MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting
May 23, 2022
Revised
Lincoln Center/Virtual

PRESENT: Eisenthal, Kohls, Meggers, Mix, Ntem-Mensah, Orsene, Pattacini, Patterson

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy, Director of Human Resources Sone-Moyano

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Mr. Eisenthal moved to go into Executive Session. Ms. Mix seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Executive session began at: 6:05 p.m. and concluded at 6:55 p.m.

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting back to order at 7:04 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of May 9, 2022. Secretary Patterson moved and Ms. Mix seconded the motion.
8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Personnel & Finance Committee
Mr. Eisenthal reported that the last meeting was held on May 9, 2022. Committee Members in attendance included Tracy Patterson, David Eisenthal, & Michael Orsene. Also in attendance were Superintendent Geary and Assistant Superintendent Clancy.

Mr. Geary provided an update on new Magnet School tuition legislation. Magnet School tuition will be capped for Manchester. If the number of Manchester students attending paid Magnet Schools goes above 4% of our enrollment (approximately 300 students), MPS will receive $4,400 per student back from the State. This equates to $1.3m. CREC has also increased Magnet School tuition rates by $900 per student. We have approximately 350 Manchester students attending CREC Magnet Schools which means we will see an increase in cost of approximately $300K. The net impact on the Board of Education budget is $1m to the good. Committee members discussed Long Term Budget Planning for the purpose of addressing concerns with regard to short term grant funding sources. This is an ongoing discussion that will be revisited at the next Personnel & Finance committee meeting.

Mr. Eisenthal also commented on the committee report that the discussion of Long-Term Budget Planning did not only address concerns about short-term grant funding sources, but did and will continue to address the long-term financial health of the District.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR
Mr. Geary presented six items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action
Details were provided to Board Members in their packets.

C.2. Transfer of Funds
• Transfer from Manchester Middle Academy Alternative Education Other Purchased Services account in the amount of $4,000.00 to Manchester Middle Academy Alternative Education General Supplies & Materials account in the amount of $4,000.00.

• Transfer from Bentley Alternative Education Field Trips account in the amount of $1,005.00 to Bentley Alternative Education Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of $500.00 and to Bentley Alternative Education Office Supplies and Materials account in the amount of $505.00, for a total transfer of $1,005.00.

C.3. Establish an appropriation for the State of Connecticut Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) Grant Program for the FY 21-22 in the amount of $29,673.37

C.4. Permission to apply for the Manchester Head Start Cost of Living and Quality Improvement Adjustments Grant for the FY 22/23 in the amount of $64,057

C.5. Permission to apply for the State Department of Education’s Program Enhancement Project (PEP) for Adult Education for the FY 22/23 in the amount of $40,000

C.6. Permission to apply for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Supplemental Enhancement Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of $50,000

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Eisenthal seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in the agenda.

8/0 - Voted in favor.
D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT
Alexandra Hamza shared the MHS update:

- At Manchester High School we are in the second half of fourth quarter with a month left for most students.

- With the end of the year in sight comes end of the year concerts. There were two concerts in the Bailey Auditorium last week: the Modern Band and the Orchestra concert. The Band and Guitar Ensemble concert will occur tomorrow at 7pm.

- There were many field trips last week as well. The Drama Club saw Beetlejuice on Broadway, Spanish classes saw the play La Gringa, the Student Equity Advisory Team participated in a Human Rights Summit at UCONN and Senior Picnic was on Friday.

- The end of the year also signifies final presentations. The Science Research class at the high school will be hosting a research symposium this Thursday at 5:00. Seniors, a keynote speaker and other students in the class will be presenting their research.

- Seniors also continue to be celebrated with senior nights on sports teams as spring sports enter state and class LL competitions.

- Some other events in the future include graduation walks and the chorus concert.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, recommended several magazine articles on topics such as Connecticut history, the shooting in Buffalo and college entrance exams. He recommended several books, including What is Juneteenth? for younger children and Mediocre - The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America. Mr. Stringfellow also mentioned banned books in some parts of the country and censorship regarding race and gender topics.

F. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

F.1. Board of Education 22-23 Budget Update
Mr. Pattacini mentioned that this topic is being voted on later this evening, so if anyone has any questions, they should be addressed now.

Mr. Geary explained that there were basically two reductions taken to the budget that we presented to the town. The General Manager took a $300,000 reduction before he even took the budget to the Board of Directors. This was related to the cost of self-insurance and had no impact on us.

The second reduction was taken by the Board of Directors for $1.5 million.

The good news is that the most recent legislation, which previously was only for East Hartford, provides Manchester with a cap on the number of students it has to pay tuition for to attend a magnet school. The cap for East Hartford was previously over 7% of the school age population in town, while our cap is 4%. This equates to $4,400 per student over about 300 that the town would pay Manchester. At the same time, CREC announced that they are raising tuition by about $900 per pupil.

Mr. Geary reduced the Public Tuition line by about $950,000. He also proposes moving about $550,000 in Certified Salaries to the Alliance Grant. The recommendation is to move either STEM teachers 7-12 or Family Consumer Science teachers 7-12. As a reminder, the Alliance Grant is set to go up $1.3 million next year.

Mr. Eisenthal noted that of the $1.3 million increase in Alliance next year, that would be reduced by $550,000. He wondered how this would compromise the ability of the district to continue to move ESSER funded items into the Alliance Grant. Mr. Geary noted the moving of items is phased over several years. While this puts us a little behind, we are still in pretty good shape overall. Without the legislation, we might be taking all of the Alliance Grant increase to cover the Board of Directors reductions.

Mr. Eisenthal also asked about the use of the $2 million non-recurring fund. Mr. Geary responded that this fund is reserved for capital projects, there will be some use of the fund for this purpose in fiscal 22/23, but there would likely have been more use of the fund without the legislation capping magnet tuition.
Mr. Pattacini thanked the legislative delegation for their work. We are grateful and without this help we would be facing a larger cut to the budget or more taxes for the taxpayers in town.

F.2. Update on COVID-19
Mr. Geary reviewed that numbers are spiking across the country. Manchester now has 42.3 new cases per 100,000 people and we are in the RED. Over the last two weeks we have had about 180 students and 76 staff positive for COVID. Regardless, we are not currently recommending any changes to our protocols. Reinstating the mask mandate is not a local decision. We are in contact with the local and State Departments of Public Health and will follow their lead. The most disruptive part of the issue currently is that staff, regardless of symptoms, have to quarantine 5 days if they are positive.

Ms. Patterson liked that tests are given prior to events, which is proactive. Mr. Geary agreed and noted the hope is that people will test before returning to school and avoid spreading the virus as much as possible.

Ms. Patterson wondered if there is a different protocol for those testing positive if they are symptomatic or asymptomatic. Mr. Geary noted that regardless a 5 day quarantine is required. He wondered if that distinction would be made in the next phase.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Bid Waiver
Mr. Geary reviewed that we currently use ESS as our certified substitute service. About 4 years ago we switched to them from Kelly Services because Kelly’s fill rate had declined. ESS was a new company and won a 2 year contract with 2 1-year options to renew. We are at the end of that term now. No company has good fill rates at this time due to the pandemic, but we are happy with ESS and how they have communicated and worked hard to hire more subs.
ESS has offered us a 2 year extension at the current rates. ESS claims they are on a national bid list, so we may not need a bid waiver. However, if it turns out we need a waiver, Mr. Geary wanted to be able to call on 5 Board members to sign off on the waiver. There were no objections.

**H.2. 2022-2023 Budget**

Secretary Patterson moved to approve the Board of Education Budget for 2022-2023 in the amount of $119,689,162.93. Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Meggers asked to recess for the purposes of caucus. Chairperson Pattacini called a recess for the caucus with no objections at 7:32 p.m. Back in session at 7:38 p.m.

The motion was restated and discussion resumed.

Mr. Pattacini clarified there is approximately $4.2 million of items funded in ESSER that we would like to move to Alliance. This year we will move approximately $750,000. Mr. Geary agreed and noted that we will move more each year as the Alliance Grant rises over the next several years.

The vote was called.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Geary and Ms. Clancy for their hard work. It is difficult to balance the needed work of the district with what the taxpayers can pay and then find public and private funding to help.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (Limited to items on tonight’s agenda)

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar and the information from the student representative. It sounds like the kids had a good senior picnic and Mr. Stringfellow recalled his own MHS senior picnic back in 1974 in Moodus.
Mr. Stringfellow supports the budget, even with the Board of Directors reduction. This is a trying time for all and he fears there will be another trying year in the fall. Mr. Stringfellow recommended several articles on health and equity, the impact of Covid on mental health, and issues with long-haul Covid. He recommended articles on the effects of Covid on learning, as well as school absenteeism. Last, Mr. Stringfellow mentioned an MLK initiative discussion in Glastonbury being held on June 13th.

**J. COMMUNICATIONS**
None.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Monday, June 13, 2022  
Adult Education Update/Manchester Teachers of the Year

Monday, June 27, 2022  
Close of School Update

Monday, July 25, 2022  
Summer Programming Update

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that the Board had been in Executive Session prior to the meeting this evening. He wondered if Board members would like to add an item to tonight’s agenda to go back into Executive Session.

*Secretary Patterson moved to add item L. Executive Session to Review Superintendent’s Evaluation. Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.*

*8/0 - Voted in favor.*

*Secretary Patterson moved to go into Executive Session. Ms. Mix seconded the motion.*

*8/0 - Voted in favor.*

The public portion of the meeting ended and the Board moved into Executive Session at 7:48 p.m. Executive Session concluded at 8:05 p.m.
L. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Orsene seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

8/0 - Voted in favor. **Adjournment 8:06 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Traey Patterson, Board Secretary