

**City/School Joint Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2009
Room 24 – 5:30 p.m.**

Attendees: Chairman Mavodones, Councilor Anton, (Councilor Waxman-absent), Joe Gray, Ellen Sanborn, Anita LaChance, Bob Leeman, Doug Sherwood, Joe Gray, Suzanne Knight, Jim Morse, Chair Snyder, Jaimey Caron, and Simon Thompson.

Item 1: Update on Sustainability Plan

Jim provided handouts addressing issues from the sustainability plan. He has created this as sort of a report card with a key showing progress. The School Committee has set aside \$600,000 toward the FY07 deficit. Jim outlined the following:

- The legislature hasn't done any EPS changes to date, and they will stay and track this for changes.
- No changes in ELL but possible decrease to DY (disadvantaged youth).
- They have achieved savings in bus maintenance using South Portland. Jim said that Westbrook is also interested and discussions are underway with the possibility of routes being taken over by Portland and having South Portland provide maintenance. They also have five new CNG buses, which are more efficient and have been paid for through matching funds from the State.
- Achieve savings from administrative cuts. Ellen explained that this \$200,000 is retroactive over a period of time and was done through the State's mandated alternative plan.
- MOU for HVAC services. Jim said the quality of service has gone up but cost savings have not yet been achieved. Pipe going into Deering had been repaired several times and when the City took over it was completely fixed. Jim is very pleased with the quality of work and anticipates real savings over time. Anita said that although there have been no significant savings, the HVAC systems are in a lot better shape and the repairs that have been made will pay off in the long run. Bob said that there is underground piping that goes from Lyman Moore to Lyseth that needs repair. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done and they are hoping to get some of this done through Ameresco.
- Jim said they are evaluating special education and he is in the process of putting together an RFP to bring on an outside contractor to provide this service. This will be paid for through stimulus funding.
- Jim has been working on putting a structure in place for grant revenue and hopes to have a system in place by the end of the month.
- Regarding fiscal responsibility the chart of accounts has been completed. Monthly reporting is in progress and the school's finance committee has been meeting twice a month. Ellen pointed out that some of these items on this report are ongoing responsibilities and should be put into a separate plan.

Jim wanted to thank Kathy Alves and Bob Leeman for bringing two roofing problems to his attention because these would have been severe during the winter months.

Anita handed out draft MOU's for Financial Services & HVAC. She is in the process of scheduling a meeting to discuss Public Services and Recreation & Facilities.

Peter reported that it may not be until January before the School will know what the curtailment is. Ellen asked about cuts for this year. Peter said they may do this over two years. Jim said it may be almost \$3.5 million and that they should be prepared to take it in second year.

Councilor Anton asked about the possibility of combining custodial and maintenance services. Jim feels it is important to keep custodial services under their direction and they need them for day-to-day operations when things come up. Regarding maintenance, Doug said that Joline Hart has brought this up during bargaining and that it would be brought back if there were areas for savings. They are willing to look at this but would like examples.

Discussion was held on the School's new website. Jim said they have hired a company that is putting together a prototype. Ellen asked what this is costing them and Jim said they are paying \$20,000 and that he would be happy to provide the city with all reference material.

Item 2: Report on City Council's Finance Committee Action on 2009 Capital Improvement Program

Ellen said this was put on the agenda in response to Kate's email. Material that was submitted to the Finance Committee had been provided. She explained that the committee split the CIP and have sent the \$3.5 million TPL payment to council along with capital equipment. The balance of the CIP will be brought back to committee on September 24th.

Discussion was held on the QSCB financing. Ellen said the rules on this are different than our traditional bonding and needs to be financed separately. She is looking into how it might be done and whether it is cost effective. She said one of the problems is that the U.S. Treasury has not set rules around this type of financing. The QSCB borrowing is for 15 years and the city usually borrows on 20 year terms.

Item 3: Energy Performance Project Status

Ellen said she put this on the agenda to provide an update on how the school committee can participate. Anita said they are at the beginning stage and will be having their first meeting to discuss approach. They will be providing a Powerpoint presentation to the Council at a workshop. Ellen wanted to make it clear that this is the first step and they there will be a second more detailed report after the City does some work with the consultant. Jim said the Ameresco report is very important to them. Ellen said that

because of the magnitude of school improvements in this project they will need to evaluate funding, as improvements are paid for from energy savings. John feels that now is the time to get the school committee involved.

Jaimey asked about a peer review and there will be an RFP going out for this. John suggested that when committees are formed the school members should be included.

Kate questioned the timing of this in terms of budgeting. Ellen said there is a cycle with this and it will have to be layered. She said it may not impact the budget until FY12 due to the amount of time needed for construction.

Item 4: Preliminary Discussion on FY2011 Budget

They have already had discussion on EPS. Councilor Anton hopes that the committees can have many structural discussions before the budget begins. He feels it's important to set priorities before budget season. Jim said they have been doing a lot of work this summer and fall. He said the personnel committee has been delving into total staffing. He said they are looking closely at special education costs for possible savings. Also, looking at class size issues at elementary school level and will have good numbers in October.

Item 5: Other Business

No other business.