



Lowell City Council

Finance SC/School FSC Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: October 27, 2020
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Zoom/City Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT:

Present on Roll Call were C. Elliott, C. Conway, C. Nuon, SC Martin, SC Descoteaux and SC Hoey. Also present were Conor Baldwin (CFO), C. Samaras, Supt. Boyd, Billie Jo Turner (Asst. Supt. Of Schools), C. Chau, Allison Chambers (Asst. CFO), SC Clark and Tina Masiello (City Auditor).

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

C. Elliott called the meeting to order noting the attendance. SC Martin noted attendance and requested Ms. Turner provide presentation.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Ms. Turner provided to subcommittee the following presentation entitled "Lowell Public Schools Joint Subcommittee Budget Update as of October 27, 2020". The presentation highlighted the following topics: strategic use of FY20 savings; review of Section 64 (payment of bills in excess of appropriations); delayed bills and; uncertainties for FY21. Ms. Turner noted that there could be a surplus or deficit for next year and it is difficult to calculate. SC Martin noted the final budget had been approved noting it was in line to what had been allocated and that a number of new positions were added. C. Elliott questioned the status of the food service revolving fund. Ms. Turner commented on different reimbursement formulas and that there monthly reports. SC Martin noted that all children in the school system are eligible for free food programs. Supt. Boyd noted areas where food is available as school is remote with no one in the building. SC Hoey noted prior reimbursements were short due to error in submissions. Ms.

Turner noted that better verification of costs was needed to correct submissions. Ms. Turner was not aware of current formula as the Department of Education had yet to set it. C. Samaras noted prior administration issue was that they were overcharging for services rendered in this area. Ms. Turner noted a correction to the charges were made and that they are charging at lower percentage. C. Nuon questioned costs of tutors used throughout the system. Supt. Boyd



noted teachers are available for services for students, the special education services may see increased in out of district costs as they go remote in City system. C. Nuon questioned status of transportation costs. Supt. Boyd noted payments that will be made regardless if busses are used. SC Martin noted that special education costs could have a dramatic effect on the budget. C. Nuon noted goal should be to keep all students in the district. C. Nuon questioned if City could provide services to other communities as a source of revenue. SC Descoteaux noted St. Louis School campus could be a possible site to house special education services. SC Hoey noted City was short funded when the Student Opportunity Act was altered. C. Elliott noted that system is full of needs for services and that they must be attended to. Supt. Boyd commented that system must take care of own before services are offered elsewhere. C. Conway noted need for in-house special education and questioned use of substitute teachers while system is remote. C. Conway questioned the adding of position during this budget. Supt. Boyd noted positions were restored positions. SC Martin noted new positions did not impact bottom line. C. Conway commented that meetings should continue between both administrations throughout the fiscal year. C. Elliott noted the importance of the meetings. Ms. Turner commented on meeting schedules. C. Conway noted that there should not be surprised regarding finances. C. Elliott discussed bad bills being sent from school side noting that it is October and being brought forward this late and at all is not acceptable. Ms. Turner commented on efforts to clean up bad bills and that the guidelines on them became stricter. C. Elliott noted that was the City Auditor doing the proper oversight. C. Elliott voiced his displeasure with educational reimbursement being part of the bad bill process as people seeking such funding should be well aware of time constraints in the system and he is not inclined to reimburse these costs. SC Hoey noted the efforts of the Superintendent and the School Committee. C. Elliott noted that future budgets are going to be greatly impacted and that preparation should be done in that regard. City Auditor Masiello commented on purchase orders in line with payment of bills.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn by SC Marin, seconded by C. Nuon. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk