Minutes
Finance Committee
April 8, 2015

Present:
Denise Harvey, Board Member
Phil Schaefer, Board Member
Colleen Palmer, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Jo-Ann Keating, Ed.D., Director of Finance and Operations

Absent:
Ellen Uzenoff, Board Member

Guests:
Terri Clevenger, President, WHS Boosters Club
Mark Berkowitz, WPS Athletic Director

Public:
Elise Major, Weston Resident

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Harvey at 8:09 a.m.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding student activities and other related fees:

• Dr. Keating reported that she met with the Assistant Principals and Mark Berkowitz, the District’s Athletic Director, and they are putting together a report that reflects the fees and other charges districts are assessing their students for athletics and other activities. The report should be ready for the May Finance Committee meeting.

• Mr. Berkowitz reported that only a few districts have changed their athletic user fees in recent years. Additionally, he feels that if the District is going to raise the athletic user per sport fee, it should be raised by $25, not $10, and the family cap should be increased to $400. This will avoid having to increase these fees again in the next few years.

Terri Clevenger and Mark Berkowitz left the meeting after the discussion on the above items concluded.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding the FY 2015 financial update:

• Dr. Keating reported that she has increased the Special Education Excess Cost Grant
based on the most recent information from the Department of Education. The account will be adjusted one more time and funds will be transferred to the Out-of-District Tuition account based on pending requests. Dr. Keating also reported that there may be an opportunity to reclassify expenses from the IDEA grant to the General Fund, which will allow the District to have some carryover for 2015-16, and the Committee agrees. That amount is yet to be determined. Dr. Keating also reported that the internal services fund is trending well.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding the FY 2016 budget update:

• Dr. Keating reported that the Board of Finance approved the District’s 2016 budget request at their meeting the previous evening.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding the security grant update:

• Dr. Keating informed the Committee that during the Board of Finance’s meeting the previous evening, the Board of Finance approved the District’s supplemental request for the purchase of Phase 2 school security related projects.

• Dr. Palmer reported that a federal grant has become available for security and the District will be reviewing it and applying for it if qualified.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding an update on the RFQ for health insurance carriers:

• Dr. Keating reported that based on the analysis and recommendation from the District’s insurance consultants – Arthur J. Gallagher and Company – Aetna will be retained as the health insurance carrier for our employees. Four responses were received to the RFP. The district will stay self-insured as the bids for fully-insured programs were 8% higher than the maximum bids for self-insured programs.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding the RFP for food service:

• Dr. Keating informed the Committee that the District continues to wait for the State’s legal department with revisions to the RFP format. She also expressed concern that the prolonged delays from the State will have a negative impact on the bid results.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding facility use fees:

• Dr. Keating informed the Committee that she will collect further information from other districts, such as when they set their fees and when they were last changed.
The Committee discussed the following items regarding the enterprise initiative update:

- Dr. Keating reported that the District is planning on running a few camps this summer, such as a technology camp and art camp. Additionally, the District is going to investigate the possibility of housing international exchange students on campus. Ms. Harvey noted that the strategic plan contemplated that a committee would be formed to evaluate tier 1 and tier 2 opportunities. The plan also contemplated that Lewis Brey, the District’s legal counsel, would provide input on permissible revenue raising activities. Dr. Keating will form a committee for this project, and Dr. Palmer will offer seats on the committee to Board of Finance members as well as interested community members. Phil Schaefer has agreed to be the Finance Committee’s representative on the committee.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding other business:

- Dr. Keating informed the Committee that the District would like to use $2,400 of the funds remaining in the arts program for training on Raspberry Pi computers. These are credit card sized computers that plug into computer monitors or TVs and teach students to program in languages such as Scratch and Python. Dr. Palmer endorsed the use of the funds to pay for this training, and the Committee agreed.

- Dr. Keating reported that the cost for the softball field scoreboard was higher than anticipated. She will work with the vendor and Mr. Olenik to lower the cost by using in-house facilities staff for the installation if possible. Additionally, there are some remaining funds in the athletic account under Fund 3 that can be used to offset the additional costs. Ms. Harvey asked if outside groups can use the scoreboard as well, and perhaps contribute to the cost. Dr. Keating will contact Dave Ungar, the Town’s Parks and Recreation Director, to investigate this option.

- Dr. Keating shared some preliminary information on alternative energy for the District.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on May 8 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Andrew Galli
Administrative Assistant to the Director of Finance and Operations