

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
October 10, 2023
Administration Center Board Room and Via Zoom
5:30 PM**

MINUTES

- I. The Chairperson,** Rebecca Bear, called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary, Patricia Rosado called the roll.
- II. Board Committee Members Present:** George Andrews, Rebecca Bear, and Wayne Rohner. Richard Schlameuss was absent.
- III. School Personnel Present:** Brian Baddick, Peter Bard, Steven Booth, Maria Casciotta, William Riker, and Patricia Rosado.
- School Personnel via Zoom:** None.
- IV. Community Members In Person:** Larry Dymond.
- Community Members via Zoom:** None
- V. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by George Andrews to approve the agenda for October 10, 2023, and with members of the Committee reserving the right to add to the agenda and take further action in the best interest of the District. Motion was seconded by Wayne Rohner.

Wayne Rohner made a motion to on to the agenda the discussion of Special Activity Accounts. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously, 3-0.

The amended agenda was carried unanimously, 3-0.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by George Andrews to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023, Finance Committee meeting. Motion was seconded by Wayne Rohner and carried unanimously, 3-0.

VI. Items for Approval:

- a. Approve the United Concordia Dental Change from Advantage to Elite Prime at an estimated annual cost of \$8,476.00 (or \$1.07 per employee per month).
Mr. Bard said dentists are dropping out of our United Concordia plan on a monthly basis, which I spoke to you about last month in Executive Session. It is becoming harder for our employees to find proper coverage under our current dental plan. I attached the network coverage and there is no network change to coverages. It just increasing the network coverage. It is only going to cost \$8,476.00 per year. It will take effect on January 1, 2024. Mr. Andrews asked will this still be under United Concordia. Mr. Bard said it will remain United Concordia. It is just changing the level of coverage. Elite Prime is the highest level. It provides is a higher reimbursement rate for services. That is why there is an increased cost. Mr. Andrews said if we are out of network they just pay a certain amount. Mr. Bard said if a dentist were out of network, the employee would have to pay out of pocket. Mrs. Bear said they would then have to submit for reimbursement. Mr. Bard said this would be an added benefit to our employees at a very low cost. Mr. Andrews asked is the \$8,000 per month. Mr. Bard said, no, it is annually. It is about \$1.07 per employee per month which totals \$8,476 per year, which is not a high-cost expense. Mrs. Bear said I think it will benefit the employees in the long run and the small amount will not make that much of a difference. Mrs. Bear asked with the employees pay the \$1.07 difference. Mr. Bard said the district would pay that cost. There would be no added expense to the employees.
- b. Approve TranslateLive at a cost of \$29,837.00 (the lowest of 3 quotes received).
Ms. Maria Casciotta said that TranslateLive is for language assistance. When I saw this at the PASA Conference, it made me think about all the people that we cannot reach due to language barriers. This device would be kept in the office. If a parent comes in and speaks a foreign language such as Polish, the person can speak into the device, and it would translate it into English. When we speak back to the device, the person would hear it in their native language. I believe this device would be very beneficial to our district. In your packets, you would see that we are purchasing minutes so we can use them at meetings like the one I do in January for intervention and mediation. There are some parents that are not very proficient in English. They can be at home, and I can present with my team, and they will hear it in their native language. I believe it as a wonderful device that will help us to connect with our families. We can use it with our schools when they have presentations. Parents/Guardians will receive a QR code that they can go on to view the presentation. Mrs. Bear asked can we do this for School Board meetings. Dr. Riker said you can if you want to purchase more minutes. We can look into that and give you information about the cost. Mrs. Bear said we can probably do just certain topics that we want to share with the entire community by sharing a QR code with the parents. The presentations are usually 20 minutes long. It is not for robust discussion. I believe the Education Programs & Resources Committee meetings are a great place for this. Mrs. Casciotta said you can have the company put in the registration packages in the system with

different languages. If we purchase this device, it will come with training. We tested them at the conference. Mr. Andrews said this device is more for the administrative side of it and not to use with the students. Mrs. Casciotta said it is not to use with the students. Mrs. Bear asked if you have a registration packet, and the parent fills it out in their native language, does it automatically transfer it back in English so we can understand it. Mrs. Casciotta said I believe the way it works is that the information is given to the parents in their native language and when they reply with the information it automatically populates the information in English. Mrs. Casciotta said the limitations are that we purchase minutes. The device is one fee. We purchase it for us to speak to parents at planned meetings. If a parent comes to the office and it was not a plan meeting, we can speak to the parent in their native language. It is HIPPA Compliant and Government Compliant. Mr. Andrews asked have we had trouble getting interpreters. Mrs. Casciotta said this would cut down on using others. Mrs. Bear said we can probably use this device for expulsion hearings, too. Mr. Rohner asked what account are we taking this out of. Mr. Bard said it would be coming out of the General Funds. There is always a cushion that we can use so it will be coming out of the Pupil Services budget. It is a districtwide initiative. It is not just for students with disabilities. Mrs. Casciotta said it was actually developed for the hearing impaired. Mr. Rohner said I am interested in knowing how many school districts in Pennsylvania have this program. Mrs. Casciotta said I would have to find out. I don't have that information. Mrs. Bear said we should have this because parents have given me feedback that they struggle with filling out forms. They usually have to tell a friend to help them understand them and help them fill them out. They also have to bring someone with them when the district does not have anyone that can translate for them. Mr. Andrews asked can this be used for expulsion hearing. Mrs. Casciotta said it cannot be due to the amount of minutes. It can be used for presenting information but not for a full hearing. Mrs. Casciotta said if it is approved and we get the device in, we can see all of the functions it performs. Mr. Rohner said I keep hearing about a limitation about minutes. What exactly are you saying? Mrs. Casciotta said the minutes are not for the one on one conversations. They are for the presentations that go along with the QR Codes. If you are going to make a presentation, you have to buy minutes for them. We are recommending buy 5,000 minutes. Mr. Andrews said if we do a hearing, it will be used up quickly. Mrs. Bear said if we use it for a Board meeting, the minutes will run out. Mrs. Casciotta said that is what we have to decide. We can start with the 5,000 minutes and then we can add more, which is what the price that is quoted includes. Mrs. Bear said I think we should start with the 5,000 minutes and see how it goes. Over time, we can see if we need more or less. Mr. Andrews asked how many different languages do we have in the district. Mrs. Bear said a lot. Dr. Riker said I believe it is over 30 languages. Mrs. Bear asked how long is the contract for. Mrs. Casciotta said it is for three years.

- c. Approve the revised Senior Rebate Resolution for the 2023 Calendar Year (see attached).

Mr. Bard said the resolution is in your packet. It has been reviewed and revised by Attorney Brown. The language in red are the changes to the resolution that currently exist. The resolution language matches Act 7 of 2023 that was passed by the Legislators and signed by Governor Shapiro. What this does is it increases the allowed rebate. It also raises the household income max. The household income max increased to \$45,000 from \$35,000. It also increased the max rebate from \$650 to \$1,000. The other districts in Monroe County are also going to follow suit and revise their resolutions. The resolution also includes some change in language. Primarily it was to increase the rebate maxes that are in the current resolution. It is also to extend the filing deadline to December 31st instead of the end of October. The State extended the deadline. Without permission from the Board, we could not extend the deadline. This revised resolution now gives us permission to extend the deadline without approval. Mr. Andrews asked is this for last year or for the current year. Mr. Bard said it would be for this tax year so you would file it next year. It always lags a year. This resolution would affect the 2023 year. If we pass the resolution, it would be for this calendar year. Mr. Andrews said but they do not file until next year. Mr. Bard said the paperwork that is being filed now is for last year's taxes. We are just changing the resolution to follow the current updates. There is also language in 2.1 of the resolution that allows the rebates to increase as the State increases theirs; therefore, we do not have to keep updating our resolution. Mrs. Bear said this is for primary residents only. Mr. Bard said correct. Mrs. Bear asked does the person that is applying for a rebate have to be listed on the deed as an owner. Mrs. Bard said yes they do. We need the 1098T form from the owner that the State requires. Everything is doubled checked before we issue a rebate check.

- d. Discovery Education (CIU20) - Renewal - \$5,130.13 paid by C&I.

Dr. Riker said this is for renewal of educational videos that the district has been using for years.

- e. HiTech Instruments - 30 microscopes - \$16,465.00 paid by ESSERs.

Dr. Riker said we recently bought some microscopes, and we are looking to purchase 30 microscopes. Mr. Andrews asked are we getting a total of 60 microscopes. Dr. Riker said I believe we purchased 30 microscopes before. Mrs. Bear said they are the same ones as before. Mr. Rohner said I shall presume that 30 microscopes will go to the South and 30 microscopes will go to the North. Is that how it works? Mrs. Bear said the district was inventorying the microscopes and some were being replaced. Dr. Riker said we were evaluating all microscopes in all schools and replacing the ones that need to be replaced and fixing those that need to be fixed. Mr. Rohner said I am sure North is up to bat. Dr. Riker said keep singing the same tune. Mr. Rohner said I know the community more than you know them. Dr. Riker said we are replacing the microscopes that need to be replaced.

VII. Items for Discussion:

a. Discussion on Act 1 Timeline in 2024 due to potential moving Primary Election in 2024

Mr. Bard said when I added this item to the agenda, there was going to be a change in the Act 1 Resolution that we normally pass. I don't know where it stands with our legislature. It may be accelerated, so you may see it under the December or maybe in the January Board agenda to pass a resolution that says the Board resolves itself not to raise taxes above the Act 1 Index. The Act 1 index number for the East Stroudsburg School District is, I believe, is somewhere in the 7% or 8% range. It is one of the highest, if not the highest it has been since the index has been instituted because of the State's economy. The Board is not going to need to raise the taxes beyond the Act 1 Index, if at all. I don't believe we are going to need to do a preliminary budget. We will just do a resolution in that time period. There may be an accelerated timeline to do so. Once it is all settled and resolved, I will make sure the resolution is passed within the State's timeframe. I just wanted to bring this to your attention. Right now, the State House passed a motion to accelerate the Primary Election away from the Passover date. Like I said, I am not sure where it exists right now because the State Senate is on recess until next week. We will wait see and go from there to once we know what the change in date is, if any. Mr. Andrews asked what does this mean. Mr. Bard said the original date that the State Senate passed was voted down in the House and they said it is a dead issue right now. The State House created another piece of legislation that moved it up but not as far as the State Senate piece of legislation did. I don't know exactly where it stands. Once the State finalizes its Act 1 Index timeline, I will make sure that we follow what it is. Mr. Andrews asked what does that have to do with the Primary Elections. Mrs. Bear said they are moving the Primary Elections because the Primary Elections fall on Passover. Mr. Bard said they also want to be a player in the Presidential Primary Election. That is the two reasons I was told. Mr. Bard said we can place the resolution on the December Board meeting to be on the safe side. We then don't have to worry about it. Historically, that is when the Board has approved it. Mrs. Bear said I believe they are moving it to May. Mr. Bard said they are moving it to March. Mr. Rohner said so the Primary Elections are being moved from April to March. That is a difference, and it makes sense. Mr. Bard said they are moving the date up. The bigger issue is that there are a third of the districts that use schools as their polling place especially in the Western part of the State where they are extremely rural in parts of the State of the Commonwealth. Their main place to vote are in the schools. We will see what happens. There is a lot of push back from a lot of different people. Mr. Andrews said we use a couple of our schools as polling site but not all of them.

b. Special Activity Accounts Discussion

Mr. Bard said I would like to preface that I don't have much knowledge of where the money is distributed. I will take notes to get answers for you. Mrs. Bear said when I volunteer for soccer, there is a form in there that I sign my name on. Because I volunteer as a Soccer mom, a portion of those proceeds will then go to

the Soccer Girls' team. When I volunteer for basketball, I sign the sheet. A portion of those proceeds will go the Girls' basketball team. Football parents will ask band parents and football parents to volunteer. If there are two band parents and two football parents, they would split the proceeds between the band fund and football fund based on how much money was collected. That is what South does as well because Jason Gullstrand volunteers at South. Mr. Rohner said that is not where I was going with this. When I volunteered, the band parents were in the concession stand so I know how it is being distributed. My question is the Football parents did a fundraiser and I take issue with the fact that it is going to be split amongst other fall sports and activities. Mrs. Bear said it should not be. Mr. Rohner said that is why I was curious to know what policy am I looking at because I am certainly interested in changing the Administrative Regulations. If I am putting in the hours and efforts to raise funds so that the varsity football or football program in general can have a sport banquet, that they have not had in two or three years, I certainly do not want to make it harder for the student body and community up North to fulfill a simple banquet. That is all I am fighting for. Mrs. Bear said I have reached out to the Football coaches two years in a row, because Winona Lake where I live donates their club house free of charge to any East Stroudsburg School district club. Mr. Rohner said the Football Club did reach out to them and evidently there is no availability. Mrs. Bear said I told them to reach out to me and I will reach out to them and get the room. I said that to your son and the head coach twice. Dr. Riker said I just want to clarify because I am hearing muddy information. Mrs. Bear said I can help with the banquet. Dr. Riker said are you saying that when there was a separate fundraiser that the football team did on their own that the money was distributed to other groups. Mr. Rohner said what I am hearing is that it goes to the special activity fund. Mrs. Bear said it will then be given to the team. It always does. I have seen it. I looked at the funds. Mr. Rohner said then there is miscommunication there. Dr. Riker said that is why I am trying to get some clarification with what the exact fundraiser is, because your initial addition to the agenda was about concession stands which is different from fundraisers. If you know there is a specific fundraiser, let me know what the fundraiser was. I can look into that. Mr. Rohner said there was a \$3,000 fundraiser and I don't think they should be distributing that. Mrs. Bear said it is normally not distributed. Mr. Andrews said it should be going into the specific's club or team account. Mrs. Bear said what happens is that there is a fund for East Stroudsburg North Athletics that it goes into. They put their sealed envelope that the coach is supposed to do, and they label it approved fundraiser. All fundraisers have to be approved. Dr. Riker said by me. Mrs. Bear said and the Principal and Athletic Director. They take the envelope and whatever money they collected, and the checks are made out to East Stroudsburg and whatever sports team name it is. It goes in a sealed envelope to Mr. Dailey and then it goes downtown and gets put into the special activity fund. There are sub accounts for each sport or club. I have been involved with basketball and soccer and that is how it is done. Mr. Andrews said so if the football team made \$2,000, it would go into their account. Mr. Bard said I can assure you that it would not go into any other club if it is labeled North Football

Club. Mr. Rohner said I am encouraging them to do a 503 for Football Booster club. Mr. Bard said you can do that, or you can have them reach out to me directly and I can have them do that as well. Mrs. Bear said the other athletic teams that I have been part of have raised money and it has gone into the athletic fund. We then plan the banquet and we do it at the club house. We have done this for all of the sports that my children have been in. We then submit a payment request to the Business Office for the DJ that we have had, who donates his service at a low cost. The parents cook diverse ethnic food and decorate. I let the football, basketball, swimming, and volleyball coaches know if they would like to have their banquets at the club house, to let me know. We try our best to accommodate them. Normally, Friday night is the better day to do them. I always stay late and lock up for them. They do not have to pay for an extra employee to lock up for them. There are options available if they want it. Mr. Rohner said that is all I wanted to know.

VIII. Recommendations by the Property & Facilities Committee (Pending Final Approval by Property & Facilities Committee)

- a. Approve - Change Order #1 - HSS Flooring Replacement - COPE Commercial Flooring - decrease total amount by \$52,930.40.
- b. Approve - Change Order/Invoice #56702 - JTL Auditorium - COPE Commercial Flooring - increase total amount by \$6,644.00.
- c. Approve - Change Order #1 - Smithfield Roof Replacement - Weatherproofing Technologies - decrease total amount by \$3,856.95.
- d. Current Project List.

Mr. Rohner said I see that we are 89% done for the North Campus stormwater pipe replacement. What needs to be completed in order to complete stage one? Dr. Riker said that is a question for the Property/Facilities Committee. Mr. Rohner said I will have this discussion at the next Board meeting.

IX. Recommendations by the Education Programs & Resources Committee

None

X. Public Participation - Limited to Items of Discussion

None

XI. Advisory Recommendations for Consideration by the Board of Education

1.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Wayne Rohner to recommend that the Board consider for approval the following items. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously, 3-0.

- a. Approve the United Concordia Dental Change from Advantage to Elite Prime at an estimated annual cost of \$8,476.00 (or \$1.07 per employee per month).

- b. Approve TranslateLive at a cost of \$29,837.00 (the lowest of 3 quotes received).
- c. Approve the revised Senior Rebate Resolution for the 2023 Calendar Year (see attached).
- d. Discovery Education (CIU20) - Renewal - \$5,130.13 paid by C&I.
- e. HiTech Instruments - 30 microscopes - \$16,465.00 paid by ESSERs.

3.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by Wayne Rohner to recommend that the Board consider for approval the following items, which were recommended by the Property/Facilities Committee. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously, 3-0.

- a. Approve - Change Order #1 - HSS Flooring Replacement - COPE Commercial Flooring - decrease total amount by \$52,930.40.
- b. Approve - Change Order/Invoice #56702 - JTL Auditorium - COPE Commercial Flooring - increase total amount by \$6,644.00.
- c. Approve - Change Order #1 - Smithfield Roof Replacement - Weatherproofing Technologies - decrease total amount by \$3,856.95.

XII. Next Meeting - November 13, 2023, at 5:30 PM In person and via Zoom.

RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE:

Motion was made by George Andrews to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Wayne Rohner and carried unanimously, 3-0.

XIII. Adjournment: 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia L. Rosado
Board Secretary