

**Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, CT
Approved Minutes
Fiscal Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 13, 2011
Administration Building Conference Room**

Members Present: Mary Kortmann, Fiscal Committee Chair
Cheryl Trudon, Fiscal Committee Member
Mark Malcolm, Fiscal Committee Member (arrived at 6:30 p.m.)

Also Present: Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent of Schools
Gregg Blackstone, Business Manager

The meeting was called to order at 5:55 p.m. by M. Kortmann.

I. Approve Fiscal Minutes

MOTION: Approve Fiscal Minutes from December 9, 2010

By: C. Trudon

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes to approve the minutes as written 2-0

II. Financial Reports for December

A. Grant Report

G. Blackstone stated he did move some money to spend old balances first. He stated we continue to have a small surplus in ARRA Stabilization grant which he will spend before the end of the fiscal year. G. Blackstone stated there was some new spending in Title I for supplemental educational services that is not currently reflected on this grant report, but will be reflected on the next grant report. M. Kortmann stated that Title II carry over looks like the fund with the most money we need to spend. G. Blackstone said he needs to move some money there from professional tech. and investigate why it is negative. He believes we have not used some teachers' salaries in favor of professional tech services. If that is true, we may need to submit a budget adjustment request to SBE.

G. Blackstone said the Carl Perkins Basic Grant – 7191 should be removed C. Trudon asked why. G. Blackstone answered because we are in a consorsome this year as our expenditure level last year was under a threshold that SBE determines so EastCONN is handling it this year. He stated it is typically a \$15,000.00 grant. G. Blackstone said everything should be going through EastCONN and this could be a cumbersome process. He will investigate further and believes this should be a requisition and not be listed under a grant.

B. Encumbrance and Management Reports

G. Blackstone stated the certified salaries balances are up slightly which reduced the shortfall he projected. The difference is about \$60,000.00 because of some additional sections of classes he had to cover.

G. Blackstone said the non-certified salaries also changed from \$123,000.00 to \$100,000.00 in balance available due to payrolls. All the other line items did not change and he expects to achieve his projections. He stated one area that might improve is subs.

M. Kortmann asked G. Blackstone for his opinion and projection on the oil costs that were based on degree days. G. Blackstone answered the heating season just started. He stated that Mr. Noel filled out a survey for CRCOG to solicit our requirements and start the bid proposal process. G. Blackstone stated we did receive one fuel delivery, but he does not have a forecast model up and working as yet. G. Blackstone stated he will have a forecast for the committee next month.

Dr. Bernard stated our energy club is studying energy usage. G. Blackstone mentioned there is a possible grant award.

Dr. Bernard stated she was pleased with the snow cleanup the town staff did so schools could be opened today.

C. Food Services P&L and Cash Flow

G. Blackstone stated Food Services had a positive month. Their balance was up by about \$4,500.00. He said they were continuing to have positive results from operations. C. Trudon mentioned positive feedback on the food services from her children. Dr. Bernard mentioned the farm to table program was particularly well received. Dr. Bernard said that the Food Services department was running in the black, but they don't have the money to make large capital purchases that are needed. If there is money in the budget at the end of the year, Dr. Bernard would like to spend some of the money for capital improvements, such as a walk-in freezer, for Food Services. M. Kortmann stated she and G. Blackstone discussed how to measure the electricity usage of the freezer. She stated replacing the freezer with an energy efficient freezer could justify the expense. Dr. Bernard stated the committee should review this in March.

M. Kortmann stated the pension numbers were not in the report yet and at some time the committee needs to know what the pension number will be.

D. Excess Cost Report

M. Kortmann stated that the local expenditure budget vs. actual is better than last month. She stated that she asked G. Blackstone which numbers he was using for budget because our numbers were lower than in previous years. G. Blackstone stated the number of student placements is the same at 21. He doesn't think the actual placement locations are identical and that there are more private placements in the budget than there are actual placements. M. Kortmann said the budget has 26 placements, but there are only 21 placements currently. G. Blackstone stated he will use 21 placements for the budget next year.

M. Kortmann noted the CREC budgeted money is the same for the first four students and the actual total cost the lines are different. She stated that the total cost on the actual side includes tuition, summer school, and transportation. Dr. Bernard and M. Kortmann stated we over-budgeted this year and under-budgeted last year. Dr. Bernard said the budget was at 70% reimbursement. C. Trudon suggested the % be raised to 75%. M. Kortmann suggested waiting for another month and then looking at the numbers. G. Blackstone mentioned we don't know what the state will do. He said we should know by the first part of February.

III. Special Ed – Prototype schedule for all costs

G. Blackstone stated anything on excess cost shows under ED001 line 405. M. Kortmann asked why the forecast is more than the budget. G. Blackstone answered that part of what is on the report is not Special Education. C. Trudon asked why there are two 560 lines. G. Blackstone answered one of the 560 lines is for the magnet school and should not be on the report. The first line 560 should not be there. M. Kortmann asked what line 561 was for. G. Blackstone answered those are the private placements. G. Blackstone said he made a mistake. The two reports will not balance because he tried to zero out the 560 line.

M. Kortmann stated that we will not get the transportation money this year. She stated that we should still spend money to help special students. M. Kortmann said that contracted services staff could be hired and they don't receive unemployment benefits. M. Kortmann stated Para-professionals seem to place themselves and rarely use unemployment benefits.

M. Kortmann asked G. Blackstone about an e-mail he sent that said some of these factors were based on historical data and maybe it would be better to use salaries. G. Blackstone answered they could be done with salaries. M. Kortmann asked if he feels there would be any significant difference. G. Blackstone answered it won't give us any money this year. C. Trudon stated she would like to know which way is better.

M. Kortmann stated if regular Paras were being lost and special education Paras were being hired, the percentage split should be adjusted to reflect the change. G. Blackstone said he needs to know if that is what the Paras are spending their time doing. He could analyze it by coding. Dr. Bernard said they could start with this analysis. C. Trudon stated that some Paras could assist other students if their assigned student is out or behaving well. The committee discussed what Paras can do. Dr. Bernard stated it depends on what is in the IEP.

The committee discussed creating a report similar to the management report to obtain the excess cost details. M. Malcolm asked what the report will be called and what should be on it. He asked if the committee wants this report as a managerial or operational tool. G. Blackstone answered he wants it as a way of confirming when he completes the ED001 he is using an approach that reflects where we are now as opposed to something we have always done. M. Malcolm asked if the ED001 is something recurring on an annual basis. Dr. Bernard answered it was an annual report. She stated G. Blackstone wants formula's he can track back at a more strategic level. G. Blackstone stated he used the typical approach this year because it was his first month here and he didn't have a better way to do it. He said he now knows more about it he wants to use more

accurate data. . Malcolm stated the work needed to produce the report may not be worth the effort. C. Trudon suggested the research be done to see if the numbers are more accurate.

M. Malcolm stated budget lines 560 and 561 have several items under them and asked how the totals of the items related to excess cost. G. Blackstone and M. Malcolm reviewed the budget lines 560 and 561.

The committee discussed ARRA money and when it should be used.

M. Malcolm asked M. Kortmann to explain how she calculated the local expenditure – local expenditure actual figure of \$422,288.87. M. Kortmann reviewed the calculation.

The committee discussed the possibility of the new governor restoring ECS and removing ARRA. Dr. Bernard mentioned a discussion she had with G. Blackstone and M. Malcolm regarding ARRA and ECS. Dr. Bernard asked G. Blackstone if the Governor fully funds ECS does that mean the loss of ARRA won't affect the budget. G. Blackstone answered yes; it would be an even exchange. M. Kortmann stated the ARRA money must be spent on teachers. She suggested using the ARRA money for teacher salaries and using the money budgeted for teacher salaries for other budget line items. Dr. Bernard suggested creating another page for the jobs money with the budget.

Dr. Bernard asked how many student placements there really are, 21 or 24. The committee did not know for sure. Dr. Bernard will ask during the Board of Education meeting this evening.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: To Adjourn the Fiscal Meeting at 7:17 p.m.

By: C. Trudon

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Lessard, Subcommittee Clerk

Approved: February 10, 2011