



**AVON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Wednesday, December 6, 2017—7:00 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Ken Birk; Deb Chute; Jason Indomenio; Peggy Roell; Jay Spivak; Kathy Zirolli

Member(s) Absent: Jackie Blea; Houston Putnam Lowry; Laura Young

Administration Present: Myles Altimus, Director of Operations; Maggie Dreher, Director of Nutrition Services; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent; David Peling, AHS Principal; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

- I. Call to order
The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair, Deb Chute, at 7:00 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Communications from the public
No comments from the public.
- IV. New Business
 - a. 17-18/82 Proposed 2018-2019 Avon High School Budget
Avon High School principal, David Peling, presented the AHS proposed budget, which includes:
 - Accomplishing goals from strategic plan
 - Create a school culture of respect
 - Attendance – having students in class
 - College & career readiness for all students
 - Instructional practice of engagement & inquiry
 - Consistent communication practices
 - Full time Special Education teacher to allow for increase in co-taught classes and allow for greater specialization support
 - .4 FTE Business teacher to help with the personal finance graduation requirement
 - .2 FTE ELA teacher to restore a cut from last year and improve the ECE offerings
 - .2 FTE Administrator to make the 10 month assistant principal a full year position to help with state reports, summer hiring, handbook revisions, parking permits, review of all district policies and protocols, scheduling, and other preparation for the school year
 - .2 FTE for secretarial support to make full time secretarial support available to the assistant principals during the summer months
 - Textbooks for Personal Finance and Investment course
 - Maintaining the existing programs, staff and facilities

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Spivak expressed his concern with the situation students faced last year with classes of 25 which prevented students from switching classes or changing levels. With funding available, Mr. Spivak would like to ensure the right number of staffing is in place, allowing more classes to avoid the same situation. Mr. Peling responded that the additional FTEs requested, a decrease in enrollment and the data used to forecast what classes are needed will hopefully prevent the situation from occurring.
 - Ms. Zirolli asked for clarification regarding enrollment and if there is a built in withdrawal to the enrollment numbers. Mr. Spivak responded that the projected numbers will decrease over time. Mr. Peling replied yes as to the withdrawals. Ms. Zirolli thanked Mr. Peling for the details regarding movements.
 - Ms. Chute asked Mr. Peling to confirm the number of tutor interventionists as three – Math, ELA and SAC to which Mr. Peling confirmed.
 - Ms. Chute also asked about the increase in funding for graduation. Mr. Peling replied that though he has some graduation ideas; historically graduation has been underfunded and this is a better reflection of past practices.
 - Ms. Chute asked Mr. Peling if he had anything he would like to add to the budget if he could to which Mr. Peling responded that he would wish for security cameras to help with school climate/culture, discipline, attendance and even student achievement. Mr. Altimus added that it is currently in next year's phase 2 portion of the capital budget.
- b. 17-18/85 Proposed 2018-2019 Pupil Services Budget

Director of Pupil Services, Dr, Kimberly Mearman, presented the Pupil Services Department's proposed budget, which includes:

- Continuation of this year's highlights
 - Comprehensive multi-disciplinary approach for supporting students
 - Wilson certification of teachers
 - Increasing a 1 FTE Wilson certified teacher
 - The student support model
 - Training for co-teaching teams
 - Work groups
 - Assistive technology coordinator stipend for primary and one for secondary
 - Transition coordinator stipend
- Out of district tuitions
- Transportation
- Increase 3 year olds' PreK program from 4 days to 5 days a week - .4 FTE para-educator
- Shifting federal grant funded items into the general budget
- Assistive technology
- Transition planning
- Behavioral mental health supports – alternative learning program

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Birk asked if there were further things that can be moved from the federal grant. Dr. Paddyfote replied that Dr. Mearman very wisely selected items that can be purchased and have on hand such as technology equipment and software.
- Ms. Chute expressed her excitement of the return of social workers to the district and asked for clarification regarding the number of social workers that the district will have. Dr. Mearman replied that 1 FTE social worker will be hired to work now to the end of the school year between the high school and preschool program. Another 1 FTE will be hired next year and the splits will be one between the high school and middle school and the other between TBS and preschool.

- Ms. Chute asked if there were anything Dr. Mearman would like to add back to the budget to which Dr. Mearman replied that she felt the budget adequately addresses resources needed and did not have any items to add.
- c. 17-18/86 Proposed 2018-2019 Operations Budget
- Director of Operations, Myles Altimus, presented the Operations Department's proposed budget, which includes:
- Custodial personnel consists of 24 custodians, 5 specialized maintainers, 1.5 transportation/courier. The Security Department includes the Security and Safety Director, 3.5 FTE security guards at the high school
 - Increase of 1 FTE custodian to work at the Central Office, High School and Middle School
 - 3 Summer hires to help with the fields; the Town annually has 5-6 summer hires
 - The rest of the budget shows no increase due to reallocating some savings from utilities into the maintenance, service and supplies

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Zirolli asked about and offered appreciation for the electric plant operations decrease and the natural plant operations staying the same. Mr. Altimus replied it was due to efficiencies and lowering the electric bill due to LED lighting. Ms. Michaud added that the joint effort between the Board and Town resulted in better rates and energy savings.
 - Ms. Chute asked if the non-functioning scoreboards at the schools was something that came out of his budget. Mr. Altimus replied that replacing broken scoreboards is a capital budget item; when items can be fixed the Athletic Department takes care of it.
 - Ms. Chute asked if there was anything he would wish to add to the budget. Mr. Altimus said the budget was sufficient.
- d. 17-18/87 Proposed 2018-2019 Food Services Budget
- Director of Nutritional Services, Maggie Dreher, presented the Nutritional Services Department's proposed budget, which includes:

- A new pilot program to connect with local farmers and increase the offering of local produce from what is already received locally
- Sharing staff who agree to work within the three shared services districts (Avon, Burlington and Canton)
- Sharing and billing out inventory to the other two districts at the end of the year
- Shared training in the three districts
- Nutrislice (meal app) for parents and students was charged as a single district for all three districts
- Standard increases in food costs and labor
- PD has decreased as training will be done in house
- Contracted services line is specific to the Director of Nutrition and her assistant which is divided up according to enrollment between the three districts
- Repairs of equipment

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Chute asked Ms. Dreher to explain how they are independent from the school budget to which Ms. Dreher explained they are a self-supporting budget. Ms. Michaud explained the food program is self-sustaining and was pooled into the Town though it should be handled independently.
- Ms. Chute appreciated the Nutrislice app and asked if the link was readily accessible on the district website to which Ms. Dreher explained it is under the Departments link on the website, Food Services and then Menu.

- Ms. Chute asked if sales were going well. Ms. Dreher replied they were and was amazed at how the little ones were taking more of the fruits and vegetables.
 - Ms. Dreher also commented that the department is in a very good position except for some of the older equipment such as the walk-in refrigerators.
 - Ms. Zirolli thanked Ms. Dreher for the good news on the finances after years of struggle and asked for clarification that PD will be in house as the line shows a zero. Ms. Dreher confirmed that PD will be done in house using the strengths within her staff which builds self-esteem and supports the staff.
- e. 17-18/88 Proposed 2018-2019 Central Office Budget
- Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, presented the Teaching and Learning proposed budget, which includes:

- Continuing with curriculum review and revisions in Business, Technology Education and Library Media curriculum will be revised with STEM
- Maker spaces will be implemented as Library Media Centers are examined
- Social Studies curriculum was embedded in ELA and will be reviewed to ensure it is aligned with standards
- Chinese curriculum in partnership with Confucius Institute
- All curriculum will be reviewed using Understanding by Design with PD to support the process
- Work with the national consultant which will be completed after the next school year
- Teacher on Special Assignment will focus on enrichment for all and will collaborate with the STEM and Library Media Specialist
- Capturing Kids Hearts for the remaining 50 people that need to be trained along with new hires
- Welcoming Walkthroughs to assess the welcoming culture in the district
- Professional development based on either district or school areas of focus; sending staff out to workshops/training
- TEAM which provides new teachers with mentors

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Spivak commented that he is confused as to how teachers were not being provided the textbooks or workbooks they are requesting and asked for confirmation that teachers have the books instead of asking students to purchase them. Dr. Rusack replied that since her time in the district all textbook requests have gone through CPDC for review and then purchased. The district has been clear that we do not use workbooks and instead we have been supporting teachers to do inquiry and project based learning. The accounting course has not yet gone through the review process.
 - Mr. Indomenico asked for an explanation of Welcoming Walkthrough. Dr. Mearman explained it is in collaboration with CREC to assess how welcoming schools are using a committee of staff, parents, students and outside people and then receive recommendations on how to be more welcoming. This will enhance family engagement. Three of the schools have opted to do this; the other two asked for more time to prepare. Ms. Roell, explained that walking through the schools with that kind of lens is very interesting.
 - Ms. Chute asked Dr. Rusack if there anything she wished to which Dr. Rusack replied no.
- Interim Superintendent, Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, presented the general administration proposed budget, which includes:

- Director of Human Resources for a district of 470 people is necessary. Currently the responsibility is shared by many people. This should be centralized and ensure that Title

IX and Americans with Disabilities Act is followed as well as all mandated training. The district is best served with a person having an 092 certification.

- A receptionist/registrar to manage the registration, changes of address, welcoming vendors and visitors and answering the phones to free the executive assistant to help the superintendent.
- Board clerk to be present at meetings to take minutes and ensure the notifications and postings meet FOIA compliance.
- Strategic Plan with an external facilitator which sets the blueprint of what the district does. The last plan was created in 2012 and needs to be revised.

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Birk questioned if the Human Resources position impacted students and asked if it would be combined with the Town. Dr. Paddyfote replied she did not think it would work well. The Town currently has a Director of HR but the biggest issue for the Board of Education is certification for teachers, including state reports regarding certification requirements. Mr. Birk commented that though he sees the value in this position whether it reaches and impacts the students. Ms. Zirolli added that the Town has less employees and has a Director of HR. Dr. Paddyfote also added that HR issues for the school differ from the town including certification requirements, disciplinary actions, confidential information and evaluations. Mr. Indomenico stated that the potential to avoid potential grievance expenses would probably pay for the position; and may be penny wise pound foolish if we did not add this position. Ms. Chute thinks this does impact the students as impacting the people who work with children does impact students.
- Ms. Zirolli expressed her concern that the low pay for the Board Clerk position would not attract the right person as she has found in the past. Ms. Zirolli suggested that perhaps it be combined with the registrar or secretary position. Dr. Paddyfote agreed that an attempt to do that was considered but it leaves the position empty when the Board Clerk is attending to Board duties.
- Ms. Chute thanked Dr. Paddyfote for leading the way in presenting easy to understand budgets and asked if Dr. Paddyfote had anything for the wish list. Dr. Paddyfote replied she did not and she applauds everyone for presenting good budgets.

Director of Fiscal Affairs, Heather Michaud, summarized the proposed budget:

- Five year look back showed an average of a 2.576 increase
- Breakdown of expenses in categories:
 - 80% payroll and benefits
 - 10% transportation and out of district tuitions
 - 10% remaining items
- Budget Drivers:
 - Health insurance had a negative premium increase of -4.35% due to the move into the HSA
 - Pension with the Town of Avon – 79% funding ratio
 - OPEB account to fund post-retirement health benefits
 - Transportation – with a contract extension with Specialty is relatively flat
 - Tuition – Special Education is a moving target; magnet school enrollment has decreased

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Zirolli asked for an explanation regarding the Worker's Comp increase. Ms. Michaud replied that she and the Town HR Director increased the split the Board pays with the Town.

- Ms. Zirolli also asked for an explanation regarding a significant increase in contracted services for World Languages. Ms. Michaud replied that this relates to the contract with Confucius Institute at CCSU for the opportunity to have Chinese teachers in the district. The increase was due to the need for an additional Chinese teacher this year that was not budgeted and another one for the coming year. Dr. Rusack added that the number of teachers needed is according to how their Visas are written as some cannot be shared between schools. Ms. Michaud stated that the district pays the teachers one-third of their salaries according to their step. Dr. Rusack also added that the teachers are certified and also evaluated under the same evaluation plan as other teachers.
- Ms. Zirolli inquired on the increase of legal fees and contracting services. Ms. Michaud responded that the \$30,000 for the strategic planning consultant and legal fees for negotiations was placed in that line as well as some of the past contracting services in preparation for the new superintendent's possible needs.
- Ms. Zirolli asked about the increase in miscellaneous funds. Ms. Michaud explained the funds are meant to capture the needs of the Board and has been historically underfunded such as CAFE, on-line membership fee to view policies, celebrations and awards, Avon Day, hiring committees and negotiation needs.
- Mr. Birk asked if the district will get to select the insurance for Worker's Comp, to which Ms. Michaud replied no, the Town decides.
- Mr. Birk also asked if the OPEB contribution by the Board is the full Annual Required Contribution (ARC) given the 2015 ARC was over \$1 million.
- Mr. Indomenico expressed concern over the length of the transportation contract. Ms. Michaud replied it was a contract extension as the negotiation leverage was to extend the contract.
- Ms. Zirolli asked why the transportation for internship costs were decreasing and magnet school increasing. Ms. Michaud replied it was due to the efficient use of the two internal district drivers; as to the magnet school increase, it was due to the addition of a type 2 bus and a van.
- Ms. Chute asked if we transport preschool students. Dr. Mearman replied it is to transport Special Education preschool students with IEPs.
- Ms. Chute asked if there was any item Ms. Michaud wished to add to which she replied no.

Director of Fiscal Affairs, Heather Michaud, summarized the revenue portion of the budget:

- Revenues has been reduced to be more conservative due to not collecting as much in gate receipts and State of CT funding being lessened or eliminated
- Open Choice for Early Beginnings grant is incentive to take younger PreK and K children in a full day program; \$4,500 per child
- Open Choice will maintain the 120 seats, which is 3% of our student population; \$6,000 per child
- Reporting of retiree dental and life contributions is no longer included in revenue
- Revenue has also been reduced for the billing of Hartford for Open Choice because the City of Hartford is currently leveraging the net of the per student tuition and then over and above if the services fall above that net

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Zirolli asked how the district can access the money that comes in and goes to the Town. Ms. Michaud replied that the district would ask for supplemental appropriations. The Open Choice and Early Beginnings money must go for education.

- V. Communication from Avon Board of Education members
There was no further communication from Board members.

VI. Communications from the public

A resident expressed her appreciation for the budget presented but was concerned that taxes have increased significantly and asked the Board to be prudent. She also asked for further explanation as to the obstacles of combining a Director of Human Resources with the Town. The resident also asked for clarification as to where the savings from the health plan was going. She also asked for more information regarding the pension and why while there are 400 employed there were only 130 with pensions. Dr. Paddyfote replied that teachers throughout the state fund their pension not the Town; 7.25% come out of their salary and will go up to 8.25% in January. Ms. Roell added that the 130 people are the non-certified staff. Dr. Paddyfote stated that the Town has one full time HR person for 100 people while the district has 470 staff and the HR work is spread across three people. While unsure of the HR Director's specific duties, Dr. Paddyfote suggested the resident pose the question to the Town regarding the efficiencies of having one HR person for 100 people. The resident responded that the district should ask the town to reconsider consolidating services to which Ms. Zirolli replied that the district has asked several times to consolidate certain areas in the past and the offers were declined. Ms. Michaud shared that the health care savings went to fund OPEB costs and offset pension costs.

VII. Adjournment

The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:06 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary
Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Zirolli, Board Secretary

Katharine F. Zirolli

December 15, 2017