

## MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

### BUDGET WORKSHOP

**Thursday, February 4, 2021**

6:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center/Virtual

**PRESENT:** Gundersen, Heinrich, Hughes, Luna, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Stefanovicz, Thames

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

**ABSENT:**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Darryl Thames, Snr., co-chair of the Personnel & Finance Committee. This is the third and final budget workshop.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

**C. SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET PRESENTATION**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed there were no questions sent from the previous Budget Workshop. The budget proposal includes current services as well as the 15 additional teachers hired during COVID. Mr. Geary reviewed the multi-year approach to Respond - Recover - Reimagine the district, which will start this summer.

Important factors considered in creating this budget include:

- Local economic impact of the pandemic.
- CT is in budget year 1 of a new 2 year budget.
- CT has a small budget surplus currently and a decrease in the projected budget deficit over the next two years (1billion per year vs the original 2billion) and there is approximately 3.1billion in the rainy day fund.
- Alliance Funding is in a 10 year phase-in and should mean an additional \$1,695,521 for Manchester.
- Both the recently passed and new proposed Federal Relief Packages.
- Potential BOE savings for the 20-21 School Year.
- Covid vaccine timeline \*(currently available for those over 75 years old).

To review, the 2021-2022 original proposed budget amount is \$121,042,676, which represents a 2.78% increase over the current budget amount of \$117,774,174. Considering the Alliance funding expected that increase drops to a 1.3% increase over the 20-21 budget.

Mr. Geary announced that we found out today that the portion of the second Federal Relief Package coming to Manchester Public Schools will be \$6,829,365! This money can be used for specific funding over two years. It is helpful that the funds can be spread over two years, because it is hard to find good people willing to sign on for only a one year commitment. These funds are intended to supplement not supplant the local funding for our budget.

With the news of the Federal funds, the cost of retaining the 15 new teachers is able to be moved from our budget.

Retirements have also been calculated and will result in a savings of approximately \$522,351. To achieve that number the difference in salary between a teacher at the top of the salary ladder and a new hire (at step 3) yields an approximate savings of \$35,000 per teacher.

At this point our budget request drops to \$117,774,174, which is a 0% increase.

Key cost drivers for the budget remain:

- Intervention/acceleration - certified and non-certified contractual salaries.
- Outplacement and magnet school tuition - special education.
- Board policies that require a certain percentage of the budget for capital repairs and computer equipment.

Mr. Geary reviewed the last few sections of the budget, including utilities, supplies and equipment/dues & fees.

Utility figures are estimates as the last 12 months have not been typical.

The supply lines have been flat funded.

Under the equipment and dues & fees section some items that have been underfunded in the past include vehicle replacements and capital projects. Security upgrades are a recurring expense as well.

Mr. Geary reviewed the various grants we continue to receive. As in the past, we continue to move positions to the Alliance Grant.

The Minimum Budget Request was again reviewed. The town may not budget less than the previous year's budget for the Board of Education. We do not

qualify for an exemption to this being an Alliance District, and if the town were to underfund us, the penalty is twice the amount they underfund. With that being said, Mr. Geary reviewed that we have always been fiscally responsible and have returned unused funds to the town several times, including \$250,000 last year and the amount anticipated to be returned this year. Mr. Geary is recommending that the Board of Education request a non-lapsing reserve fund be set up this year. This fund can hold up to 2% of the budget and we would note the funds would be used for capital projects and special education overages. The money would sit in the fund until needed.

Mr. Geary reviewed that the budget needs to be approved at Monday night's Board meeting so it can be given to the Town by the February 14 deadline. On Monday he will also ask for Board approval to request the 2% non-lapsing fund as well.

Mr. Geary will get more details on exactly what the Federal monies can be used for and will give Board members an idea of the general plan Monday evening as well.

**Mr. Thames** wondered if Mr. Geary anticipates any major variance in the presentation for the Board of Directors. Mr. Geary does not.

**Ms. Stefanovicz** asked if she was correct in thinking that most of the increase in funding needed was the cost of the 15 additional teachers but that we can now cover that increase with the Federal funds which results in our asking for a budget with 0% increase. Mr. Geary added that we were lucky in that our health insurance line did not rise as much as it typically does (due to changes in employee coverage choices). Also, the number of retirements contributed to the budget numbers changing.

**Mr. Gundersen** asked for clarity around the retirements. It was reviewed that the savings equals the difference between a teacher at the top of the pay scale versus a new hire at approximately step 3.

**Mr. Pattacini** asked if we are fully funding the board policies on capital improvements, capital repairs and technology with this 0% increased budget. Mr. Geary confirmed we are fully funding all policies.

**Mr. Thames** noted that the amount of the Federal Relief Package has alleviated a lot of his concerns.

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**E. CLOSING COMMENTS**

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked the administration and staff for their hard work. Although he always likes to spend more, he agrees this 0% increase is the right approach to take this year and he supports the recommendation of the Superintendent, who always maximizes any funding we get. Mr. Thames concurred.

**F. ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m. by Mr. Thames.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini  
Board Secretary