

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 27, 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 27, 2021.

1.0 Establish Quorum

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

Also present were Dr. Macary, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Robert Testa, Assistant Superintendent and Ms. 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 Pledge of Allegiance

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

There was no public comment.

5.0 Budget Workshop

Dr. Macary reviewed a follow-up item from the last budget workshop; the difference between the “2021-2022 Salaries & Wages” total of the Budget Summary on page 5 and the total of the “Personnel” budget on pages 137 - 169. Ms. Wang passed out a document which details all line items not included in the base pay salaries in the Personnel budget. The total of these items explained the difference. Mrs. Fischer thanked Ms. Wang for the explanation.

VCMS Budget:

The Board began the review of the Vernon Center Middle School budget on page 47.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked if we plan to review stipends for VCMS and the elementary schools as well. Dr. Macary said yes.

Mr. Kalina asked about the Bermuda trips. Dr. Macary said we are not going this year and we're not sure what International travel will look like for next year. It's a "wait and see" situation.

Mr. Kalina asked what the "General School Prog Supp" was on page 49. Mrs. Fischer said this was for the Truancy Counselor position.

A question was asked about EpiPen Training cost per person on page 50. Dr. Macary will find out. He also explained that this is a "train the trainer" model. The nurses are trained and they, in turn, train additional staff.

Mrs. Rodriguez questioned there being no budget for substitute teachers and an office clerk on page 50. Dr. Macary said the office clerk position was removed and a full-time secretary position was added. Substitute teachers are included in the Central Administration budget. They are not listed at each school.

There was much discussion about the "Employee Travel" line items on page 51. Why has all travel been cut in half? Is the "Two Traveling Teachers" note for the Art program correct? Art teachers do not travel. Should we leave some money in these items for conferences? Mr. Testa said yes, we should. It was also suggested to change the "Two Traveling Teachers" note to "Conference Support".

Dr. Buxton asked if we print letterhead. Dr. Macary said we do not; we use the template on file and print when used. It was suggested we remove "letterhead" from the notes on page 51 under VCMS Guidance near the bottom of the page.

Dr. Buxton asked what a "Markerbot" machine is. Mr. Testa said it's a machine that can create 3-D objects.

Mrs. Rodriguez noted varying amounts for piano tuning at all schools. Why is this? Dr. Macary said the price is based on the type of piano, how many each school has and the number of times a piano is tuned based on use. We do use the same vendor for all schools.

Mr. Kalina questioned the line item on page 53 for material & perishables for Family & Consumer Science Instruction. Dr. Macary explained that these items are purchased to run the classes.

Dr. Buxton brought up a suggestion that some of the \$5,000.00 in decreased funds for Libraries-hard cover books be moved to Libraries-eBooks at the bottom of page 52, which currently has a budget of only \$200.00. She pointed out that they can be easily read on any device, including phones. Dr. Macary said he is not opposed to this and will follow-up with VCMS Principal Mr. Caruso to discuss.

Mr. Kalina asked about the utilization process of eBooks. Dr. Macary said they are directed by the teachers to the students and are not student initiated. They are not for pleasure reading. Mr. Testa

said we piloted a few licenses this year at the high school, but haven't rolled anything out just yet. RHS is gauging student interest. Dr. Macary said our goal is to get more students to read eBooks.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked about the notes stating "Per CREC bid – 6-8 program" on the "Art Instruction" line on page 53. What does this mean? Dr. Macary explained that we buy all our supplies through the CREC consortium.

Mrs. Fischer asked about the Social Studies line item on page 54 for \$7,700.00. Why did the same amount move from last year to this year? Didn't we already purchase world atlases & supplies last year? Mr. Testa said the majority of these funds were earmarked to purchase NewsELA, but last year, we put it in the Central Office budget. Dr. Macary & Mr. Testa will find out more about this and get back to the Board.

Dr. Buxton asked if the library is still using DVD's. Dr. Macary said yes we are, but we will eventually update the library and phase them out.

The Board concluded their review of the VCMS budget and moved on to the Center Road School budget on page 59.

CRS Budget:

Mrs. Fischer noted that the stipend for Webmaster is different at each school. Mr. Testa reported that the Stipend Committee met today and will have an update on this very soon. He also stated that Webmaster really doesn't fit under stipends.

As the Board reviewed Secretary Salaries on page 60, Dr. Macary posed a question; now that the Secretary/Custodian/Maintainer contract has been ratified, do we want to include the salaries from the new contract in the 2021-2022 proposed budget? We are currently listing 2018-2019 salary rates. The Board unanimously said yes. Dr. Macary said these changes will not affect the bottom line, but will increase the Personnel budget and decrease contingency.

Mr. Brown noted a salary decrease in the CRS Nurse position on page 60. Dr. Macary said this was due to a new hire.

Dr. Buxton asked why we are using secretaries to work overtime for students who miss their bus or return to school. Couldn't we use a Para for this? Dr. Macary said the practice has changed and the School Climate Specialist at each school has been asked to stay for these students. A follow-up question was asked; should we reduce the budget for this line item at each school since the practice has changed and should the notes be edited? Everyone agreed that yes, we should. We will change the budget for this line at each school as follows:

- CRS – decrease to \$100.00
- LSS - decrease to \$100.00
- MSS - decrease to \$300.00
- NES - decrease to \$100.00
- SRS - decrease to \$100.00

We will also edit the notes at each of these schools by removing any statement regarding "late bus or returned students".

A question was asked about printing and binding services on page 61. Would it be more beneficial to utilize on-line student agendas rather than printing them? Dr. Macary said yes, now that we have Chromebooks, we can move in this direction. There will be a small cost for on-line access. He recommends that we leave the money in the budget for now.

Mr. Kalina asked what “itinerant staff” refers to. Dr. Macary said this pertains to Art & Music staff members that travel between schools.

It was noted that the line item for ESL Language Arts Instruction” at the top of page 62 is to be moved to the Lake Street School budget.

Mrs. Fischer questioned the notes at the top of page 63. Didn’t we already fix the tile floor? Dr. Macary said yes, this note should be changed to say “repairs – tile floor”.

The Board concluded their review of the CRS budget and moved on to the Lake Street School budget on page 67.

LSS Budget:

Mrs. Fischer questioned the difference in coaching payouts. Dr. Macary said each position is based on student interest.

Mr. Kalina asked if all elementary schools have kilns. Dr. Macary said yes.

The Board concluded their review of the LSS budget and moved on to the Maple Street School budget on page 73.

MSS Budget:

Mr. Kalina asked what the “Mural Club” was for on page 73. Dr. Macary said it’s an after school club that designs murals for the walls inside the school.

Mr. Kalina asked what a “die cut” was on page 75. Dr. Macary said they are paper cut-outs, letter cut-outs, etc.

The Board concluded their review of the MSS budget and moved on to the Northeast School budget on page 79.

NES Budget:

Mrs. Rodriguez noted the removal of the IXL Computerized ELA/Math Web Based Program on page 82. Dr. Macary said we are piloting this right now. If all goes well, we will implement this next year and it will come out of the Central Administration budget.

Mr. Kalina asked about the barriers/gates on page 82. Dr. Macary explained that they would serve the same purpose as the gates at CRS. We are trying to prevent people from coming in after the buses. Mr. Kalina asked if they require maintenance. Dr. Macary said they are designed for outdoor use. Mr. Kalina asked if the entrance located on Route 30 could be blocked. Dr. Macary said we cannot because it is a State road.

Mr. Brown questioned the blinds budgeted on page 83. Didn't we do this already? Dr. Macary said that we installed blinds in half of the gym this year and will finish the other half next year.

Mrs. Fischer noticed that there is no money budgeted for shades – are we all set? Dr. Macary said yes.

The Board concluded their review of the MSS budget and moved on to the Skinner Road School budget on page 87.

SRS Budget:

Mrs. Fischer noted that the ESL Language Arts Instruct line item on page 87 should be moved to the Northeast School budget.

Mrs. Fischer asked if all elementary schools compete at the Invention Convention at UCONN listed on page 89. Dr. Macary said all students do a project, but not all students compete at the event.

Mr. Kalina asked what the “key fob” was for on the north and south wings of the school building. Dr. Macary explained that these are the badge scanners that allow entrance into the building.

The Board concluded their review of the SRS budget.

Now that all school budgets have been reviewed, Mrs. Fischer asked Board members if they would be willing to stay and review more pages. They agreed to stay longer, so additional time was given during the meeting for them to prepare any questions they may have. After approximately 15 minutes, they proceeded to review the Maintenance budget on page 97.

Maintenance Budget:

Mr. Kalina posed a question about the new HVAC position the District intends to fill. Have we taken into account the equipment and vehicle needed for this position? Dr. Macary said this position will share equipment and a vehicle with the other HVAC person. We will stagger their work shifts, one working 6-2 and the other 12-8. They will share the equipment for 2 hours and will coordinate their schedules accordingly.

Mr. Brown questioned the “treated dust mops” line item on page 97. Dr. Macary said we buy them from the company and this is the contractual increase. This is an area that can be looked at in the future for a better option.

A question was asked about the NextSTEP van lease on page 97. Didn't we just lease that? Ms. Wang explained that we paid \$15,000.00 up front and will lease the remainder over the next three years. She would like to pay the lease off early in order to avoid finance charges. Dr. Buxton asked if this is the only vehicle we lease currently. Ms. Wang said yes; the other two vans have been paid off.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked why there is a decrease to zero for “Hood Testing” on page 97. Dr. Macary said we now connect directly and no longer need this service.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked about “AC repairs due to age”. Where are these units? Dr. Macary said they are located at Maple Street School and are older wall-mounted units.

Mrs. Fischer noted that the Fire Alarm Testing pricing is different. Dr. Macary said the pricing is based on the square footage of each building.

Mr. Kalina asked if “School Dude” on page 99 is our work order software. Dr. Macary said yes.

Mr. Brown asked about line item “Cleaning of Buildings”; are we still required to use “green” cleaning supplies. Dr. Macary said yes and the prices have increased significantly. This could become a problematic line item with price gouging. We may want to consider increasing the amount budgeted. Dr. Buxton asked if the 10% increase was due to cost only or is this a result of increased usage as well. Dr. Macary said both. We will change the note to state “10% increase in cost and increase in use”.

Mr. Kalina asked if the new HVAC position could take on the work currently being performed by an outside vendor. Dr. Macary said he would consider that, but would like to wait until next year when the person has been with us for a while.

The Board concluded their review of the Maintenance budget and moved on to the Continuing Education budget on page 125.

Continuing Education:

Dr. Macary stated that Andy Rockett has done a great job with the Adult Education program. We collect funds from other districts that they receive from the State and run their program for them.

A spelling error was noted in the first line of notes on page 125. “Grand” should be changed to “Grant”.

Mrs. Rodriguez asked for an explanation of the dollar amount for line item “LEA Tuition in LEA Boundaries” on page 125. Dr. Macary said this was the money we receive from the State to Run our GED and ESL programs. The BOE’s share is for Vernon residents only.

Dr. Macary said he could obtain a spreadsheet showing all expenses, etc. which total almost a million dollars.

Dr. Buxton said it’s a good program that does a lot of good for a lot of people.

The Board concluded their review of the Continuing Education budget.

We will next review Central Administration, Office of Pupil Services, Athletics and the Capital Plan at the budget workshop scheduled for February 1st.

Dr. Macary ended the meeting with a recap of the follow-ups needed and changes to be made that were discussed tonight:

- Dr. Macary will follow-up with price per person for EpiPen training.
- Page 51: Employee Travel 55020 – the note “Two Traveling Teachers” for 90221221 VCMS Art should be changed to “Conference Support”. There was a question if Employee Travel should be removed. Mr, Testa said we should leave some money in there for conferences.
- Page 51: 55500 VCMS Guidance – remove “letterhead” from the notes.
- Page 53: Dr. Macary will follow-up with Dave Caruso about placing some of the \$5,000 in decreased funds from 56420 VCMS Libraries Hard Copy Books to 55999 VCMS Libraries eBooks.
- Page 54: Dr. Macary & Bob Testa will find out more about the \$7,700.00 for 56440 VCMS Social Studies Instruction NewsELA.
- Page 60: 51133 CRS Secretarial OT – Reduce to \$100.00 and remove “Students who miss bus or returned to school” from notes.
- Dr. Macary will follow-up on the differing amounts for Webmaster stipends.
- All Secretary/Custodian/Maintainer salaries will be changed in the budget to reflect their newly ratified contract. As a result of this, line items on the Budget Summary on page 5 will change.
- Page 62: move CRS 90833100-56440 ESL Language Arts Instruction to LSS.
- Page 63: Change “Fix Tile Floor” to “Repairs-Tile Floor”.
- Page 68: LSS Secretarial OT – Reduce to \$100.00 and remove “such as student returned to school, late bus, etc.” from notes.
- Page 73: MSS Secretarial OT – Reduce to \$300.00.
- Page 80: NES Secretarial OT – Reduce to \$100.00 and remove “late bus, students returned to school, etc.” from notes.
- Page 88: SRS Secretarial OT – Reduce to \$100.00 and remove “late buses, student returned to school” from notes.
- Page 90: move 90633100-56440 SRS ESL Language Arts Instr. to NES.
- Page 99: 56130 Cleaning of Buildings – Add “and increase in use” to the end of notes. A question was also asked if we should put more money in this line item – Dr. Macary said we will discuss at the end of the workshops.
- Page 125: 51112 Principals – change “Grand” to “Grant” in notes.

Mrs. Fischer asked Board members if they had any other questions. There were no questions.

6.0 Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Linton, Secretary