



**COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
Colchester, Connecticut

**BUDGET FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 5, 2023 8:00 AM  
Pupil Services Conference Room

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Christopher Rivers, Alexander Oliphant

**ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:** Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Business Director Rachel Linkkila, Accountant Michelle Marceau, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk Heather Petit, Board of Finance Liaison Michael Egan

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COLCHESTER, CT  
2023 APR - 6 AM 8: 51  
Gayle Furman  
TOWN CLERK

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Budget Finance Committee Chair called the meeting to at 8:00 AM

1.2 Roll Call

Budget Finance Committee Chair conducted a roll call

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

2.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct  
Michael Egan, Board of Finance Liaison

Mr. Egan said he thought the Joint Meeting last night (Tuesday, April 4, 2023) went well. Mr. Egan stated that the Board of Finance is getting closer and appreciates the patience of the Board of Education.

3. \*PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

3.1 \*Approval of Budget Finance Committee Minutes of March 1, 2023

**Motion by:** Alexander Oliphant

To approve the Budget Finance Committee minutes of March 1, 2023

**Seconded by:** Christopher Rivers

**Roll call:** All in favor

Motion carried.

3.2 Budget Reports

Discussion was had in regard to the monthly budget reports and placing them on the website before the Committee has a chance to review the reports. It was concluded that the monthly reports will be put on the website going forward with a “draft” watermark. Ms. Linkkila will work on draft language regarding posting of unapproved Committee/Board reports (i.e. within

seven business days the report will be posted) for the website. Ms. Linkkila will also send the monthly reports to the whole board.

#### January Monthly Report

Christopher Rivers asked about encumbrance of salaries and asked about a timeline regarding notice of retirement. Mr. Sullivan said there is an incentive in the teacher's contract to notify the district early but there is no required timeline and staff can announce retirement at any time.

Ms. Linkkila said there is concern in regard to certified staff going out on leave and the additional expense of hiring a substitute to fill the position in the interim in terms of budgeting. Ms. Linkkila went over the vacancies as of March 31, 2023.

Mr. Rivers asked about Pupil Services line items in the monthly budget report. Ms. Linkkila spoke to line items 44561, 44562, 43323, 43326, 43327 and 43510 and stated that the district is able to use excess cost to cover those expenses. Ms. Linkkila explained that the town keeps anything over the excess cost amount needed and puts it into their revenue.

Discussion was had in regard to the operational audit. Mr. Rivers stated that he feels the district and town can move forward to discuss excess cost and other items before the operational audit is done. Mr. Sullivan stated that the district was never asked to help fund an operational audit and there has been no discussion about the cost and has not been budgeted for. Ms. Linkkila reiterated that the district only receives as much excess cost from the town to make those accounts whole. Mr. Rivers said that both boards (Board of Finance and Board of Education) should have discussion with their members and then work together to see what the best process is moving forward.

Discussion was had in regard to the district telephone system and oil spill at Bacon Academy. Mr. Sullivan stated that there was a need to update the phone system as the previous system was antiquated and phones were not working at some of the schools. Mr. Rivers asked for detail on how the Bacon Academy oil spill was paid for.

#### February Monthly Report

Ms. Linkkila said that the district has paid 98% of certified salaries already for this year, so this will have to be something to look at this closer for next year as the district budgets for MA step 9 and this may need to be adjusted. Mr. Sullivan said that there is an option to possibly contract for services the district is unable to fill on its own.

Ms. Linkilla distributed a comparison report.

#### Health Insurance Reserve Report

Mr. Rivers reported that he has not received a response from the First Selectman in regard to the letter sent about the Health Insurance Reserve fund. Mr. Sullivan asked that the committee send a follow up email so the district can plan accordingly for next fiscal year and if it's beneficial to have a shared account.

Ms. Linkkila said that she will be having a meeting with the insurance company today as it may not be the best insurance for employees or the district. Ms. Linkkila said the town is on a “richer” plan and offers more benefits. She is hoping to learn more at the meeting today.

Mr. Rivers confirmed that the district needs to look around to make sure they have the best plan. Mr. Rivers stated that if the town does not properly fund the health insurance reserve, the district may look at having their own insurance program as the district is currently covering town expenses.

Ms. Linkkila said the town is behind in paying their bills so the district has not received payment from the town as of yet. Ms. Linkkila said that they are aware and the new director is working on rectifying this. Mr. Egan asked how long ago the last payment was from the town. Ms. Linkkila said the last payment was made in December 2022. Ms. Linkkila discussed the shared accounts. Ms. Linkkila said that they have not made payment in 2023 as of this time.

### 3.2 Budget Transfers Under \$5,000

Ms. Linkkila discussed budget transfers under \$5,000. No action taken; informational only.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the Committee would authorize account titles to be renamed in the interest of transparency and understandability. Mr. Rivers asked that they bring the proposed account title changes to the Committee for review before going to the full board for approval.

### 3.3 Budget Transfers Over \$5,000

None.

## 4. \*PUBLIC COMMENT

### 4.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

Joanne Rose

Joanne Rose asked about the cafeteria report. Ms. Linkkila said that it is a quarterly report and will be available for the next meeting. Ms. Rose thanked the Board of Education and staff for all of their work.

Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III

Mr. Sullivan said it greatly concerned him that the Board of Finance continued discussion on a specific special education student at last night’s meeting. Mr. Sullivan discussed the National Freedom of Information (FOI) Coalition and discussed all FOI exemptions. Mr. Sullivan stated that there are only 14 students in the school district who currently have an out of district placement. He expressed that when people start talking about one student it can be highly identifiable and they are not creating a community that is welcoming and accepting of all individuals. He stated it is a potential liability for the district and a violation of the students rights. Mr. Sullivan asked that going forward the Board of Education and Board of Finance partner and say to the community we will not comment on one specific student. Mr. Sullivan said he does not want anyone to be vilified.

Mr. Rivers stated that he agrees completely and thinks a statement should come from the Board of Education in regard to this to the Board of Finance.

5. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by:** Alexander Oliphant

To adjourn the Budget Finance Committee Meeting at 9:11 AM

**Seconded by:** Christopher Rivers

**Roll call:** All in favor

Motion carried.