

RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RUTLAND CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS – FINANCE/PLANNING COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

June 16, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Joanne Pencak, Chair
Ann Dages
Dena Goldberg (5:24 pm)

Committee Members Absent:

Charlene Seward

Also Present:

Superintendent Bill Olsen
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
CFO Mary Alma Noonan
Patricia Aigner
Catherine Solsaa

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. Chair Pencak noted that absence of Commissioners Goldberg (5:24 pm) and Seward.

CALL TO ORDER

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the Finance/Planning Committee April 30, 2020 Meeting. No changes were made.

**MINUTES
4/30/2020**

Progress on Financial Policies & Calendar for Financial Reporting & Decisions – Assistant Superintendent Bliss advised that he reviewed the policy manual and shared policies relevant to the Committee with Commissioner Goldberg and Mary Alma Noonan. Chair Pencak will meet with Commissioner Goldberg and Mary Alma Noonan for information purposes and to develop a calendar for next year, to establish expectations and to insure that nothing is missed.

FINANCIAL REPORTING AND DECISIONS CALENDAR PROGRESS

Update of State Guidance Regarding Financial Implications Arising from COVID 19 – Based on information received from the State on Friday, Mary Alma Noonan advised that concerns (roll backs of budgets and raising tax rates) expressed by Commissioner Cavacas (Hurley) at the last Board Meeting are not of concern. The projected deficit of the State Education Fund has dropped from \$164,000,000 to \$106,000,000.

STATE GUIDANCE UPDATE RE: COVID 19

CFO Noonan reviewed the funding sources for bridging the gap including, the CARES Act (about \$30,000,000 will be distributed directly to school districts,) which will probably be distributed along the same lines as Title I Funds. When the funds will be distributed is still undetermined. It will likely be after July 1, 2020. Distributions will be issued for FY 20 and FY 21. There is also funding that came into the State for State relief. The State is planning for funding to go to the Education Fund. The Legislature is still debating as to how the funds will be distributed. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER Funds) will also help to offset costs. We will likely have more savings than extraordinary expense for FY 20, but expenses related to the pandemic are being flagged and tracked to establish how much funding we could potentially request from these sources. Administration is not at the level of planning to address Commissioner Cavacas' questions (i.e. - buses, hall monitors) at this time. The State has decided not to affect the property tax yield. They are going back to February and releasing the property yield as if the pandemic never happened. The tax rate is actually going to be a bit lower than estimated. Once planning is complete, we will be able to be able to address budget in more specific terms. Discussion included items which provided relief of the Education Fund deficit (receipt of taxes that were assumed as a loss and surplus.) The State generally keeps a surplus of about \$38,000,000 which is being utilized. There are still a lot of questions to be answered and decisions to be made by the Legislature. CFO Noonan noted that all she reported should be prefaced as being the "best guess" based information received as of last Friday. Discussion revolved around procedures for reallocating budget funds and budget roll over (tuition, gate receipts and some grant revenues.) It is important to note that roll over funds will not always be there, but a surplus is anticipated for FY 21 and these funds will be immediately available and can be utilized prior to the completion of the audit. Currently,

the FY 19 is outstanding. It was originally due at the end of March. The due date was extended to July 15, 2020 and confirmation from the AOE that this is an acceptable date has been received. Discussion revolved around historical aspects of audits including: utilizing the same auditor for many years, audits generally being on time in the past, FY 18 audit was late (various reasons noted: Business Office Staffing and auditor turnaround time. Chair Pencak noted that the auditors need to report to the Board. This is the expectation for next year. Mary Alma Noonan will advise Jim Reynolds of this expectation. The new Director of Finance will also need to be made aware of this expectation.

**STATE
GUIDANCE
UPDATE RE:
COVID 19
(CONT.)**

Commissioner Goldberg advised that she has been working to extract specific items from Policies relevant to the Committee and the development of a timeline and calendar. She noted that some have deadlines which align with State Statutes.

**FINANCIAL
REPORTING
AND DECISIONS
CALENDAR
PROGRESS**

Weighting Study – Chair Pencak noted a seminar attended by herself and Commissioners Dages and Solsaa. Discussion revolved around advocacy, involvement of the Board of Alderman and Representatives, political timing (pandemic) and those districts likely to be losers already being on top of the issue.

**WEIGHTING
STUDY**

Strategic Plan Update – There is no update at this time. This will be delayed until the new Director of Finance is installed. It can also be discussed at the retreat.

**STRATEGIC
PLAN UPDATE**

Board Education on School Funding – Discussion revolved around potential presenters to speak to the Board and delaying a presentation so that the new Director of Finance may attend.

**BOARD
EDUCATION OF
SCHOOL
FUNDING**

New Business – None.

NEW BUSINESS

Communications – A communication received from Commissioner Cavacas (Hurley) was addressed earlier in the meeting by CFO Mary Alma Noonan.

**COMMUNICAT-
IONS**

At 5:51 pm the Committee adjourned to executive session with Superintendent Olsen, Assistant Superintendent Bliss and CFO Mary Alma Noonan for the purpose of discussing the employment of a public officer, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

The Committee came out of executive session at 6:02 pm.

**OUT OF
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion by Dages/Goldberg to adjourn at 6:02 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted,
Betty A. Kapitan, Recording Secretary