

**Coventry Board of Education  
Coventry, CT  
Minutes  
Fiscal Committee Meeting  
Thursday, September 8, 2011  
Administration Building Conference Room**

Members Present: Mary Kortmann, Fiscal Committee Chair  
Mark Malcolm, Fiscal Committee Member

Member Absent: Jennifer Beausoleil, Fiscal Committee Member

Also Present: Gregg Blackstone, Business Manager  
Dr. Paul Smotas, PhD Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Paul Noel, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by M. Kortmann.

**I. Approve Fiscal Minutes from August 11, 2011**

**MOTION: Approve Fiscal Minutes from August 11, 2011**

**By: M. Malcolm**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion to approve minutes as written passes unanimously**

**II. Encumbrance Reports for August 2011**

Mr. Blackstone reviewed the encumbrance and management reports. He stated that the certified salaries would need to be adjusted, due to corrections needed in the coding; there will be savings there. He said he has started working on the Position Report as requested, and it should be available at the next meeting. He said the Encumbrance Report is subject to change as we encumber some things up front and some as we go; typically, though, we run very close to the numbers.

Mr. Blackstone reviewed the Property and Liability Insurance and that is not expected to change.

M. Kortmann stated that she was very pleased with the unemployment expenses and asked if the number was accurate. Mr. Blackstone stated that there were a few cases pending and that a hearing was scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup>. If a bill does come to fruition it is not yet reflected in this report. He said he plans to attend the hearing and speak on the Board's behalf.

Mr. Blackstone reported that lines such as Instructional Supplies may be subject to change.

Mr. Blackstone reviewed the Expenditure Grant Report.

Dr. Smotas requested clarification on education jobs rundown for September 30, of 2012.

Mr. Blackstone stated that the line of thinking was that some would be spent this year which leaves some for next year to relieve possible budget pressures with a three percent increase for teachers.

M. Kortmann confirmed it was mechanically done with the intention that the same people, who were put in this year, would be covered by that money next year. Mr. Blackstone agreed.

Mr. Blackstone stated that Special Education placement information should be available at the end of this month that will be worked into the forecast.

### **III. FY2012 Punch List (revised) – Joint Fiscal discussion**

Mr. Blackstone passed out FY2012 Budget Future Projects and Punch list update. He reviewed the item and noted the modifications that had been made to the list initially provided in the packets. One of the changes was to the certified library position. The committee discussed the certified library position and how it relates to the NEASC report and mandate.

Dr. Smotas brought to light that the administrators need to have 6 year old lap tops replaced. He said he didn't see any funds for this listed on the punch list. He stated that these laptops were a high priority.

M. Malcolm asked the definition of the punch list.

Mr. Blackstone suggested that the Punch List should be proposed expenditures.

Dr. Smotas stated that the Punch List seems to include absolutes as well as requests. He further elaborated that expenses that arise, such as Tropical Storm Irene, were not requested, yet costs were incurred.

It was determined by the group that the Punch List needed to be more clearly defined by what is required and what is wished for.

The Committee discussed items for consideration under the CIP, how to present request to the Town and what would qualify.

Mr. Noel reported that he did add the floor of the old gym at the high school, the chimney at Robertson, and the Portico at the high school as items for the "wish list."

In regards to the chimney removal Dr. Smotas spoke with John Elsesser and was advised that there may be enough funding from the roofing project to remove the chimney. Therefore it should be removed from the list, but should not be lost sight of.

Dr. Smotas stated we need to alter our philosophy in regards to mandatory apparatuses; whether it be laptops for administrators and teachers or maintenance items. He said it sounds like we are not doing a good job of explaining the need for necessary equipment. He stated that there are actual needs in the district that have not been taken care of and he would like to see that change. It is unacceptable that our district snow blowers cannot handle a twelve inch snow storm; as it is also unacceptable for administrators and teachers to have to provide their own laptops. He stated that he's unclear as to whether people have been hesitant to ask, if requests have simply gone unfulfilled, if funds haven't been available or if the priorities have just changed. He would like to see a change in the mentality in regards to necessities for individuals to complete their jobs effectively. For an individual who is being paid an administrators' salary to have to wait for memory on a lap top is unacceptable.

Mr. Noel agreed and commented that it is a strong reflection on infrastructure.

M. Kortmann stated that when you compare the cost per hour of the individual and time wasted waiting for response and equipment, not providing necessities is counter-productive to the budget.

Dr. Smotas stated that principals are always trying to get things for students, teachers, and custodians and they aren't likely to request materials they need in order to complete their jobs more efficiently. He elaborated that the chimney at Robertson is a perfect example, an accident waiting to happen. Gym floors also need replacing - the high school gym floor is dangerous with to buckles and ridges.

The Committee discussed the Maintenance and Custodial budget and what the plan may be for the future to assist in explaining what will be needed.

Dr. Smotas stated that an entirely new more defined budget proposal and presentation would be created this year and that all items will be detailed.

M. Kortmann was pleased with the detail oriented report idea and felt it would be very advantageous in prioritizing.

Dr. Smotas stated that new categories would include Under-Funded Special Education, CECC pre-kindergarten programming needs, and Athletic salaries.

The Committee liked this idea.

#### **IV. Storm Irene – costs and other administrative items**

Mr. Blackstone stated that we need to leave the \$10,000 encumbrance as is for Storm Irene costs.

The Committee discussed Future Projects, Board Recommendations, an Energy Audit, and Remedial Structure Work.

M. Kortmann commented that the creation of a discretionary list is in order.

Dr. Smotas requested Mr. Blackstone create another category, "Other Issues" in an effort to keep information in sight.

The Committee returned to the discussion of the priority of items on the CIP, such as a portico for the high school entrance, the gym floor, the upgrade to the electrical pane, and remedial structural work.

Both M. Malcolm and Mr. Blackstone agreed that documenting the intention of the CIP funds is important.

M. Kortmann stated that the last CIP presentation had detailed information and an extensive set of explanations with photographic evidence of the problems at hand.

The conversation returned to costs incurred by Storm Irene.

Mr. Noel reported about \$1,300 was spent. Power loss at CGS created a situation requiring food to be transferred to Robertson and the high school. Nominal losses may exist there. Many branches are going to have to be removed by contractors (they are broken and hanging and at this point a safety issue). Doug Reece had explained to Mr. Noel that the branches in question are too high for his crew to remove.

Dr. Smotas asked about the roof project. Mr. Noel stated substantial completion exists however, the gutters are problematic allowing excess water flow (downspouts are not installed).

Mr. Blackstone stated that he believed that was going to be addressed at CGS next week.

Mr. Noel stated that the chimney at Robertson must be addressed immediately. He also reported that the gutter situation should not incur any new expenses.

## **VI. Silva Engineering Report**

Mr. Blackstone's recommendation for immediate action; Mr. Noel is going to request Mr. Silva return and provide a blueprint for us to address the joist in question. The cost reflected in the Executive Summary Report is for remedial structure work. He expects that the bulk of the expense will be steel work.

M. Kortmann questioned the masonry clips.

Mr. Noel explained that we have started the repairs on the seismic raising on the columns in the auditorium. During orientation we had to block off the last seven rows under advisement that that section should not be used until repairs are made. It is expected to be complete in the near future and the expense is around \$7,000. He feels the clips need to be placed at the top of the masonry because it is a relatively inexpensive fix. Web stiffeners may be useful in helping deal with the structure that holds the folding door. We can't divide the gym until this is done.

Mr. Noel reported that some items on the list can be done in house, for example: moving the braces that hold up the sprinkler pipes.

M. Kortmann stated that it seems like many items can be done with in house. Mr. Noel answered: "Yes"

**MOTION: To adjourn at 7:25 p.m.**

**By: M. Malcolm**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion passes unanimously.**

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Respectfully submitted,

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Donna Summers Salad, Substitute Board Clerk

Accepted by M. Kortmann, Fiscal Chair – November 17, 2011