

RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RUTLAND CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS – FINANCE/PLANNING COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

April 30, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Joanne Pencak, Chair
Ann Dages
Dena Goldberg
Charlene Seward
Alsion Notte
Kevin Kiefaber
Cathy Solsaa

Also Present:

Superintendent Dave Wolk
Incoming Superintendent Bill Olsen
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
CFO Mary Alma Noonan
Patricia Aigner
Michael Derevjanik

Discussion of Committee Charge – Chair Pencak reviewed goals and expectations including: policy development and review, identifying/scrutinizing types of resources (and how they are allocated), identifying risks and exposures, changing parameters around audit (having the auditors report to the committee), budget work, Board and public education (re: how school financing works and how it affects taxpayers), strategic planning (working closely with other committees related to finance), making sure financial policies are in line and reporting.

COMMITTEE
CHARGE

Strategic Planning – Superintendent Wolk suggested asking for help with planning and recommended that the Committee might start by developing an RFP for a consultant and looking at working with the Regional Planning Commission and City Planner. He advised that it makes sense to do more detailed student enrollment projects and demographics. He suggested that there may not be a need for all of the traditional brick and mortar buildings in the future, given remote learning opportunities. He advised that **Michael Derevjanik will share Facilities Assessments with Committees. Superintendent Wolk will search to see what strategic plans are out here and will put ideas down on paper prior to leaving his position.**

STRATEGIC
PLANNING

The State Weighting Study – Superintendent Wolk advised that potential weighting changes could have a huge impact on schools going forward. No significant changes have been made since Act 60 and Act 68. Approximately 2/3 of our budget comes from the State, making funding changes very high stakes. Rutland has the second highest poverty level in the State. There has been a growing feeling of inequity in the system with a correlation between poverty, social services and special education. Chair Pencak noted her desire to take the lead in educating the Board, getting the public interested and advocating with Legislatures. There was no opposition regarding Chair Pencak leading this charge. Superintendent Wolk and Assistant Superintendent Bliss both advised getting out in front of this issue early, starting as a tactical leader in the region now and keeping the message rolling/not falling behind. Mary Alma Noonan explained that the total funding will not change, but the formula determines how much each district gets. There will be winners and losers. This issues is also tied to proposed changes with Act 133 (Special Education Funding.)

STATE
WEIGHTING
STUDY

Calendar Development and Reports to the Board:

CALENDAR &
REPORTS

- Regular Meeting Time – Chair Pencak advised Committee Members to take a look at their schedules. The plan is to develop a regular schedule so that it is always posted properly. **Chair Pencak will reach out to Committee Members regarding scheduling.**
- Policies – **Commissioner Goldberg will work with Assistant Superintendent Bliss and CFO Mary Alma Noonan to review policies related to finance within the next 30 days.**

- Board and Public Educational Events – Discussion revolved around challenges for the future, educating public and officials about school finance, what makes a good school and the benefits to the community of having good schools. The importance of building relationships was noted.
- Planning – Was covered by Superintendent Wolk during the Strategic Planning portion of the meeting.

**CALENDAR &
REPORTING
(CONT.)**

Financial Picture and Estimates – Chair Pencak noted that Mary Alma Noonan is working from home and that it may not be easy for her to access some information quickly. Mary Alma Noon reviewed a quarterly summary and draft of estimated unplanned costs and potential savings related to the COVID19 Pandemic. Discussion revolved around reimbursements related to food distribution (reimbursement estimates are included in the report) and over time (consists of mostly busing for field trips - it is not feasible to hire an additional person to save over time.)

**FINANCIAL
PICTURE &
ESTIMATES**

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

AJOURN