

SAU 41 GOVERNING BOARD
OCTOBER 13, 2022
PUBLIC HEARING
MEETING MINUTES

A Public Hearing was conducted by the SAU 41 Governing Board on Thursday, October 13, 2022 at 6:05 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School.

Krista Whalen, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Amy Kellner, Vice Chairman
Karen Jew, Treasurer
Brooke Arthur, Hollis School Board
Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairman, COOP School Board
Tom Enright, COOP School Board
Tammy Fareed, Secretary, Hollis School Board (arrived at 6:06 p.m.)
Kenneth Haag, Chairman, Brookline School Board
Robert Mann, Hollis School Board (arrived at 6:09 p.m.)
Carryl Roy, Vice Chairman, Hollis School Board
Tom Solon, Vice Chairman, COOP School Board
Cindy VanCoughnett, COOP School Board
Kelly Zakar, Brookline School Board

Members of the Board Absent: Alison Marsano, Brookline School Board
Colleen Micavich, Secretary
Kate Stoll, Secretary, COOP School Board
Beth Janine Williams, COOP School Board

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Linda Sherwood, Senior Assistant Business Administrator

PUBLIC HEARING

UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE

The purpose of the Public Hearing was to provide an update and obtain public input on the Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB).

The UFB is an account governed by the SAU 41 Governing Board. The Board can approve utilization of the UFB for expenses deemed necessary for the SAU.

Superintendent Corey noted the Board approved salary adjustments (May meeting) and discussion that occurred at that time regarding the likelihood of an adjustment to the hourly wage employees.

A document was provided the Board (copy attached) outlining, for administrative and hourly support staff, FY23 beginning salaries, Board approved increases (May), the resulting percentage increase, proposed mid-year increases, total FY23 salaries (if increase approved), percent of increase from FY23 beginning salaries, and

proposed FY24 salaries (primarily based on 3.5% increase), and the percent of increase over the final FY23 salaries.

Disparities in some (may show lower percentages) as a result of individuals seeking a Masters, etc. and receiving compensation through those activities. Some, due to the process being utilized to bring them to the point of regionally competitive rates, are at a higher percentage of increase.

The FY23 beginning balance was \$260,385. Proposed uses include hourly personnel salary adjustments totaling \$18,318, and the FY23 Board Approved Salary Adjustments (\$33,807) for a total of \$52,125. If approved, the ending fund balance would be \$208,260 or 9.9% of the overall budget. The target is 7-10%.

At this time, due to staffing issues (unfilled positions), there is a strong possibility it will not be necessary to look to the UFB as a source of funding.

The Business Administrator reached out to surrounding districts to identify rate structures. For an accounting specialist position, for example, SAU41 is presently at \$23.50 for an annual compensation of \$46,001.25 where Milford is at \$25.10, Windham \$25.00, Bedford \$28.14, Amherst \$31.20, and Oyster River \$27.63. This is the same issue being discussed at the district level concerning hourly employees.

The proposed \$18,318 increase would provide mid-year increases to various positions (as outlined in the attachment).

Two staff members have received offers of employment; however are aware the Board is considering this proposal. Although they enjoy the working environment the SAU provides, at some point the differential may become too great for them to continue on.

Linda Sherwood, Senior Assistant Business Administrator, commented on having shared with the SAU 41 Compensation Sub-committee information on the investment in terms of training for the individuals in these positions. Over the summer, the SAU lost someone who had become a payroll specialist. That individual was able to take the training we provided and move over to a neighboring district for \$60,000, which represented a significant increase. The neighboring district was also able to provide a fully remote environment, which was the other piece the individual was seeking.

Superintendent Corey remarked the business office personnel and HR Director who all fall under the leadership of the Business Administrator do exceptional work and work extremely hard. It has become very difficult and competitive, in the hiring market, to retain people. The proposed mid-year increases will be discussed further during the regular meeting.

He reiterated he does not anticipate the entire \$52,125 of UFB would be utilized, and there is the potential none of it would be required.

Member Solon asked for clarification of the percentages listed in the far right column (% Inc. from Final FY23 Salaries). Superintendent Corey stated if the individual is receiving a mid-year increase, then it is compounded into next year's salary as well. Member Solon stated when an increase it is not relative to the first column, it would be a total FY23 assuming the mid-year increases go through. Superintendent Corey stated that to be correct.

Member Solon commented on the open positions; if they are required, what needs to be done to fill them? To say we need them but not take the steps to fill them seems inconsistent, and to run the district successfully without those positions filled brings into question whether they are needed.

Superintendent Corey stated he would address that during the regular meeting when discussing the SAU going out to an agency for the receptionist position and the steps that have been needed across the SAU to address not having an out-of-district person. There have been difficulties in addressing the needs. The Director of Student services has put together a short-term plan to allow the SAU to function. Some of the funds allocated will be expended on assigning specific duties and pieces that must be done to individuals who have the skill set and are currently employed by the SAU.

Member Solon remarked if we need to fill those positions, he questions the validity of saying that we will not need the funding as his guess is that if we are not able to fill them in part because of our pay scale, we will need everything we have and then some.

Superintendent Corey stated if unable to fill the position the funds from the position will be utilized to farm out piecemeal work to qualified individuals as well as to address salary areas. He provided the example of the Assistant Director of Student Services position; total salary approved was \$90,000. We are looking at \$93,150 for next year. That is a very competitive salary, but for a position where very few qualified people exist. We did interview a handful of qualified people and for whatever reason they decided not to come. He provided the example of one of the districts that we thought we were going to be hiring someone from that was able to take their ESSER COVID funds and offer that individual a retention bonus to stay. He believes when getting to January/February a larger pool will be seen. There is also a greater sense of comfort with people changing districts now that we are through hopefully the worst of COVID.

Member Fareed commented the first time she ever heard Amy Rowe say anything in public was in a presentation to the Hollis Budget Committee. She was asked that same question and her answer was we can handle this situation for the time being, but if we do not adjust to it for the following district year, we will end up being out of compliance.

Member Roy remarked the Budget Sub-committee had similar conversations about this and the situation that our SAU office is in right now in covering these things. It does boil down to compliance. It is unsustainable. While we can piecemeal things together right now, it is a necessary position.

Member Solon questioned if the proposed FY24 salary is large enough to fill the vacancy. Superintendent Corey stated his belief the salary will attract qualified candidates. If the exact dollar amount is not enough, the Board is always provided the flexibility to ensure we gain the right candidate. That dollar amount is going to get people in the door. Noted was that the receptionist position has been filled.

Chairman Whalen opened the floor for public comment.

Testimony in Favor

Brian Rater, 31 Mason Road, COOP Budget Committee/SAU Budget Sub-committee.

Understands the depth of the situation the SAU has found itself in and is very happy the Board acted when it did to try to address that. However, he strongly disagrees with using the retention fund to pay for long-term salary increases. In the future, if doing this, he encouraged one-time retention bonuses, perhaps even with half in front

and half at year end. This feels like the SAU Board expanded its own budget using the retention fund, which has been talked about endlessly as being a contingency fund.

He commented on having had a discussion during the COOP Budget Committee meeting around the retention fund and how it is rarely used and only used in extreme emergencies, and the next morning learned the SAU Board has decided to expand salaries and is using the retention fund to pay for those salaries.

He believes the request that has been made is reasonable and he supports it, it just feels as though this is a little more outside of the process than it should be.

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

The Public Hearing was declared closed at 6:31 p.m.

SAU 41 Governing Board Chair _____

Date: _____

SAU Salary Analysis FY23 - FY24

	Original FY23 Salary	FY23 Increases Approved in May	Total Salary Expense Approved	% Inc. Over Original Budget	Proposed FY23 Mid-Year Increases	Total FY23 Salaries	% Inc. from FY23 Original	Proposed FY24 Salaries	% Inc. From Final FY23 Salaries
Administration									
Superintendent	\$167,570	\$10,430	\$178,000	6.22%		\$178,000	6.22%	\$184,230	3.50%
Asst. Superintendent	\$134,930	\$7,570	\$142,500	5.61%		\$142,500	5.61%	\$147,488	3.50%
Director of Student Services	\$111,240	\$2,160	\$113,400	1.94%		\$113,400	1.94%	\$117,369	3.50%
Asst. Director of Student Services	\$82,750	\$7,250	\$90,000	8.76%		\$90,000	8.76%	\$93,150	3.50%
Director of Technology	\$97,144	\$0	\$97,144	0.00%		\$97,144	0.00%	\$105,058	8.15%
HR Director	\$59,387	\$2,113	\$61,500	3.56%	\$2,495	\$63,995	7.76%	\$72,000	12.51%
Business Administrator	\$121,567	\$2,360	\$123,927	1.94%		\$123,927	1.94%	\$128,264	3.50%
Senior Business Administrator	\$89,095	\$4,405	\$93,500	4.94%		\$93,500	4.94%	\$96,773	3.50%
Assistant Business Administrator	\$58,350	\$3,150	\$61,500	5.40%	\$2,495	\$63,995	9.67%	\$72,000	12.51%
Facilities Director	\$78,352	\$3,148	\$81,500	4.02%	\$1,746	\$83,246	6.25%	\$91,000	9.31%
Hourly Support Staff									
Student Services Admin Asst.	\$50,890	\$610	\$51,500	1.20%	\$673	\$52,173	2.52%	\$54,967	5.35%
Compliance/Comm. Specialist	\$45,000	\$179	\$45,179	0.40%	\$263	\$45,442	0.98%	\$47,536	4.61%
HR Specialist	\$37,542	\$3,632	\$41,174	9.67%	\$5,197	\$46,371	23.52%	\$50,895	9.76%
Accounting Specialist	\$45,567	\$1,233	\$46,800	2.71%	\$2,525	\$49,325	8.25%	\$53,949	9.37%
Accounting Specialist			\$46,001		\$1,463	\$47,464		\$50,895	7.23%
Business Office Specialist	\$41,534	\$1,566	\$43,100	3.77%	\$1,463	\$44,563	7.29%	\$47,882	7.45%
	\$1,220,918	\$49,806	\$1,316,725	4.08%	\$18,318	\$1,335,043	9.35%	\$1,413,455	5.87%

Budgeted Amount

-\$16,000

\$33,806