

Newtown Board of Education  
CIP/Facilities/Finance (CFF) Sub-Committee Minutes  
November 16, 2023 6:00pm  
BOE Conference Room

**PRESENT:** Alison Plante, Deborra Zukowski, Christopher Melillo, Tanja Vadas,  
Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mrs. Plante called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

**BUSINESS:**

Mrs. Plante asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2023. Ms. Zukowski moved to the approve the minutes of October 17, 2023. All in favor the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Financial Report and Transfers:**

Ms. Vadas presented the summary of the financial report and transfers of October 2023. After looking at the financial statements, Ms. Vadas pointed out that the projected balance has changed substantially over the past month. She explained that it is early in the year and they did encumber a lot of salaries and made changes in special education by putting in anticipated obligations. Projections of the salaries were also included. Going forward, they can expect to see that change again in November's report which will show a better picture of where the district will be at year end.

Ms. Vadas said that November is a critical month because the excess cost grant calculations are being done which include the special education out of district tuition costs, as well as mediated agreements. The calculations will be submitted to the state by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Vadas said that they are requesting a transfer of \$1.14 million in certified staff line item. This transfer request is typical for this time of year as many certified positions have been reclassified. It does not change the bottom line because it is internal transfers.

Ms. Zukowski asked if this includes teachers resigning and/or retiring.

Ms. Vadas said that it does and is in the budget turnover line. This current year, Newtown budgeted \$450,000 and had an exceptional amount of turnover. There were 25 resignations and 8 retirees. All of these positions have been filled and the budgeted turnover number of \$450,000 has been exceeded by approximately \$189,000. There were additional costs in certified staffing which means that the net saving is just over \$80,000. This is a good start as all of our positions are currently filled but it is still early in the year.

Ms. Plante asked why there was an uptick in resignations.

Mr. Melillo answered that there are a couple of reasons. One reason is moving to a District that has higher pay. Another reason is that their family is relocating and there were only one or two that felt Newtown was not a good fit for them.

Ms. Vadas reported that the non-certified accounts are currently experiencing a large surplus in the para profession account. Once again, it is challenging to fill these open positions and internal conversations are being had regarding these openings.

Mr. Melillo spoke about the budget process thus far. He stated that there are issues presented in the budget because there is a flat to increase in enrollment. The good thing is they won't lose any teachers, however, this also means that the budget will be higher. Last year there was a surplus and they were able to pre purchase materials. As a result from that, when we jump into next year's budget, those lines will look inflated.

Ms. Vadas added that pre purchases aren't always the way to go.

Mr. Melillo is planning on talking to other Board leadership prior to the budget.

Ms. Zukowski agrees that is a good idea.

Ms. Vadas continued reporting about the financial transfers. She stated that they are transferring \$162,772 to cover costs for our behavioral therapists. The funding for this transfer is coming from the non-certified salary adjustment line. As of today, there are only two behavioral therapists positions open. They found a service that is less expensive (\$45/hr) than our previous service (\$60/hr).

Ms. Vadas said that there were no emergency repairs over \$5,000 for the month of October.

Ms. Vadas said that out of district tuition can be a wildcard. As of today, they have fully encumbered the anticipated costs for this line item. Newtown has had to hire out for transportation at \$250/day. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, they will be submitting the first estimate to the state of the excess cost grant. The grant is now expected to be reimbursed at %70.

Ms. Vadas answered that they budgeted \$5.3 million for 58 students, which includes mediated agreements but currently only have 53 students and still paying \$5.3 million.

Ms. Zukowski thought it was typically only 42 students.

Ms. Vadas does not recall that number but there are 53 special education students which includes mediated agreements.

Ms. Vadas reported that the supply account has been accounted for as fully expended as they typically make adjustments later in the year. There is a surplus emerging from the electricity accounts due to the virtual net metering program. Last year this program produced a large surplus and reduced the energy costs by two-thirds. This program is complex because it operates on a calendar year.

Ms. Vadas concluded by showing the committee the estimates from the excess cost grant which is at the budgeted amount (\$1.83 million).

Ms. Zukowski asked if that estimate was based on how many outplaced students there were.

Ms. Vadas answered that she would get back to Ms. Zukowski with that number.

### **Transportation Update:**

Ms. Vadas gave an update on Transportation. Ms. Vadas said that Newtown is in very good shape. As of today, the routes are filled and there are six spare drivers.

Ms. Zukowski asked if the spares were back from Brookfield.

Mr. Melillo said that they are back.

Ms. Zukowski asked if any more spares were being lent out to other towns.

Mr. Melillo said it is not a school decision for spares to go to other districts. It is All Star's decision.

Ms. Vadas said that All Star has four applicants in the works along with two additional employees that will get their license in four weeks. Newtown is also staffed for sports and charter buses.

Mr. Melillo believes that he believes our bus drivers feel appreciated.

### **Facilities Update:**

Mr. Barlow was not able to attend tonight's meeting so Ms. Vadas provided the committee with the facilities update. Ms. Vadas said that the \$130,000 facilities study moved quickly through the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and then was approved by the Legislative Council the night before.

Ms. Vadas said that she will send a memo to the BOF and LC to confirm that the Reed chiller is on their next agenda.

Ms. Zukowski added that the money for the Reed chiller will be coming out of the non-lapsing fund and will not cost the Town any monies.

Ms. Vadas continued with the report by stating that the new truck was picked up on Tuesday and all is good.

Ms. Vadas reported that the repairs to Middle Gate and Hawley playgrounds are complete.

Also, Ms. Vadas said that Mr. Barlow is making some headway on the lighting at Reed. The budget for this project is around \$125,000. He met with Next Stage, who was the original vendor but their quote was very high. He is planning on meeting with another vendor and believes it will come in at budget.

Head O' Meadow's condenser project has officially been pushed back until spring break due to equipment delivery delays.

Lastly, Newtown applied for the HVAC grants for the HOM condenser, as well as the A wing and B wing at the high school. The applications are due December 31<sup>st</sup> so we expect to hear back at the end of January, early February.

Ms. Zukowski asked if Mr. Barlow had the RFP for the facilities study. Ms. Vadas did not have it yet but he is going to work with our Purchasing Director to button it up.

Ms. Zukowski asked for a timeline on when they could expect it.

Ms. Vadas answered that they would have it for review by the week of November 27<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Plante and Ms. Zukowski will receive the RFP via email to review. They can email Mr. Barlow with any questions or concerns that they have.

### **Superintendent's Update:**

Mr. Melillo reported that he has been working on the budget with Ms. Vadas for the past couple of weeks. They have been meeting with the schools to go over their budget as well. He also reported that he will be attending the CABE CAPPs conference the next day in Mystic, Connecticut.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting ended at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sarah Connell

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BOE CFF/CIP  
SUB COMMITTEE.