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REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET WORKSHOP
Joel Barlow High School - Library Learning Commons
On YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpOKinELAtzbYQcJ5NA3-hg>
March 10, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: D'Agostino, Johnston, O'Brien (remote), Graziano, Lehberger, Pampel
Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Almeida, Petruzzelli, Scrofani
Others: 3 members of the staff and public, and the videographer.

CALL TO ORDER

M. D'Agostino called the Region Board of Education Budget Workshop to order at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of February 15, 2022, Regular Meeting. (Johnston, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of February 25, 2022, ER9 Joint Boards of Education Regular Meeting as amended. (Lehberger, Pampel) Approved Unanimous. Corrections: "Petruzzelli" and "Scrofani" are misspelled; on page 4, it should read "...accept for a 1st reading to repeal..." on page 5, it should read "written lease with the Town of Easton."

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of March 3, 2022 Regular Meeting with Budget Workshop. (Johnston, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.

M. D'Agostino said that another Recording Secretary is needed for the District.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2022-2023 OPERATING BUDGET PRESENTATION

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jason McKinnon, began his presentation by giving a recap of how the proposed budget had reached tonight's version and said they would address the questions from the last Budget Workshop of: budget correction/edits; elimination of bus route; agri-science transportation; co-teaching; SpEd; and AP offerings. Dr. McKinnon explained that the budget edits included: a technical edit to transportation for agri-science program and credit from the adjustment for the district Facilities Manager position. Additionally, the bus elimination for Reg 9 involves: the combination of two bus routes that have buses populated with only two to four students, and that there will be no impact to the length of routes and/or rides.

Joel Barlow High School Special Education Chair, Dave D'Angelo, explained the co-teaching model and how co-teaching has helped expand opportunities for students with IEPs to move into advanced classes. He said that co-teaching also helps typical students as they benefit from the increased student to teacher ratio and that this also helps the classroom teacher. Dr. McKinnon and D. D'Angelo presented information on SpEd outplacements and the Bridge Program, and how the Bridge Program prevents students from being outplaced and provides an appropriate learning environment for outplaced students who re-enter the building. BOE members had questions about inclusion of 8th grade students, costs associated with the 18-22 age group of SpEd students and the increase in the SpEd budget. Dr. McKinnon explained that there are a considerable number of students who require more intensive SpEd services and outplacement in the coming year.

Dr. McKinnon shared the results of a survey the District conducted with 18 neighboring school districts, saying that the survey revealed that most of these districts offer AP classes to 10th grade students. JBHS Head of School, Dr. Mario Almeida, said that, based on staffing, the two possible options of AP classes for 10th graders would be AP Comparative Government and AP Computer Science Principles. He said they would send out a survey to 10th grade students to gauge interest in taking these classes. In the discussion that followed, BOE members expressed appreciation that efforts are being made to possibly move forward with the AP class plan for the 2022-2023 school year.

Dr. Almeida also gave a presentation on the additional support in place for students who are struggling with academics and/or re-engagement post pandemic. He said that there are full-time math and writing centers where students can receive support, and that there is a credit recovery module for students who are not on track to graduate on time.

Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol, reported on grants, saying that there are funded positions for: Study Skills Paraprofessional – to help students with organization and time management; Math Paraprofessional – to provide interventions in math studies; and a Personal Improvement Plan Paraprofessional – to help students complete homework and independent work. She said that the Personal Improvement Plan para had been hired but that they are having difficulty in filling the other positions. Dr. Pierson Ugol said that the credit recovery courses – taught after school hours – are critically important for seniors to graduate on time and are taught by certified teachers.

Dr. Almeida explained the many ways JBHS provides information and events to transition middle school students to the high school. He said they will start having events earlier in the year (in the fall) because, at that point in time, students have not yet made decisions about courses, activities, etc.

Dr. McKinnon gave a summary of the health insurance, pension and transportation accounts. He said that additional information would be available at the next regular BOE meeting.

BOE members had further questions about the additional school counselor and the transition to high school. Dr. Pierson Ugol and Director of School Counseling, Paula Panos, responded that demand for counseling has increased dramatically and that if students cannot function emotionally, then they will not be able to function academically. They said that the additional counselor will help with the caseload and decrease the feeling of being overwhelmed for students and staff alike. Dr. Pierson Ugol also added that pre-planning and meeting with teachers in the lower schools about study skills is being conducted more consistently now.

M. D'Agostino said that BOE members should ask any remaining questions so that the 2022-2023 budget can be finalized and voted on at the next BOE meeting. BOE members then had questions about specific and detailed budget items that included: the bus reduction corresponding to a fuel savings; "Hudl" program used in the Athletics dept.; cost sharing and dues for the Director of Facilities position; maintenance of the gym floor; Brown

& Brown increased fee for health insurance consultation; movement to the Google Classroom platform; advertising; Tri-State Consortium fee; bond repayment; heating oil price locked-in; pension contribution; Curriculum & Instruction increase; summer work stipends; and the scissor lift purchase. Dr. McKinnon, Dr. Pierson Ugol, S. Petruzzelli and S. Scrofani answered: bus reduction does not mean fuel savings; "Hudl" is a video footage tool for coaching; quotes have been obtained for all tech subscriptions and contracts currently in use; advertising includes RFPs, job postings, legal notices, etc.; Tri-State Consortium is a professional organization for school districts concerning best practice ideas; bond repayment information will be shared at a later date; the heating oil price is for the consortium and they are awaiting price finalized for the coming year; Pension Committee has recommended a contribution of \$90K; Curriculum & Instruction increase is because of textbook order for new astronomy course; and scissor lift purchase will be discussed further at next BOE meeting. Dr. McKinnon said that the budget process is moving toward a process of matching budget projections to actual invoices.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

T. Johnston thanked the administration for thoroughness and thoughtfulness in the budget presentation.

K. Thompson thanked the administration for a thorough and thoughtful budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education meeting with Budget Workshop be adjourned. (Pampel, Lehberger). Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Submitted by Karen O'Brien
Secretary, Region 9 Board of Education

Recorded by Sarah Ota