original carpeting of 30,000 sq ft. This was affected by the flood. He had a cleaning company come in to clean the carpet and dried everything out and it ended up really clean and everyone was happy with the outcome of that.

He mentioned he shifted some things as placeholders out to years 7, 8 and 9. The CIP is somewhat driven off of the facility study at this time and there are bigger discussions to be had down the road such as interior renovations which is a huge category.

The committee talked about 'new' vs a renovation and the difference in the % reimbursement and how the state views each from a space calculation aspect and that they also look from a financial perspective and not an education perspective. He stated there needs to be bigger conversations about what we are going to do with our buildings going forward.

Mr. Barlow talked about the facility study and that he received the corrected drafts back and has gone through them. He has another follow up meeting and then he should have final drafts. He is hoping that at the final meeting they will be able to dial in the functionality piece as to how our space is used. The next driver is for the Superintendent to look at the data and information and maybe as a group we can start to talk about some short term discussion and long term discussions.

Mrs. Uberti stated the facility study was driven out of a discussion on whether or not to do the HVAC project at the Middle School.

Mr. Barlow also stated the facility conditions assessment is only looking at the conditions that exist right now, not what we might put into the building or what we want to do. He further stated right now the facility study with the Middle School is looking at \$30M in repairs. If you add HVAC to that which was estimated at \$20-25M that is a lot of money.

Mrs. Uberti stated if you are at that place then maybe you want to talk about a renovation and that is where the bigger conversation comes in.

Mr. Barlow asked for an executive summary of the entire facility study per building and simplified to make it understandable with the numbers and priorities.

Approval of Amended BOE CFF Sub Committee Meeting Schedule

Mrs. Tomai asked for a motion to approve the Amended BoE CFF Sub Committee meeting schedule for the remaining 2024. Mrs. Plante moved the motion. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. All in favor.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ADJOURNMENT: Mrs. Tomai made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

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

