

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM BOARD

**Minutes of the April 18, 2017 Meeting of the of the
Sub Committee on Outreach and Finance**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical High School System Board Committee on Outreach and Finance met on April 18, 2017 at Eli Whitney Technical High School, CT.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Barrasso called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM

Present: John Barrasso Chairperson of the Outreach and Finance Committee
Gina Chiarella, Committee Member
Commissioner Scott Jackson
Patricia Keavney, Vice-Chairperson of the CTHSS Board
Commissioner Catherine Smith, Committee Member
Robert Trefry, Chairperson of the CTHSS Board
Mr. Fitz Walker, Committee Member
James Chasse, CTHSS Education Consultant
Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent of the CTHSS

Absent: Chris DiPentima, Committee Member

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation

III. Minutes of the February 28, 2017 Meeting of the Outreach and Finance.

Ms. Keavney moved, Ms. Keavney, Mr. Walker seconded, that the Committee approve the minutes of the February 28, 2017 meeting of the Outreach and Finance.

Vote: In Favor: Barrasso, Chiarella, Keavney, Smith, Trefry, Walker
Opposed: 0
Abstained: Jackson
Absent: DiPentima

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Strategic Planning for the Connecticut Technical High School System

A. Budget Update 2016-17

Mr. Chasse provided an update on the 2016-17 Budget. In an effort to increase transparency, the CTHSS will start providing the board more detailed reports to the Board moving forward. In the first analysis of the report, Mr. Chasse provided a breakdown of payroll, fuel and utilities and the supply and services. Mr. Chasse explained there was a series of transfers during the fiscal year from net payroll savings from unfilled positions to the services and supplies side of the budget in order to address areas of shortage or concerns including \$800,000 for infrastructure repairs as the CTHSS awaits bond commission consideration in order to keep the schools operational. There is also a reserve of \$500,000 for the relocation of the home office, and there was a transfer of \$200,000 for a new IST shop at Kaynor Tech.

The CTHSS is looking at potential lapse back to the State of Connecticut of approximately \$1.7 million based on the latest analysis however, there are 32 positions approved for refill and depending on how long the process takes, there could be another \$600,000 in potential lapse bringing the total to \$2.3 million. Mr. Chasse informed the Board of a reserve of three separate line items within the payroll that is awaiting resolution of collective bargaining with SEBAC. An additional \$1.5 million would lapse to the State of Connecticut if an agreement is not reached by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Chasse also provided a breakdown of the payroll analysis representing the largest portion of the budget and shared some areas of concern including accumulated leave.

As part of the Superintendent's program expansion plan for 2017-18, there is a need for investments if the CTHSS were to consider opening: Information Systems Technology (IST) at Windham THS: \$200,000, Information Systems Technology (IST) at Eli Whitney THS: \$200,000. New trade at Vinal THS: \$200,000, Health Technology at Bullard Havens THS: \$50,000 and Music (Chorus) at Vinal THS: \$50,000.

These items were not included in the budget that was submitted to the Governor and modifications to the budget would need to be made if the Board would like to continue with these programs.

Mr. Chasse also pointed out there is a need to purchase Chrome Books for incoming freshmen students for the next school year pending bond commission approval.

Questions/Discussion included: Ms. Demsey explained the hiring process and stated their first priority is to have teachers in front of the students. Additional discussion included: the percentage of vacancies including home office, how long does the process take, the possibility of the schools not receiving chrome books in time for the new school year, the CTHSS add/drop process exercise and how often the CTHSS goes through this exercise, low enrolled shops, looking how can the CTHSS reduce administrative costs in order to continue to meet the needs of the students, how can the committee assist the CTHSS, Ms. Demsey reminded the Committee members that although there are currently resource issues, funding can be targeted to support what the Leadership and the Board feels is critical. Ms. Demsey also shared some of the techniques SDE is doing with regards to their resource issue (i.e. focusing on items required by statute).

It was suggested that a working planning meeting of the Subcommittee on Outreach and Finance be scheduled for May 4, 2017 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM for the committee to meet with CTHSS staff to provide input to the 2017 Budget process and the decisions needed regarding the Superintendent's expansion plan which is not part of the Governor's budget. The Committee members extended an invitation for Ms. Demsey to attend. There is a considerable amount of internal work to be completed before the budget can be finalized.

A copy of the Budget report is included in the official file of this meeting.

B. Budget Update 2017-18 & 2018-19

Mr. Chasse reported that in terms of the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19, there are some adjustments the Governor is proposing. There is funding for four additional staff members at J.M. Wright. Beginning next school year, J.M. Wright should be fully enrolled. There is also a proposal to transfer approximately 20 staff from the State Department of Education to the CTHSS Home Office (primarily in IT, Human Resources and Financial staff). There is also a proposal to regionalize/centralize business office operations which will result in the elimination of 35 positions saving \$2.7 Million, the continuation of existing hold backs, a proposal to create a dedicated account for payroll and a separate account for all other supplies and services. Currently, the budget is all in one line item. In terms of the capital budget, there would be no new funding available however; there is still approximately \$20 Million that the CTHSS could access previously that was authorized by the Legislature.

The Appropriations Committee will be issuing their recommended budget within the next week or two and negotiations continue.

While the CTHSS awaits legislative resolution of the budget, there is a considerable amount of internal work to be completed before the 2017-18 CTHSS Operating Budget can be finalized, including but not limited to:

- Finalizing school position givebacks and adjustments (Add/Drop process);
- Review and approval of summer hours for Guidance and other Student Services personnel;
- Review and approval of ALEKS math support hours;
- Determining the number of positions to be held vacant;
- Resolution of the business office staffing proposal;
- Formulating a fuel and utilities budget; and
- Finalizing sports offerings for all schools;

The CTHSS looks forward to discussions with the Committee on May 4, 2017 and the Committee's input regarding these items.

A copy of the 2017-16 & 2018-19 Budget report is included in the official file of this meeting.

C. Discussion on Consolidation of Fiscal Offices

The Governor's biennial budget proposal calls for the consolidation of fiscal services in the CTHSS and the elimination of 35 fiscal staff; resulting in cost savings of \$2.7 M. Mr. Barrasso handed out a letter to the Committee members dated March 21, 2017 from Dr. Torres to the CTHSS Board regarding the consolidation of fiscal services in the CTHSS. Mr. Barrasso reminded Board members this item was on the March 21, 2017 Outreach and Finance Subcommittee Agenda for discussion and resolution about the regionalization/centralization of the business offices and that meeting was cancelled. Mr. Barrasso commented on how unique our school system is on being able to go for lunch, have your hair done or your car fixed as well as outside production work. We are not like most districts. He recommended that the Committee members review the summary so it can be discussed at our next meeting.

Mr. Barrasso requested the Committee members to review the memo and bring their thoughts, feedback and input to the May 4, 2017 planning meeting.

V. **The next meeting of the Committee on Outreach and Finance will be held on May 16, 2017.**

VI. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15.

Prepared by: *Niane Curtis*

Administrative Assistant
Connecticut Technical High School System