Concord School District
Finance Committee Minutes

School Board Committee: Finance Committee

Date: November 19, 2014

Finance Committee members present: Rusty Cofrin, Tom Croteau, Chair, Patrick Taylor

Finance Committee members absent: Kass Ardinger

Other Board member(s) present: Clint Cogswell, Jennifer Patterson

Administration: Superintendent Chris Rath, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Director of Facilities and Planning/Community Education Matt Cashman

Finance Committee Chair Tom Croteau called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. and noted that the agenda was to review the history, revenues, expenses and proposed changes for the Community Education program.

Director of Facilities and Planning/Community Education Matt Cashman provided a history of the Community Education program.

- 1978 – Concord opened “Nite Lite” Adult Enrichment Classes at CHS
- 1983 – Nite Lite name was changed to Classes for Life
- 1983 – Brochures began to be mailed to Concord residents
- 2013 – Concord Community Education redesigned its website to offer online registration, review course offerings and descriptions. The website also includes a detailed background of the instructors.

Mr. Cashman presented the history of directors since the inception of the Community Education program.

- 1978 – 1980 – Joan Kenney oversaw “Nite Lite” and Adult Basic Education
- 1980 – Present - Kathy Vincent hired as clerk and brochure specialist
- 1980 – 1981 – Mark Roth – Director of Community Education
- 1982 – 2012 – Jeff Siegel – Director of Community Education
- 2012 – present – Matt Cashman – Director of Community Education

Patrick Taylor arrived at 5:36 p.m.

Mr. Cashman gave each Committee member and Board member present a copy of the Fall Community Education brochure and explained that the brochure is sent to 106,800 dwellings in Deerfield, Manchester, Hooksett, Bedford, Canterbury, Center Barnstead, Contoocook, Epsom, Henniker, Hillsborough, New London, Suncook, Warner, Weare, Bow and Loudon, as well as Concord and Penacook.
Mr. Cashman stated that the five ways to register for classes are: online, by phone, mail, fax or in person at the high school Community Education office.

Business Administrator Jack Dunn then explained the financial portion of the Community Education program. He began with a review of expenses 2012 to current including budget vs. actual, explaining that total budgeted expenses for FY15 are $219,974 and actual expenses through 11/18/14 are $92,605.

Revenue from Community Education Tuition and Summer Enrichment Tuition (Robotics) includes credit card payments, check and cash payments, as well as refunds. Total budgeted revenue for FY15 is $242,500 and actual revenue through 11/18/14 is $40,698. Actual expense vs. revenue through 11/18/14 is -$51,907.

Mr. Dunn explained that the salary line ($92,822) includes the Administrative Assistant and salaried instructors and the Benefits line ($23,867) covers the insurance for the Administrative Assistant and salaried instructors. Professional Services ($32,200) are contracted classes such as Ballroom Dancing, and the Purchased Property ($3,965) expense covers the copier. Purchased Services ($20,000) are for advertising; the majority of this expense covers printing and postage. Included in the expenses are supplies, books and utilities ($6,700) as well as dues, fees and interest ($3,200) that covers website assistance, the LERN subscription, credit card dues and fees, renewal of domain and the SSL security certificate.

Superintendent Rath explained that Community Education was originally intended to be self-supporting, but currently is not. The administrators want to give the Finance Committee and Board ideas for program changes to make the program self-sustaining.

The administration proposed reducing some expenditures, including reducing the mailer to those 106,800 dwellings from three times per year to once per year, and eliminating newspaper ads, for a cost savings of $28,720. Administration proposed adding a convenience fee to credit card transactions, instead of the district paying 2.95% on credit card transactions, as well as eliminating the LERN Subscription. The reduction in credit card fees and the LERN subscription could yield a cost savings of $8,500. In addition to these changes, the administration proposed increasing class tuition by $10 per course.

In a discussion regarding the mailer being reduced from three times a year to once per year, Mr. Cashman explained that the brochure can be used as a vehicle to refer people to the website. Jennifer Patterson asked about the possibility of sending out postcards as reminders of upcoming classes. Mr. Cashman replied that they have consulted with Spectrum on some cost savings already, but would also inquire about the impact of moving to a card notification. Mr. Cogswell noted that the brochure is a good marketing step, and Mr. Cashman added that the brochure was the biggest source of information about the program. Mr. Dunn agreed, adding that of 17 towns, 16 responded to a survey and the brochure was the source of information most used for reviewing available courses.
Patrick Taylor asked how many courses are offered during a semester and what the average tuition is. Matt Cashman noted that tuition ranges from $29 to $144 per class and the Biology labs can cost as much as $425. Mr. Dunn noted there are approximately 70 course offerings. In response to a question from Mr. Croteau about how many students must be enrolled to run a course, Mr. Cashman replied that four more are required.

In response to a question from Mr. Taylor about how tuition is determined, Mr. Cashman explained that it is determined by reviewing cost of books and supplies and curriculum with the instructor, as well as a small overhead charge.

Mr. Dunn explained that the struggle with revenue is enrollment, and assuming next year mimics this year, if no changes are made and we leave everything as is, tuition for classes will need to be increased by $32. Mr. Cogswell reiterated that making the proposed changes would only require each course to be increased by $10.

Mr. Croteau asked for an explanation of the discounts. Mr. Dunn explained that if a person signs up for two courses, he or she gets a 10% discount on the second course. Senior citizens receive a 25% discount, and Concord School District employees receive a 50% discount. He added that most enrollments are full-pay and/or the 10% discount.

Superintendent Rath added that School Board Policy #633 needs to be reviewed and revised by the Board in order to be in compliance with the senior citizen discount for course tuition.

Additional proposed changes are to redesign the brochure to make it a yearly brochure for three semesters, advertise on ConcordTV by promoting classes through interviews and on WKXL as a reminder that classes are beginning. Other avenues are through social media, by creating an online survey, and by increasing course offerings.

The Finance Committee voted 3-0 (motioned by Rusty Cofrin, seconded by Patrick Taylor) to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Tom Croteau, Chair Finance Committee

Jack Dunn, Recorder