

**ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018
6:30 PM
ROCHESTER SCHOOL
APPROVED MINUTES**

1. Call to order – 6:47 pm
 - 1.1. Attendees: Administration: Bruce Labs, David Larcombe, Bonnie Bourne. Board: Janie Feinberg, Jenny Austin, Megan Payne, Carl Groppe, Amy Wildt, Ethan Bowen. Additional attendees from the public.
2. Additions / changes to the agenda – none
3. FY 18/19 Budget Review and Approval
 - 3.1. Rochester snow removal amount is higher than Stockbridge because of the increase in areas, sidewalks, and entryways. May be savings in the coming year with less snow removal needed in certain areas, but at this time not sure what these savings will be.
 - 3.2. Budget assumes one zone of Rochester high school is open, and there is lower heating of the other two zones. It was noted that this assumption in the budget was not clear, even by board members. It was noted that it needs to be clear what is assumed, and that we need to move forward as a group.
 - 3.3. There was a question asking what the 504 program is. Carl noted that this is if there is a child that is not getting services provided by the special education program but need to have accommodations due to a learning disability, physical disability, or other need.
 - 3.4. Repair and maintenance amount shown is a historical number, and Bonnie noted this does not include the high school. Issues in Rochester include leaks, plumbing issues, etc. Numbers shown are best guesses, and not estimates. Stockbridge list is also a current list and includes items such as softening of hot water in the kitchen, window gaskets, and acoustic paneling for the multi-purpose room.
 - 3.5. What is the board's criteria for accepting this budget? Some items identified by those present include being under the cap for both Towns, educational equality between the two campuses, and downsizing of facilities in Rochester.
 - 3.6. It was noted that the budget assumes two principals. The intent is for both to move back and forth between schools.
 - 3.7. Salary of the Stockbridge administration has not changed, and an additional 10 days was added to the budget number for this line item during the meeting as this has been discussed over the last couple meetings.

- 3.8. There was discussion regarding the desire for a second language at both schools. This is not planned for next year, and even if there were money in the budget the scheduling would need to be figured out. Bruce noted Sharon and Strafford are trying to find a full time foreign language teacher.
- 3.9. The need for acoustic panels in the Stockbridge multi-purpose room is included in the repairs line item. Carl noted there is desire in Stockbridge to fix existing facility deficiencies, and in the future may consider additional space at the Stockbridge campus. Barbara Woods had preliminary sketches for additional space and could be used as a starting point for future additional space.
- 3.10. Janie noted neither schools have a formal writing program nor reading program. Bonnie noted a full reading program could cost \$12K-\$15K. There is not money in the budget for structured reading programs or tiered multi-age reading program. These items are not an "if" but instead a "when". Bruce noted the curriculum director to work with teachers to look at data and what needs are. Bruce noted schools typically decide curriculum on their own and the SU is trying to move away from that and do things together.
- 3.11. Public question asking whether the custodial amount in Stockbridge is enough. Carl noted this has been sufficient in the past. The board can look into the staffing needs during the summer, especially as it relates to the summer One Planet camp program. It was noted that in Stockbridge it is not the custodian that mows the lawns and may be one factor as to why the Stockbridge salary is lower.
- 3.12. What are our priorities – student achievement needs to be at the forefront as well as a world student. A foreign language class is desired. Stockbridge is in need of more interventionalist time as well. We are losing students from Pittsfield, Granville, and Hancock. We need to identify what we need in year two to keep and gain students from those towns. We need to advertise our schools, bring in families outside of here to try and promote these students to come to our schools. Bonnie noted that from what she has heard from Granville and Hancock families deciding where to send their kids to school that they are looking for (1) second language, (2) after school program, and (3) music beginning earlier in grades 3-4.
- 3.13. Need to be always looking at student achievement. Budget is the implementation of the philosophy. Janie noted Randolph school board gets STAR360 reports from the school every time it is conducted. The high achievement of the Newton School was discussed, and Bruce noted they have had a well vetted writing program and workshops for teachers there for years and it is carried down to the students. Bruce suggested the board have a retreat in the spring to talk about ideas and what is most important.

- 3.14. There was public comment that the Rochester elementary school is twice the size of the Stockbridge elementary school and it was written in the merger document that the Rochester High School would close. Public was interested in the Stockbridge board members thoughts on the size of the building. Jenny noted that she agrees that the Rochester students could fit into the Rochester elementary building and that closure of the high school was in the agreement. However, we don't have enough time during this budget preparation to fully consider all the options and that this is year one and we can achieve full efficiencies in year one. It is an option that needs to be looked at. Carl noted he has concern with closing the doors just for the sake of closing the doors. Another member of the public later suggested that moving forward a building committee should be established with board members as well as the community to discuss such issues. Later there was public comment that this is the first attempt in the right direction by having one zone open and lowering heat of the other two zones, and that we need to take the time to look at it.
- 3.15. Bonnie noted that the last question we should ask ourselves with every decision is "how is this good for kids?".
- 3.16. In regards to the grievances with the high school closing, one public noted that Rochester kids need to be told "you get to go to your school of choice" instead of having the feeling that they are "losing their high school. She noted that kids in Stockbridge are excited when it is time to transition to middle school, and this attitude can help Rochester kids feel excited about this, rather than sad.
- 3.17. Carl noted that the reason the budget is separated into two budgets is because there was great concern in Stockbridge that the phantom students that were allowed for past Rochester budgeting purposes but no longer currently allowed, that there would be less resources given to Stockbridge than to Rochester. However, as the budget is currently shown it is the Stockbridge budget that is on the verge of going over the cost per equalized pupil count
- 3.18. There is equipment in Rochester high school that can be reallocated, such as smart boards, or sold.
- 3.19. Amy made a motion to accept the total budget of \$4,251,494. Carl seconded motion. Motion approved.

4. Annual Meeting Warning Approval

- 4.1. The warning language provided by the SU was reviewed and there was discussion regarding what articles to include. Stockbridge currently has a building reserve fund, and

Rochester does not. David explained that if there is no reserve fund established for the merged district then there is technically no way for remaining funds from this year in the Stockbridge reserve fund to be accessed. There can be reserves for each Town. Carl suggested campus-based reserve funds. Current Stockbridge reserve fund is approximately \$70K - \$80K. Revisions made to the articles include:

4.1.1. Article 3 – establish a reserve fund for future capital improvements and maintenance of facilities at Stockbridge.

4.1.2. Article 4 – establish a reserve fund for future capital improvements and maintenance of facilities at Rochester.

4.1.3. Article 5 – establish a reserve fund to be used as needed for assisting with payment of tuitioning of secondary students.

4.2. Amy made the motion to approve the amended warning as read. Janie seconded the motion. Motion approved.

5. RSUD First Report Discussion – Amy

5.1. Amy and Carl to draft sections of report, with Megan to work on a graphic for the front. Jenny to look at the community survey results for both Towns and draft a summary of trends in survey results. Jessica to get Jenny the Rochester survey results to Jenny.

5.2. Residents need report in their hands by May 12.

6. Public Comment – *included in #3 above as public comment was in regards to budget review*

7. Other – *no additional topics*

8. Next Meetings

8.1. May 1 – regular RSUD meeting, 6:30 pm in Rochester

8.2. May 15 - Public Informational Meeting, 6:00 – 7:30 at Stockbridge

8.3. May 17 - Public Informational Meeting, 6:00 – 7:30 at Rochester

8.4. May 22 – Annual Budget Meeting – 7:00 pm at Rochester high school auditorium

9. Adjourn

9.1. Carl made the motion to adjourn at 9:43 pm. Megan seconded. Motion approved and meeting adjourned.