

Personnel and Finance Committee

Minutes

November 2, 2021

6:00 - 7:00pm

The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

Members: **Kirk Doyle**, Irv Faunce, Betsey Hyde, Libby Kaut, Lisa Laflin

Members Absent:

Other Board Members Present: Chair Coles

Staff: Chris Elkington, Laura Columbia, Beth Christopher

1. Call meeting to order - Doyle at 6:00 pm
2. Review [approved minutes](#) from the last meeting - Doyle
 - a. No discussion
3. Review Signing of Warrants - Doyle
 - Week of November 8: Irv/Libby
 - Week of December 13: Kirk/Betsey
 - Week of January 10: Lisa/Irv
 - Week of February 7: Libby/Kirk
 - Week of March 7: Betsey/Lisa
 - Week of April 11: Irv/Libby
 - Week of May 9: Kirk/Betsey
 - Week of June 13: Lisa/Irv
4. [Quarterly Finance Update](#) - Christopher
 - a. Review of Cost Center Questions
Few questions were asked.
 - b. Open Position Costs
 - i. Even though several positions remain unfilled, subs are now working in them until we are able to hire people. We are also using some outside vendors/groups in the place of RSU 9 Staff.
 - ii. With the unfilled positions, are we looking at using some of the unspent funds for important longer-term projects not able to be funded previously, but will be on our list for 2022-2023? There will be more of a discussion at the December meeting.
 - iii. A complete breakdown of the open positions by program will be shared in the future for the committee to have a better understanding of the openings and what they affect.

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- iv. What are the options that we have for compensating our staff who are taking on additional work due to the staff absences?
 - 1. Nurses are being paid extra for all of their time and energy.
 - 2. We can also pay staff for committee work after school or on weekends.
 - 3. More info will be shared at Dec Mtg.
 - v. Is there a way to give staff members a bonus or additional pay? Some districts have given a stipend for extra planning, especially if teachers are required to teach remotely. Options can include additional planning hours, curriculum work, and overtime.
5. Maine Environmental Education Association
- a. \$1,500 Mini-Grant for Outdoor Learning [Application](#), [Notification](#), and [Award Letter](#)
 - b. Discussion was heard on the approval process and that future grants need to be tied to the strategic plan being developed. We continue to tweak the process so that prior approval is given both at the building and central office levels before coming to Finance.
6. LD993 Update
- a. This is a law passed at the end of June that gives 15 more days to staff for COVID-related leave. We along with MSMA and our attorney believe this is for days used/needed from January 1st of 2021 and ending on October 18th, 2021.
 - b. The Union and MEA believe differently and so we will see who is proven right or if legislation is introduced to correct the disagreement. We are waiting to see if the Department of Labor might give clarity to the understanding.
7. RSU 9 Hiring Plan Changes - Christopher/Columbia/Elkington
- a. Advertising strategies
 - i. Website Update
 - ii. Ad plan
 - iii. Other?

A review of some of steps taken so far were discussed.
 - b. Application changes
 - i. Process Review being done
 - A committee is working on this.
 - ii. Online Program options review
 - 1. We are working on securing an online portal to assist in the hiring process.
 - 2. We are now looking at one that was recommended to us.

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- c. Proposed clerk position to be shared w/Salary & Benefits
 - i. Increase outreach
 - Key to get applicants and keep them.
 - ii. More of a hands-on approach and greater support of non-professional staff
 - In HR we need to make it easier for people to apply and be helped during the hiring process.
 - iii. Costs
 - Would come from funds already budgeted from open positions.
 - iv. Will it add to the overall budget in 22-23?
 - Would change the cost center it would be part of, but not add to the future budget.
- 8. Salary & Benefits Proposed shared position /HR
 - a. Why is it needed?
 - Contracts are very complicated and with over 500 employees greater assistance is needed
 - b. The role will include working with salary and benefits as well.
 - c. Costs for this year?
 - We would be using unspent open position funds.
 - d. Will it add to the overall budget in 22-23?
 - We are taking a deeper dive into the support needed. May look at adding hours to current central office staff if skills match. This will be brought to the full board in December.
- 9. Custodian & Driver hiring expectations
 - a. Difficulty of hiring
 - b. Meeting with Union on possible options
 - i. They understand the need for greater flexibility. We hope to have advertisements updated shortly that do not require a custodian to be a driver.
 - c. Will be asking the negotiations team to meet
 - If the Union is willing to agree to an adjustment.
- 10. Current Open Positions Update - Elkington
 - a. Ed Week Article - [How Staff Shortages Are Crushing Schools](#)
 - b. [National Staffing Shortages](#)
 - i. Info shared by the superintendent showed how our problem is universal.
 - ii. Discussion was heard regarding special education staff and the current status.

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The superintendent shared that he has not heard very many complaints, that everyone understands we have to adjust. That he does have concerns about what the long-term effect could be and that a greater breakdown of positions by program will be reviewed at the next meeting.

- iii. The superintendent is looking to form a Special Education Committee, to assist in reviewing concerns and needs, items that may or are coming up.

11. Future Agenda Items - Doyle

- a. ESER 2 Funds breakdowns
- b. What are the risks of not evaluating certain staff members in 21-22
- c. Budget Timeline for 22-23
- d. Support Structures for New Staff Members