

BOE Finance Subcommittee Special Meeting
January 9, 2025 6pm
PPMS Library

1. **Call to Order:**

Megan Gallant (MG), BoE Finance Subcommittee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM. Other BoE Finance Subcommittee members present: Deborah Burke-Grabarek (DBG). Absent: Michael Hinton (MH). Also present: Dr. Roy Seitsinger (RS), Preston Schools Superintendent; Cindy Varricchio (CV), Director of Finance; Vicky Schwery (VS), Fiscal Assistant; Thomas Wright (TW), Board of Finance representative.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Comment:**

No public comment was submitted via email, nor was any provided by members of the public.

4. **Approval of Minutes:**

DBG made a motion to approve the BoE Finance Subcommittee meeting minutes from 12/5/24. MG seconded. All were in favor; the minutes were approved.

5. **Business:**

• **Approval of BoE Finance Subcommittee Meeting Dates for 2025/2026:**

BoE FSC members DBG and MG discussed future meeting dates and agreed it would be appropriate to continue holding regularly scheduled meetings the Thursday prior to the regularly scheduled BoE meetings.

DBG motioned to approve the 2025/2026 meeting dates; MG seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

• **2023-2024 Update:**

CV and RS confirmed that the draft audit should be available next week, and they anticipate that the audit will be filed by January 31. Both CV and RS praised the auditors' diligence and hard work.

• **2024-2025 Budget Report:**

CV reviewed the 2024-2025 Year-To-Date Budget Report. All line items are currently on track, and there are no major concerns. CV clarified that the 'Contracted Services' budget line is currently over budget due to the need to contract transportation services. This overage will be offset by reduced 'Salary' expenditures, as these contracted services are replacing an unstaffed position.

• **2025-2026 Budget Discussion and Kickoff:**

CV and RS discussed initial considerations for the budget, including:

- A 4% increase was assumed for categories where the actual increase is unknown or undetermined at this time. These categories will be refined as the budget process proceeds.
- Special Education costs are unpredictable and are determined by sending districts at the secondary level, as well as for any "out-of-district" placements. These costs are non-negotiable.
- Investments in cybersecurity remain crucial, as evidenced by the PowerSchool data breach earlier this month.

- Grants received during COVID were carefully used to mitigate a potential fiscal cliff. While these grants will be exhausted in the coming year, the district does not anticipate a significant impact on operations.
- No curriculum purchases are recommended or anticipated for the next fiscal year, as both math and reading curricula were purchased in the last two years.
- **Budget Summary Worksheet:**
 - **Salaries:** VS reviewed the 'Salary' line item, confirming that it reflects all contractual obligations based on census data. This line item currently shows an increase of \$626K and is essentially fixed.
 - **Employee Benefits:** VS clarified that this line item includes health benefits, insurance, FICA, and 403(b) contributions. The anticipated increase for this category is 11.9%, but the district is working with the broker to reduce rates where possible.
 - **Utilities:** A 20% increase in electricity costs and a 15% increase in propane costs are estimated.
 - **Administrative Support:** This category reflects a 5% projected increase due to increases in Worker's Compensation costs.
 - **Tuitions/Student Services:** Both categories are projected to increase by 4%, with RS confirming that these costs are fixed and set by sending districts.
 - **Transportation:** The district is currently maintaining an aging fleet, and the increase in this budget category reflects the need for increased maintenance. RS reminded everyone that the Capital Improvements request includes funding for the purchase of new vans and buses.
 - **Other:** At this time, the Plant Operations, Operational Support, Supplies, and Instructional Technology categories are not ready for discussion and currently reflect their baseline budgets from the current fiscal year. These categories will be updated throughout the budget workshop process.
 - **Overall Budget Increase:** The current worksheet reflects a \$1.17 million increase, but this number will evolve over the next four weeks of budget workshops.
- **Town Budget Calendar:**

The town's budget calendar has not yet been set, but CV anticipates the BoF presentation to take place in mid-March. RS also reminded members that the BoF meeting on 1/16/25 will include a discussion on Capital Projects.
- 6. **Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made by DBG and seconded by MG. All were in favor; the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.

The next BoE Finance Subcommittee meeting will be held on January 16, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the PPMS Library.