



Torrington Board of Education

CHRISTOPHER G. LEONE
SUPERINTENDENT

FRANK RUBINO
BOARD CHAIR

Budget Committee Minutes April 14, 2010

Committee members present were: Chairperson Susan Cogswell; Ellen Hoehne and Judith Raymond. Also present were: BOE Chairperson, Frank Rubino, Superintendent Christopher Leone, Director of Business Services Danielle Batchelder and Director of Facilities, David Bascetta.

1. Call to order at 6:00pm
2. Roll Call
3. Review of Minutes from March 10, 2010 meeting: Motion by Ellen Hoehne, seconded by Judith Raymond, to accept the minutes of March 10, 2010 Meeting. Motion carried 3-0.
4. March 2010 Financial Statement
 - a. Danielle Batchelder reported on surpluses and deficits as of March 31, 2010. Danielle Batchelder noted that non-certified staff is in a deficit of \$135,065 and Special Transportation is a surplus of \$168,882, which is up from the February Financial Statement.
 - b. Judith Raymond asked if the legal fees were in the deficit because of negotiations. Danielle Batchelder reported that legal fees are in the deficit due to special education litigation, TEA Arbitration and on-going negotiations.
Motion made by Judith Raymond to accept the Financial Statement, seconded by Ellen Hoehne. Motion carried 3-0.
5. Budget Transfers
 - a. Danielle Batchelder noted that there were 5 transfers within the maintenance department. The electricity line item is running in a surplus of about \$89,000 due to consortium pricing for 09/10. The electricity account is broken down by school and the transfers are by school.
 - b. David Bascetta explained that Forbes Elementary School needs to remove old fire alarm devices and install new devices. THS needs an exhaust fan #68 C-Bldg replacement, retention head power flame burner and cafeteria air handler. TMS also needed replacement of bearing, belt and pulleys for air handlers. Torrington needed replacement of bearings and motors for an exhaust fan and Vogel needed to replace bearing assemblies, seals, gaskets and couplers on the main circulator Pumps and also a combustion head replacement for boiler #2.

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- c. Frank Rubino asked if all these items are maintenance items and if so, we should try to maintain these items within the maintenance line item in the general budget. Susan Cogswell asked if these items were in the 10/11 maintenance budget. Dave Bascetta said “no”. Dave Bascetta stated that these items have broken and need replacement.
- d. Susan Cogswell said that the Forbes project (replacement of fire alarm device) should be a priority. Judith Raymond agreed.
- e. Superintendent Leone asked what would have happened in money wasn’t there in years past to have these items replaced. Dave Bascetta responded that money could possibly be pulled from a different fund that had a surplus. Dave Bascetta also stated that in 08/09, the maintenance budget ran in the deficit of about \$28,000 and the 09/10 maintenance budget was reduce by \$25,000 during budget season.
- f. Dave Bascetta prioritized what items could be held back and possibly done in the 10/11 budget.
- g. Superintendent Leone recommended that we wait a month and come back to these transfer when the final budget is more known. Susan Cogswell, Judith Raymond, Ellen Hoehne and Frank Rubino all agreed.
- h. Frank Rubino noted that the Board needs to cover the insurance deficit first and then we can discuss possibly spending.
- i. Susan Cogswell asked that is we held the transfers for a month, would we be endangering students. Dave Bascetta said “no”.

Motion was made to wait on all the transfer for one month except the Forbes project which was approved to do. Ellen Hoehne accepted motion, Judith Raymond seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

6. Review of Grants (2009-10)

- a. Danielle Batchelder gave update on grants.
- b. Superintendent Leone gave specifics on ARRA Funds. Stated that we can repurpose the funds through acceptance from the state for the future but we cannot replace for the past. ARRA funds have to be exhausted by June 2011. We’re holding some funds because we are waiting to see if Forbes and Vogel make APY. If so, a portion of Title money will have to be spent on that.
- c. Frank Rubino asked if we could get any grants to help with maintenance items. Dave Bascetta explained that there are no grants out there right now.
- d. Superintendent Leone noted that the Budget Committee would be given monthly reports in the future on grants. Also noted that the District writes the grants and the Board approves the funds that are received.
- e. Susan Cogswell asked if the Board could review grants before there submitted to the state. Superintendent Leone stated that the timeline of grant submissions would not allow for that. The district is under tight deadlines by the state to receive grant responses.

Budget Committee Received the Grant Update and Review

7. Review of Legal Expenses

- a. Susan Cogswell noted that last budget committee, the committee asked for only legal expenses and not consulting fees and dues.

- b. Superintendent Leone explains legal fees and that the 10/11 budget has a placeholder of \$100,000 for legal fees. Superintendent Leone asked if the Board wanted to put an RFP out for a Law Firm to represent TPS.
- c. Susan Cogswell asked if this should be brought to Policy Committee first.
- d. Discussion on expulsion hearings and having one, two or any lawyers present.
- e. Superintendent Leone asked if we should send this to Policy Committee to stay status quo or put out an RFP for a Law Firm.
- f. Susan Cogswell stated the firms have a variety of specialty lawyers and that it should go back to Policy Committee. Ellen Hoehne agreed.

Motion to send to Policy Committee, Ellen Hoehne accepted, Judith Raymond seconded.
Motion carried 3-0.

8. Review Draft of Transportation Contract

- a. Susan Cogswell asked if the district would ask for a performance bond from All Star. Danielle Batchelder said, "yes".
- b. Susan Cogswell thinks that page 17; paragraph 1 should have tighter language.
- c. Superintendent Leone stated that the contract will go to the lawyer for tighter language and we will also clarify statement on page 3.
- d. Susan Cogswell wants this to go before the BOE at the next Board meeting.

Motion to recommend our Lawyer to review Page 17 and page 3 with the intent to take contract to the full Board next BOE meeting. Ellen Hoehne accepted motion, Judith Raymond seconded.
Motion carried 3-0.

9. Update on Fuel Costs

- a. Danielle Batchelder explained that there is still no movement of locking in a fee yet. The consortium is still waiting and watching the market. Frank Rubino agreed to wait it out.

10. THS Central Treasury Accounts

- a. Danielle Batchelder gave overview on how the THS student activity accounts run with a focus on the sports accounts.
- b. Susan Cogswell thought there should be a better way to account for it.
- c. Frank Rubino wanted this item to be brought to the committee so everyone could see and understand how much money is within the THS Student activity account. Frank Rubino thinks that we should put an RFP for banking services due to the large amount of money in the accounts. Thinks it should be competitive.
- d. Superintendent Leone asked how the committee would like to see this account moving forward.
- e. Susan Cogswell said to update committee quarterly on THS Student Activity account and once Danielle Batchelder has reviewed all schools, to have a presentation on all student activities in the district.

11. Additional Security cameras at THS

- a. Danielle Batchelder and Dave Bascetta gave overview of current security set up and advised the committee on additional camera systems. The new system would cost \$12,000.

These minutes were approved by the Torrington Budget Committee on May 12, 2010.

- b. Superintendent Leone stated that this is a sound investment for long term safety and security.
- c. Susan Cogswell wants this item to be brought back in a month once the final budget is more known.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ellen Hoehne and seconded by Judith Raymond. Motion carried 3-0.

Motion was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Submitted by Danielle Batchelder

Reviewed by Chris Leone

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