

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
CITY HALL AUDITORIUM / ZOOM  
April 28, 2021**

A **SPECIAL JOINT MEETING** of the Board of Finance and the Board of Education was held on Wednesday, April 28, 2021. Mayor Carbone, City Clerk Carol Anderson, City Treasurer Daniel Farley, Torrington Public Schools (TPS) Superintendent Susan Lubomski, Assistant Superintendent Susan Fergusson, Interim Director of Business Services Ed Arum, Executive Director of Student Services Laura Klimaszewski, Director of Human Resources Kimberly Schulte, Director of Information Technology Alison Herold, Board of Finance members Christopher Beyus, Christopher Anderson, Laurene Pesce and James Wright and Board of Education members Fiona Cappabianca, John Kissko, Ellen Hoehne, Armand Maniccia, Jessica Richardson, Cathy Todor, Gary Eucalitto, Nikki Fappiano and Susan DePretis attended the meeting in person at the City Hall auditorium. TPS Director of Facilities John Barlow and Board of Finance member Lance Boynton joined by Zoom. Board of Finance member Mark Bushka and Board of Education member Edward Corey were absent.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**TPS PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET: 2021-2022**

Supt. Lubomski presented a summary of the proposed TPS operating budget for the fiscal year from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Mrs. Pesce questioned whether there were any new course offerings being mandated by the State and Supt. Lubomski explained that there was an emphasis on computer sciences and STEM curriculum. She also noted that the school district will be required to offer African American, Latino, Hispanic and Puerto Rican studies. Mrs. Pesce also requested an update on the number of advanced placement course offerings and Supt. Lubomski reported that TPS had a combined total of approximately 20 offerings, including traditional AP, UConn AP and UConn ECE classes. Additionally, Mrs. Pesce requested information regarding students' attendance and bus transportation. Mr. Arum explained that the City must provide transportation to every student that needs it and Supt. Lubomski reported on the challenges of getting students to participate remotely, but noted that attendance was up from the start of the year.

Mr. Beyus asked the Superintendent and Board of Education whether they expected any negative impact on enrollment as a result of the new legislation which eliminated the religious exemption for required vaccinations. Ms. Cappabianca explained that current students would be grandfathered in and Supt. Lubomski noted that she does not expect any issues because TPS has a high vaccination rate. Mr. Beyus also asked how many new staff TPS intends to bring on and whether they would replace any of the retirees. Supt. Lubomski and Mr. Arum explained that the proposed budget included 25 new positions.

Mr. Anderson requested clarification regarding the distribution of grant funds. Supt. Lubomski and Mr. Arum provided an update on some of the grants, including an explanation of how they are awarded and how they could be allocated.

Mr. Wright requested clarification regarding the proposed addition of a new foods teacher and Supt. Lubomski explained that an existing foods teacher was retiring. She noted that the position would be replaced with one that requires a family consumer science certification so that the new hire could teach other courses as well. Mr. Wright also questioned why the starting salary for social workers was higher than that of teachers and Mr. Maniccia explained that the social workers' certification requires more college credits.

Mr. Boynton expressed his concerns about relying on one-time revenue sources and Mayor Carbone clarified that State and Federal grant funds were not being utilized to offset operating expenses in the proposed TPS budget.

Mr. Beyus requested a breakdown of funding for TPS salaries and Ms. Cappabianca shared the Board of Education's concerns about the amount of required positions that are funded by grants. Mayor Carbone noted some of the financial advantages of Torrington's Alliance District designation.

Mr. Eucalitto urged the Board of Finance to consider the school system's role as the major social services agency for the City and the associated costs that are budgeted for psychiatrists, social workers and other staff and services. Ms. Cappabianca also reflected on the difficulties that the school district faces in providing various social services to its students and their families. Mayor Carbone noted that the City does not receive the federal funding that other municipalities receive for social service offices because Torrington's population is under 50,000. However, she reported on other efforts that the City has taken to support the growing needs of the community, including partnering with Supportive Housing Works to promote a shelter diversion initiative.

**TPS PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET: 2021-2022**

Mr. Arum presented the proposed 5-year capital plan for the Torrington Public Schools and reported that they were in the process of creating a 10-year capital plan. Ms. Cappabianca noted that the turf field at THS would remain untouched by the new school construction project. Mr. Arum also reported that the track needs to be resurfaced every seven years. Mr. Beyus requested an update on how the one-time revenue streams would be utilized to address the school district's major needs. Mr. Arum reported that the Board Education was awaiting clarification on how various funds could be utilized and he noted that security system upgrades were needed

for all of the schools. Supt. Lubomski and Ms. Herold also discussed the benefits of a long-term investment in Mac computers, instead of Chromebooks which have a much shorter life expectancy. Mr. Boynton asked if there would be a preventative maintenance component to the 10-year capital plan and Mr. Arum assured him that there would be. Mr. Beyus requested a brief update on the school construction project and Mr. Arum described the placement and design of the facility. He noted that they are expecting to break ground in spring of 2022 and also reported that the reimbursement rate increased from 62.5% to 68%. Mr. Maniccia invited Mr. Beyus to attend a Building Subcommittee meeting and he emphasized the thoroughness that the subcommittee reviews every aspect of the school construction project.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Beyus, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:31 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Jonathan Draper, Asst. City Clerk*

ATTEST:

*Carol L. Anderson*  
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC  
CITY CLERK