

Personnel & Finance Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Date: November 22, 2021

5:35 p.m. - 6:10 p.m.

ELM STREET SCHOOL CONFERENCE ROOM

Members Present: **Christine Downs, Jessica Smith (Remote), Mary Martin, Amber Lyman, and Scott Tiner (Remote)**

Members Absent:

Other Board Members Present: Mike Downing

Administrators Present: Amy Hediger, Craig Worth (Remote), Ken Healey

Staff Members Present:

Personnel & Finance Sub-committee Meeting opened by Mary Martin at 5:35 PM.

- Item 1: Review Financials (none available due to the Audit presentation scheduled for the upcoming December 13th school board meeting.)
- Item 2: Review Subcommittee Rules - Mary Martin and Ken Healey gave an overview of how sub-committee meetings should be conducted. Specifically, we have to ensure that the school board doesn't have a quorum (8 or more members or 502.5 weighted votes) of school board member actively engaged in the sub-committee meeting to prevent an illegal school board meeting from happening. Sub-committees are accessible to the public, but the public does not participate in the sub-committee meeting. None of the sub-committee school board members are still encouraged to attend the sub-committee meetings, but not engage in the discussion or decision making of the sub-committee, just like other members of the public. The primary purpose of the sub-committee is to hear and discuss school district issues and provide a viable recommendation to the full school board for consideration.
- Item 3: District budget meeting/referendum - Mary Martin described the two step process of the district budget meeting and the budget validation referendum that is currently needed to pass a school district budget. Ken Healey spoke about the additional burden having two separate budget approvals. He explained that 2 of the 3 towns have their budgets passed at town meeting which is equivalent to the school district budget meeting.
- This year our school budget timeline was in conflict with all three towns' election schedule and the RSU was asked by all three towns to align their preferred budget timeline to meeting the three towns' needs. Ken went on to explain that this kind of conflict need not exist if only we passed the school district budget the same way 2 of 3 towns pass their municipal budgets through the town meeting form of budget approval.

Every three years the school department sends a separate article for the towns people to consider if they would still like the additional budget validation referendum to continue. This is the third year, so the RSU 16 budget referendum will have a separate article, to see if the towns people will allow us to eliminate the need for the additional referendum requirement. If the towns people were to authorize the elimination of the referendum as a requirement then the school budget would be subject to passing the budget through the annual district budget meeting.

The advantage to the district budget meeting being the sole school budget approval is that at the district budget meeting each article is voted up or down separately, not like the referendum, that only considers the total budget as a yes or no vote. At the district budget meeting the articles are considered closed and the only adjustment to the monetary value of each article is to reduce the amount, you can not adjust the article to increase the monetary value of any article. This provides a much more transparent view of the RSU 16 school budget and if more towns people came to the district budget meeting annually they would have a much better understanding of what the budget entails and its impact on our students and community.

It was recommended that we seek support from all the town elected officials to support eliminating the school budget validation referendum. It was suggested we embark on an educational campaign to demonstrate the merits of having a single step budget approval process for the school budget. It was suggested we come up with a single page explanation for community consumption explaining the need and advantages of this single step process. It was also suggested that we also go to each town selectperson/council meeting to solicit their support in this effort.

Item 4: Budget season schedules - Mary explained that she will be seeking school board members to be part of the annual school budget committee. She had hoped that the budget committee could be made out of the member of the Personnel & Finance Sub-committee. Mary also asked about if it was time to invite the towns to identify a community member to be part of the school budget committee. Ken told her that he would be sending out that request shortly probably in December. Ken also reported that the budget process was well underway for the school administrators, we are initially calculating the contractual salary increases, identifying needs and wants, we have also increased our student count from last year to 1703 as of Oct 1, 2021. This increase in student count will help our subsidy rebound from our small numbers last year. Ken reported that the DOE will also be looking to make adjustment to Nursing services in the school funding formula given the pains each school district has gone through during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Item 3: Sign policies that were approved at the 11/8/21 School Board meeting
JKAA Use of Physical Restraint & Seclusion;
JKAA-R Procedures on Physical Restraint & Seclusion

Done.

Item 4: Sign Warrants - None.

Warrants and approved policies will be available for all school board members to come in to the Central Office on December 3, 2021 from 8 AM - 4 PM for viewing and signatures of the current warrants and policies.

A motion was made to adjourn the Personnel & Finance Sub-committee by Amber Lyman and seconded by Christine Down, by a 5-0 vote the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 PM.