

Madison Public Schools

Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 29, 2022 5:30 PM

Town Campus Hammonasset Room/Zoom

10 Campus Drive

Madison, CT 06443

Meeting Minutes

Galen Cawley called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Members present: Galen Cawley, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Emily Rosenthal, Seth Klaskin, ex officio

Also present: Dr. Craig Cooke, Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director

Recorder: Galen Cawley

We opened by noting changes to the Budget Calendar. Key dates include the upcoming 12/7 Admin Council Retreat, the 12/21 distribution of proposed budget to the BOE, and the 1/10 Budget Workshop. Chair Klaskin proposed an agenda item for the workshop to examine potential budget impact of Open Choice, if that program were to be implemented in 2024/25 or beyond. I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask the Board to please feel free to submit any other ideas, questions, or items for the workshop.

Dr. Cooke stated that the administration would list some items for positions and purchases NOT as budget requests for the current budget cycle of 23/24, but as possible requests for future years as an indication of priorities and trends. One such request might be to continue the elementary school social workers in 24/25 after the ESSER grants step down – more on that to follow.

Dr. Cooke also noted the addition of key town dates, including the 2/8 distribution of the budget to BOS and BOF and the 2/28 Public Hearing.

Stacy informed the board of projected increases in fuel, electricity, and health insurance.

- Fuel 20% gas: schools and transportation. Our contract with Durham Transportation also calls for a 2.5% annual increase (this is year 2 out of 5 in the contract).
- Electricity 5%, mitigated by installation of solar panels and LED lights
- Health insurance up 9% in a post-covid catch up. Our district is self-insured. The 10-year average is about 3%.

The committee asked Dr. Cooke what contingency plans we have in place to realize savings in case costs continue to rise, both for 23/24 cycle and the outyears. The answers were, first, we have a history of accurate budgeting. But in an extreme case, the Superintendent could enact a budget freeze, which would involve delaying purchases and freezing new hires. Declining to flat enrollment in the upper grades might also result in savings.

The discussion moved to open items. I noted that on average, the BOE has returned about \$300k to the town over the last 7 years. This led to a conversation about Special Education, which stands at about \$350k (or 2.5 expensive outplacements). Dr. Infantine-Vyce asked for trends in outplacement and special ed requests. Emily thought that a history of spending internally and in relation to our DRG would be helpful to place the issue in context. Dr. Cooke noted the value of social workers at the lower grades. Emily noted the different skills and needs by grade level.

I'd like to reiterate my call for budget workshop topics.

There were no public questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04.

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