

**Portland Public School District 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon
Board of Education's
Finance, Audit and Operations Committee Meeting**

**January 30, 2018
Informal Minutes**

The meeting of the Board's Finance, Audit and Operations Committee convened on the above date at 3:05pm at the call of Chair Rita Moore, in the Mazama Conference Room at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon St., Portland, Oregon, 97227.

There were present:

Board Committee Members

Rita Moore, Chair
Amy Kohnstamm
Mike Rosen
Paul Anthony

Staff

Dr. John Burnham, Senior Director of Health and Safety
Harry Esteve, Strategic Communications Director
Liz Large, Interim General Counsel
Jerry Vincent, Chief Operating Officer

Update on Legal Expenses

Ms. Large provided information on outside legal expenses between July 1, 2012 and January 23, 2018. There were various legal agencies that were late-billed, but staff was working to get current; also, staff does not have visibility to their accrued billing fees that have not yet been submitted. Ms. Large reported that the Legal Department would exceed the budgeted amount for legal fees this year, and that they want to get to the point where they are forecasting budgeting. Director Anthony stated that the Board would like to know where the District was exceeding the legal budget. Director Kohnstamm commented that the Finance, Audit, and Operations Committee has requested a monthly update on legal costs. Ms. Large mentioned that staff would like to find a cost-effective resolution, and have mediation set up with various legal firms. They were also diversifying firms more than in the past and looking at different styles and rates. In addition, staff was exploring alternative fee arrangements. Chair Kohnstamm asked if Ms. Large had a best guess of how much the Legal Department would be over budget this fiscal year. Ms. Large responded about \$1 million. Most of the fees were driven by personnel matters. Ms. Large stated that she would return to the Committee next month with data on growth of staff in-house and yet increases in outside legal fees. Chair Moore requested a break-out of Special Education expenditures.

Tubman Update

Mr. Vincent provided a PowerPoint presentation. Natasha Butler, Tubman Principal, provided an updated on communities activities, including a walking tour with the Communities of Color. On February 20th, there would be a monthly community engagement meeting at Tubman beginning at 6:00pm. On February 21st, they will provide student activities with the four feeder schools and then will have monthly activities for students as she wants the students to know each other before the next school year begins.

Mr. Vincent reported that everything was on schedule for the Tubman Environmental Testing, and also on schedule for the asbestos abatement and construction diligence. Dr. Burnham provided information on permitting and also on the Environmental Technical Advisory Committee (ETAC). ETAC will provide technical and community feedback to PPS administration and PSU consultants on matters related to the health and safety to students and faculty at Harriet Tubman Middle School. Initially, ETAC will review and provide feedback on assessment and mitigation of outdoor and indoor ambient air toxins. Director Rosen requested a copy of the charter for ETAC. Dr. Burnham responded that it was available online, and added that the District should have

preliminary numbers in April. Director Anthony questioned if the duct work could be paid by the bond. Mr. Vincent responded that he would look into it, but right now he was out of time, money and staff.

Next Steps

Chair Moore stated that she was working with Board Office Manager Rosanne Powell on how the Board can have a role in building the budget. Director Kohnstamm requested that at the next meeting, the Committee should discuss what other issues they need to address. Director Rosen requested that Ms. Powell send the Committee Work Plan to the Committee members and discuss the Work Plan at their next meeting. Director Kohnstamm requested a list of items to be heard at the next Committee meeting. Chair Moore commented that staff has asked for a postponement of the Athletic Fees Audit discussion.

Public Comment

Steve Buel commented that, for the last 20 years, the District has been working on equity in school programming and that it should happen with the new middle schools being opened. The Board should have a budget for that. It seems that the topic was petering out and that the District does not care if students on the west side have better programming than other areas in the District. Director Kohnstamm responded that it will begin to happen with the middle grades and elementary schools next year, using a new staffing model.

Adjourn

Chair Moore adjourned the meeting at 4:22pm.

Submitted by:

Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Clerk
PPS Board of Education