

Call to order: A regular meeting of the Shelton Board of Education Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, October 18, 2017. The meeting convened at 5:02 p.m., Chairman Win Oppel presiding.

Roll Call:

Members in Attendance: Chairman Win Oppel via Skype, Dr. Darlisa Ritter, Kate Kutash, Faith Hack, David Gioiello, Mark Holden, Kathleen Yolish.

Absent: Tom Minotti (excused), Amanda Kilmartin (excused).

Also in Attendance: Dr. Chris Clouet, Superintendent, Ed Drapp, Finance Director, John Calhoun, Facilities Manager, Judson Crawford, Shelton Senior Center Commission, Deborah Keller, President Shelton Education Association, Wayne Bragg, Board of Education Candidate, Jim Burns, Transportation Director, Cafeteria Workers.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mark Holden MOVED to amend the agenda; proposing that we add under "New Business," a discussion of the protocol for Board of Education request of the administration relating to financial matters, SECONDED by Faith Hack. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

Approval of the Agenda:

Faith Hack MOVED to approve the amended agenda, SECONDED by Dr. Darlisa Ritter. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

Win Oppel opened the floor for a public portion. Karen Moriarty spoke on behalf of the cafeteria staff and their concerns regarding their Whitsons' contract. Win Oppel stated that the negotiations are between their union, who represents the cafeteria staff, and Whitsons. The Board will not interfere in these negotiations.

Approval of the Minutes: "Regular" Finance Committee September 20, 2017:

Mark Holden MOVED to approve the meeting minutes, SECONDED by Faith Hack. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

- **Year-to-Date Object Summary, (L2) for 2016-17 School Year through September (handout):**

Ed Drapp stated that there has been no substantial change since the last report. We are closing out a few late incoming invoices, but then we will be working with the auditor to close out the school year. Our projection is a little over \$4,000 as a carryover from the budget.

- **Year-to-Date Object Summary, (L2) for 2017-18 School Year through September (handout):**

Ed Drapp stated that most of the major items are coming in as budgeted. There have been a few out of district placements which we expect to cover with funds from the Excess Cost Grant. Overages that are shown on the handout will change when we encumber some funds, and we are counting on excess cost revenue from the state to cover anything that goes over budget. We are running significantly under budget for Special Education Transportation in relation to where we were last year as a result of the bidding that was done. We do anticipate some excess cost money to further onset the transportation for special transportation. John Calhoun will speak on a few maintenance issues that we had in the last week or two. We should be okay in that area. It is relatively early in the school year, so it is always unknown what will happen during the year. Everything looks to be proceeding according to budget except for the few items just mentioned. David Gioiello asked about the approximate dollar amount that we will have to make up regarding private tuition if there is no money received from the state. Ed Drapp responded that we are approximately \$656,000 over budget. Last year we brought in \$1.5 million

in excess costs reimbursements. We have no reason to believe that will not be forthcoming, even if there is a small reduction. David Gioiello asked what line item does the food service contract fall under. Win Oppel stated that it is an off-budget item. Ed Drapp stated that we have not had any expenses and that we have just received our first bill for September. There will be a report out on that once there is some activity. David Gioiello asked if the bill would define the expenses. Ed Drapp replied, yes. David Gioiello asked if these expenses are offset by the selling of the cafeteria items. Ed Drapp replied that funds come from sales and various reimbursements. David Gioiello asked what the audit process was for sales. Ed Drapp replied, cash is deposited at the schools, the bank receipts are sent to the Finance Department, and there's reconciliation between cash register reports, cash, and bank receipts. David Gioiello asked if we have access to back up data. Ed Drapp responded, yes. Kathleen Yolish asked when we will have an idea of how well the sales are. Ed Drapp responded that we would be able to quantify and make some comparisons quarterly. We have a \$4,000 income guarantee and any funds over that amount will go to the schools, and any loss will be absolved by Whitsons. Kathleen Yolish asked if we deny students lunch after a number of times of not having lunch money or after maxing out their credit limit. Ed Drapp responded that there will always be an alternative lunch for children to have after reaching their credit limit and no child has been or will be turned away for lunch. David Gioiello asked where we would find legacy cost in the budget, benefits that we continue to pay retired employees. Ed Drapp responded, typically these costs are in the benefits line. David Gioiello asked if it would be possible to develop and inform the Board what those costs are and who receives legacy benefits. Win Oppel stated that in the budget book there is a gross number, but he is unsure if it has ever been individualized. David Gioiello stated that it's a burden that future boards have to bear and it would behoove us to get those costs in line and if we can, negotiate our way out of them so that future boards don't have to worry about them. Win Oppel stated that the SEA stepped up the last time that we were in a difficult time and had furlough days that were paid at retirement or exit. Kathleen Yolish mentioned that we should look into the amount of money owed to teachers for those days taken in the past.

Approval of the Year-to-Date Object Summary, (L2) for 2016-17 School Year through September & (L2) for 2017-18 School Year through September (handout):

Faith Hack MOVED to approve the Year-to-Date Object Summaries, SECONDED by Mark Holden. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

Approval of the Check Register & A/P Cash Disbursements:

Faith Hack MOVED to approve the Check Register & A/P Cash Disbursements, SECONDED by Dr. Darlisa Ritter. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

- **Report on Facilities**

John Calhoun stated that the second boiler at Sunnyside School was beyond repair. He spoke with the city representatives and the Mayor, and he approved us to go out and bid to replace that at the expense of the city. That project is in progress right now. It will be a dual service unit. A 250-gallon water heater is being replaced by three tankless water heaters at Perry Hill School due to deterioration from hard water. Until the tankless water heaters are installed, we are using a temporary water heater, just for the kitchen. The City of Shelton will take on that replacement cost as well. The water heater at Sunnyside School died, it is a smaller expense. It is being replaced today and should be working tomorrow. At Sunnyside School, work continues on the front entryway and fascia. We are ordering the vinyl product and LED lighting for the front entryway. We hope to get all of this completed within the next 2 to 3 weeks. At Shelton High School, we are completing punch list items and repairing a few minor leaks as they are reported. We are scheduled to finalize the project with the Fire Marshall soon. Unfortunately, there was a mishap with the fuel cell, so we have postponed preparations to become an emergency

shelter at this time. School Administrators are reaching out to the state to ensure that the proper documentation is in place to begin the process of bidding out the window project at Elizabeth Shelton School. Members from the City and the School District met at the High School to discuss the High School Field Turf and Track Replacement project and scope before going out to bid for engineering services. The City approved the project to go out to bid. The Bid is currently out and will be opened on October 25th, 2017. Dr. Darlisa Ritter asked for an update on the ceiling fans for classrooms. John Calhoun replied that the cost would be about \$250.00 for two fans per classroom. Win Oppel asked how many classrooms will receive ceiling fans. John Calhoun stated approximately 100+ classrooms. Win Oppel asked if an estimate can be put together for the cost of the electrical work. John Calhoun replied, yes. Dr. Darlisa Ritter asked about the status of the LED lights. John Calhoun replied that we are starting the LED light upgrades at Sunnyside School on Monday. We've done audits at the High School which is our next target. He will be reviewing the proposals for those, and then we will probably start that after the 1st of the year. David Gioiello asked if there has been any reconciliation regarding maintenance of the school grounds. John Calhoun replied that the city is severely understaffed and plans on having another maintenance exam to help fill some of their vacancies. Dr. Darlisa Ritter asked about the electrical use at the High School and the comparisons to the increase of the electrical bills. John Calhoun stated that we are hoping to find answers through the electrical audit.

- **Old Business:**

- **Athletic Account:**

Ed Drapp stated that there was \$67,609.00 in the Athletic Account.

- **Student Parting Fees:**

Ed Drapp stated that there was \$23,300 in the Student Parking Fees.

- **Food Services- Cafeteria:**

Win Oppel asked if there was any new information regarding the current negotiations. Ed Drapp stated that the last negotiation session was on October 12, 2017, and they will meet again on October 23, 2017. They are exchanging different proposals. Win Oppel stated that Whitsons has done what we have asked for them to do. According to the bylaws and policy when Board Members are requesting information, the Board Members should make any request through the Chairman, the Chairman should request it through the Superintendent, and the Superintendent should request it from the staff. Dr. Christopher Clouet stated that David Gioiello posed a question to whether or not there was a legal opinion that the Board should not be involved in the negotiations. There is a State opinion, and we have that document. It is a document sent to us after the vetting of the contract with Whitsons expressing what party is responsible for what aspect, and it is very clear to what party is not responsible for negotiations of benefits. That would be the Board of Education. David Gioiello stated that he requested a copy of the documents that the contractors were required to submit when they submitted their RFP that states information about their wages and benefits. He also requested information about their wages and benefits that should've been submitted since we now have a contract with Whitsons. Ed Drapp stated if we make any changes to the information that was sent to the state we would have to start the bidding process for the Cafeteria over again, from the beginning. Ed Drapp stated that he would be able to provide the information on what they provide all of their employees for benefits, right out of their handbook. These benefits are not customized for Shelton Public Schools. Kathleen Yolish stated when the committee went through the volumes of food services that were offered, and they talked to each one, Sodexo did say that they would be renegotiating a contract. They planned to go in with a 0% pay freeze for the first year, a slight raise each additional year, and they would be changing

insurance benefits. We said that our primary concerns were that all of the workers had the opportunity to have a job, we wanted Linda Stanisci to stay, and we wanted them to have medical benefits. Kate Kutash asked if the workers were aware that Sodexo planned to start their new contract that way. Dr. Christopher Clouet stated that in the budget situation that we are in now, with limited resources, we were losing a lot of money with Sodexo and he would rather have that money available to keep teachers on board. We have been very fair, and very respectful. We should stand back and let the process work itself out.

○ **Transportation Bid:**

Ed Drapp provided a handout of the history of pricing for the past five years. These items are what we would be bidding out this year. Bids go through the City of Shelton. It is the city's intent to continue use of their buses. Win Oppel asked if we would allow bidders to submit a proposal if they used their buses. Ed Drapp replied that would have to be a board discussion. Win Oppel stated that in the previous bids we had an average fleet age of 6 years. Mark Holden asked what shape are our buses in currently. Jim Burns stated that after talking with Matt, the terminal manager, he hadn't highlighted any particular buses that require more maintenance or more cost associated with maintenance to this point. There are some that have more miles than others. Win Oppel asked if they rotate the buses. Jim Burns replied, no. David Gioiello suggested that we put into the contract that the buses have to be rotated so that we don't have buses with twice as much mileage than others. Mark Holden responded that might be a way to decide what buses should be replaced. Ed Drapp stated that it was his understanding that we want to be out for bidding around November.

○ **Conservation Initiatives:**

Ed Drapp stated that he's been meeting with some of the principals to take some common sense approaches in order to change habits through education and awareness. We are dealing with things like printing and copying, turning off lights, personal appliances, and other short term and long term changes that can be made to conserve energy and save money. We've been monitoring the cooling unit at the high school. We think that will save us money, regarding energy and water. We are involving the students in the initiatives. We will be establishing some baseline data. This all will be shared quarterly with the board.

○ **Fuel Cell:**

We are working with the city to lock in some rates. Right now for the fuel cell, we are about over \$8.00. For the fuel cell, we are looking at locking in at a rate of \$4.40. Win Oppel asked if we have resolved the issue of volume because that seemed to be a driving cost. Ed Drapp stated that the fuel cell is constant. Every day throughout the year we can lock in the cost for the fuel cell. By locking in at \$4.40, we will save \$120,000 over what we've spent this year. We are looking at locking in the natural gas and electric as well. Win Oppel asked how long we would be able to lock in for. Ed Drapp stated that we are looking to lock in for three years.

Mark Holden MOVED to recommend that the Superintendent and Finance Director are authorized to proceed with rate locks for natural gas and electricity, SECONDED by Dr. Darlisa Ritter. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

● **New Business:**

○ **National Federation High School Sports School Broadcast Program:**

Ed Drapp stated there was a discussion during the policy committee about how the subscriptions should be charged. Maybe we can work to understand the subscriptions and make a recommendation to the full board on what the charges should be. There are various programs and discounts. Win Oppel stated that it would probably be a good idea to have the Athletic Director, John Niski, to come in and show the menu and alternatives. The Connecticut Association of Schools decided to pay half of the camera costs. We will be able to everything within budget. Ed Drapp stated that he will have John make some proposals to bring to the next Finance Committee meeting.

○ **Review/Approval or 2018 Finance Committee Meeting Schedule:**

Ed Drapp handed out the proposed meeting schedule for the 2018 calendar year. Ed Drapp stated that he has been working with the superintendent in order to put together a budget calendar. They will be incorporating some community forums on some of the schools to get community input.

Dr. Darlisa Ritter MOVED to adopt the schedule for the Finance Committee for the 2018 calendar year, SECONDED by Faith Hack. A vote was taken with all in favor, motion carried.

Win Oppel stated that this would be his last Finance Committee Meeting.

Win Oppel adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita Smith

Anita Smith

Recording Secretary