



Finance & Operations Committee

August 4, 2022

Committee of the Whole

MINUTES

Meeting called to order by Committee Chair: Kehoe 5:02 p.m.

Board of Ed members present: Kehoe, Brooks, Christenson, McCoin, Wilson

District staff present: Merritt, Piesz, Kling, Gruszczynski, Tyszkiewicz, Meier, Jory

Citizen Representatives present: Paton, Roderique **Other Citizen(s):** none

Also in attendance: Scott Stewart, Tony Vinson, and Angela Reynolds from Durham Transportation

Public Comments - none.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – June 28, 2022 - approved.

- Member Kehoe begins by explaining that this is a “**meeting of the whole**” because having more than three Board of Education members in attendance constitutes a quorum, and the Open Meetings Act requires that if more than three are in attendance, the meeting must be posted as a Meeting of the Whole. Several of the Board members were interested in participating in this meeting in order to participate in the discussion around the School Resource Officer (SRO) MOU renewal.
- He also confirms that the three Board Members that are on the F&O committee from 2021-2022 (Kehoe, Christianson, and Brooks) wish to continue on the committee for the 2022-23 year. Likewise, he asks the citizens on the committee, Ms. Paton and Mr. Roderique, if they also wish to continue on the committee, and they agree. Mr. Kehoe will be sending out a more formal email to these members to confirm their continued participation.

Renewal of SRO Agreements with Canton Township – Superintendent Merritt shares that we have three SRO (School Resource Officers) at P-CEP. In the past Canton Township has paid the salaries of two of the officers, and P-CCS has paid the salary of the third officer. We began discussing an update to this agreement prior to the pandemic. Recently, through a new MOU, Canton Township has requested that we split the cost of this expense equally. Sharing this cost is common practice in other districts. The new MOU that we have received for the

2022-23 school year reflects the increase, as the cost to the district for this will now be \$138,621 (for 1.5 FTE). Prior to this the district was paying \$92,414.00 (1.0 FTE). The draft agreement from Canton Township has been reviewed by our legal team. We will present this draft for first reading at the meeting at the Board of Education meeting on August 9, 2022.

Mr. Roderique asks about the charges for the extra-curricular services the SRO's provide, like football games, dances, and other events. This cost comes out of the district safety and security budget. These hours are posted at the Canton PD and officers who sign up to cover these events are not always the SROs. The overtime that the SRO's work are for working on investigations, or the time it takes to write a report. The SRO overtime hours are included in the MOU, but none of the hours for after school events are.

Mr. Meier shares that the rate we pay for this has not been raised since 2014. Mr. Kehoe would like to know how the cost compares between having actual police officers, or district security staff.

The overtime hourly rate that is charged for a P-CEP staff security person is \$30.93 per hour, but for the police officers we pay \$79.86 per hour, including fringe benefits. If there is a higher ranking officer at the event, like a sergeant, we pay a slightly higher rate. Canton Township sends us a detailed spreadsheet and a bill. We ask for extra security personnel if we host a rival football game that would bring in more spectators, if there is more than one event in process, etc. Mr. Meier first assigns district security staff at each event, and then police officers are added as needed. Mr. Meier notes that times that our assigned SRO's are used, the township does not bill us for those hours.

The SRO's, the security staff members, and the building administrators all have very separate and distinct roles on campus. Part of the role of the SRO is to build a relationship with the students, break down stigmas, and to have them on site as a resource for things that rise to criminal or delinquent behavior, such as a threat, assault, or sexual assault. They do not administer disciplinary action, and they do not enforce the student code of conduct. They are mainly there as a first responder. The district security staff is not armed, so if there were an armed suspect on campus, the SRO is armed and would deal with that situation. They work with students every day answering any questions students have related to law enforcement. They talk to classes about subjects like social media safety and law enforcement as a career. They visit other schools in the district and do speaking engagements about various subjects, like the DARE Program, or how to avoid getting involved in criminal behavior.

There are very strict policies about search and seizure, interviewing, and dealing with minors. In Michigan, in order to interview a student, an officer must have parental consent.

Member McCain added that a few years ago Canton Township came to a district Policy Meeting and described the training they receive and the procedures that they follow on campus. All officers get training related to interactions with juveniles and minors, but SROs are sent to further specialized training as well, to ensure they are heavily trained on all issues related to interactions with juveniles. They follow the NASRO national model.

Mr. Wilson asks Mr. Meier to describe the procedure for dealing with a complaint. His answer is that all complaints are elevated to the Canton Township Police. Every complaint is investigated. If we ever had a complaint against one of our SROs or other police officers on campus, Mr. Meier would direct the principal to submit a complaint to the police lieutenant. He would also notify Superintendent Merritt and the CORE Team, who would disclose that information to the Board.

Mr. Meier notes that since the district has been using the SRO the number of fights has decreased sharply. After the students came back from lockdowns, there was an increase in the number of fights, and SROs were able to successfully bring the number of incidents down, determine why they were occurring, and address the issues by implementing things like diversion programs to avoid escalating incidents to citations or prosecution.

As an aside, it is common practice for Canton Township to rotate officers that are assigned to P-CEP as SROs. Recently, they wanted to replace two of the three, but Mr. Meier was concerned that the third did not have enough time on the campus, so they put in a formal request to the Township to keep one of the more experienced SROs. Canton Township granted that request and extended the assignment of a very experienced officer to stay on campus.

Transportation Update

Tony Vinson, P-CCS Transportation Director, has accepted a new position with the Detroit Department of Transportation. Mr. Vinson's last day will be Friday August 12, 2022. Angela Reynolds is in attendance, who will be taking over as the new P-CCS Transportation Director. Ms. Reynolds has been working with Mr. Vinson all week, and will continue to work with him throughout next week. She is happy to be here and is enjoying her interaction with our drivers and transportation office staff.

Mr. Kehoe shares that the Board is very concerned about the staffing shortages that have been affecting students and families over the last school year when we had to rotate drivers. This caused a lot of hardship for families.

Recently we put out a survey to give families the opportunity to opt out of transportation, in an effort to reduce the number of routes. We are still analyzing the results of the survey, but the number of students opting in for transportation is coming in higher than expected. We will be putting out a further clarification to families and hope for a more complete response.

Traditionally we use the first month of the new school year to collect attendance numbers from the drivers to determine exactly how many students are riding the bus and we make adjustments as needed. We also discuss the fact that we experience changes in ridership at times during the school year based on seasonal sports, activities, etc.

We are going to start the year based on 107 routes, and we currently have 84 drivers available. At this time there are 32 potential new drivers in the hiring process.

Mr. Stewart shares that they need to do a better job at communicating the numbers of drivers we are losing each week. Mr. Kehoe understands that it is a very long process to become a driver, so how do we explain the fact that so many leave? Mr. Stewart explains that their research shows that the number one reason drivers leave is due to benefits, so Durham is in the process of the looking at their benefit packages to see what they can improve. The second highest reason drivers leave is guaranteed wage (number of hours), and the third reason is the driver wages. We have recently raised the guaranteed number of hours to 6 per day, and we have raised the hourly pay to \$21.50. These changes are just now starting to take hold.

Ms. Reynolds adds that most of the people who leave are not the new hires, but rather the tenured drivers, for a variety of reasons. Ms. Reynolds has experience with techniques to address the issues and retain these tenured drivers. They will continue the recruitment efforts and will look at ways to get these potential drivers through the pipeline faster. Their goal is to staff drivers at 110% by the start of school in order to provide a substitute driver pool.

They will continue their recruitment efforts such as signing bonuses, attending job fairs, online ads, banners, and offering more flexible hours for drivers. The people who are currently in the hiring pipeline have indicated they became aware of the job openings on Indeed, and by seeing banners and signs both online and in the community. They have implemented aggressive training Monday to Sunday, 8 hours per day, at their expense. They will also use the assistance of their corporate routing team to ensure their routes are as efficient as possible.

Mr. Kehoe asks that they come back to the next F&O meeting scheduled for August 18th to update the committee. He is concerned that we will not be fully staffed for the start of the school year. He also asks that they come back with ideas to reduce the TAG shuttle routes, and ways to utilize the vans and sedans in a more successful way. Ms. Reynolds has experience with this at her last district. She is looking forward to learning more and implementing strategies to address the staffing issues.

Annual Audit Pre-Communication with the Board / Audit Services

Agreement – This information was included in Board Notes last week. Ms. Piesz asks if there are any questions on this, and there are no further questions.

Review of Tentative 2022-2023 F&O Calendar -

Ms. Piesz asks that we schedule a F&O Committee meeting on December 22, 2022 in order to be prepared for the January 10, 2023 Board meeting. The Board members on the committee all agree that they can be present on December 22.

- Ms. Piesz provides the information that Member Kehoe requested at the last Board Meeting when discussing the Trash Disposal/Recycling contract that was awarded. Mr. Kehoe asks if food service uses paper trays, not Styrofoam, and Mr. Gruszczynski believes the materials used are made from recycled materials, and are degradable, but not sure if they are “compostable”.
- Mr. Kehoe asks whether if “spoiled loads” are simply added to the regular trash that goes to a landfill, in which case, the extra expense is a waste.

Adjourned: **6:45 p.m.**