

**Portland Board of Education
Budget Meeting
Tuesday, January 11, 2024 @ 7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Dr. Britton, Superintendent, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

BOE Members Present: Laurel Steinhauser, Tim Lavoy, Meg Scata, Kim Nagy-Maruschock, Sarah Spear; Dave Murphy, Stacy Benham

Members Absent: none

Administration Present: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Stephanie Fragola Assistant to Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs, Dawn Davis Director of Student Services, Eric Martin Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, Bob Shea Director of Facilities, Valley View Principal Jessica Bruenn, Middle School Principal Chuck Hershon, Gildersleeve Principal Ryan Walstrom, High School Principal Kate Lawson, Brownstone Principal Michael Searson

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments – Julie McGovern, Grace Lane – spoke as a parent in Portland and TSOL teacher at the school. Spoke in favor of TSOL certified teachers for equity for all students.

4. Review/Discussion – 2024-2025 Superintendent of Schools Proposed Budget Review, Discussion and Action Upon Budgetary Matters for the Forthcoming Fiscal Year. Board members and the public are advised that the Board may vote to approve the budget for the next fiscal year at this budget meeting. Action may also be taken to revise or modify the budget.

Discussion on custodians and 1:1 device needs. If reduce custodian would have to make it up in overtime. A building maintainer has been reduced. Currently taking a look at the 1:1 device needs for Valley View and how we may shift PreK-1 and potentially grade 2. No purchase of chrome books for this budget cycle request, it has been shifted to CIP. Younger grades get passed down devices, not new. Smartboards discussed. Capital Budget discussed. Not recommending any capital improvements at VV, GS, and BIS. Although Dr. Britton noted it's not due to a lack of improvements that may be needed due to leaks and flooding. This is part of a bigger discussion on school facilities. Strong recommendation for HVAC upgrade at secondary school, deionization systems installed and replace all the air handling units. This would be funded with a matching grant. Bob Shea explained what was needed and how the grant funding would work. Need to replace 80 desktop units (only hard drive towers) due to no longer supporting Microsoft office suite, which then becomes a cyber security threat. Eric Martin explained these desktops are in each classroom to run the smartboards, secretaries, and computer labs. As a reminder capital is not part of the 4.85% increase. Insurance and kindergarten enrollment are still unknowns at this point. Insurance final rate should come back in February. Dr. Britton stated if he were to prioritize the reduction to reinstate, it would be the ELL position. Laurel stated that the round five of staff reductions were the most concerning. Consensus on Board that they would be in favor of adding ELL back. Pay to Play option

discussed. Dr. Britton stated that if the Board was interested in this option, he would do the research and bring it to the personnel committee for review. Consensus to proceed to have Charles do the research on figures. Transportation discussed. Student Services out of district spending on transportation reviewed. Looking into in-house van driver for mid-day runs. Question on if there is additional space that Oak Hill would be interested in renting. Charles will reach out to them and see.

5. Question and Answers – Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools

Question posed if it is cost effective to contract OT/PT with Cheshire Fitness vs hiring in house. Dawn stated due to the schedule of need, it evens out using Cheshire Fitness. It would be hard to find a candidate for part-time. We don't have overhead costs using Cheshire Fitness. Outplacement discussed. Discussion on the inability to accommodate outplacements in house as most are significantly impaired and we do not have the level of services to accommodate. Question on what would be the additional cuts if needed. Special Ed would be the top look. Candidates hiring going forward would be at a low step. Additional positions would be cut. Discussion on looking at cuts outside of personnel, such as smartboard and using projectors instead.

T. Lavoy moved to ask the Superintendent to bring to the Board what a 3.5% increase (reduction of \$322,000/1.36% from proposed budget) vs the 4.85% increase would look like, seconded by S. Benham. MOTION CARRIED with 6 in favor and 1 abstention by S. Spear.

M. Scata spoke about unfunded mandates that put strain on districts.

6. Public Comments

Alicia Strong, Gospel Lane – asked if anyone was going to reach out to parents to see what they would be willing to support.

Erin Benson, Grove Street – asked who parents can contact to have their voice heard.

L. Steinhauser informed citizens that they can reach out to Dr. Britton and to the full Board. Also parents can speak during citizen's comments at any of the Board meetings, the next one is 1/16/24 at 7pm.

**7. Possible Action Item – Approve 2024-2025 Superintendent of Schools Proposed Budget
NO ACTION.**

8. Adjournment

T. Lavoy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 pm, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tricia Dean
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk