

Newtown Board of Education
BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Minutes
January 12, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mrs. Larkin called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Participants: Jennifer Larkin, Deborra Zukowski, Alison Plante, Chris Melillo, Superintendent, Tanja Vadas, Dir. of Business, Bob Gerbert, Dir. Of Operations, Ed Schierloh, Board of Selectman, William DeRosa, Legislative Council, Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

Due to the Superintendent's schedule any Superintendent updates will be part of the current discussions.

Item 1: Approval of December 15, 2022 Minutes

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to approve the BOE CFF/CIP Minutes of December 15, 2022

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

All in favor, motion passes to approve the BOE CFF/CIP minutes of December 15, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

Transportation Update

Mrs. Vadas presented updates from All-Star pertaining to drivers and things that are in the queue. There is a new driver that started who is fully licensed and will be driving bus 27. She stated bus 14 has had some COVID and illness issues. The driver is back but Mrs. Vadas was not sure on the PM run for that bus. For bus 11, the driver has been very sick and Mrs. Vadas is not sure how long the driver will be out. She stated All-Star has been trying to pull drivers from other yards.

She stated that the good news is on January 17th, 4 people will be starting the class and if everything goes well and they get through the entire process we could have 4 new drivers by March 1st.

Ms. Zukowski asked if those drivers would be getting the full incentive package to join. Mrs. Vadas stated they would not get the bus driver bonus as the bonus was a one-time longevity payment for drivers that were coming back. It was also for new drivers who signed on before September 1st which was at the discretion of All-Star as they did not want to leave this bonus open-ended. She did state that All-Star was looking at their referral bonus program.

There was discussion around the bonus retention program and clarification of who was to receive the retention bonus and the time frame of new drivers starting.

Mrs. Vadas stated up until September if they signed up for the class they were considered a new driver.

Mrs. Larkin stated we are still having a problem attracting new drivers.

Mrs. Vadas asked the committee if they would like All-Star to go farther and with anyone who signs up would get a sign-on bonus. She stated we could offer it to All-Star but it is up to them for the decision because they have contracts and unions to deal with.

The committee further discussed the contract and service.

Ms. Zukowski stated she would like to see a list up to the month of December of what All-Star has done to encourage new drivers to come in.

Mrs. Vadas stated All-Star was against leaving the bonus retention open ended due to operational reasons.

Mrs. Larkin then asked about bus 38 and 22.

Mrs. Vadas stated one of the drivers had to be let go. She stated All-Star has been pulling from other yards to cover bus 38.

Mr. Melillo stated they do not have a driver for 38 at this time. He further stated that if someone walks out then it becomes a 6-8 wk turnaround to get a new driver.

Mrs. Larkin stated she was trying to get a feel for what buses are currently open.

Mrs. Vadas stated bus 27 was open and was filled.

Mrs. Larkin asked about what they are doing for the families of bus 38. Mrs. Vadas stated she would look further but thought they were pulling drivers to make it work.

Mr Melillo stated we are offering our coaches the opportunity to get the public passenger endorsement so they can drive vans for our athletics.

Mrs. Larkin asked if there was anyone taking up on that endorsement.

Mr. Melillo stated yes, and we are paying them to do it.

Mrs. Larkin asked what was involved to get the endorsement.

Mrs. Vadas stated it takes about 3 weeks.

Mrs. Larkin stated she would like to know the timeline of when we will see this initiative.

Mr. Shierloh stated it could take a while to get the results of fingerprints back.

Mrs. Plante asked how large of a van are we talking.

Mrs. Vadas stated an 8 passenger van.

Mrs. Larkin asked where are we getting the vans from.

Mrs. Vadas stated they are our vans that we use for the NCP program so when they are not using them we can.

Mr. Melillo stated he reached out to Fran Rabinowitz to ask if she could enquire within her network and also push in Hartford as we are not the only district dealing with these issues. He stated she will be the advocate for Hartford. He also talked with the Commissioner of Education, Charlene Russell-Tucker, and she is going to connect him with Eric Scoville who is the Director of Communications and follow-up with him on transportation partners who may be available to help us out. He further stated he called in a favor to a friend who is the Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, and spoke with him and wanted to know if the shuttle government is getting involved with this as it is across the country. He stated that the only thing they have done so far is relaxing the CDL license requirements by taking the 'under the hood' off the table which is part of the licensing. He stated our Purchasing Director is working on a RFP (Request for Proposal) for our athletic teams we could guarantee transportation for our athletics and we also have a vendor in house that we could leverage.

Mrs. Vadas did state that if we go out for another RFP for the athletics we will have to amend the current All-Star contract and amend that scope of work.

Ms. Zukowski stated if we have another contract that states it all yours to bus company B then we have to say to All-Star you don't have any hope of getting any runs and take that out.

Mrs. Larkin asked if they have to agree to that.

Mrs. Vadas stated a conversation has to happen with All-Star.

Mrs. Vadas stated we do not have the drivers for out-of-district right now.

The conversation continued around the contract, costs.

Mrs. Plante asked for a Point of Order as the conversation was veering elsewhere.

Mr. Melillo stated he investigated some outside solutions such as 'ride share' but ride share works more for urban areas. He stated we would be sending a survey out to families because we have families that are choosing to drop off and pick up their children at school and he wants to see if they would choose to take their kids off the bus and thus we could consolidate routes and run with a leaner force.

He stated he reached out to the American Legion to see if there are any veterans with CDL licenses that would be interested in stepping up to drive a bus. He also stated he also sent letters of support to Tony Wong and Mitch Belinski to do their work in Hartford to push as this is not just a Newtown issue but a statewide issue. He stated other states such as the Governor of Massachusetts used the National Guard to drive school buses and he would like to see some help from Hartford with this as it is not only Newtown but again a state issue.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the number of buses and the number of routes and what was being done about the buses that seem to be absent the most.

Mr. Melillo stated there is language in the bus drivers' union contract regarding additional work and driving additional buses.

Mr. Shierloh stated what could really help us temporarily is the survey and if All-Star could do another ridership of how many students are on the buses. He stated we could possibly temporarily cut two buses in the morning. He stated with Mr. Melillo's survey and re-do the routes and get all-star to agree to drop two buses or whatever the number is that would help tremendously.

Mr. Melillo stated we are currently working on the survey and technically he needs to have a seat for each child and if he gets parents' permission to pull kids off because they are driving them.

Mrs. Larkin stated if you are going to drop a bus then you need to do it in both tiers to even the counts.

Mrs. Larkin asked the question regarding setting up a working committee outside of this committee regarding this topic. She stated we only meet once a month with the CFF committee and this topic seems to be taking over the meeting. She stated we need to be dialoging on a more regular basis so that we can work at fixing some of these transportation issues.

Ms. Zukowski recommends that this would be a subcommittee that serves at the pleasure of the Superintendent and we can request certain number of seats for particular slots of positions of people that we might want to have.

Ms. Zukowski asked Mr. Melillo what his thoughts were.

Mr. Melillo stated it makes sense to put a committee together weekly.

Mrs. Larkin stated there is an opportunity to move quickly and she would recommend this and use this CFF committee less as a working committee regarding the transportation.

The discussion continued around who would be on this committee.

Mrs. Larkin stated she would follow up with the Superintendent outside of this meeting and we could put together some frame work.

Mrs. Plante suggested since this is not a board committee them maybe the Superintendent could mention this in his Superintendent updates as a committee to look at this and dialogue.

Ms. Zukowski stated we should at the recommendation of the board at least one board member with substitutes and at least one representative of the town.

Mr. Shierloh then discussed the ridership survey that took place in the past and that bus drivers for the first 2-3 weeks of school would write down how many kids on each bus and how many times they rode the bus. After that period of time the routes would then be adjusted.

The conversation continued around an opt-out waiver and the radius for walkers and buses.

Mrs. Larkin then suggested the committee move forward with the rest of the agenda items.

Hawley HVAC Update

Mr. Gerbert stated Hawley's continuation of the process is as reported. He said everything has been going smooth in terms of schedules and hitting their targets. He stated the focus now is on the C bldg. which is the 21 wing and finishing up the duct work, plumbing, electrical.

He stated in the 48 wing a lot of the stuff is complete in terms of rough work and they have started with the ceiling contractor putting up the ceiling grid, duct work insulation has been pretty much complete.

AVS our control vendor has been using 3-4 man crews in getting controls in place and installed.

He stated the next big push is in the attic of the 21 wing and they have done some preliminary work and eliminated the 3 dog house dormers. They will be getting ready to lift those units in place and finish up with final carpentry. They are expecting the balance of the HVC units to arrive at the end of this month.

Mr. Gerbert stated in terms of budget we are still doing pretty well with contingency both for owner and CM contingency. He stated they are expecting to hit their target and finish by April except for the switch gear which still remains delayed and is expected to show up the later part of May.

Mrs. Larkin asked Mr. Gerbert when it was expected to start moving all of the stuff from Reed back to Hawley.

Mr. Gerbert stated we are still working on the plan and it is all contingent with the last day of school.

Mr. Gerbert stated the move would happen in June.

Facilities Update

Middle Gate Playground

Mr. Gerbert stated there is a sale on the playground equipment which the vendor gave him a pamphlet of what is on sale. In that pamphlet there was equipment that was very similar to what was proposed for Middle Gate and was listed as a \$18K reduction in price. He stated he is waiting for a quote to get the new number and he stated the original quote was initially at \$82K and with the reduction of the \$18K we are looking at around \$60-65K range assuming that other items have not moved up in price.

Mrs. Plante asked how much of that is covered by the district budget vs what we would be asking the PTA to put in.

Mr. Gerbert stated there was \$20K in our operating budget. The Grants Specialist was going to go to the Art Committee to see if any money was available.

Mr. Shierloh stated it was brought up with the Art Committee and the First Selectman was going to communicate with Mr. Gerbert or vice versa.

Mr. DeRosa asked Mr. Gerbert what he expected the anticipated cost to be. Mr. Gerbert stated if no other items have increases then it would be in the \$65K range.

Mr. DeRosa said it seems reasonable. Mr. Gerbert stated the sale prices run through June.

Mrs. Larkin stated this is a slippery slope not to have Middle Gate contribute something. This will give them time to come up with a fund raiser. She would recommend to them to form a fund raising committee for this playground. She further stated she does not believe the Board of Ed should have to pay for the entire cost.

Mrs. Plante said it would be a shame if we lose out in the sale. If we can get \$30K in Art Money and \$20K from district budget that would put \$15K for the PTA.

Mrs. Larkin asked who is communicating with the MG PTA president. Mr. Gerbert stated he is.

Mrs. Zukowski stated she has been in touch with the MG PTA president and will continue communication in regards to the MG PTA contributing to this fund for this playground.

Mrs. Larkin asked when we would see this on the agenda again.

Everyone agreed for next month for more updates.

Mr. Melillo left the meeting at 7:05

Mr. Gerbert then talked about other facility updates. He stated we completed the swap out of roof top units at the High School. We now have our control vendor upgrading all of the controls to the AC units in the A-wing.

He stated the parking lot lights were completed over the thanksgiving break and we are still waiting for 5 fixtures that were back-order. He stated this was for the full parking lot. He stated the lights have a photo-cell which switches off and on based on when the sun goes down and an occupancy center which they can then dim to a lower level if people are moving around.

Ms. Zukowski then asked about the conversation in the past regarding salvaging the coolant. Mr. Gerbert stated they received a delivery of 4-30lb jugs of R22 coolant. So there is 120lbs in reserve. He thought it should have been 190lbs and he is looking into the difference and if we are expecting more to be delivered.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the Chiller since we have the money in our non-lapsing account. Mr. Gerbert stated it is on the CIP plan for year 4 and if there was a desire to do that now he could move it to year 1. He stated what is on the CIP is for 2 chillers and some ancillary control upgrades. Ms. Zukowski stated we have \$120K in our Non-lapsing and if the chillers get put into year 1 then we would start this and asked if that was the plan. Mr. Gerbert stated we can stretch it if we want to leave it in service. He also stated if there was going to be a leak it would have done so by now since the units are 20 years old.

Mrs. Plante then asked about when we would hear on the State HVAC grant.

Mr. Gerbert thought they would be making an announcement in January at some point but he has not heard anything.

Mr. Gerbert left the meeting at 7:16

Update on Current and Upcoming Grants

Mrs. Vadas presented a current list of grants for the 2023-24 school year. She talked briefly about the new grants specialist Judit DeStafano who was previously on the Legislative Council and was hired in October 2022.

The grant list consisted of current and future grants. She stated the IDEA and Title I, and Title II grants are re-occurring grants that come up every year and are entitlement grants. These grants are in our budget and they support staffing and other needs within the schools. She talked about additional grants and grants that are fading out.

Mr. DeRosa asked if there was a committee that decides what grants to write for. Mrs. Vadas stated there is no committee per se, but internally they are decided upon. She stated the grants are specific for their needs.

Ms. Zukowski asked for more of a structure to the spreadsheet of the grants. She requested to Mrs. Larkin that we have a pass on this and discuss it again at the next meeting.

Mrs. Vadas stated she will have the Grant Specialist revise this list to better understand.

Ms. Zukowski stated we have a charter for our legislative council which we have a section that says all grants are to go through the Financial Director for the town which he would do a financial obligation. She further stated we are a line item on the town budget and its up to the school budget how they handle the finances.

Mr. Shierloh stated when we approve the grants the Town Financial Director prepares a budget sheet which would state if there is an additional cost for the town for the grant. He stated most of the time there is not a cost.

Mrs. Larkin stated that is what we need for information in addition to the spreadsheet of grants.

Mrs. Vadas stated she believes that the majority of these grants are funded at 100%.

The discussion continued on how this spreadsheet can be presented with more information to better understand all of the aspects.

Mrs. Plante stated grants are a good thing and we have to be careful that we are not setting ourselves up for obligations that we don't want to be signed up for and we have to be wary about fiscal clips and such.

She further stated she is happy that these grants offset things in the budget and she is happy we have a grant writer who is going out to find these things and providing services that we probably would not have otherwise.

Financial Report and Transfers

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial report for December.

She stated good news over the prior month our balance has only changed with an increase of about \$10K. This month all of the transfers that came through last month were done to try and align our budget.

She stated we still have a big balance in our certified salary accounts. With employee benefits there is a small deficit which is driven by our 401A plan. There is a small balance emerging out of our purchased property services and that is coming mostly from our water and sewer accounts. Other purchased services which contains transportation, contracted services, special education and out-of-district tuition has a large negative number.

She stated, in our supply accounts a good thing that is happening right now is our virtual net metering program which has been booming. This program is offsetting all of our energy costs. She stated we were told not to budget for it because we had no idea what it would produce. She said this year because CLP energy costs are increasing and supply costs are increasing we will probably cap out on our credit. The cap is \$495K but that does not mean it is all of our money, but it is the first year because Eversource is going up on their kilowatt hours. She talked about the formula of how this is calculated. She stated the credit we are receiving on our bills is almost \$0.07 per kilowatt. We use about 8M kilowatts. She stated it was a great program.

Mrs. Vadas stated in our certified salary accounts we have an anticipated negative balance of \$54K with the driver being from the turnover account.

She stated the main driver behind our balance is salaries. She stated pensions are in the hole a little bit with a transfer request in the near future. Professional services are looking good and building and site is looking good with a \$250K balance now which is more than half of the budget for this time of the year. Contracted services will become positive once we revisit the sped grants.

In transportation, we are requesting a transfer of \$68,300 for the balance of the bus driver retention bonuses.

Tuition is holding steady at a negative \$330K.

Mr. DeRosa asked what was the anticipated balance for July.

Mrs. Vadas stated the anticipated forecast is \$439K as of now.

2023 CFF Sub-Committee Meeting Schedule

Mrs. Larkin presented a proposed schedule of future CFF meetings for 2023 and asked if there were any concerns with the dates listed.

The committee discussed a few dates.

Ms. Zukowski moved to accept the calendar of the CFF Mtng schedule for 2023 as presented with amendment with April 17th as a meeting date which is replaced from April 6th.

Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. All in favor.

Public Participation

None.

Adjournment

Mrs. Larkin made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Mrs. Plante moved the motion. Ms. Zukowski seconds the motion. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:50.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

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

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 re-create 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 advice 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

Newtown Public Schools
BOE CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub Committee
2023 Meeting Calendar
BOE Conference Room

January 12, 2023

February 16, 2023

March 16, 2023

April 6, 2023 (this is over spring break)

May 11, 2023

June 15, 2023

July 6, 2023

August 17, 2023

September 14, 2023

October 12, 2023

November 16, 2023

December 14, 2023 (will we have school this day?)

January 11, 2024