

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
HELD AT DODD MIDDLE SCHOOL ON JANUARY 30, 2024 AT 7:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg-Chair; Anne Harrigan-Vice Chair; Adam Grippo-Secretary; Anne Marie Cullinan; Mark Ecke; Anthony Perugini; Timothy White (7:05)

Board Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer, Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Robin-Anne Carey, Director, Pupil Personnel Services; Mary Jocelyn-Gadd, Principal, Cheshire High School; Diana Burns, Principal, Chapman Elementary School; Katharine Carlucci, Assistant Principal, Chapman & Norton Elementary Schools; Kimberly Dessert, Principal-Darcey School; Amy O'Brien, Principal, Doolittle School; Jodie Roden, Principal-Norton School; Scott Jeffrey, Principal, Highland Elementary School; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Mike Woods, Community Engagement Coordinator.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:03 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called, and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Ms. Rosenberg led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDED BUDGET.

None.

3. FINANCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE 2024/25 PROPOSED BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Dr. Harrigan, Chair of the Finance Committee reviewed that there were two very in-depth Budget Review meetings the previous week. She explained that the Finance Committee would like to -move the pre-engineering and environmental science proposals forward into this budget and keep fencing as a varsity sport. She said they also wanted to consider the current financial climate, so they asked Dr. Solan to try to bring the budget proposal increase under 6%. Dr. Harrigan asked Dr. Solan to review his recommended reductions.

Dr. Solan said there was a lot of interest in adding pre-engineering and environmental science (2 elementary teaching positions) as well as fencing, which was already included in the budget proposal. In order to bring the budget under 6% as requested, he shared that they would need to make reductions in other places. He said the most difficult

decision was to cut the German program at Dodd Middles School and eliminate that teaching position. He said it is in no way a reflection on the teacher, but the fact that German is the least selected language by Dodd students. Over the past four years, only 22% of students had German in their top two choices. They will keep German at the high school and those students who are taking German in 7th grade will be taught German in 8th grade by the high school German teacher. He outlined his recommendation as listed below that would bring the proposed budget, for the 2024-2025 school year, to \$90,067,609 or 5.97% over the current budget.

Line #		
113 (Teachers)	increase	\$48,789
115 (Homebound)	decrease	\$10,000
560 (Tuition/Outplacements)	decrease	\$125,000
611 (Instructional Supply)	increase	\$120,000
641 (Textbooks/Software)	decrease	\$15,000
642 (Library/Periodicals)	decrease	\$5,000
644 (Library/Media Supply)	decrease	\$1,710
730 (Replacement Equipment)	decrease	\$6,250
731 (New Equipment)	decrease	\$6,250
610 (Office Supply)	decrease	\$4,235
732 (Capital Equipment)	decrease	\$5,000
420 (Maintenance/Repair Equipment)	decrease	\$5,000
430 (Maintenance/Repair Buildings)	decrease	\$50,000

MOTION by Mr. Ecke, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

MOVED that the Finance Committee submit to the full Board of Education a proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 of \$90,067,609, an increase of \$5,074,180 over the current year's budget.

Discussion:

Mr. Grippo said he has an alternate motion but will bring it to the full Board. Mr. Perugini asked if these requests to the Superintendent were discussed at the budget meeting Thursday. Dr. Harrigan said, no, she and the Board Chair discussed, between Thursday and tonight, and came to the decision that they wanted to keep the pre-engineering and environmental science program in the budget and bring the budget under some constraints. Mr. Ecke said he supports this budget and thinks it is a good balance between the needs of the schools and being fiscally responsible for the Town. He said he supports the addition of the science and pre-engineering program and the fencing program.

Dr. Harrigan said, as a language teacher herself, she loathes cutting this program. She said she had a good conversation with Dr. Solan on this matter and unfortunately, difficult decisions have to be made sometimes. This was not a decision that was made lightly.

VOTE: The Motion passed 3-0.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Grippo, and seconded by Mr. Ecke, the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

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