

**BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
PERSONNEL & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: April 9, 2025
LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School
Collaboration & Innovation Center (Room 112), 185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT
SUBJECT: Personnel & Finance Committee Meeting

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Meaghan DeLucia, Committee Chair	Board of Education
Y	Peter Berdon	Board of Education
Y	Judith Barron	Board of Education
Y	Adam Greenberg (Virtual)	Board of Education
Y	Marie McNamara	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels	Board of Education
N	Ram Shrestha	Board of Education
Y	Shawn Tiernan	Board of Education
Y	Laura Troidle	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Christopher Tranberg, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Allison Moran, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Blaize Levitan, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present:

CALL

- 01** The meeting was called to order at 7:12 PM by Meaghan DeLucia.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments made at this evening's meeting.

APPROVE MINUTES

- 02** MOTION (Michaels/Greenberg) to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2025 and March 12, 2025 Personnel & Finance Committee Meetings.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (by all BOE members attending in person and virtually)

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

03 A. 2024/2025 Monthly Finance Reports

This evening Mr. Levitan reported/discussed/highlighted the following: we are entering the final quarter of the fiscal year (so far things are going very well), projecting a balance at the moment of \$863,000 (will likely decrease as we start to encumber year end purchases), all major contractual obligations for the year are encumbered (reflecting strong encumbering and management at principal and department level), we received an interim of the \$300,000 for Special Education funding for the Excess Cost Revenue (not reflected in this months report), we are projecting a soft close for fiscal year 25 on May 22 (a month later than usual), we will open the fiscal year in June (allows for teachers to place orders before they leave for the summer), budget concerns remain largely the same (will most likely carry that way into the future), working with the Town on our electric rate and it is time to think about the next round of bidding.

Continued...

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)

Capital

Mr. Levitan discussed the following; we had a \$90,000 month to month reduction in funding (not a peak time for capital funding execution), planning for upcoming summer work, there is a project coming up on April break that will use encumbered door money, the RTM is voting tonight on the \$600,000 skylight request (Ways and Means approved last week unanimously), the bid for light panel is closed (one bid within the appropriated budget), bidding out while simultaneously getting appropriation was the right approach (able to secure materials because of contingent bid) and other summer projects that are in planning stages are; Indian Neck parking lot renovation, some flooring repair funding (in FY 26 Capital funding request), the Tally Sepot memorial stadium seating and parking lot prep work at MTM (with help of Town engineering).

Grants

Mr. Levitan discussed the following; the focus is on grant funds that expire June 30, on track to reach the 80% spend on Title I, an approved IDEA revision for funds (that will be expire) that will help cover summer renovations at Indian Neck (smaller building for the Access program transition space),

Food Service Fund

Mr. Levitan discussed the following; going really well, new menus implemented, a pilot program for breakfast to address low participation (not moving the needle at all, we may not continue), we are serving food directly in the Tisko lobby and piloted a different style menu are Murphy (some lagging regardless of what we do), letters were sent out to families regarding negative balances (netted approximately \$500), hoping next month to have the proposed fee increase for next year, we have engaged a number of local farms for our food program (we had a grant from the Federal Government for \$12,000 and another one from the State for \$6,000 to buy directly from local farms), Foe has been running a salad bar from H2O Farm in Guilford, there was a recent tasting event at the High School with local beef from a farm in Ledyard, we also have some contracts with these grants that we were able to sign for next year (local pasta sauce, salad from H2O and 4000 lbs of beef from a local farm) and Foe is also running an educational program telling kids where he is getting the food from.

Personnel

Mr. Levitan concluded this portion of tonight's monthly reports by discussing; the lunch aide pilot program that is fully staffed at all three elementary schools (providing relief to the para shortage, principals are very happy with the program, we will explore potentially making it permanent) and we are in the ramp up of the hiring season right now.

Continued...

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04 B. COO Updates

Among the items that Mr. Levitan provided an update for this evening were; the FY 26 budget process - the Board of Finance voted on March 31 to reduce the Operating Budget by \$50,000 (for two reasons - to signal to RTM that they did review it and it didn't warrant any further reduction), the budget was built logic driven, health insurance assumption is proving to be fairly stable (the State indicated an increase is 9.9%, we are assuming a 5.5% increase), the RTM Ed Committee on Monday went very well, recent attendance at the Board of Finance meeting to answer questions, our budget is currently at 5.7% (increased our revenue consumption based on legislature with Special Ed excess costs), the net impact year to year is down to 4.4%, [they] eliminated Capital (reduced by 1.88 million) to a request of \$600,000 (four projects funded - technology AV annual request of \$50,000, Ipad request for early childhood and special ed I pads, \$115,000 for a flooring project and elementary furniture replacement at Murphy and Tisko), this is non bonded capital so it is "pay go" (paying as they are taxed for it live in that year), returning in the Fall to pay for a maintenance bonding program off cycle that will help bridge the gap until the Master Plan is more at a stage where it is realistically implemented, the RTM vote on May 13 and we are still going forward with the Zum grant (going very well).

05 C. Recruitment Plan

In his update this evening Mr. Levitan discussed the following; para vacancies being down to the lowest numbers that they have been in years, it is peak hiring season, Talent Services has a working on going plan to form a recruitment strategy - doing their own professional development sessions (focusing on recruitment and retention), going through job descriptions (last updated 2001 or 2006), putting more graphics and posts on social media, expanding where we are recruiting and advertising, building on our presence of where people are looking for jobs (Indeed) and getting a much better talent pool by using these areas, potentially building out a pipeline program for ParaPro Exam (requirement to alternative to an Associates Degree) - Adult Ed is looking into building in the exam certification into the GED or English Language Learner program for next year, the plan for Educator Diversity, building a better relationship with Universities across the State, attending and better presence at job fairs and working on our overall welcoming onboarding experience and making the department more accessible in language and technology (doing a good job).

ADJOURN

06 MOTION (Michaels/Barron) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (by all BOE members attending in person and virtually)

Ms. DeLucia adjourned the meeting at 7:50 PM.

The next Personnel & Finance Committee Meeting will be
May 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM at Walsh Intermediate School
Collaboration & Innovation Center (Room 112)

Respectfully submitted,
Meaghan DeLucia, Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich