

**Coventry Board of Education**  
Coventry, Connecticut

**Fiscal Committee Special Meeting**  
Approved Minutes of May 21, 2020  
Electronic/Remote via Google Meet

Committee Members Present:

William Oros, Fiscal Chair  
Mary Kortmann  
Barbara Paré  
Jennifer Beausoleil, Board Chair

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools  
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

**I. Call to Order**

W. Oros called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**II. VOTE: Approve Fiscal Minutes of April 7, 2020**

**MOTION: To Approve the Fiscal Minutes of April 7, 2020**

**By: M. Kortmann    Seconded: B. Paré**

**Result: Motion passes unanimously**

**III. PEGPETIA Grant**

W. Oros said this item has to do with the video broadcasting for the Town and the Board. Dr. Petrone said we applied for the grant and received a fraction of what we need. He said the Administration is looking for funds to make up the difference. W. Oros noted the Board's cost would be \$2,361.63. Mr. Carroll said the split is 1/3 by the Town [\$1,180.82] and 2/3 by the Board.

M. Kortmann asked where the 1/3 - 2/3 split came from. She said we have the same number of meetings. B. Paré agreed. Dr. Petrone said, it is most likely due to the sizes of the budgets. Dr. Petrone and Mr. Carroll reviewed the reasons for the need for upgraded equipment.

M. Kortmann said she is willing to do it, but it is suspicious since we both have the same amount of meetings.

W. Oros said the Board has two other pieces to the broadcasting; the Board channel and a mobile production kit. W. Oros said he would like to see a 50/50 split due to expected expenses in fall to open school.

M. Kortmann said we should do it. B. Paré said she supports it especially due to Distance Learning. She said she would like to see it put into two parts, approving support and how much to support.



Dr. Petrone continued to review what the workshops will cover.

M. Kortmann asked if any of the expenses are fundable through FEMA. Dr. Petrone believes, some, yes.

Dr. Petrone said there will be significant expenses related to these guidelines. He talked about transportation and what that might look like.

J. Beausoleil asked if we are required to provide transportation to summer school, in a normal world. Dr. Petrone said yes.

The Committee talked about the various scenarios the district could be looking at in re-opening schools.

B. Paré said as these new procedures are put in place, in regard to Transportation, it will open a whole new conversation about what to do when rules are not followed and any related liability. Dr. Petrone said there was language in the guidelines about the State working on alleviating the exposure districts may have.

### **B. Transportation Contract**

Dr. Petrone said we settled with M&J verbally - at 49.5%. He continued and noted, Curtin, who transports one student is at a 40% savings.

Dr. Petrone said the latest information from EASTCONN is a realized savings of \$8,792 for in-town and out-of-town is at \$17,359.

Dr. Petrone said we are all settled in relation to transportation and the settlement letters are being drafted.

### **C. Out of District Placements**

Dr. Petrone said the out of district placements are starting to trickle in. He said we will probably settle around 90-95%. W. Oros confirmed that the students are getting services. Dr. Petrone said yes.

Dr. Petrone asked Mr. Carroll about his meeting on Special Education transportation. Mr. Carroll said there is not much new to say. He continued that the State does not want these special education facilities to shut their doors because they can't afford to operate and districts are encouraged to give as much as we can. He said, they indicated that the State paid us our reimbursement and is expecting us to pay special education contractors.

Dr. Petrone said he is working to not paying for more we are receiving and he is confident we will settle these, we are documenting everything.

### **V. CSDE Policy Change**

Mr. Carroll said the state calculated per pupil cost includes a number of data elements pulled in from various district reports. He continued that the "minor school construction" was considered part of daily expense. He said that this policy change is that they will no longer consider this construction when calculating the per pupil cost. He said this will provide a more stable number year to year.

M. Kortmann asked if they provided more detail and if there are other things that we leave out? Mr. Carroll said they will put that information right off of the list of items/projects submitted.

B. Paré thanked M. Kortmann for asking that question and she is looking forward to reviewing the information and becoming more familiar with it.

Mr. Carroll said this will also affect excess cost grant and will provide continuity in that area as well.

## **VI. Information: HEEC Tuition FY21**

Dr. Petrone said we wanted the Committee to be aware of the facts from area towns. He said Coventry is in a unique spot as they are NAEYC accredited. He added that we wanted to stay competitive and keep the tuition the same for one more year.

M. Kortmann talked about the extra costs for parents for before/after care. Dr. Petrone said that is all extra; funds beyond tuition.

J. Beausoleil said she is worried about COVID-19 restrictions at HEEC and how that will affect finances. Dr. Petrone said we will have to make hard decisions going into the fall. He said we will probably have to come back to the Board with details. J. Beausoleil said if HEEC is affected by restrictions we will need to increase tuition. Dr. Petrone said possibly, or we may customize learning and we would come back to the Board will options.

B. Paré said she is all for holding the line and keeping tuition the same and although attendance may be down, it is possible parents will need us more.

Dr. Petrone said a plan will be developed and it will come before the Board as more information becomes available.

W. Oros and J. Beausoleil reminded the Committee that this is a self-sufficient budget; no Coventry tax funds are used.

## **VII. Technology CIP Items Spring 2020 Prioritization**

W. Oros said this was voted on at the Board level last time and the Erate equipment was approved for purchase last week.

Dr. Petrone said he just brought it forward for the Fiscal Committee to review for any possible further purchases.

W. Oros said if we have unexpended funds we can look at the list again. J. Beausoleil said, typically, at this time of year Fiscal assesses priorities for the budget and technology is a priority. She said any operating savings not COVID-19 related could go toward technology.

M. Kortmann agreed and said we will be relying on technology more and more to get through next year - our technology should be strengthened.

W. Oros said we should prioritize the chart and use unexpended funds for these items. M. Kortmann agreed, as this includes our internal infrastructure and we rely on it to work for Distance Learning

D. Petrone said these items also support the Town's technology.

B. Paré said this conversation is to earmark savings that are not COVID-19 toward technology. She continued that she is concerned about backing us into a corner. She said as things come up we could take the savings and put it toward those items; why do we have to decide all of it right now.

J. Beausoleil explained as the year ends and we are comfortable with numbers, we can start to buy off the list, but it doesn't have to be all of it right now. M. Kortmann said we have to use the funds by June 30. J. Beausoleil said this practice does fit with the partnership of the Town Council; anything we can purchase out of this year's savings to reduce capital or expenses for next year is acceptable.

W. Oros asked what direction the administration needs.

D. Petrone said we would like to methodically move through list as money becomes available. W. Oros and M. Kortmann were in favor with purchases as possible.

**MOTION: To allow the Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations to use their discretion in terms of purchasing technology from the Capital Improvement Plan request we need to get us through the coming school year as long as we have the money.**

**By: M. Kortmann**

**Seconded: W. Oros**

Discussion: B. Paré said she wished she knew more where money would come from and if it would be possible to use these funds for improvements related to COVID-19. J. Beausoleil said some of the other items are being done, but until some of the guidance comes through, we might not be able to move forward until summer. W. Oros said we already know we need this technology.

B. Paré said for her, she would be more agreeable if she could see balance, and she is not saying that there isn't, but she would like to see it. She said she puts her trust in the administration.

**Result: Motion passes unanimously**

## **VIII. Financial Reports for April 30, 2020**

### **A. Management Report**

Mr. Carroll reviewed the Management Report and noted the bottom line of expected unexpended funds is \$557,000. He reviewed that the Board has offered \$83,000 of that to the Town to pay for their share of the WANRack project. He continued noting that the negotiation of the special education contracts are still on going and he suggests reserving some funds to pay those expenses.

Mr. Carroll said there are many pieces to this.

Mr. Carroll continued noting the other wish was to transfer \$100,000 into the 1% account, which would leave us at \$332,000. He added that the Board would like to give back to the Town 100% of COVID-19, which would be nearly \$380,000. He said if we truly did that we would not be able to, we would be short.

J. Beausoleil said, the \$380,000 does not net out what we spent due to COVID-19. Mr. Carroll agreed. J. Beausoleil confirmed that the \$332,000 noted on the report includes operating savings and COVID-19 savings. J. Beausoleil said the next row "Projected COVID Savings thru End of Year" is explained on page three. Mr. Carroll confirmed.

J. Beausoleil asked that the non-COVID operating savings be separated out for understanding. Mr. Carroll said that number is the Net Total Forecasted General Fund Unexpended Funds minus the Projected COVID Savings thru End of Year [\$41,147.71].

Mr. Carroll said if we now use \$37,000 of that to do the technology, the Erate purchase, we are down to approximately \$5,000.

J. Beausoleil asked that the report be adjusted in time for the Board meeting so that figure is clear.

**MOTION: To adjourn the Fiscal Meeting at 7:18 p.m.**

**By: B. Paré**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion passes unanimously**

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Respectfully submitted:

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Kimberlee Arey Delorme  
Board Clerk

Approved: June 11, 2020