

## OESU BOARD MEETING

OESU Central Office and via Zoom

January 4, 2022

Present:

Board Members:

BMU: Judy Murray

OUUSD: Angela Colbeth, Danielle Corti, Chelsey Perry

Thetford: Charlie Buttrey, Donna Pluta

Waits River: Jason Rogers

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Randall Gawel, Alison Kidder, Linda Metcalf, Cate Beaton, Nicole Bell

Others: Ted Pogacar, Bridget Peters, Lillian Gahagan

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Judy Murray, Vice Chair. Those present were introduced and welcomed.
- II. Board Business
  - A. The agenda was reviewed. Public Comment was added after Board Business and before the Budget discussion
  - B. By consensus, the Board minutes of June 15, 2021 were approved. By consensus, the Board minutes of August 24, 2021 were also approved. By consensus, the Board approved the minutes of November 16, 2021.
  - C. Board Orders: Danielle Corti reported that some expenses from ESSER have started to come through. Some equipment has been purchased so that hybrid meetings can be held, thus making it possible for more to participate.
  - D. Contracts: None
  - E. Correspondence: None
- III. Public Comment
  - A. Danielle Corti: She is concerned at the difficulty of getting a quorum. She suggested setting up some committees so Board work can continue between meetings.
- IV. Budget:
  - A. Linda Metcalf: 2023 Budget Draft.
    1. General Fund Expense: Surplus funds used for Special Education of \$550,000. Surplus funds of \$250,000 used for Central Administration. Technology costs are centralized and billed back to schools.
  - B. Special Education budget shows a decrease of \$53,000 due to using surplus funds. We don't know if the State will help with purchasing Technology equipment. Overall, the budget shows a 3.3% increase.
    1. The Surplus is coming from the audit done 2021. The numbers are pretty solid on the surplus. Some of the surplus is coming from Special Education, some from decreased costs in Central Administration

a. D. Corti: Will applying this surplus make next year's budget have a wide swing? L. Metcalf: This surplus will help to ease the increase of assessment at the local level. L. Metcalf: We will come back with a proposal for keeping a fund balance to present to the Board. If the Board elects to put some of this money aside, it would sit in the general fund.

C. Special Education Assessment: A total of \$4.6 million is expected, plus \$250,000 from the surplus. E. Knisley: We are now working in a reimbursement model. Revenue comes from the State, and reimbursement comes to the schools. Act 173 gets rid of that system. It is based on the average of costs over the past couple of years. We will not be seeing revenue for para reimbursement in the local budget. We will apply that amount of funding in the SU Budget. The adjustments for the weights are stuck in the Legislature. If the weighting formula goes through, Thetford will get less revenue, and other districts in the SU will get more revenue. There was discussion of concern for costs for Special Education. E. Knisley: Do we need to use some more of the ESSER funds to help with the expenses for School Districts? L. Metcalf: Gave a comparison of estimates for 2022 and 2023. By using the surpluses, we were able to help the assessments for each of the schools. Without the application of the surplus, several districts are looking at a significant increase due to a change in the number of pupils.

a. D. Corti: Is there any chance of being able to wait until the weighting study comes through? E. Knisley: There is not consensus between the associations and not a push in the Legislature. Act 173 is not a system designed for SU's. In some rural districts like ours, systems are difficult to deliver (North Country and Grand Isle are in a similar situation to us). E. Knisley doesn't think there will be a delay. She thinks there may be a gradual change on the weights. The Board asked for a copy of the slides and some background information

V. ESSER Funds (Nicole Bell)

A. Reconciliation for ESSER I, a grant amount of \$619,541, Performance Period March 13, 2020 – September 30, 2022

B. ESSER I: Expenses Allocated include: Paying for Websites for OESU and Schools, Air quality study at BMU, E-sign solution for all schools, Newbury remote learning and social distance supplies, OESU Zoom subscription, Extended Learning Transportation, OUUSD Remote School, Teachers, BMU Remote Teacher, WRVS Remote Learning and Social Distance supplies

C. ESSER II: performance period 3/13 2020 to 9/30/2023. Grant Award: \$2,959,749. Expenses Allocated include: OESU Wide Instructional Coaching, Extended Learning Programs for Students, Contact Tracing Hours beyond Contract and Nursing Support Beyond Contract, Grants for Administration, Extended Learning Coordinator, Extended Learning Transportation, OESU COVID coordinator, Remote Learning Teacher (if needed), OESU PD on Universal Design for Learning, DESSA Program and PD, Tech Equipment for All Schools for Hybrid Meetings, STAR Assessments, Mobile Laptop Cart for testing, Homeless Transportation, Upbeat Survey and Survey Monkey (multiple years), Building based subs at all schools, Math Intervention at BMU, RBCTC

Interventionist, RBCTC Outreach Coordinator, RBCTC Middle School Exploration Teacher, OHS School Counselor

1. D. Corti: Are we being very thoughtful and responsible with positions we are funding with ESSER Funds? N. Bell: Yes, having thoughtful conversations. The positions we have needed to add are social-emotional support personnel. They are in response to COVID. E. Knisley: In the budgets, it's in a whole different fund category. D. Corti: Are we collecting data on the usefulness of these positions? E. Knisley: A number of positions are COVID specific.
2. ESSER III has to have at least 20% go toward learning loss. All expenses have to be tied to COVID. D. Corti: Are you finding the ability to utilize having a direct impact on supporting students? Are we able to hire people to get students what they need? C. Beaton: We have hired four people recently, who are well qualified. D. Corti: Are there parts of ESSER that can be used to support teachers in their emotional health? N. Bell: Yes, a staff appreciation component.

- VI. Agenda Items for Next meeting (Next meeting scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup>)
  - A. Committees
  - B. Budget
  - C. Some additional supports or appreciation for staff
  - D. Fund Balance Policy
  - E. Update on morale
  - F. SU Policy work
- VII. Public Comment--None
- VIII. Motion by Danielle Corti, seconded by Angela Colbeth to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 PM. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

**The minutes are in draft format and are unofficial until formally approved by the Board at a subsequent meeting.**