



Finance and Operations Subcommittee
Remote
October 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
Open Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Geoffrey Epstein (Chair), Beverly Hugo, Scott Wadland*, Tiffanie Maskell

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch, Matt and Mark Abrahams, The Abrahams Group, Executive Assistant to the School Committee Joanna Hastry

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He said this meeting was being broadcast live on Facebook and being recorded. He read those in attendance, and how to participate in public comment.

Public Comment

No public comment

Student Activity Account Audit

Mark and Matt Abrahams from the Abrahams Group went over the Student Activity Account Audit, and showed what items were not satisfied and the recommendations for action items to rectify. They said that they recommend that sports raised funds are not kept in a student activity account and instead in a rolling account. It was noted that the School Committee needs to vote on the provisions per the student activity account policy, and need to vote annually on the student activity accounts. There was discussion around training for staff regarding handling cash and storage. In response to questions, the Abrahams Group said that there needs to be a School Committee policy on disposition of deficit balances, and the travel policies need to be revised per DESE guidelines regarding costs. Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch said that he will be presenting a plan of action for the items that were not satisfied at a future meeting. Discussion on what pieces need to be policy versus procedural, and based on recommendations that come from the future meeting members can look at what the Policy Subcommittee also needs to look at.

Warrant Process Update

Mr. Epstein said that they have recaptured the warrant process with full review of invoices. He asked that the shared drive that has warrants be looked into to make sure all warrants are included for all dates.

P-Card Need and Means to Get One

Mr. Epstein said that staff reimbursements were also mentioned in the audit, and said that a P-Card would make things much easier to purchase and cut down on reimbursements, but the City Treasurer has not approved this happening. Mr. Lynch spoke to protocols and procedures that could be put in place to track every purchase and ensure no abuse or fraud. He spoke to how it could be a more efficient and standard operation.

Motion: To recommend that the School Committee make a formal request to the City Treasurer to issue a P-card to the Executive Director of Finance and Operations.

Moved: Mr. Epstein **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo

Discussion: Members spoke about how there can be a cap on the credit card limit, and can trust the Executive Director of Finance and Operations to manage it since he manages the entire district budget.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (4-0-0) (Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Epstein, Maskell)

FY21 Operating Budget

Discussion on the new \$2.3 million Chapter 70 funds, and how the City Council needs to approve how these funds will be distributed, which will be happening in late October. Discussion on how the full funds are intended to go to the District's budget, and this year there is a one year agreement for \$630,000 to go to health insurance, which usually would be paid out of the City's budget.

Mr. Lynch said that he would recommend waiving the bus and parking fees for the rest of the year. Mr. Epstein asked how often bus fees are paid, as well as if the fees could be split up fiscally so this could be looked at again further into the year. Mr. Lynch said they are usually paid all at once, unless there is a payment plan in place. He said that the income generated from bus fees is usually around \$300,000, and based on the contract amendment from Durham the District will be saving much more than that amount. He said the bus fees would definitely need to be reinstated in FY22. He said it would be very hard to split the fees, as would have to figure out price per day, and figure in students going back to in person learning at different times through the year. Mr. Wadland said that the bus and parking fees are also to help with the demand and availability, and if there were concerns with that if the fees were to be removed. Mr. Lynch said that in a normal year he would agree with that, but due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines they have had to cut bus ridership by a third, and follow the policy on eligible riders. Members discussed how families are having a hard time right now financially, how when more students do go back in person there will be a need for more buses, the uncertainty of when the hybrid model will start, and possibility of setting a date to revisit again.

Motion: To recommend that the School Committee, on the advice of the Executive Director of Finance and Operations, waive bus fees until January 4th, 2021.

Moved: Mr. Epstein **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell

Discussion: Discussion on having this reviewed at a point prior to January 4, 2021 in order to make a decision for the rest of the school year.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (4-0-0) (Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Epstein, Maskell)

Motion: To recommend that the School Committee, on the advice of the Executive Director of Finance and Operations, waive parking fees until January 4th, 2021.

Moved: Mr. Wadland **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (4-0-0) (Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Epstein, Maskell)

Discussion on COVID-19 issues such as classroom space or providing lunch in person, including how there are 60 classrooms that cannot have six feet distancing, and if there are any financial impacts. Mr. Lynch said there will be less students in a classroom, so there will be no financial implications, but there could be financial implications with lunch.

*Mr. Wadland had to leave the meeting for a few moments at 7:41p.m. and returned to the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

He said that they will need to hire new staff to keep track of who is buying lunch, helping with delivering it to classrooms, and the mode of transportation such as with coolers to move them. He said that he is not worried about the amount of those costs. He said there are no financial impacts with technology needed during COVID-19, such as hotspots or Chromebooks, as they were covered by grants or COVID-19 funding. Mr. Lynch said that he has been working with VanPool to have a similar contract agreement with Durham, and they are in agreement with that, but they are requesting that if an out of district school or Framingham Public Schools stop operations mid-week, they are paid for the full week. He said this is to ensure that the drivers get paid. He said that he will continue working with them and will bring the final proposal to the full School Committee.

FY22 Operating Budget

Discussion on local contribution, Chapter 70 funds, and reserve funds and how the District should work on providing historical data and the reasons why the problems with these need to be resolved with the City, and include it in the budget book. Discussion on reviewing this data at the next meeting. Mr. Lynch said that the City is now using a platform called Open.Gov on funds being spent, and has a budget book builder that is interactive, which will help with developing the District's budget book as well. Discussion on how capital projects have been underfunded for years, and looking at the financial aspects of this, how much is actually needed every year, and financial implications for putting projects off. Mr. Lynch spoke about how some of this information will be provided at the next full School Committee meeting. Ms. Hugo asked for the end of year reports for 2018 and 2019 to be able to compare when looking at FY22.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of May 28, 2020 and July 22, 2020.

Moved: Ms. Maskell **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (4-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Epstein, Maskell)

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. Wadland **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (4-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Epstein, Maskell)

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

2018-2019 Student Activity Accounts Audit

Draft May 28, 2020 Minutes

Draft July 22, 2020 Minutes

These minutes were approved by the Finance and Operations Subcommittee in Open Session on January 7, 2021.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on January 11, 2021.