



EXECUTIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – May 15, 2018
EDCO Collaborative
36 Middlesex Tpke., Bedford, MA 01730

In attendance:

Diana Fisher Gomberg, School Committee, Newton
Jon Sills, Superintendent, Bedford
Bella Wong, Superintendent, Lincoln-Sudbury (9:50am)
Helen Charlupski, School Committee, Brookline
Ed Heller, School Committee, Weston
Drew Echelson, Superintendent, Waltham

David King, EDCO Treasurer
Tom Markham, EDCO Collaborative
Colleen Dolan, EDCO Collaborative

Diana Fisher Gomberg called the meeting to order at 9:35pm.

A motion was made by Helen Charlupski and seconded by Jon Sills to accept minutes from the 2.27.18, 3.14.18, 3.20.18, 3.29.18 and 4.5.18 Executive Finance Committee meetings and to recommend the Board of Directors accept the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Colleen Dolan asked for a debrief of the 4.12.18 Board meeting. She stated at that meeting that the FY19 budget was presented after a full discussion with the EFC on 4.5.18 and a supportive EFC vote recommending the FY19 budget to the Board. But, Dolan felt that the budget discussion at the April 12 Board meeting was not reflective of the discussion, guidance and vote from the April 5 EFC meeting. Dolan continued noting the discussion at the last EFC meeting was, in terms of the work done by the administration and the materials presented, affirming from all members in attendance. EFC members asked questions and either she or Tom Markham answered them referring to the budget materials presented. Plus, two members expressed concerns about the 45 Day Program expansion project and respectfully voted against the motion to recommend. EFC members were reminded that if questions came up as materials were reviewed prior to the Board meeting, Mr. Markham or she would be available to answer questions.

At the April 12 Board meeting the following week an EFC member asked several questions that she feared impacted the credibility of the presentation. She questioned the role of EFC having believed the EFC is the body who reviews information prior to the Board meeting in order to make a sound recommendation. If EDCO administration must repeat the same presentation at the Board meeting, especially after receiving affirmation, she questions the role and duty of the EFC. Dolan wanted to be clear that the administration must always be properly ready to answer questions and offer remedy actions when prompted by the Board and that she does not want to come across as complaining. The Board has every right to direct the staff, but she just wanted to share that she and Mr. Markham felt blindsided at the Board meeting given the affirming comments and vote by the EFC just a week earlier. A few Board members commented agreeing that participation in EFC comes with the responsibility to offer comments, direction and guidance to the administration ahead of time and to come to the Board meeting ready to make an informed

recommendation; even if in opposition. Communicating ahead of time to the administration can both save time and resources and preserve credibility in the budget development process.

Dolan also explained she feels a collaborative budget should be indicative of growth and should not be compared to school budgets that are level funded or show modest increases. In response to district needs, the collaborative should be expanding, adding growing programming and services is an essential function of collaboratives.

Bella Wong stated she no longer felt EFC was facilitated in a way that made it a good use of her time and she is considering taking leave of the committee.

Tom Markham was asked to re-present the FY19 budget. He had prepared and distributed a detailed, 24-page Budget Proposal Booklet with summary schedules for each program area, and narratives outlining notable areas of change and attachments. The revised Budget Book includes a comparative data form the last 4 years, budget highlights, an executive summary, revenue and staffing charts, information on membership assessments for FY19, tuition rates for FY19, and budget planning and assumptions information. Also included is the EDCO teacher salary schedule, FY18 teacher salary comparisons for both collaborative and member districts, and the interpreter salary schedule. This new FY19 Budget Proposal Booklet supports the same budget figure of \$16,118,964 as was originally presented to the EFC and the full Board in April. The revised FY19 proposal document does not include any new program costs or initiatives from what the Board has already seen.

Markham explained the proposed budget includes a building project that will add space to the North Crossing Academy for the 45-Day Assessment Program. Currently, both middle and high school students are enrolled in the program, but space is tight and daily these groups of students are in the same rooms. The new suite of classrooms will provide separate classrooms for middle and high schoolers and an office for the school psychologist. The entire cost of construction is built into the budget and is anticipated to pay for itself the first year. The budget presents a projected surplus of \$61,028 and, as previously presented, provides a 3% equity increase for EDCO's teachers, a 7% increase in educational interpreter salaries and an overall COLA of 3%, or less as provided for in state or federal grants.

Helen Charlupski suggested the building project be postponed until the status of the CASE Collaborative lease is determined after FY19. Dolan explained the assessment program had to turn down referrals due to space and grade configuration and there are requests form member districts for psychological evaluations. Other members understood Helen's concerns but are also keenly aware of the districts' need for these services and are prepared to support the administration's proposal in expanding an existing program to support these needs.

A motion was made by Kathleen Bodie and seconded by Diana Fisher Gomberg to approve the FY19 budget of \$16,118,964 as presented. A motion was made by Helen Charlupski and seconded by Ed Heller to amend the budget to eliminate the building project. The motion to amend failed with two in favor and four opposed. Drew Echelson moved the question. The main motion to approve the FY19 budget as presented passed with five in favor and one opposed.

A motion was made by Helen Charlupski and seconded by Kathleen Bodie to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully submitted by Colleen Dolan. 6/28/18

