

**Newtown Board of Education
CFF Sub-Committee Minutes
April 23, 2024, 6:00 PM
BOE Conference Room**

PRESENT: Shannon Tomai, Alison Plante, Brian Leonardi, Christopher Melillo, Tanja Gouveia (Vadas), John Barlow, Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance, Jill Soderholm, Legislative Council

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Plante called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

BUSINESS: Approval of BOE CFF minutes of March 19, 2024. Mrs. Plante tabled the motion to the end of the meeting due to a Board member arriving late.

NEW BUSINESS:

Financial Report and Transfers

Ms. Gouveia presented the March financial report. We have a new projected balance of \$401,759 which is a slight increase from last month by \$35,638. She stated the majority of changes came from Other Purchased Services and Supplies.

She stated with certified staff there was not much in change with a \$9,100 difference from last month. With non-certified staff we had a decrease in the balance of -\$43,390 with the majority of that coming from our custodial maintenance staff and special education special services staff. We adjusted for a new hire at HOM. We also adjusted for custodial overtime which has been high in this area. She stated we have had some custodians out on leave and we recently hired a custodial sub at the Middle school. This sub is here to try and mitigate or offset some of the overtime.

Mr. Barlow stated we currently have two custodians out on workman's comp for most of the year. The sub gives us more cleaning hours at a slightly less price as we are not paying for overtime for the hours the sub works. Contractually custodians are given 3 hours of time and a half of overtime to make up for the absence of a person.

Ms. Gouveia stated the account is running in the red by about \$20K.

Mr. Leonardi asked for a brief description and understanding of the financial report information which Ms. Gouveia provided.

Ms. Gouveia stated the non-certified staff account budget driver is still our Paraeducators. We currently have a \$152K balance. She stated we are down to about 10 positions that still need to be filled.

Mr. Leonardi asked about budget analysis at year end. Ms. Gouveia explained the year end process.

Ms. Gouveia stated employee benefits are still seeing a deficit of -\$34K due to unemployment costs which came in higher than projected.

Professional services which includes our SLP services reflects two teachers that are out so we have had to contract outside services to cover for those teachers which are projected to be out for the end of the year.

In Purchase property services we have a \$20K balance in bldg & grounds which has emerged due to the Director of Facilities being able to collapse some of these services and do some of the work in house. Equipment repairs now shows a new negative balance that could wash out in April.

Ms. Gouveia stated within Other Purchase Services she talked about the following sub accounts. In contracted services we had to encumber an additional \$35K for our Behavioral Techs due to 4-5 unfilled positions which are required by students IEP, therefore, we have to bring these positions in from an outside service. As a year to date update, this year we have spent \$140K using grant dollars and \$120K from the general fund.

Mrs. Plante asked how it compares to last year and Ms. Gouveia stated last year we spent about \$360K.

Mrs. Tomai joined the meeting at 6:20pm.

In transportation services which currently have a deficit of -\$85K due to two families displaced and a student who was outplaced.

Insurance-Property & Liability is showing a savings of \$10K. She stated kudos goes to our Director of Technology who has been locking down on some of our cyber security protocols and putting new security processes into place.

Mr. Leonardi asked for an explanation of what is out-of-district tuition.

Ms. Gouveia stated Tuition - out-of-district is the cost for all of our students who are outplaced to places that have services that are not provided in Newtown. This is a big driver in our budget and is usually a deficit during this time of year. This budget is over \$4M. This includes the excess cost grant which is a state grant that provides some funding. It's a reimbursement of 4.5 times the number of per pupil expenditure. The last projection update from the state on 3/1/24 came in at 66.71% reimbursement. We have lost from the original grant projection of about \$77K based on the state not being able to fund this.

The discussion continued regarding the excess cost grant and types of services and programs that are needed for students.

Ms. Gouveia continued with the financial report and talked about the supply account. She stated there are some sizable balances in this account. In plant supplies, our Director of Facilities was able to find some new vendors with lower costs which then enabled us to close out some purchase orders that were put in place earlier this year.

In the electric account the virtual net metering continues to provide us credits from energy off of the grid with a projected balance of \$120K. She stated next year we may not see a balance.

Mr. Leonardi asked if we shop for energy electric providers. Ms. Gouveia stated yes and is in-house.

In the sub-object of fuel for vehicles we received our excise tax credit which is a federal credit for use of alternative fuel for buses. The credit came in at \$76,833 which was projected.

Ms. Gouveia stated there was nothing to report in property or miscellaneous.

Transportation Update

Ms. Gouveia stated there was nothing much to report and everything was running smoothly. She stated we have spares and drivers and we will be meeting with All-Star to talk about summer routes with needs and expectations.

She stated athletic transportation is doing great. She said as of last year at this time we had run 292 trips and this year we have done 291 runs. All-Star has done 75% of the trips this year vs last year when they only ran 42% of the athletic trips. There is a difference in savings of \$40K.

Mrs. Tomai asked if the athletic trips were included in what we are already paying them.

Ms. Gouveia stated it is not included in the main contract but is included in the sports budget. The costs are cheaper than hiring out.

Mrs. Plante asked about the gap between All-Star providing 75% of the athletic runs vs the 100% of all the athletic runs.

Ms. Gouveia stated it had to do with staffing in that earlier in the fall school year All-Star was not fully staffed.

Mr. Leonardi asked about our agreement and service levels.

Ms. Gouveia talked about certain clauses that are stated in the contract.

Facilities Update

Mr. Barlow did a recap. He stated the NMS boiler was installed into the bldg last week and was hooked up and running. The portable boiler will be removed. There are still issues that need to be addressed and the issues will come to light with the facility study.

Mrs. Plante asked after the warranty payment how much did the temp boiler cost us

Mr. Barlow stated two months of payments. Month #1 was \$15K and month #2 was \$9,800.

Mrs. Plante asked if that included the fuel. Mr. Barlow stated no that was separate. Ms. Gouveia stated that she does not know the final cost right now as it comes from the town in the quarterly report.

Mrs. Plante stated the cost of the temp boiler/oil was covered by insurance/warranty. Mr. Barlow stated the only thing covered under insurance was the replacement of the entire boiler which was \$63K for the piece of equipment. Once the rep comes out to do the official inspection and an official start up then they will start the process of issuing a check back to us.

Mr. Leonardi asked about the new equipment and if it is covered by a new warranty. Mr. Barlow stated yes.

Mr. Barlow stated at HOM new condensers were put on the roof and that there is enough money left in the project. He met with the Director of Finance with the Town and there was enough money in the project to do some leak work to determine where the leaks were in the system and the repairs for those leaks are all being funded out of the project and will still leave a balance in the project of over \$100K.

Mr. Barlow stated the RTU's at Hawley were installed. They are currently wired and running. There is some work that has to happen from the building automation company to make the heat pumps the primary source of

heat. He stated he signed all of the LOA's with the power company for \$85K reimbursement. That money came out of the contingency fund for the Hawley school which will leave about \$150K balance. That project was quoted at \$800K and we did it for \$150K.

Mrs. Tomai stated that Mr. Barlow was full of a lot of good news tonight.

Mr. Barlow stated the air handling units for NHS were installed. He said the heating system is back on. There were some control issues due to updating the BMS system and everything is up and running.

He talked about the greenhouse at the NHS. The seed system is all completed. They were able to locate and pull all of the network cables up to the greenhouse. The seed computer will be networked and the new generator will be installed soon.

Mr. Barlow talked about the maintenance dept working at the high school in the weight room off the boys locker room. They relocated some of the squat racks and made it a more usable space and installed a new floor.

The roof at the high school is holding it's own. They found two small splits in the b-wing roof which they took care of right away. They also found another split on the c-wing roof. They are working to stay ahead of these issues.

Mr. Barlow stated that the Park & Rec Dept. went out for a bid on lawn maintenance. What was always an extra in the bid was the courtyard at Middle Gate and Reed and the garden in front of Sandy Hook school. These extras were put into the bid as an add alternate and the price came back at \$24,600. It is way more money than we are currently spending. Mr. Barlow stated to Park & Rec that he did not want these areas included in the bid and that he would go out on his own and try and get a better price. Mr. Barlow stated he would be putting an RFP out.

He stated we are out to RFP for the Reed lights on the stage and the Reed Chiller.

Mr. Barlow stated our issues with cooling will be the Middle School and Middle Gate.

Mrs. Plante asked about the landscaping in the Reed courtyard and if we have to air lift equipment in there to clean out the area. Mr. Barlow stated that is a different project which we put in the projects budget and the LC/BOF took those out and put them into capital non-occurring as a project moving forward provided that everything gets approved and voted for. This summer we would bring a crane in to move some equipment into the courtyard to make the area more manageable.

Mr. Barlow mentioned about the Sandy Hook school and that the garden was originally set up to be an aquatic garden and there is a cistern tank sitting there for that purpose that is not in use. He stated this topic should be up for discussion.

Middle Gate Recess Field

Mrs. Plante stated she received an email regarding the recess field at middle gate school with the field being rocky.

Mr. Barlow stated he needs to talk with the principal as there is a beautiful field up top but they cannot use that field due to it being unsupervised. In order to get the field fixed it would have to be shut down and the summertime is not the best time to grow grass due to the heat. He stated if they could move the kids to the top field he could probably get something done to the rocky field and work with the PTA on this.

Mrs. Plante is concerned over a safety issue of this field with the students playing on it. She stated it is a worth-while investment.

Mr. Barlow stated he would have a deeper conversation with the principal regarding this and see if some sort of plan can happen.

Superintendent's Update:

Mr. Melillo stated he would give an update at the full Board meeting.

BUSINESS: Mrs. Tomai made a motion to approve the minutes of March 19, 2024. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passes to approve the CFF minutes of March 19, 2024.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs, Tomai made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

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

Newtown Board of Education
CIP/Facilities/Finance (CFF) Sub-Committee Minutes
March 19, 2024, 6:00 pm
BOE Conference Room

PRESENT: Shannon Tomai, Alison Plante, Christopher Melillo, John Barlow, Tanja Vadas, Steve Goodrige (Board of Finance)

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Tomai called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

BUSINESS: Mrs. Plante made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2024. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passes to approve the CFF minutes of January 11, 2024.

NEW BUSINESS:

Financial Report and Transfers:

Ms. Vadas presented the financial report for February 2024. She stated that the year end projected balance is \$366,121 which is down approximately -\$42,000. The majority of this reduction has come from the non-certified staff salaries. Newtown has hired at least ten para educators in the past month. The overall balance in this object is showing a negative balance of -\$37,865. This is due to the higher than usual unemployment costs, now showing a negative balance of -\$40,881. However, we are beginning to see a small balance emerge from our medical line which has to do with our long-term disability costs coming in lower than anticipated.

Ms. Vadas continued by stating that professional services has changed due to hiring two SLP's from an outside service to cover for two teachers who are currently on leave as well as a 1:1 nurse for a student. These two services were detailed in last month's report and a transfer of \$22,000 was requested.

Ms. Tomai asked if this outside service was similar to the previous service for BT's.

Ms. Vadas said that there were 10-12 BT's hired last year and the service charged around \$60/hr.

There are only two SLP's from this outside service.

Mrs. Plante asked if these positions are required because of an IEP.

Ms. Vadas answered that the only position that is required by an IEP is the 1:1 nurse.

Ms. Vadas reported that the purchased property services account does not have a balance projected at this time. There have been issues at the middle school and high school but the offset in this account is that the other schools are coming under budget. Behind this line item, Ms.

Vadas stated that there are ten different accounts, some with surpluses. Ms. Vadas said that they will start to look at the encumbrances in March and April.

Transportation Update:

Ms. Vadas reported that they are experiencing a deficit in the transportation account. There are currently additional costs in both in-district and out of district line items. Currently, there are two families that have been displaced and temporarily located in New Milford and Roxbury. The additional costs could be as high as \$80,000, sending the in-district transportation account into the red by \$40,000. In the out-of district account, there is an estimated cost of around \$30,000. There is now a deficit of \$72,000 in this account.

Ms. Tomai asked if the district could hire someone to transport the students.

Ms. Vadas answered that the vehicles have to be certified and need an endorsement. However, the parent can drive the student and the district will reimburse the mileage.

Facilities Update:

Mr. Barlow reported that the Newtown Middle School boiler's rental period for the first month was up on March 15th. We are now in the second month, however, Triple A Boiler said that they would prorate the cost once the boiler is returned. The new boiler will be brand new but the labor and installation is not warranted. The plan is to rig it into the building next week and potentially run on the boiler by the end of the month. There will be incidental costs for the removal of the old and installation of the new unit totalling approximately \$20,000.

Ms. Tomai asked why the installation is not covered by warranty.

Mr. Barlow said it was out of the warranty period.

Mr. Barlow said that seven years ago, ABS subcontracted the installation to a contractor out of Manchester, CT and was poorly installed. There were a number of issues from the beginning. Mr. Barlow spoke with his predecessors and they both agreed. Unfortunately, they did obtain a building permit so there is no recourse.

Ms. Tomai asked how many boilers are being delivered and what the warranty is.

Mr. Barlow said Newtown will be receiving one new boiler and the warranty is the same as the existing warranty (10 years).

Ms. Vadas stated that all of the costs associated with the boiler and fire panel are in the report.

Mr. Barlow reported that they interviewed a potential company for the facilities study. The interview lasted about 2.5 hours and was very informative. Newtown received three bids, however, only one provided all the necessary documentation and came within the budget. The

potential company is Bureau Veritas. They are data driven and provided Mr. Barlow with previous schools that they have worked with. The reviews on them have been very positive. Ms. Tomai noted that their job is not to be the architect or designer but to conduct the study. She was not concerned about the license. She found it to be a non issue.

Mr. Barlow said that there was some confusion in the meeting because some members of the committee thought there would be a much deeper engineering dive into the systems. In fact, it will be more of an overview. They said they can provide a maintenance schedule as well as barcoding all of the equipment. These options will cost an extra \$29,000. The original bid was \$63,000 so this will still leave us with \$30,000 for anything that they find and we decide to take a deeper dive into.

Ms. Tomai noted that they said that their estimates, for purposes of cap end spending, are within 15%-20% of what the actual cost is for clients.

Mrs. Plante asked when they would start.

Mr. Barlow said they would start within two weeks after the signing of the contract. The study will take around 12 weeks to complete.

Mr. Barlow reported that the high school has been experiencing leaks in the roof. It is a no bonding year but a new roof will be included in the CIP because it is important to make repairs on the existing roof as soon as possible. The best option is to have a semi-permanent membrane that can be used until a new roof can be installed. The total costs year to date to repair the roof has been \$33,000.

Superintendent's Update:

Mr. Melillo did not have an update.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Plante moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Tomai seconds the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

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