

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

Virtual Meeting held remotely via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/98169993911?pwd=SndaNVNiS01HYThIS3YzUWdHYXU3QT09>

Meeting ID: 981 6999 3911, Passcode: 06612

Thursday, April 8, 2021

8:00 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Stinson, Goldstein, Chieda, Hicks, Parker, Wible

Administration: Harrison, Pierson Ugol, Zachery, Del Conte

Others: 40 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

J. Stinson called the Easton Board of Education Special meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

J. Stinson first stated that the meeting purpose and objective was to spend time talking about various items in the budget, given that the Board of Finance had asked the BOE for a reduction of \$150K in the proposed 2021-2022 budget. He said that during the course of the meeting that they will be talking about everything within the budget, and also that they are not required to have an exact penny accounting. J. Stinson asked that the public and BOE members keep this in mind during the Public Comment and Board Comment portions of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: REVIEW AND DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR RECONCILING APPROVED BUDGET

J. Stinson said that he had a couple of thoughts and acknowledged that Dr. Harrison and building administrators also had some ideas; one thought was that some of the professional development in next year's budget could be done over the summer with costs coming out of this year's overages. C. Zachery shared a financial report with MTD and YTD spending amounts; he said that currently there was \$153K unexpended. He added that he was not comfortable saying unequivocally that we will have that exact amount at the end of the year.

BOE members had numerous questions regarding the status and/or possibility of: math curriculum pre-spend; bus company reimbursement; COVID cleaning expenses; grant expectations; Open Choice reimbursement; payment from Redding for SpEd Director; certified teacher retirement; excess SpEd Funding; curriculum work; and, the health insurance reserve. Several BOE members felt that the looming issues to affect the budget are currently food services and making sure grant proposals are being prepared. Dr. Pierson Ugol confirmed that it would be possible to conduct professional development in June once the school year has ended.



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CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
TOWN CLERK EASTON CT

An extended conversation took place about the allocation of federal grant money that included the particular topics of: allowable uses for the funds; a back-and-forth on whether to use the funds for staffing positions; extracurricular activities at HKMS; and, any resulting optics from these decisions.

The conversation then turned to the topic of the health insurance reserve and included some historical perspectives from BOE members. The questions and comments mainly pertained to the appropriate and financially-wise amount to be put into the reserve, as well as the BOF request that the BOE take more risk in this area. BOE members had differing opinions on this topic.

BOE members shifted the discussion to that of how much (if any) needs to be cut from the 2021-2022 budget. Some BOE members asked if the amount was the full \$150K (per the BOF) or another amount, given that there will be unspent funds from the 2020-2021 budget and grant monies available. J. Stinson said that it is a fluid situation and that the BOF is more interested in the total number of the budget. One suggestion was for the BOE to approve a \$150K reduction in the 2021-2022 budget and then for Central Office to design a plan for this reduction. BOE members voiced a reluctance to proceed in this manner. J. Stinson said that the BOE will need a plan with slides from Central Office; R. Hicks asked for line items with numbers. J. Parker said that he will distribute to BOE members and Central Office a plan he had devised during the course of tonight's meeting. All plans for reducing the 2021-2022 budget will next be discussed, and finalized, at the April 20, 2021 BOE Regular meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. Chieda thanked administrators for sitting with us for the duration of the meeting.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education Special meeting be adjourned. (Hicks, Chieda). Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Submitted by Gretchen Goldstein  
Secretary, Easton Board of Education

Recorded by  
Sarah Ota