

**New Milford Board of Education
 Operations Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
 August 13, 2024
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

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2024 AUG 19 AM 10:47
 NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mr. Eric Hansell, Chairperson Mr. Tom O'Brien Mr. Brian McCauley
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Absent:	
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Also Present:	Dr. Janet Parlato, Superintendent of Schools Mr. Jeffrey Turner, Technology Director Mr. Matthew Cunningham, Director of Facilities Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Finance Mrs. Teresa Kavanagh, Director of Human Services Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services
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1.		Call to Order The New Milford Board of Education Operations Subcommittee was called to order at 7:34pm by Mr. Eric Hansell, Chairperson.	Call to Order
2.		Public Comment There was none.	Public Comment
3.	A.	<p>Discussion and Possible Action</p> <p>Monthly Reports</p> <p>1. Budget Position dated July 31, 2024</p> <p>2. Purchase Resolution D-785</p> <p>3. Request for Budget Transfers</p> <p>Mr. Giovannone stated the budget position document covers the beginning of the fiscal year and provided an overview of expenses, noting a large batch of encumbrances. There are no payroll encumbrances on the report.</p> <p>Mr. Giovannone stated the Purchase Resolution includes P.O.'s captured thus far in the fiscal year and will continue in the September report.</p> <p>Mr. O'Brien asked about the ESG payments and the turf field deduction, and noted it hasn't happened yet. Mr. Giovannone stated that it will happen in January 2025, following the conclusion of the audit. All 3 governing bodies have already taken action on it.</p>	<p>Discussion and Possible Action</p> <p>A. Monthly Reports</p> <p>1. Budget Position dated July 31, 2024</p> <p>2. Purchase Resolution D-785</p> <p>3. Request for Budget Transfers</p>

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	<p>B. 24/25 Phase of 5 Year Capital Plan Mr. Giovannone stated this was part of the proposed budget presentation in January 2024, and was based on what was known at the time. Currently there are revised requests across the district that fall under facilities, technology, band & music and athletics. The total revised request is \$1,400,000 to fund those projects.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated what Mr. Cunningham reviewed in the Facilities meeting are contained in the line item for 5 Year Capital Plan for Facilities. Mr. McCauley made a note that the capital reserve can be depleted quickly. Dr. Parlato agreed and added the items included for 2024-25 are not frivolous. Mr. McCauley agreed and stated this is why we have a Capital Reserve account. Mr. Hansell also agreed and stated the schools have to be maintained.</p> <p>Mr. O'Brien stated the item for gutter seams was supposed to be covered as part of the roof. It's troubling that \$150,000 is coming back to us. Dr. Parlato replied that in conversations with the town, the problem is there are no more contingency funds available.</p> <p>Mr. Hansell asked about the turf field replacement and when it might come up on the 5 Year Capital Plan. Mr. Cunningham stated the last time it was evaluated, the district was told they were still several years out from replacement.</p> <p>Mr. O'Brien asked if the \$25,000 marked for the Hill & Plain septic tank was enough money. Mr. Cunningham replied the \$25,000 will be enough to ensure the functionality of it. As far as the lifespan of the tank itself, more money will be required to evaluate the equipment associated with it.</p>	<p>B. 24/25 Phase of 5 Year Capital Plan</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>A. Employment Report - August 2024 Mrs. Kavanaugh stated there are currently four open positions. There was a career fair in front of the high school and it brought in five new paraeducators.</p>	<p>Items of Information A. Employment Report - August 2024</p>

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	<p>B. Enrollment Report - August 1, 2024 Dr. Parlato stated a summer enrollment report is often volatile and does not provide a true picture of enrollment yet.</p> <p>C. Additional enrollment-driven position using general fund dollars Dr. Parlato stated this is a position she was requesting that was not originally in the 24/25 budget. She is asking for an additional 1.0 teacher for the Excel preschool, and paraprofessionals. It's an unprecedented number for enrollment, and the numbers grew after October 1, 2023. That is a tremendous number of children in need of services. Also, there are more children remaining in Excel for another year because of the new kindergarten cut off age.</p> <p>Mrs. Olson stated this has been watched since April, and cannot be sustained without the appropriate staffing. The request is for an additional .5 for each building and additional paraprofessionals. It is a quality program that already has a waiting list. There is an unprecedented number of students coming into the age 3 program with a diagnosis of autism.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated it is not only the number of children coming in but it is also the number who need services, including 1:1 paraprofessional support.</p> <p>Mr. Hansell asked Dr. Parlato if she knew why there was such an increase in students with special needs. Mr. McCauley asked to answer, and stated there is speculation that it has to do with Covid. Dr. Parlato added that it is a nationwide issue with increased student needs in each town and state. This would be funded by the general fund. Mrs. Olson added this is not the first time this has happened, it is unpredictable to know how many children will be coming in with need for these services. Mr. Hansell stated it would be good to know how to fund this. He mentioned the school based health clinic that has a full time secretary, and square footage in the school that they are not paying rent on. It's supposed to be self-sufficient.</p>	<p>B. Enrollment Report - August 1, 2024</p> <p>C. Additional enrollment-driven position using general fund dollars</p>
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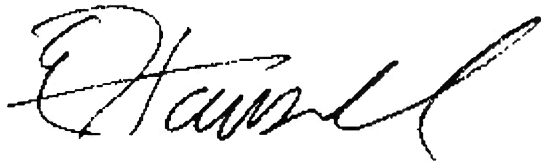
	<p>The money going to the school based health clinic could be used towards these positions. Especially since the school based health centers stated they would be self-sufficient and they should be on their own.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated what is paid to the secretary would not cover what she is asking for the Excel teacher. Mr. Hansell noted that it would offset it. Dr. Parlato stated the school based health center addresses a different sort of need that exists in the school. It assists families for children’s mental health needs. Mr. Hansell stated he does not think the school based health centers are not meeting a need, but they are supposed to be self sufficient. They collect insurance money, and the board voted to have them on the basis they would be self-sufficient. We now have a situation where we need that money to support the needs of other children. They are supposed to be supporting themselves and they are not.</p> <p>Mr. McCauley stated it wasn’t a fair comparison because school based health is meeting different needs for students. He would want to find the funds for the Excel teacher from somewhere else. Mr. Hansell stated we have a case where we have a quantifiable need. There will be a day when the budget is voted down and there will be a need to cut dollars and positions. Mr. Hansell stated it was disingenuous that the school based health center claimed they would be self-sufficient, and they need to be called on it. The district continues to allow them to be on school property for their business but the district continues to pay for their secretarial support and the square footage they are occupying. That would offset the cost for the additional staff. Dr. Parlato stated she would have to research what was promised when the school based health centers came here. Ms. Hollander stated it was funded by ESSER, but the district would pay for the clinician, and that was part of the agreement. Mrs. Olson stated the school based health centers are more of a cost avoidance. They assist with the mental health needs of the students and help avoid having to send students out of district. Mr. Hansell stated he does not want to get</p>	
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	<p>rid of them, but they are supposed to be self-sufficient.</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated Mr. Hansell's point is well taken, and that he is pointing out a place where we can maybe gain some revenue. Mr. Hansell stated we have a population of students who need these funds and as a school district we need to supply it. There will be a day when the budget gets voted down and we need to be creative about finding those dollars. This is a case where the school based health clinic said it would be temporary and self sufficient, and it is not.</p> <p>Mr. McCauley asked Dr. Parlato how she planned to get funds for these teachers. Dr. Parlato stated she will have some of the funds come from the salary line because there are teachers that have been hired that are below step 10. Also, the staff that has left generally were at a higher step than those replacing them. Mr. O'Brien stated he understands Mr. Hansell isn't for the school based health centers but he has not heard any criticism of the service they provide. It is well worth the cost. Mr. McCauley suggested they come in and give an overview of their services.</p> <p>D. Potential partial use of 2% ECS set-aside funding</p> <p>Dr. Parlato stated the Board did ask for 2% of the ECS money that goes to the town. She is hoping to use some of those funds for a 1.0 SMS school counselor. There was a counselor position she had to cut when the ESSER funds ran out and she is proposing to bring that position back for one year. The counselor caseload at SMS is high. School counselors serve as the 504 case manager. There are 70 students at SMS that have 504's. The need has increased dramatically and is severe. The school counselor helps with those needs and align the pathways career with the high school and allows for alternative programming at SMS. Mr. O'Brien asked about the cost. Dr. Parlato stated the position would be roughly \$90,000, of the \$231,092. She added she would not bring it to the board unless there was a real need. SMS is on a</p>	<p>D. Potential partial use of 2% ECS set-aside funding</p>
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	<p>E.</p>	<p>positive trajectory and having that school counselor for even one more year would be important.</p> <p>Update on Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and meals in 24/25 Dr. Parlato stated because there are over 25% free/reduced lunch students, this allowed the district to apply for the community eligibility provision. The state looks at how funds are managed in the food services account and the district qualified. This allows us to offer free breakfast and lunch for all students.</p> <p>Mr. O'Brien stated we offered this last year, because of a favorable balance and used our own money. This year we don't have to do that. Dr. Parlato stated yes, that is correct. Mr. O'Brien asked if this is an annual thing. Dr. Parlato stated that is the hope, yes. Mr. Hansell stated this is a sign the department is well run.</p>	<p>E. Update on Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and meals in 24/25</p>
<p>5.</p>		<p>Public Comment There was none.</p>	<p>Public Comment</p>
<p>6.</p>		<p>Adjourn <i>Mr. O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm, seconded by Mr. McCauley and passed unanimously.</i></p>	<p>Adjourn Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Mr. Eric Hansell
 Chairman, Operations Subcommittee