

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
MEETING MINUTES
July 15, 2019

A meeting of the Grand Forks School Board Finance Committee was held on Monday, July 15, 2019, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Bill Palmiscno presiding.

Committee Members Present:

Doug Carpenter, Grand Forks School Board Member/Voting Member
Amber Flynn, Grand Forks School Board Vice President/Voting Member
Bill Palmiscno, Grand Forks School Board President/Voting Member
Matt Spivey, Grand Forks School Board Member/Voting Member
Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools
Scott J. Berge, Business Manager
Catherine Gillach, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education

Committee Members Absent:

Misty Brustad, GFASB School Board Liaison
Jody Thompson, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Education

Others Present:

Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary

Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes. It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Flynn to approve the May 21, 2019, minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Amendment to Agenda. It was moved by Spivey and seconded by Carpenter to amend the agenda by adding "Proposal to Increase Special Education FTEs for Middle Schools." Motion carried unanimously.

Recommended 2019-2020 Budget. Berge reviewed annual budgeted results with annual actual results for the fiscal years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Although some reconciliation still had to be done for 2018-2019, he said budgeted revenues and budgeted expenses have been generally higher than actual results for each of the four years. Berge reported that 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have deficit results even without the district's deferred maintenance issues factored in and said that significant improvements in

efficiencies needed to be found in order to eliminate substantial deficits in future years. For the preliminary 2019-2020 general fund budget, assuming an average revenue growth of 2.3% in local, state, and federal sources and an average expenditure growth of 3% in salaries, fringe benefits, other expenses, and utilities, a deficit of \$1.9M is expected. There is still work to do and conversations to be had regarding grants and other spending in order to move forward and finalize the fiscal year 2019-2020 general fund budget.

Berge provided information (North Dakota Century Code Chapter 57-19) on the establishment of a special reserve fund. He said up to three mills could be levied. Committee members said that from a pure budget perspective, it made sense to establish a special reserve fund, but they were concerned about the timing of it in light of the District's plan to move forward with a referendum.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Spivey to recommend to the full Board approval of the fiscal year 2019-2020 preliminary general

fund budget as may be subsequently modified by the business manager and that the District adopt a resolution establishing a three-mill special reserve fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Grant Writer Position. Brenner explained a request to establish the position of Grant Writer. The draft document included in this meeting’s materials called the position a Grant Administrator; however, he said it is not an administrative position and that the position is correctly called Grant Writer. He suggested the District pay for the position in its first year and that most of the cost thereafter would be recouped from grants. The goal is to recoup 100% of the cost; however, it would more likely be about 80%. With salary and benefits, pay for the position would be in the \$60-65,000 range.

Gillach said that the investment far outweighed the amount that would be recouped and that there is an outstanding amount of grant opportunities and money available.

Carpenter said that he generally supported the position, but wanted to see a report of income and expenses after the first year.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Spivey to recommend to the full Board approval of the request to establish the position of Grant Writer with a salary and benefits range of \$60-65,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Corners Budget Update. Berge reported constructions costs for a parking lot at the Executive Corners location were originally estimated at \$180,000 with Pure Development agreeing to provide \$120,000 of the cost. The low bid received for the project totaled \$227,237. As a result, parking lot construction costs will exceed the initial estimate by \$47,237. In addition, estimates for landscaping and a fence to be installed along the property line facing the resident next to the parking lot are yet to be determined. The additional parking spaces at Executive Corners will allow the District to reduce the number of spaces rented in the downtown parking ramp. The administration is working with the City to finalize the District’s parking ramp needs for the 2019-2020 school

year. Parking for Grand Forks Central High School will be a mess when the Pure Development project is in progress. Berge said he has discussed a contingency plan for parking with the City and that they will work with the District for additional spaces in the ramp if needed. Palmiscno suggested if the need for additional parking arose, the cost for additional parking should be paid by Pure Development because it would be caused by their project delay. Carpenter discussed the need to be proactive and communicate the parking situation with teachers.

Proposal to Increase Special Education FTEs for Middle Schools. Brenner explained a proposal for an increase of three FTEs (two certified and one more in the behavioral level) in special education staff at the middle schools at an estimated cost of \$65,000 per FTE. An increase of 41 special education students in 6th grade is expected. Currently, the middle schools do not have adequate staffing to meet the special education needs and staff at the elementary level have been so inundated that they have not been available to the middle schools.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Flynn to recommend to the full Board authorization the increase of three FTEs in special education at the middle schools. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Flynn to authorize the business manager to include costs for the Grant Writer position and the three special education FTEs in the fiscal year 2019-2020 preliminary general fund budget. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

APPROVED _____
(Date)

Bill Palmiscno, Committee Chair

Scott J. Berge, Business Manager