

Newtown Public Schools
BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub Committee Special Meeting
Agenda
January 12, 2023 - 6:00pm
BOE Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

BUSINESS

Item 1 Approval of BOE CFF/CIP Minutes of December 15, 2022

NEW BUSINESS

- Transportation Update
- Hawley HVAC Update
- Facilities Update
 - Middle Gate Playground
- Update on current and upcoming grants
- Financial Report and transfers
- 2023 CFF sub-committee meeting schedule
- Superintendent update

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

Newtown Board of Education
BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Minutes
December 15, 2022 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mrs. Larkin called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

Participants: Deborra Zukowski, Alison Plante, Chris Melillo, Superintendent, Angela Walsh, Asst. Dir of Business, Ed Schierloh, Board of Selectman, Phil Carroll, Legislative Council, Steve Goodrich Board of Finance, Absent: Bob Gerbert, Tanja Vadas

Item 1: Approval of November 10, 2022 Minutes

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to approve the BOE CFF/CIP Minutes of November 10, 2022

Ms. Zukowski moved the motion. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion.

All in favor, motion passes to approve the BOE CFF/CIP minutes of November 10, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Sub-committee Description

Mrs. Larkin presented an outlined update to the CP/Facilities/Finance Committee responsibilities. She stated in the last meeting they discussed adding into the roles and responsibilities an additional statement on oversight of contracts. The statement specifies to provide an oversight of contracts totaling \$50K or more over the duration of the contract, which would include reviewing the terms and conditions for the RFP (Request For Proposal).

Ms. Zukowski stated in early review, Mr. Melillo and Mrs. Vadas agreed with the subcommittee on what was captured in the update and now the question to this board is how much of a dollar amount do they want to add to this statement. She stated initially she proposed the amount should be comparable to what we do for the CIPs as that seems to be a trigger point at \$200K for the duration of the contract or the sum of all years. She said we currently have a policy that makes a distinction at \$50K. She thought the discussion tonight would make the dollar amount clearer. She said this committee could discuss the amount of \$50K or \$200K or somewhere in between.

Ms. Zukowski said we would agree here and then recommend to the Board. She said we could talk about the two triggers with the board so that they are aware which would base their discussion.

Mrs. Plante asked how relevant is the CIP trigger which is more capital projects, whereas projects through the subcommittee are more operating contracts.

Ms. Zukowski stated with the CIP, the \$200K point is where we need to have extra vigilance with the town when they need to go over the \$200K.

Mr. Melillo stated the only concern around the discussion was around the timing. He said we don't want to be in a position when we need to move forward with a contract and then have to wait for a board meeting to get the process through.

Mrs. Plante said she would lean towards what the decision is with Mr. Gerbert and Mrs. Vadas feel is the correct cutoff and said she would personally lean more towards the \$200K because she worries there are many \$50K contracts at that level that would slow down the processes. Ms. Zukowski stated she shares that concern as well.

Mr. Shierloh read the current policy and stated the \$50K was already there.

Ms. Zukowski stated what we are adding is that the committee would get to see the terms and conditions of the request for proposal. In the past it has only been once we get the bids the committee was able to review who actually bid and then make a recommendation. She said the bids were after the fact. She did add reviewing the conditions in terms will make the bid process longer.

Mr. Carroll stated after seeing what happened with the bus contract he would strongly suggest that the subcommittee review the terms and conditions of the bids that would apply.

Mrs. Plante stated that this would get caught in the higher threshold.

Ms. Plante stated that it makes sense for the \$200K level for this committee versus the \$50K as that will just create delays.

Ms. Larkin stated she agrees and said the subcommittee meets once a month and she would not want to see this meeting overtaken with minutia contracts. She would agree on the \$200K.

Mr. Goodrich stated he does not have a problem with the \$200K and that it covers most of the majority of the things that the committee would want to look at.

Mrs. Plante stated #2C which was an addition on the CIP/Facilities responsibilities feels like it already captures what the subcommittee is currently doing now.

Ms. Zukowski stated at this point, that is essentially what we are doing now with Hawley. She did not recreate the ad-hoc committee that we have for the Hawley HVAC as in reality it was the CFF committee that was the ad-hoc. That is why you see the HVAC update on every single agenda for the CFF committee.

The subcommittee agreed to change the amount to \$200K.

Mrs. Larkin stated this is now in Ms. Zukowski's hands.

Ms. Zukowski agreed and stated the CFF/CIP meetings would continue with 6:00pm before the 2nd board meeting of the month in terms of timing. Mrs. Larkin agreed.

Mrs. Larkin stated she would provide a CFF meeting calendar for 2023 year by the end of January.

Ms. Zukowski asked everyone who is in this meeting now if they are happy to continue to be on the committee. There were no objections.

Mrs. Larkin wanted to know about other town board member liasons and when they attend our meetings if they bring information that is talked about back to the other boards. She thought the focus was to keep other boards apprised as to what we do in this committee so that everyone feels in the loop and asked if it has been working for them.

Mr. Goodrich stated he does pass on information as it pertains. Mrs. Larkin stated we expanded it for more transparency throughout the year rather than just budget time.

Mrs. Larkin stated she wanted to add that the other boards coming are not just for their benefit but for the subcommittee's benefit as well. She said it is good to have representation to have that dialogue.

Transportation Update

Mr. Melillo stated the bus company is fully staffed and that includes a dispatcher who is a driver. We have one driver who will be testing on January 3rd, and should be ready for the road after that. One started training last week and will be ready in February. All-Star is considering reinstating their referral bonus to coincide with outcome training class of January 17th. He stated we will be sending out more flyers which includes a Superintendent newsletter on 12/23 to promote training classes. The Superintendent's office is considering a round of sign on-bonuses to coincide with the January training class. First round could include a \$2k sign on and could consider the same amount up to \$10K which is something he said we can discuss here. He stated it is an investment to sign on drivers. We currently have legal looking at our contract and will prepare a legal opinion for the Board so they can weigh their various options. He further stated, the letter can be presented and discussed in an executive session or we could bring an attorney to the executive session.

Mrs. Plante asked if we could invite legal to an executive session.

Ms. Zukowski said there is something about if the executive session has communication outside of the Board of Ed there could be difficulties in terms of whether it is considered a public meeting or not.

Mr. Melillo said we could have an executive session with our attorney giving us legal advise with the attorney, providing the Board with the information that could be shared.

Mrs. Larkin asked for an update of how many buses we have down since the first of the school year.

Mr. Melillo presented a report of the buses that have been down from September through November.

Mrs. Larkin stated transportation has been on the agenda and there have been buses down and we are seeing more due to illness, drivers or other personal issues. She said we will leave the buses on the agenda for the next few months until we feel good about taking it off the agenda. She said we know there are a lot of variables and as a public school we have an obligation to get our children to school and we want to meet those obligations but there are some factors that are somewhat outside of our control and some within our control.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mr. Melillo if this report was from All-Star. Mr. Melillo stated his report was provided by the Business Office.

Ms. Zukowski questioned about the contract and how it specifies a number of substitutes. She asked if anyone has gone out to talk with other districts to find out how many substitutes they actually have.

Mr. Melillo stated Mrs. Vadas is compiling a list of districts across the state on how many are fully staffed, how many are short, and how many times drivers have called out on runs.

Ms. Zukowski asked if fully staffed meant number of drivers to number of buses. Or does the term fully staffed mean number of drivers plus number of substitutes. She said the reason she is asking is we can all be fully staffed but some districts might have six substitutes.

Mr. Melillo stated the issue we are dealing with is not so much the drivers who have routes its more about the tier system.

The conversation continued around the issues of substitutes and whether or not other districts have them and why we don't.

Ms. Zukowski asked for a number of substitutes across districts to look at.

Mrs. Plante asked if we have any sense how this compares to last year.

Mr. Melillo stated although he was not here last year his reviews were there was a daily occurrence, and those words do not help with people who don't have transportation.

The conversation continued around the accountability of the transportation company.

Ms. Plante stated that the committee hears the sentiment and the next step is to get the legal guidance.

Mr. Shierloch stated he thought the documentation was good but asked to also include the documentation of what legal says is out of the contract.

Mrs. Larkin asked how much has it cost the district to rectify or meet our obligations in charter fees and are we in the negative due to their inability to provide drivers.

Mr. Melillo said we are not in the negative.

Mrs. Larkin then asked if we were paying teachers extra to stay waiting for the sweep buses. Mr. Melillo stated in the morning yes as we decided to have people there when parents drop their children off. In the afternoon we are not paying staff to stay for the sweep buses as people are usually still there.

Ms. Zukowski stated we could add how much money we are accumulating and add in the activities and how much we are paying that should have been covered in the contract.

Mrs. larkin stated there are three things affecting busing right now. Our labor, challenges, our vendor, and our two tier system.

The conversation continued with the two tier system and rates of pay and hours.

Mrs. Larkin stated we have a short term problem and compounding with sickness which you can't control, and if we think we will be in a transportation bind going forward then we would be irresponsible if we don't try and put a long term solution in place.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mr. Melillo if there was anything through his network that can be done to fix this.

Mr. Melillo stated he would reach out to CAPSS.

Mr. Shierloh stated he thought Mr. Melillo & Mrs. Vadas are at a good start and moving in the right direction.

Ms. Larkin stated we will keep this on the agenda for a couple of months and wanted Mr. Melillo to let her know when the committee can start to brain storm some recommendations. She said she did not want to put everything onto him or Mrs. Vadas.

Ms. Zukowski left the meeting at 7pm.

Hawley HVAC Update

Mrs. Larkin stated that Bob Gerbert, Director of Facilities was not available for tonight's meeting but he provided his updates which she would read from.

Updates are attached to these minutes.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mr. Melillo if things were going well.

Mr. Melillo stated all was on budget and on time.

Update on State HVAC Grant, Status and Timeline

Mr. Melillo stated the state came out with an HVAC grant. He stated the problem with the grant is the turnaround time and it would not make it feasible to add a new project such as the Middle school or Middle Gate to get it up to speed. He said the grant does allow for us any previous year past projects which Hawley does fit in. We wrote the grant for it and we will see if we are awarded.

Mrs. Larkin asked if this committee would be the place for grant updates to do periodically throughout the year.

Mr. Melillo stated yes, and we could put it on the agenda and present a report.

Lunch Program Update and Possible Extension

Mrs. Larkin said the free lunches are scheduled to end in January. She said we have a fund setup for only lunch related or equipment related. She stated the free lunches were extended through December and suggested that we extend it through January.

Mr. Melillo stated the balance of the lunch program looks good and the costs to us is \$7K / day. This program is overseen by the FDA. The fund is created through the lunch program. During COVID the reimbursement per meal from the FDA was at a higher rate and every student received free lunch. Therefore we have a surplus. The funds from this can only be spent on food or upgrades to cafeterias. The Federal Food Grant is ending mid December, so we decided to use some of this money to provide free lunches and get families through the MLK holiday.

Mrs. Plante asked what our current balance says. Mrs. Vadas had informed Mr. Melillo that we are in a very good place.

Mrs. Plante stated she would like to know where we are relative to that \$500K fund and what are the opportunity costs and do we need to do improvements in any of our kitchens. She said if we are in a good spot and we do not need updates to any of our kitchens then we should extend the program.

Mr. Melillo talked about 'sharing tables' a program that happened in a previous district he worked at which the program would use leftover food going to food pantries and cutting the costs of trash removal as food scraps would go to a local compost.

Mrs. Larkin stated she would love to see a program like that here.

Mr. Melillo stated meals continue to come in above estimate. He said if the funds are allowed he would like to get a read on how the board feels about subsidized meals. He said our reserve is approximately \$500K. He continued that food service was hit hard with illness. They have done a fabulous job in keeping the lunch lines moving and pitching in to help one another.

He also added that Chartwells decided to start the Mood Boost program after the school break due to illnesses. NHS is having the different chefs and are doing a 'chopped' luncheon where they are making their own soups which the students will vote on.

Mrs. Larkin asked if the funds expire. Mr. Melillo stated he thought they could carry over the \$500k into the next year.

Mr. Melillo also stated there is a window to apply for free & reduced lunch. He thought many families that do qualify have not applied due to the free lunch program. Once this program ends he believes there will be families that will have a hard time.

The sub committee agreed to recommend the extension of the free meals until March 3rd and will continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Goodrich added he thought the extension was a good idea and said we should be looking at if we are going to need new kitchen equipment down the road and to jump ahead of that before the next school year.

Facilities Update

Mrs. Larkin stated Mr. Gerbert included any updates in his handout which is attached to these minutes.

Financial Report and Transfers

Angela Walsh in Mrs. Vadas's absence presented a draft of the financial report. She said the overall year-end balance has increase by \$67,675, bringing our new projection to \$470,021.

She stated during the month of November the work was on tightening anticipated obligations and encumbrances while making adjustments for actual and anticipated expenditures.

She stated our last change over prior month was in certified salaries which has increased by \$134K with a balance of \$640K. Salaries have been a major contributor to our year-end balance.

Object codes in red are employee benefits at \$15k, other purchased services \$275,874.

In certified salaries majority comes from tutors and sublines where we have adjusted these accounts to capture the actuals. We have forecasted our estimated cost of our daily sub activity as well as adjustments to include the pro-rated cost to fill our open building sub positions.

In non-certified we have tightened encumbrances and made adjustments to open positions. This area is driven behind our year end projections and due to unfilled positions found within the unions.

Some of these accounts have been include in our transfer requests.

Benefits are still showing a negative balance of \$15K due to defined contribution plan that was discussed last month. This balance has only changed slightly to prior accounts. We will most likely request a transfer in the upcoming months.

In other purchased services there is a large deficit of \$275K. Contracted services account has not changed much to the prior month. The drive behind the balance is outside services that we had to hire to cover Behavioral Therapists positions.

Transportation still shows a positive balance of \$185K and we have asked for a transfer within the accounts to provide to the increase in contractual costs.

For local SpEd transportation we have asked for a transfer from our local required transportation account to cover the deficit.

The tuition out of district has been adjusted to include up to date information of our outplacements as well as our first estimate of our excess cost grant that was submitted to the state on December 1st. This round included 4 additional outplacements and a variety of other changes. After consideration we estimate an additional \$190,659 in excess cost funding. The Excess Cost Grant reimbursement rate was budgeted for 75% but the actual rate is 70%.

These are the major changes for the month of November.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mr. Melillo regarding staff if there is any end in sight for contracted services.

Mr. Melillo stated we have positions that just can't be filled. We have paraprofessionals, behavioral therapists, lunch workers unfilled.

She then asked how many of those positions are we actually contracting to a third party.

Mr. Melillo stated mainly therapists and in some cases a position that we don't have in the district.

He said the problem is supply and demand and there is a lot of demand at this time so you are paying top dollar.

Mrs. Walsh then talked about the requested transfers.

Requesting transfers totaling \$524,301. In account 100 they are requesting a transfer of \$84,481 of certified and non-certified salary accounts which would cover teacher reassignments, certified salary adjustments, salary for ELL tutors, and academic resource tutors. \$136,275 to cover increased hours to a float nurse, realignment of nurses salaries, overages in salary plus for summer school program, teachers previously paid curriculum rate, MOU in place of pay per diem rate and B&G salary adjustments. \$70,841 to cover increase in the contractual hourly rate of paraeducators, \$12,626 from benefits to other purchased services, transferring balances in workers comp to cover overage LAP policy. Both policies are under CIRMA. Workers comp came in less than anticipated and vis-versa for LAP. \$126,578 all in other purchased services transferring from local transportation to cover the increase in cost per the contract in local SpEd transportation. \$93,500 in supplies accounts, \$53,500 from electricity to cover increase in cost and oil mostly at HOM, and \$40,000 from electricity to cover increase costs in natural gas heating all of the schools.

Superintendent Update

Mr. Melillo stated we have some significant budget hurdles that we are addressing to our budget process that he wanted the committee to be aware of. He stated we have a \$950K Esser grant that is ending this year that was addressing learning loss. He stated learning loss will still be there when the grant ends. We

also have an unfunded reading mandate that we have to account for, there are contractual increases, along with increases in utilities that we are looking at and inflation that is impacting some of our services. With that he stated he would be coming in with a budget that is going to meet the needs of our schools while being cognizant of the fact that our community can't bear the weight of all of this. He stated he is trying to find the happy medium of meeting the needs of our students and meeting the needs of our community. He said we are trying to come in the tag line of protecting the instructional core, the instruction of our students, and to look at ancillary cuts that need to be made in order to come in with a number that is doable.

He stated we have had the Esser grants and other grants that have floated us for a while. We are working on our end to do what is right and hopefully will come in with something we can work together to make happen.

Mr. Shierloh asked if it was more than one unfunded mandate.

Mr. Melillo stated we always have lots of unfunded mandates but the large one we are looking at and may try to use any surplus from this year's budget. He stated the legislature passed a bill that says all districts need to buy one of six reading programs which would be in place next year. That is estimated somewhere between \$400-\$700K. He stated he is for this program as he feels our students need a program that would help them to be better readers. The issue is a short turn around time. He stated if a timeline was in place and money attached to it we would be in a better place. We are keeping track of this year's budget as it means to help supplement that program so it won't be a heavy lift moving forward.

He said one of the main drivers that districts have leaned on in the last 5 years is the decrease in enrollment, and COVID has changed the patterns of our residents in CT. NESDEC has provided a enrollment study which indicates our enrollment will rise over time.

Mrs. Larkin commented that regardless with what we end up with we are charged with what to do which is to deliver the best education possible within the budget that we have.

Public Participation

None.

Adjournment

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:40

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne Morris

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

December 15, 2022

Hawley Elementary School – Air Quality Improvements EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Budget:

The GMP Established for the project is \$7,491,086.00 as approved by the Town of Newtown. Revisions to the GMP and the Construction Managers Contingency are summarized below.

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Approved GMP: | \$7,491,086.00 |
| ▪ Approved Owner Change Orders: | <u>\$51,032.00</u> |
| Total Revised GMP: | \$7,542,118.00 |
| ▪ Pending Change Order Proposals: | <u>\$61,586.00</u> |
| Total Projected Final GMP | \$7,603,704.00 |
| | |
| Construction Managers Construction Contingency | \$212,865.00 |
| ▪ Approved Change Order Proposals | <u>\$11,204.00</u> |
| Remaining Contingency | \$201,661.00 |
| ▪ Pending Change Order Proposals | <u>\$13,877.00</u> |
| Projected Contingency Balance | \$187,784.00 |
| | |
| Owner's Contingency | \$350,000.00 |
| ▪ Approved Change Order | <u>\$51,032.00</u> |
| Remaining Contingency | \$298,968.00 |
| ▪ Pending Change Order Proposals | <u>\$61,586.00</u> |
| Projected Contingency Balance | \$237,382.00 |

Schedule Update:

Mechanical piping, ductwork, plumbing and electrical rough installation is ongoing. MEP rough installation has moved from Areas A/B to Area C all levels. Roofing at the C1 roof is complete. The remaining RTUs and Indoor AHUs are scheduled to ship to the job site in January. Structural steel at the Area C attic is complete, demolition and new framing at the dormers will begin in December and continue into January to allow for the rigging and placement of the Indoor AHUs. There is no change in status of the switchgear ship date in May 2023. Downes is pursuing a startup of the new HVAC equipment using the existing power and is in the process of reviewing with the subcontractors and design team.

90 Day Look Ahead

Activities for December 2022:

- MEFP Rough Installation Area C
- Insulation
- Drywall at Shafts
- RTU Shipment
- Demolition at Dormers

Activities for January 2022:

- MEFP Rough Installation Area C
- Insulation
- Ceiling Grid
- RTU Delivery
- Indoor AHU Shipment and Delivery at Area C Attic

Activities for February 2022:

- Indoor AHU Shipment and Delivery at Area C Attic
- MEFP Rough Installation Area C Attic
- RTU Delivery
- Insulation
- Painting
- Ceiling Grid
- Lighting
- Registers, Grilles and Diffusers

Critical Items:

- Electrical Switch Gear Procurement