

The Board of Education

Town of Vernon

30 Park Street – PO Box 600
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Anne Fischer, Chairperson
Mark Kalina, Vice Chairperson
Stephen Linton, Secretary
Patricia Buxton, Treasurer
Kevin Brown
Deborah Rodriguez
Mason Thrall

Date: January 20, 2021

APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP

A Vernon Board of Education Budget Workshop was held via Zoom Meeting and in-person on Wednesday, January 20, 2021.

1.0 Establish Quorum

Roll call was taken at 6:00 p.m. Board members present in person: Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Kalina, Mr. Linton, Dr. Buxton and Mr. Thrall. Mr. Brown and Mrs. Rodriguez were present via Zoom Meeting. There was a quorum.

Also present were Dr. Macary, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Testa, Assistant Superintendent and Angela Wang, Director of Business and Finance.

2.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Fischer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

3.0 Community Forum Opportunity for Public Comment on Superintendent's Proposed 2021- 2022 Budget

There was no public comment.

4.0 Budget Workshop – Personnel Budget

The Superintendent discussed the FY2021-2022 budget for all VPS Personnel. He noted that the personnel budget comprised 78% of the total Vernon Public Schools budget. He also distributed background information sheets for the Collective Bargaining Units for reference. He provided an explanation of step and lane changes for teachers in order to assist the Board with any questions regarding salary increases.

Dr. Macary spoke about the one bargaining unit whose contract has not been renewed since July 2019, but will be voted on when presented to Board Members at the Board of Education meeting

scheduled for January 25, 2021. All salaries noted in the proposed budget for Secretaries, Custodians & Maintainers are reflective of the 2019 rate.

The Superintendent also explained the new format of the proposed budget, which now includes two additional columns showing actual expenditures for FY2018-2019 and FY2019-2020.

The Board members reviewed all proposed FY2022 salaries, located on pages 137 – 169. All questions and concerns were addressed and errors and omissions were noted for change.

Mr. Kalina asked if we could possibly include years of service in the personnel budget. Dr. Macary said we could, but we are already so tight with space on a page and would have to decrease the font size even more.

A question was asked about the “Masters +15” classification. Dr. Macary explained that these are employees who are locked into the rate noted in the budget. There are fewer of these each year and should be phased out by the end of their contract.

Mr. Kalina asked about “Principal Stipend per Contract”. Dr. Macary said this stipend is based on the degree they have.

Mr. Kalina asked about the funding sources for personnel and what was the total of grant funding as compared to local budget funding. Mr. Testa provided the following:

- Alliance – \$1,001,508.00
- Hartford Foundation – \$147,480.00
- IDEA – \$676,200.00
- School Readiness – \$182,883.00
- Title 1 – \$553,704.00
- Title 2 – \$67,728.00
- Title 3 – \$12,588.00
- McKenney-Vento - \$28,321.00

Ms. Wang provided the local budget figure - \$32,828,723.31

Ms. Fischer noted that the Librarian & Nurse salaries do not match the grid. Dr. Macary explained that we include their Holiday pay. Mrs. Fischer said we should include this in the language of their next contract.

Mrs. Rodriguez noted that the salary for Bryan Wright on page 137 has a huge increase. Dr. Macary explained that this is due to a natural step increase from a 9 to a 9.5

Dr. Buxton asked what is required to be an Administrator. Dr. Macary said they must have the 092 Sixth-Year Certification. This topic should be addressed in the next contract.

Dr. Buxton noted that she is not in favor of Principals receiving a stipend since they are already paid a higher salary for the position. She feels that teachers should get a stipend since they furthered their education.

A question was asked about the difference between a Library teacher and a Library manager. Dr. Macary explained that the Library teacher is a certified teacher who teaches a class whereas the manager is not certified and assists the teacher.

Mrs. Fischer questioned the "Lane 5" entry for World Language teacher Mayra Fox on page 138. Dr. Macary said that was incorrect and should be changed to "Lane 4".

She also questioned the Library Manager increase. Dr. Macary explained that this was due to a promotion from assistant to manager.

Mr. Kalina asked what the difference was between Language Arts and Reading Arts. Dr. Macary explained that the Reading Arts position is an interventionist and the Language Arts position teaches subjects.

Mr. Brown questioned the decrease in salary for Travis Berry. Dr. Macary said he is a new teacher.

Mrs. Fischer questioned the increase for Amy Schlett. Dr. Macary said this was a regular step increase.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked what the Career Service Coordinator does. Dr. Macary said she works with colleges, job searches and runs the Allied Health Program.

Mr. Kalina and Dr. Buxton asked what the 0.20 stood for regarding the ASTE teachers. Dr. Macary said the 0.20 refers to working during the summer months.

Mr. Kalina noted that there seems to be a trend with Social Studies teachers also taking on the role of coaches. Dr. Macary agreed and said they make the "best" coaches.

Dr. Buxton asked if Constance Poulin, Special Education teacher at RHS, was pursuing her Master's Degree since she is classified as a "Grandfathered MA +15". Mr. Testa said he would look into that and let her know.

Mrs. Fischer noted that there are many open para positions. Dr. Macary explained that we had quite a few resignations at the beginning of the school year. He thought the cause may have been because they were hoping we would go with a fully-remote model and they did not want to come into the schools. He said this was disappointing and they did not give the required 2 weeks' notice. We want to fill 115 para positions.

Dr. Buxton asked if there are 2 dedicated teachers and 2 paras in the TALC Program. Dr. Macary said yes, there are.

Mr. Kalina asked what happened to Deborah Halpryn's salary on page 143. Dr. Macary said she will now be paid out of the Title 1 and Title 2 grants.

Mrs. Fischer questioned the higher salary for Yvonne Farino on page 145. Dr. Macary said she was hired with more experience and has a Doctorate.

A question was asked about why there are so many para positions at VCMS. Dr. Macary said this was because of the increase in ABL (Activity Based Learning) students.

Mr. Kalina asked about the smaller salaries for some of the custodians. Dr. Macary said this was due to their contract not being settled since 2019. He said that, once their contract is approved by the Board, we should update all salary figures for the secretaries, custodians and maintainers to reflect the new contract rates. This will not increase the budget as the funds are being held in contingency.

Mr. Kalina asked whether those bargaining unit members who resigned or retired would receive retro pay. Dr. Macary said no, they would not.

Mr. Kalina asked about how many teachers we hope to hire. Dr. Macary said ten.

Dr. Macary also emphasized that we are not eliminating any staff due to classroom changes; the only exception would be if it were due to a performance review.

Dr. Buxton asked if our long-term subs are certified teachers. Dr. Macary said they are certified and are working out very well. If a teaching position opens up, it's much easier to hire a long-term sub who is already familiar with the school and can step right in.

Mrs. Fischer asked if we have hired a nurse yet at CRS. Dr. Macary said yes, we hired someone today who has experience.

A question was asked about the note regarding Rachel Mendes on page 153 stating "Transfer from SRS". Dr. Macary said this is incorrect and should be deleted.

Mr. Kalina asked what the School Clerk position involved. Dr. Macary said this person assists with attendance, fills in for lunch, etc. and works 12.5 hours per week.

Mrs. Fischer asked about the imbalance in Kelly Stein's time at each school, particularly at MSS where there are more students. Dr. Macary explained that her time was based on the number of students interested in the Music program.

Dr. Buxton questioned the \$4,200.00 stipend for Dr. Greene on page 157. Dr. Macary said this was due to an MOU at the time of her contract.

It was suggested to remove the "Move to Alliance" note for Gayle Golas on page 157.

Mr. Kalina asked what percentage Bill Peluso works for the Board of Education and the Town. Dr. Macary said it is .15 for the Town and .85 for the BOE. He has an additional salary with the Town.

Dr. Macary stated that air quality is going to be an issue as a result of COVID and wants to hire a licensed HVAC person for all buildings. Mr. Kalina asked if we should just buy higher grade air filters. Dr. Macary said our current systems call for a MERV 8 (which we are already using) rather than a MERV 11, so upgrading would not help. And the prices have gone up on these filters as a result of the demand.

A question was asked about the FTE entry for Denise Harrison on page 163. This is not accurate and should be changed to .4 based on hours worked.

Mr. Kalina asked about the Financial Analyst position and what was this originally. Was this Cathy Rebai's position. Dr. Macary said yes.

Mrs. Fischer asked why Steven Langlais' salary was higher since Cory LaFontaine was with us for some time. Dr. Macary explained that Steven came in with a great deal of experience as a retired police officer with the Town of Vernon.

She also noted the large increase in Rachel Linkkila's salary. Mr. Testa explained that this was due to the change in duties from Grant Writer to Grant Manager, which brings financial reporting responsibilities to the position.

A question was asked about the title for Ryan Blanck – what does the “CCA” refer to on page 164? Ms. Wang will check into this and make any corrections.

Mrs. Rodriguez questioned the Nurse Supervisor increase on page 164. Dr. Macary explained that the salary is no longer split with the schools and is listed in the Central Administration budget only.

Mr. Kalina asked if the Custodial floaters are necessary. Dr. Macary said yes, they are. They split their time where needed and fill in for sick time taken by other custodians. They are always busy.

Mrs. Fischer noted a huge increase for the salary of Elizabeth Taylor on page 167. Dr. Macary explained that this is a different person with much more experience.

Dr. Buxton questioned the Assignment description for Scott Green on page 167. This should be “TLC”, not “TALC”. The correction will be made.

Mrs. Fischer asked if Pat Purcell was a teacher since he has a much lower salary. Dr. Macary said he is a tutor that assists Next STEP Program Director Peter Lynch. Dr. Buxton asked if we require a certified teacher for the program. Dr. Macary said we do not require a certified teacher for the 18 – 21 program. We will also need to revisit the Park Street Learning Center Program. There have been no expulsions since COVID. Do we need this program with remote learning taking place?

Dr. Macary concluded that the Personnel review is complete and 78% of the budget review is done. He has asked that Angela give the funding sources in writing to the Board. Mr. Kalina also requested that she give the percentages of grant funding in relation to the local budget.

Mrs. Fischer asked what we want to review next. Dr. Macary suggested we begin with Rockville High School and go through all schools and departments in order of the book.

Dr. Buxton asked if we plan to review the Capital Plan. Dr. Macary said yes, we will review at the end.

Mrs. Fischer asked a question about the Revenue Estimates on page 181. She questioned the line item for “Other Education”, object code 44890, sighting an increase from \$5,484.00 to \$27,613.00. Dr. Macary explained that he increased this figure to be more realistic with previous

actual revenue figures. Since we were reviewing this page, it was noted that the "Revenue Estimates" section review has been completed as well.

The workshop scheduled for January 25, 2021 will begin with review of the Rockville High School proposed budget.

5.0 Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephen Linton".

Stephen Linton, Secretary