

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

Present: Gladys Cooper, Richard Jannelli, Fred Karrat

Also Present: Dr. Sal Pascarella, Ann Adriani, Amy Spallino, Rachel Chaleski, Kishore Solanki, Kate Conetta, Kevin Walston

Meeting called to order by R. Jannelli at 5:35pm.

Audit from last school year still going on; anticipated ~\$10K overage. City budget allotted an additional ~\$5.4M – this includes a \$2.2M increase from the city, a \$2.7M increase from the state (ECS Grant) and \$500K one-time fee from the Matrix Development.

K. Solanki, interim finance director presented June 2019 Operating Results Analysis. Major sources of spending were special education tuition & special education transportation. Special education excess funds (reimbursed @ ~70% by the state for any \$ spent above 3-1/2 times the per pupil cost) were ~\$1.2M last year and were delivered directly to the city.

Dr. Sal reports unprecedented and unanticipated enrollment growth of over 600 additional students. \$600K was requested from City Council to handle upcoming special ed expenses (Aug. 1). Due to heavy enrollment, Dr. Sal reached out to the mayor for additional funding, for a total of ~\$1.25M. This includes \$850K in special ed spending, some additional FTEs, additional buses, OT & PT providers, and equipment/materials.

Unclear about where money may come from in the city budget. The mayor's directive to Dr. Sal was to move forward with new hires to accommodate the enrollment growth. No confirmed timeline for funding at this point, so money will be drawn down from existing budget in anticipation of money being replenished on the back end of the budget.

Special education funding formula being explored at the state level by Katie Roy. We anticipate adjusted funding from the state for ELL (15% weighted) & SES (30% weighted) students this year. The governor has committed to \$2.5M additional funding for this and the next 10 years. Dr. Sal has prepared a request letter to the Commissioner of Education to request an increase to our Priority School District grant. Dr. Sal is also reaching out to the state to see about any flexibility in rolling out the mandate around graduation requirements (increased from 21 to 25 credits).

Building space continues to be an issue. Modulars (which are reimbursable from the state) could be placed at King St. Discussion around placing multiple grades in a building based around new enrollment.

Current year financial situation is a serious uncertainty of uncontrollable cost. Increases due to higher enrollment and more of the new students needing help to be at grade level. Schools are faced with large classes, not being able to hire more FTEs as there is no place to staff them. A one-time infusion by the city is only a bandaid. Unless costs are perfectly aligned with the budget from here on in (unlikely), we will be in the red due to uncontrollable events.

Action needs to be done now for advocating more funding from all sources; R. Janelli suggests we should make up a list of what we are not doing in the schools and what needs to be done in order to overcome the current patchwork approach. He suggests a committee be formed to look into this matter.

Motion made by F. Karrat, seconded by G. Cooper, to adjourn the September 9 Finance Committee Meeting. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Kate Conetta