

Concord School Board
Public Hearing on the Budget
April 2, 2020

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noting that this was the first Public Hearing on the FY21 budget. She began by reading a statement explaining that the meeting was authorized to occur electronically, with no physical location, due to the Governor's emergency order on the Covid-19 pandemic (Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04). She explained that Board members and members of the public were able to participate and communicate via phone or "Microsoft Teams" and provided these numbers and links, along with a livestream on YouTube and ConcordTV's website. She also explained the public notice that had been given as to how to attend or view the meeting remotely, including instructions on the District website, and a legal notice in the *Concord Monitor*. This information included the number the public could use to alert the Board to any problems concerning access during the meeting, and the fact that the meeting would be adjourned if the public was unable to access the meeting. Roll call attendance was as follows, with each member confirming their ability to hear, and stating whether anyone was in the room with them:

Present: Jennifer Patterson, Gina Cannon, Chuck Crush, Tom Croteau, David Parker, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards, Danielle Smith, Barb Higgins (arrived late)

Administrators: *Superintendent* Frank Bass, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn

Ms. Patterson noted that the meeting would consist of a presentation from District administration on the updated FY21 budget. She said the budget that would be presented, which was also posted on the website, reflected modifications made in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and that it looked quite different from the budget the Board officially posted several weeks ago. She added that a second Public Hearing would take place on April 6 from 5:30-6:45 p.m., followed by a meeting on April 13 to vote on the budget. She added that the budget could be revisited in October should modifications become necessary.

Superintendent Frank Bass explained that projected valuations and revenues had been adjusted in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and that the original budget was cut by about \$1.5 million. Business Administrator Jack Dunn provided the revised posted budget.

DESCRIPTION	FY20 – FINALIZED 10/28/19	FY21 – REVISED POSTED BUGDET 3/27/20	CHANGE (\$)	CHANGE (%)
EXPENDITURES				
Total Appropriation	86,135,367	87,670,052	1,534,685	1.78
REVENUES				
Local	4,746,902	5,110,936	364,034	7.67
State	17,908,982	17,955,656	46,674	0.26
Federal	824,849	1,304,698	479,849	58.17
Transfers	550,788	323,840	(26,948)	(41.20)
Unreserved Fund Balance	1,952,365	2,100,000	147,635	7.56
State Education Tax	7,730,534	7,495,955	(234,579)	(3.03)
<i>Local Education Tax*</i>	52,405,947	53,378,967	973,020	1.86
Reconcile	15,000	0	(15,000)	(100)
TOTAL REVENUES	86,135,367	87,670,052	1,534,685	1.78

Mr. Dunn reviewed the changes made to proposed staffing. Superintendent Bass stated that a School Safety Compliance Officer had been hired and that she would be an asset to the District. He described changes and reductions made to the proposed new positions, including reductions to the floating custodian, special education teacher, educational assistant, and guidance counselor positions.

NO.	DESCRIPTION	FTE (NB)	NOT BUDGETED (NB)	FTE	FY21 (2/10/20) (3/5/20)	FTE	FY21 (3/30/20)
1	School Safety Compliance Officer			1	137,462.54	1	137,462.54
2	Custodian (CHS) – Floater			1	66,610.27	-1	(66,610.27)
3	District Nurse – Floater			1	88,928.60	1	88,928.60
4	Family Home Visitor (ages 0 - 5)			1	108,360.80	10 HRS	19,377.00
5A	Special Education Teacher (BGS,BMS,MBS)			5	497,909.05	3	298,745.43
5A	Reduction in non-Certified Staff			-10	(276,402.50)	-8	(237,766.48)
6A	Permanent Substitute			4.65	96,323.22	4.65	96,323.22
6A	Reduction in Substitute Account			-1	(107,650.00)	-1	(96,323.22)
7	Education Assistant – MBS Kindergarten			3	91,236.42	-3	(91,236.42)
8	Social Workers			2	199,163.60	2	199,163.60
9	Classroom Teacher – CMS			1	99,581.81	1	99,581.81
10	Special Education Teacher – RMS			1	99,581.81	-1	(99,581.81)
11	Occupational Therapist – RMS/BGS			0.4	61,567.21	0.4	61,567.21
12	Guidance Counselor			1	99,581.81	-1	(99,581.81)
13	Theater Arts Teacher – CRTIC*			0.67	66,513.00	-0.67	(66,513.00)
14	Assistant Principal – RMS			1	168,932.06	-1	(168,932.06)
15	Sabbatical Coverage - ½ Year Teacher Position			1	52,454.22	-1	(52,454.22)
16	LPN – MBS PreSchool Increase	0.5	38,083.03				
17	Increase Hearing Teacher (not budgeted)	0.2	32,243.89				
18	RN - Dedicated Nurse - Student (5d, 3hrs)					0.43	23,437.00
TOTAL					1,550,153.92		45,587.12

Mr. Dunn described additional expenditure, revenue, and growth adjustments, noting additions to unemployment insurance, reductions in a new projector and software programs for RMS, and a decrease in investment revenue.

EXPENDITURES

DESCRIPTION	POSTED BUDGET - 3/5	REVISED BUDGET - 3/27	DIFFERENCE
Unemployment Insurance	25,000	60,000	35,000
RMS Projector	15,000	0	(15,000)
I-Ready Online Instruction/Assessment	15,400	0	(15,400)
Xello for MS-1000 Students	4,650	0	(4,650)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES			

REVENUE

DESCRIPTION	POSTED BUDGET - 3/5	REVISED BUDGET - 3/27	DIFFERENCE
Investment Revenue	125,000	30,000	(95,000)
TOTAL REVENUE	125,000	30,000	(95,000)

UPDATE: REAL GROWTH DECREASE

In the updated budget, we have decreased the real growth from 0.77% to 0.58% or **(\$7,704,536)**

He reviewed the updated tax impact, noting a reduction in the tax impact from 1.89% to .72%. Superintendent Bass emphasized that there might be some federal dollars coming to public schools as well as some additional state funding, as the state was not able to spend all of its money.

BUDGET UPDATE – TAX IMPACT

	FY20 – FINAL RATE		FY21 – PROPOSED FEB 10 TH		FY21 – POSTED MAR 5 TH		FY21 – REVISED PROPOSAL MARCH 30 TH	
	(\$)		(\$)	(%)	(\$)	(%)	(\$)	(%)
Local Tax Rate	13.26		13.74	3.62	13.61	2.64	13.43	1.28
State Tax Rate*	2.05		1.99	-2.93	1.99	-2.93	1.99	-2.93
Total Tax Rate**	15.31		15.73	2.74	15.60	1.89	15.42	.72
UPDATED 3/30								

Mr. Dunn noted where budget information could be found on the District website, along with Board member contact information and upcoming meeting dates.

PUBLIC INFORMATION – PROPOSED BUDGET MINUTES, PRESENTATIONS AND VIDEOS

Work Session Presentations				
WS #	Description	Minutes	Presentation	Video
1	Opening Budget Presentation & Capital Facilities/Debt Service Central Office Board Room February 10, 2020			
2	Salaries & Benefits Central Office Board Room February 13, 2020			
3	Student Services Central Office Board Room February 17, 2020			
4	Curriculum & Technology Central Office Board Room March 2, 2020			
5	Open Session - Budget to Post Central Office Board Room March 5, 2020			
6	Open Session Central Office Board Room March 9, 2020			
7	CHS and CRTS Enrollments Central Office Board Room March 12, 2020			
8	Public Hearing Virtual April 2, 2020			
9	Public Hearing Virtual April 6, 2020			
10	Open Session Virtual April 13, 2020			
11	Open Session - Finalize FY21 Budget			

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearings				
PH #	Description	Minutes	Presentation	Video
1	Public Hearing Mill Brook School March 16, 2020			
2	Public Hearing Runkle Middle School March 19, 2020			

PROPOSED BUDGET BY FUNCTION AND OBJECT

Proposed Budget		
Version #	Description	Document
1	FY21 Proposed Budget by Function	
	FY21 Proposed Budget by Object	

Visit: www.sau8.org >> School Board >> Budgets >> 2020-2021 Proposed Budget

Ms. Patterson opened the meeting for Board member questions.

Chuck Crush wondered if, as the Board had spent the last months hearing how critical certain positions were, it was swinging too far toward being fiscally conservative, as it was easy to be reactionary in a time of crisis. He asked if another look at certain positions was needed, to decide if cutting them was too severe.

Superintendent Bass noted that his first instinct would be the five elementary special education positions, which were reduced to 3, as this was the area of greatest need and concern. Regarding consultant Nate Levinson, who might be considered to perform a survey of the William White Educational Consulting (WVEC) contract and the entire special education program to determine how to best proceed, he would recommend this be done sooner rather than later. Ms. Patterson noted that this was similar to what was done during the full-day kindergarten discussions when analyzing that need in a comprehensive way.

David Parker asked what was involved with the proposed survey by Nate Levinson; its nature, cost, length of time. Ms. Patterson noted that this survey was not included in the current budget but would probably be discussed next month to determine if funds could be made available going forward. Mr. Parker asked whether this meant the District would continue with the WVEC contract as it stands; Superintendent Bass noted that this was the case. He remarked that the survey would provide an overall view of how the District was providing special education services in the most effective way possible. He noted that the survey could take three years, or could be shorter. He suggested that within first year, the District would know whether to continue with, scale back, use in certain ways, or abandon altogether WVEC services. He noted that the Board should be in a good position to figure out what course of action would be best before the end of the next school year.

Barb Higgins arrived. She commented that the Board would not want to be locked into a contract (with WWEC) that it could not change.

Gina Cannon asked whether state funding would be a one-time occurrence. Superintendent Bass said this would be a one-time leftover grant funding; any positions funded would need to go into the budget moving forward. Ms. Cannon cautioned against using one-time grant funding to fund staff positions for this reason.

Mr. Crush asked whether the WWEC costs had gone up every year, due to inflation, raises, etc. Superintendent Bass noted that he did not have exact figures at that moment, but that the costs had presumably risen over time. Mr. Crush suggested, given the length of its business relationship and the current crisis, WWEC would freeze rates of service for the current year. He also suggested reviewing the Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing position, as this was a longstanding need.

Tom Croteau noted that the Board historically had not adjusted its budget significantly upward in October; however, given the current circumstances, perhaps the Board could take another look at the reduced positions in October. Mr. Dunn noted that the risk was a reduced candidate pool in October, as teachers looking for work would likely already be under contract by then.

Superintendent Bass agreed that, concerning the state money, it might be better to pay for direct services rather than hiring people, as those positions would then become part of the budget moving forward.

Jim Richards echoed Ms. Cannon and Superintendent Bass' sentiments regarding potential state grant funds, and asked what this money might be best used for.

Mr. Dunn suggested the money cover costs related to remote learning and equipment, as these were unprecedented adaptations. He said he was also concerned with FY22 and beyond, as various state revenues that fund education (lottery, room tax) were down.

Mr. Richards advised being conservative, as there would probably be unexpected expenses going forward.

Liza Poinier asked whether the three special education positions rather than the five originally proposed were going to be sufficient. Superintendent Bass agreed that this would be the first area to reexamine; those position allocations in a cost-prudent way.

Ms. Cannon clarified that the 10 non-certified positions removed from the original budget were positions that were not filled because the District was unable to find people to fill them. She said it was not a matter of cutting actual employees, but of reallocating money from areas where it was not being spent to an area where it would be.

Ms. Patterson opened the meeting for public comment.

Concord resident Steve Marcus said he appreciated the Board member commentary, and suggested perhaps using grant money to create interim positions where needed.

Concord resident and parent Zeus Simioni asked if this would be the appropriate forum for non-budget related comments; Ms. Patterson suggested this would be more

appropriate for the monthly Board meeting on April 6, as this particular meeting was specifically on the budget.

Mr. Dunn noted the upcoming meeting schedule and explained that all meetings would be “virtual.”

2020-2021 BUDGET WORK SESSION SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION	TOPIC	NOTE
April 2 nd	Thursday	7:00pm	Virtual – Click Here Audio: (925) 391-1169 Conf ID: 831 102 552#	Public Hearing #1	
April 6 th	Monday	5:30pm	Virtual – Click Here Audio: (925) 391-1169 Conf ID: 722 083 78#	Public Hearing #2	
April 13th	Monday	5:30pm	Virtual – Click Here Audio: (925) 391-1169 Conf ID: 413 501 867#	WS#11: OPEN SESSION & FINALIZE FY21 BUDGET	** 5 VOTES IN THE AFFIRMATIVE TO PASS**

BOLD: Action Meetings

Ms. Higgins made a motion to adjourn.

The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn (moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Parker).

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*
Lauren Hynds, *Recorder*