

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 7:00 PM remotely.

Board members present: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino

Board members absent: Mrs. Geraci

Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance.

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor. Motion carried, with Mr. Hicks abstaining.*

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Pietrasko gave instructions for the public to call in for comment.

Mr. Moore reported that he had received a comment from Teresa Opalacz who was concerned about the use of the surplus to balance the budget. She was also concerned about fixing the courts at Memorial School. Chuck Stengel also wrote in to support the budget. Ms. Della Ventura wrote asking how to vote on the budget tonight and Mr. Moore explained that it would be just a board vote and why. Barbara Allen asked the same question as well. Carl Stoup thanked the board, teachers and administrators for doing a great job. Mary Ann O'Brien had indicated that there were 25 watches on the public hearing.

Dr. Serino reported that Mrs. Viola from Durham had emailed and she also had phone conversation with her. All the emails will be included in the minutes. Mrs. Viola had questions about the guidance from the attorney relative to the governor's executive order about retaining the budgets and paying employees in full as well as retaining the bus drivers when they weren't driving. She also complimented the board on the virtual hearing and had some questions about how to sign on. Mrs. Viola also encouraged Mr. Moore and Dr. Serino to read an article in the Middletown Press about what East Hampton was doing in terms of a municipal salary freeze. She also asked about the playscape at John Lyman School and why that was being replaced. She also had questions about the \$6,000 for magnet schools and the use of the fund balance. Mrs. Viola had questions about the class action suit with the company that installed the turf field and questions about using the surplus. She felt that the board was not scrutinizing the budget proposals from the superintendent to the degree that they should. She also had questions about Korn School personnel and why people were placed in other schools. Mrs. Viola had questions about staffing and the need for counselors across the district. She felt that the board would make the right decision about retaining and paying staff.

Donia Viola, from Durham, thanked Dr. Serino for her summary and reiterated that she remains concerned about the cost of school budgets and feels that it's time for the Board of Education to send a

letter to state representatives asking any educational mandates be carefully reviewed and scrutinized. She stated that circumstances vary when there is a regional district where the towns do not contribute evenly and duplicate programs may exist already. Mrs. Viola hopes that the district realizes that no amount of spending can determine success rates and that they will look at the area of employment very seriously, especially during this pandemic.

### **Recognition of CABA Student Leadership Award recipients - Riley Biro, Sofia Hurlbert, Nicholas Vestergaard and Lynna Vo**

Dr. Serino reported that Sofia Hurlbert and Riley Biro, from Strong School, and Lynna Vo and Nicholas Vestergaard, from Coginchaug High School, all received the CABA Student Leadership Award. Dr. Serino read the submittals from their teachers and congratulated them all.

### **Recognition of CRHS student reporters - Ava Kowal, Joshua Mann and Nicholas Vestergaard**

Dr. Serino explained that she has sent gift certificates to the three student reporters on behalf of the Board of Education for keeping the board informed in a very mature and professional manner throughout the year. Mr. Moore also thanked them for keeping the board informed.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Board of Education special session meeting May 6, 2020**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2020 meeting.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the May 6, 2020 meeting, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **B. Public hearing on the budget May 13, 2020**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes from the public hearing on May 13, 2020.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the May 13, 2020 public hearing, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **Next Board Meeting - June 10, 2020 at 7:00 PM**

Mr. Moore added that they will go into Executive Session at the next meeting for the Superintendent's review. Mrs. Petrella encouraged everyone to get their evaluations in as soon as possible.

### **School Closure Update**

Dr. Serino explained that there are about two-and-a-half weeks remaining in the school year and added that students will have Friday off next week. Approximately 150 staff members will participate in a parade with Dattco bus drivers leading through Durham and Middlefield along different bus

routes. Classroom clean-up will be getting underway soon. The final full week of school will begin on June 8<sup>th</sup> and the principals and staff have created various activities, including scavenger hunts and virtual field days. Last day for students will be June 12<sup>th</sup>, with the last day for staff on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

A virtual graduation is being put together and students will pick up their caps and gowns soon. Dr. Serino and Mr. Moore both recorded their graduation speeches and there will be musical performances included as well. Students will get that virtual graduation on June 16<sup>th</sup>. July 31<sup>st</sup> is currently the placeholder for some type of in-person graduation though no event will be held that would jeopardize the health of students, families or the community.

Dr. Serino also reported that a survey was sent out to families and focus groups have been held with staff. Within the past two weeks, they have received some guidance from the Regional Advisory Committee for the start of the next school year, continuing with distance learning or being back in the buildings or a combination of the two.

Mr. Hicks explained that the RESC advisory board meets weekly to review and modify documents received from the State. They look at six different categories: supporting well-being, spread mitigation, operations and logistics, coordination and communication, teaching and learning and potential second-wave closings. They have also looked at several different scenarios for next year. This week, they talked about summer school, what the physical space will look at, personal protection, cleaning and disinfecting as well as bathroom and bus protocols.

### **Strategic Plan for Reopening and Recovery**

Dr. Serino explained that the Planning and Response team is meeting next Tuesday to separate the work out to subcommittees. She has taken the six areas and built it into the district's strategic coherence plan.

They are looking at issues they could possibly face in trying to support children and parents have shared that children of all ages are experiencing tremendous confusion. They are expecting to see increased anxiety and depression. Returning to a regular routine could be very difficult for many, including their sleep schedule. A big concern will be finding and reuniting with their friends as well as the challenge of getting back to the day-to-day.

They want to start with what they know works and then base it on individualized needs. They will be taking on two interns from the Marriage and Family Therapy Department at CCSU which they believe will be a tremendous support and they will continue to work with Youth and Family Services in town. They will also reassure people with the when, what and how things will happen. Reunification design plans have been designed at every level and play time will be critically important. They will work to be sure teachers are supported as well. They will do contact tracing and self-reporting and they will also develop a process by which people can report anything they see as not following a protocol. They will need to talk about steps that will be taken if there is a second wave to the virus and schools need to be shut down once again.

Regarding spread mitigation, Dr. Serino stated that they will look at daily operations, movement within the building, touch points and health offices. They will look carefully at the types of PPE that will be necessary. Summer school guidelines now indicate that students and staff can provide their own masks, but the school will need to provide them if needed. Some masks may need to be fit-tested. They have talked about products that will be ordered and protocols for their use. An isolation or quarantine area will

need to be developed for the nurses' offices. They will also need to look at the ventilation systems in the schools.

In terms of operations and logistics, they will need to see if any policies need to be revised and MOUs will likely need to be amended with the bargaining units. They have looked at amending the school calendar, including start and end times as well as staggering grades. Classroom layout will have to be changed, with a lot of furniture being removed. Current recommendations are that students would not eat in a cafeteria together, so they would need to create a protocol for food distribution.

They will need to look at transportation and will ask parents if they would have their children ride the bus. They would then have to look at the parent drop-off and pick-up process. Mrs. Neubig is already working on getting information together for FEMA reimbursement.

Dr. Serino noted that they would follow a particular plan for giving and receiving communications to be clear and consistent. Looking at teaching and learning, the administrative team as well as other staff members have been working on a plan that will be school-specific to meet the needs of the students. Dr. Serino will look at the research on interrupted learning.

Dr. Serino is waiting on more information from the CDC and the health director in terms of what the indicators will be for a second wave and what will trigger a response with a school closure.

Mr. Moore asked everyone to text or call Dr. Serino with their comments about these plans. Dr. Serino added that email would be good also. She would love to get feedback with any ideas.

### **Summer School/Extended School Year**

Dr. Serino prepared a draft summary for parents of what the expectations would be and will put the presentation on the website for the board members to review. A recommendation is to appoint a health and safety compliance liaison. There was a .5 HR specialist in the budget proposal and she would like to make that a full-time position without increasing the head count to help meet the huge requirements. Dr. Serino also explained that they will be hiring a long-term substitute for the instrumental teacher at the high school at a .6 level, which leaves .4 that can be put toward the HR position. She also feels that she can reduce another position by .1 to change the HR position to a full-time position.

Mr. Yamartino asked if Dr. Serino has asked the Health District what type of support they can provide and she noted it needed to be a school employee and the Health District is at their max in terms of managing the municipal side of the house. She will talk to them at next Tuesday's meeting about what information they can provide.

Dr. Serino explained that they are committed to continuing with distance learning this summer because they do not believe that they can meet the expectations that will assure students' health and safety at this time. If things change, they will absolutely consider providing face-to-face instruction for small groups or individual students.

Mr. Moore added that he continues to meet with the chairs of the Boards of Education on Fridays and everyone continues to have the same issues. They dealt with graduation last week and this week's meeting will focus on reopening and associated costs since reopening will be extremely costly. Mr. Moore suggested that the board will have to consider a lot of changes within the budget to accommodate the cost of reopening, if that even happens.

Mr. Yamartino has heard that students want more video-type education and Dr. Taylor had raised the issue at the last meeting of whether the district has the appropriate technology in place. Mr. Yamartino again asked if that was in place and Dr. Serino stated that they are listening and planning. She and Mr. Pietrasko have had multiple conversations about what is in the budget and what needs to be in the budget as well as receiving feedback from teachers. They have also discussed having teachers actually teach from the classroom. Dr. Serino added how appreciative she is of the board and the trust of the community.

Mrs. Neubig stated that the food service department has been serving meals since the closure on March 16<sup>th</sup> and the numbers have increased from a couple of lunches a week to over 500 a week. The district received a waiver to offer the lunches to all residents ages 18 and under. The waiver ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>, though there could potentially be an extension. Since the district does not qualify without the waiver, they are working on solidifying relationships with Middletown and Meriden for students to pick up lunches. These lunches are not reimbursed at the same amount as regular school lunches and there is no additional revenue coming in. Because of this, food service is now operating at a deficit and she has had to transfer money from the general fund to the food service to pay payroll. Mrs. Neubig did point out that this is all FEMA-reimbursable at 75 percent and she estimates about a \$100,000 deficit at June 30<sup>th</sup>, with a \$75,000 reimbursement. She added that USDA may also offer some financial assistance to districts offering food service.

Mrs. Neubig has begun preparing documentation for FEMA reimbursement as well. She also noted that the State of Connecticut received \$111 million under CARES funding and will be distributed to towns based on Title I percentages. District 13 will receive \$43,000 and can be spent in four separate areas: connectivity, curriculum, educational recovery and social/emotional well-being. Mrs. Neubig will start that application process this week.

Mr. Yamartino asked what the consequences will be if the food service waiver expires but the district continues to provide meals. Mrs. Neubig explained that that would eliminate the district from the National School Lunch Program for the entire year. Mr. Yamartino asked if Durham-Middlefield Youth and Family Services could offer anything during the summer and Mrs. Neubig stated that she could reach out to them about that. Dr. Serino stated that she has spoken to DMYFS about their food support programs and has included that information in her newsletters to parents. Mr. Yamartino added that the Middlefield Food Pantry has received a number of donations and is well-stocked at this time.

**Vote to adopt the proposed 2020-2021 budget: Shall we accept the proposed budget of \$37,371,908 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year as prepared and presented by the Regional District 13 Board of Education?**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to adopt the proposed 2020-2021 budget which reads, shall we accept the proposed budget of \$37, 371,908 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year as prepared and presented by the Regional District 13 Board of Education.*

Mr. Yamartino asked Dr. Serino and Mrs. Neubig if they felt the budget had what was needed for the coming year. Mrs. Neubig felt that there were trade-offs in the budget, such as no athletics if there is distance learning. She felt comfortable right now, but added that she may have to come back in January/February to move money from one line item to another.

Mrs. Petrella noted that the public has expressed their desire to have the budget be even less than it is and she added that the total amount of the gross budget is less than it was five years ago which she believes is phenomenal. Mrs. Petrella would also like the board to revisit completing the field house in the future, once everything settles down.

Dr. Serino stated that she felt some areas of the budget do not provide enough for what the district needs and they will need to re-assess, but they first need to look at how things can be changed. She would suggest using the people in the district in a different capacity, if needed. There may be something that would absolutely be required and will increase the budget.

Dr. Friedrich commented that, while no one is sitting with the board today witnessing this vote, this discussion is the culmination of the conversation about the budget and program priorities which has gone on since the fall. He wanted to point out that the board has been thinking about this budget, item by item in many cases, since October or November. He expressed his gratitude to Dr. Serino for her work on this process.

Mr. Hicks asked for the vote to be by roll call as this is a situation that has never existed before.

*In favor of accepting the proposed budget of \$37,371,908 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year as prepared and presented by the Regional District 13 Board of Education: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **New Business**

### **A. Selection of search consultant process**

Mr. Moore explained that he has sent out several requests for search consultants and has received two back. He will email them to everyone and hopefully have a meeting after the June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **Committee Reports**

### **A. Well-Being Committee Meeting - May 26, 2020**

Mrs. Caramanello reported that they had a meeting yesterday and Dr. Serino presented a slide show. Molly Yale and Connor Byrne gave some insightful information as far as the impact that this is having on the students, especially the seniors. They shared their disappointment and frustration that their career at District 13 is ending the way it is. Dr. Serino had shared that there will be a virtual graduation as it does not look like an in-person graduation will be possible. The students are missing the interaction with teachers and classmates. Mrs. Schaefer shared her insight from a teacher's standpoint and the staff is really relying on each other. They discussed the obvious stressors that everyone is feeling, but also discussed the fears and frustrations of coming back into school. They reviewed the anxiety and depression of both the students and staff.

The committee brainstormed different ways that the board can support everyone and it was agreed that the best thing would be for the board to be cognizant of the fact that the health and well-being of the students is the greatest concern. Dr. Serino had reminded everyone that they may be the only district to have a Well-Being Committee.

Mr. Moore stated that Mr. Falcone had asked if the board would offer a contribution toward graduation in the form of a red cord for their caps and gowns. The red cord stands for willpower, strength and courage. Mr. Moore wrote a note from the board to each of the graduating seniors.

### Communications

Mr. Moore and Dr. Serino met with Martin Anderson, chairman of the Building Committee who has also been appointed the long-term recovery coordinator for the town, about the role that the schools would play in the long-term recovery.

### Public Comment

There was just one caller on the line, but no comments were made.

### Adjournment

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Education.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First

### Public Comment Received Via Email

**From:** Robert Yamartino <[ryamartino@rsd13.org](mailto:ryamartino@rsd13.org)>

**Date:** May 29, 2020 at 3:12:08 PM EDT

**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Subject: Fwd: RSD 13 SY20/21 Budget**

**From:** Robert Yamartino <[ryamartino@rsd13.org](mailto:ryamartino@rsd13.org)>

**Date:** May 29, 2020 at 3:11:34 PM EDT

**To:** nick Faiella <>

**Cc:** Maura Caramanello <[mcaramanello@rsd13.org](mailto:mcaramanello@rsd13.org)>, [lpetrella@rsd13.org](mailto:lpetrella@rsd13.org), [jroraback@rsd13.org](mailto:jroraback@rsd13.org), Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Subject: Re: Budget**

Hi Nick,

I just realized that this and your prior email were only sent to the Middlefield BOE members. I'm copying Bob Moore that your comments can be copied into the record. Most all communication/responses come through the Board Chair and disseminated to the rest of us. Any response by a single member that is copied to the entire board is considered a discussion/ meeting under FOI and is a violation. That is why, to date, I don't think you have received a response to either email.

That said, for information purposes, I am copying all on this thread.

I understand your sentiment regarding the proposed budget and the playground equipment.

As a Board member, I have the responsibility of assuring that we have the appropriate resources in place to provide for the educational needs of our entire school community. I believe the budget we approved may indeed provide the resources required if we have the students return to school as we knew it pre-Covid. In order for students to return to school post Covid, there are many suggested alterations (physical and operationally) that we may be required to make. I fear the budget won't support all the modifications under consideration at the state level. If the fall remains at distance learning, we probably have it covered. (we will need more support for distance learning).

All that said, we have a plan to close John Lyman. We do not currently have authority to do so. We therefore have an obligation to provide for the educational needs of the children (assuming a return to school). Recess and recess activities help provide foundational social and emotional development opportunities for all children in the elementary levels. The playground equipment being proposed will satisfy the requirement for the "short" term. We are contemplating moving the equipment should the school close. A full playscape at John Lyman (such as Brewster has) would cost easily twice what is proposed at John Lyman.

In recognition of the difficult financial times some folks have been having, the Board took the extraordinary measure of transferring the expected surplus to the towns this year. Despite the State cuts to ECS funding and enrollment shifting to Middlefield, and because of the school's actions, budgetary restraint on the part of the town and increased grand list, Middlefield is delivering A slightly lower tax rate resulting in a slight reduction in taxes to all families in town.

I also do believe that given the level of financial commitment by some folks in town, it is time to move forward on the field storage building and also time to gain commitment to closing John Lyman School.

Thank you for reaching out. I truly respect your commitment and your level of involvement. By copy of this response, I'll ask Bob Moore to share your sentiment from both emails in the minutes of our Board meeting.

Best regards,  
Bob Yamartino



Sent from my iPad

On May 28, 2020, at 6:04 PM, nick Faiella < > wrote:  
Hello,

The budget that you approved last night including a significant amount of money allocated towards playscapes and swing sets at two schools. Given the current Covid-19 crisis and the possibility that children may not be allowed to use such items this school year, isn't it better to wait and see on this type of expenditure? Especially at John Lyman which may close in the short term anyway.

Nick Faiella

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** nick Faiella < >

**Date:** May 26, 2020 at 9:38:02 AM EDT

**To:** [mcaramanello@rsd13.org](mailto:mcaramanello@rsd13.org), [lpetrella@rsd13.org](mailto:lpetrella@rsd13.org), [jroraback@rsd13.org](mailto:jroraback@rsd13.org), [ryamartino@rsd13.org](mailto:ryamartino@rsd13.org)

**Subject:** RSD 13 SY20/21 Budget

Hello,

I just wanted to reach out to you all to urge you to vote NO on this year's school budget. It is irresponsible to raise expenses this year given the worst economy in over 100 years.

Using one time savings to offset what will now be our starting point for future budgets is not where we should be. This year's budget should, without question, be a decrease and the savings from this year's school budget should be deferred to next school to since we have absolutely not idea what will be happening in the fall with the Covid-19 crisis and what funds might be needed.

Nick Faiella

Middlefield Resident

**From:** jolydellav < >

**Date:** May 26, 2020 at 9:34:55 AM EDT

**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Subject:** RE: RSD 13 Budget vote for 2020

Thanks Bob – for the speedy feedback.

Regards Joe & Lynn Della Ventura

**From:** Robert Moore [mailto:[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 9:31 AM

**To:** jolydellav

**Subject:** Re: RSD 13 Budget vote for 2020

Thanks for your concerns. Last year we went out to bid for new health insurance provider. We had Anthem/Blue Cross forever. ConnectiCare won the contract and our rate was reduced by \$1.27million in our current budget. The contract also included a cap increase of 9.5% for next year's budget which is why the increase lower than we anticipated due to the pandemic and our current claim rate. We can go to bid again in 21/22 school year.

Our business manager watches carefully for savings. She is now managing a huge energy savings program at all of our facilities.

Hope this is helpful.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 26, 2020, at 8:52 AM, jolydellav <> wrote:

Thanks Robert, was not aware of that. Did not see that information in town times, RD13 webSITE, or in the flier that was mailed out. I am hopeful that the board will exercise this huge responsibility with careful consideration it deserves. From what we see it looks like health benefits renegotiation are possibly in order in the future as that is very much on the rise. That's are only comment.

Regards Joe & Lynn DellaVentura

On Mon, May 25, 2020, 12:16 PM Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

Joseph and Lynn

Thanks for asking about voting for the budget. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Lamont has issued an executive order requiring the regional boards of education to hold the vote on the budget by the members of the Board only. Therefore there will be no district referendum on the school budget this year. Board members will vote on the budget at its May 27th meeting. Public comment is still being collected and will be available at that meeting as well. Instructions for comments will be posted this week.

Thank you, however, for your interest in voting.

Sincerely

Bob Moore

Sent from my iPhone

On May 25, 2020, at 10:52 AM, jolydellav <> wrote:

To Mr. Robert Moore, Durham

Chairman of the RSD 13 Board Of Education

Hello Mr. Moore,

My wife and I are having a hard time trying to figure out how to vote on the RSD 13 Budget, scheduled to take place Wednesday 5/27/20. Will there be a Zoom meeting link posted? If so where will the link be posted and how do we proceed to vote?

Thanks in advance for your response.

Joseph & Lynn Della Ventura  
15 Pine Ledge Trail  
Durham CT.

**From:** Paul D Viola <>  
**Date:** May 26, 2020 at 4:59:01 PM EDT  
**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>  
**Subject: Re: Budget**

Bob,

I shared with Kathy re the magnet bus issue, and she acknowledged that \$6,000.00 was revenue but did not think that DATTCO would charge that little for the transportation either. As previously mentioned to you (and to her again), there is no mandate that requires the district to fund magnet schools' transportation so, my point is, why continue paying for it when the parent(s) or guardian(s) are actually responsible should their child be enrolled in one of them?

Just dropped an e-mail re the turf to her, too, and I'm hoping you'll consider taking the matter up when Buildings and Grounds meets again.

Have a good night.

Donia

On Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 10:10:50 AM EDT, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

I understand you are to be talking to Dr Serino today about the turf issue.

The \$6000 for transportation to magnet school is actually a revenue not an expense, we are getting a grant to transport magnet school attendees to Middletown where they pick up a CREC bus to school .DATTCO does provide the bus to Middletown.

Any surplus that is generated due to current year savings goes into the fund balance. The fund balance is applied to the following year budget and as such it is returned to lower that budget to the towns. The expense or gross budget is based on need not on fund balance. The gross budget as I said previously is less than the 2015 budget.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 23, 2020, at 4:43 PM, Paul D Viola <> wrote:

Bob,

Not to have you confused, I left out the reason for the lawsuit against the artificial turf supplier: they actually sold it nationwide predicting 15 years or more for its staying power but knowing full well this

was not the case. I did learn from someone (sorry, I can't remember his name) who said if their product lasted eight (8) years before crumbling that was just about the best it did.

Donia

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Paul D Viola <>

**To:** [rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org) <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Sent:** Saturday, May 23, 2020, 4:11:23 PM EDT

**Subject:** Fw: Budget

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Paul D Viola <>

**To:** Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Sent:** Saturday, May 23, 2020, 4:06:08 PM EDT

**Subject:** Re: Budget

Bob,

Conversation was never closed re turf with Ms. Serino other than its resulting effects with usage by students/athletes/public. There was no acknowledgement of pursuing a lawsuit or further communication about it. Perhaps you and the rest of the Building & Grounds Committee might want to look into it.

I sent Ms. Serino another e-mail yesterday afternoon since I have had no reply to my e-mail sent her on Monday. So the questions linger, but hopefully not for much longer.

I feel that the BOE, rather than controlling spending, has become reliant on having surplus

funds and is adhering to this trend, because by overtaxing the taxpayers, can rest assured that there will definitely be monies for something which may suddenly occur and needs immediate remediation. The large amount of monies in this fund suggest that with all the changes which have taken place over the past two decades in the district (steady decline in enrollment, insurance plans and benefit costs, closing of a school and one more expected to close), the BOE is not sufficiently scrutinizing the budget proposals furnished by the superintendent and making determinations based on the existing conditions. The focus should shift from saving jobs and adding positions. Enrichment, as pertains to the schools, does not mean getting rich. This issue is definitely one that requires attention.

Thank you again for providing the forum to be heard.

Donia

On Saturday, May 23, 2020, 2:22:08 PM EDT, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

Donia

Next years budget increases are due to a small increase in salaries due to contract requirements and two positions to meet our special education needs , with one of those positions being offset by reductions in student out-placement costs. The largest increase is in health insurance costs. This years insurance savings resulted from bidding for a new provider which also put cap on increases for next year, which is why the increase is capped at the \$500K level despite the increases due the health impacts of our current virus issues. Fund balance is created by careful control of spending during the year and unforeseen events.

It is my understanding that Dr Serino has recently answered your questions on turf issues.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 22, 2020, at 8:16 AM, Paul D Viola <> wrote:

G'morning,

You are correct in your assessment as compared to 2015 but gross budgets have steadily increased otherwise which is the reason for the heightened costs and I acknowledge it is mainly due to salaries. This year's gross budget is up over \$500,000.00 from last year. The increases are obvious when revealing the cost per pupil annually. Depending on the varying degrees of revenue given the district by the state has impacted the final budgets which I'm sure you are aware of. Working with a fund balance of almost \$1.5 million further illustrates a need for a more carefully crafted budget proposal, also.

The situation with having to replace the artificial turf installed in 2010 is another example of what happens when things do not work out as predicted. I recall when this was accepted the application was supposed to last somewhere between 15 and 20 years. Only we learned from the newspaper last year that would not be the case and the company involved has a federal class-action suit against them because they apparently did know their product would fail. Has anyone looked into being part of this legal strategy to possibly recoup part of the monies paid to them?

Thank you.

Donia

On Thursday, May 21, 2020, 4:45:07 PM EDT, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

The 20/21 gross budget is \$130,000 less than the 2015 budget.  
I will ask someone to check the Korn personnel data when they are free.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 21, 2020, at 4:27 PM, Paul D Viola <> wrote:

Hi there,

Can you say the same for the gross budget, Bob? And would you please be more specific as relates to Korn School (might be easier to answer by how many employees there were all together before the closing and how many were reassigned to other schools, perhaps?).

Thank you for your time and attention.

Donia

On Thursday, May 21, 2020, 12:10:05 PM EDT, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

Donia

I will check the magnet school  
Transportation item.

The Korn school closure closed the building it did not eliminate the 3rd and 4th grade which were relocated along with their teachers. Certain staff and a principal were eliminated.

To your last point, the average observer should look at the five years of our budget and see that the net budget is lower than it was five years ago and the number of staff positions have decrease by 23.5 over that time.

The Next Board meeting is a regular meeting in which public comments have been accepted only by email and it is not a public hearing. However, we think we will be able to get phone in comments at this meeting similar to our normal meeting before this pandemic. Instructions will be forthcoming.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 21, 2020, at 8:41 AM, Paul D Viola <> wrote:

G'morning, Bob,

I have a follow-up to last e-mail you sent me this past Monday. The superintendent made contact re Ms. Bottini but I questioned her response on that same day and forwarded such to her. I am awaiting a reply.

Two other issues I'd like to raise since I'm online now: 1) the \$6,000.00 expense for the magnet school transportation - who's getting paid for this cost as it seems unlikely that a DATTCO bus would run that cheaply; 2) how many of the former employees of Korn School were retained after its closing and what positions were given them (please identify whether or not the jobs were newly created or increased the number of personnel already established for departments). Any lay-offs?

To the average observer, it does appear that there is a consistent effort to make sure that the district continues on its quest for more funding whether or not it is really the proper approach or in line with what is happening all around us. The townspeople deserve better.

Donia Viola

On Tuesday, May 19, 2020, 8:34:39 AM EDT, Paul D Viola <> wrote:

Okay, and a reminder that a code be furnished for the next meeting since I, like so many others, cannot access webinar.

Have a nice day, and hope you & your family stay safe and well.

Donia

On Tuesday, May 19, 2020, 8:04:36 AM EDT, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

Donia

I have forwarded all of your correspondence directly to each board member as well, sorry forgot to tell you that.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 19, 2020, at 6:36 AM, Paul D Viola <> wrote:

Bob,

Due to the fact that the listening audience on the night of the budget hearing was unable to connect without access to a code for asking questions about it, I requested you share my previous communications with the full board before the May 27th meeting. Thank you.

Donia

On Monday, May 18, 2020, 5:24:27 PM EDT, Robert Moore <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)> wrote:

Donia

Dr Serino was answering your comment on Ms Bottino and I already answered your comments on why all employees and the bus drivers are retained. Additionally I read the press article and I said all your comments will be part of the record. Not sure what else you are looking for.

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Date: May 27, 2020 at 11:08:51 AM EDT

**To:** [rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)

**Subject: Public Comment: Agenda Item 11**

To the Board Members,

With all of the uncertainties that our community faces, I urge the Board to adapt the budget as presented. Though additional tax cuts are always welcome, the RSD13 and community budgets must be sufficient to address the unknowns we are facing.

Stay safe and safely educate the children in our community

Chuck Stengel

**From:** Carol Kleeman <>

**Date:** May 27, 2020 at 8:40:12 PM EDT

**To:** "[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)" <[rmoore@rsd13.org](mailto:rmoore@rsd13.org)>

**Subject:** Public comment

Bob and Board members

I am disappointed. I called in, line busy and you announced no public comment at the end and ended the meeting.

Also disappointed we can vote for the position of board members but the public could not vote on the budget? As I understand, it was not a mandate by the governor for the Board of Education to vote on the budget. I feel the board did an injustice to the townspeople.

Carol Kleeman

Sent from my iPad

*Making your homeowner dreams a reality!*

[www.carolkleeman@raveis.com](http://www.carolkleeman@raveis.com)

Licensed in CT