



Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School

10 New Bond Street Worcester, MA 01606

Phone: (508) 854-8400 Fax: (508) 854-8484

www.akfcs.org

Facilities and Finance Committee Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 13, 2022, 8:00 a.m. DIGITAL MEETING

<https://akfcs-org.zoom.us/j/98771821507?pwd=eHptc2RzaXphQ1RnZldlSWdicWp4dz09>

Meeting ID: 987 7182 1507 **Passcode:** 824734

By phone: +1 929 205 6099 US (New York) **Meeting ID:** 987 7182 1507

- I. Call to Order- Mr. Patrick Royce, Chair
- II. Introductions/Attendance Recorded
- III. Review of the March 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes
 - a. **Motion:** To approve the March 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes
- IV. Budget Presentation- Ms. Alisha Carpino
- V. Flood Update
- VI. Facilities Update- Mr. Michael Grennon (Time Permitting)
- VII. IT Update- Mr. Gabriel Beltran (Time Permitting)
- VIII. Upcoming Facilities & Finance/ BOT Committee Meetings
 - a. Thursday, April 21, 2022- *Board of Trustees Budget Presentation*
 - b. Thursday, April 27, 2022- *Board of Trustees Budget Approval*
 - c. Friday, May 20, 2022
 - d. Friday, June 17, 2022
- IX. Timely Topics as identified by the Chair and/or ED
- X. Adjournment

APPROVED

4.8.22 3:23 pm

City of Worcester, MA



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<https://akfcs-org.zoom.us/j/98983268038?pwd=R1dyaGJwMEM5Q2M4cHJXUk5YNTc0UT09>

Friday, March 18, 2022, 8:00 a.m. DIGITAL MEETING

Meeting ID: 989 8326 8038 **Passcode:** 840857

By phone: +1 929 205 6099 **Meeting ID:** 989 8326 8038

- I. Call to Order- Mr. Patrick Royce, Chair
- II. Introductions/Attendance Recorded
- III. Review of the February 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes
 - a. **Motion:** To approve the February 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes
- IV. Salary Scale Presentation- Mr. Benjamin Reilly & Ms. Alisha Carpino
- V. Flood Update
 - a. Insurance- Ms. Carpino
 - b. Renovations- Mr. Michael Grennon
 - c. Service Master- Ms. Heidi Paluk
- VI. Financial Reports- Ms. Alisha Carpino
- VII. Facilities Update- Mr. Michael Grennon (Time Permitting)
- VIII. IT Update- Mr. Gabriel Beltran (Time Permitting)
- IX. Upcoming Facilities & Finance/BOT Committee Meetings
 - a. Wednesday, April 13, 2022
 - b. Thursday, April 21, 2022- Board of Trustees Budget Presentation
 - c. Thursday, April 27, 2022- Board of Trustees Budget Approval
 - d. Friday, May 20, 2022
- X. Adjournment



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Facilities and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes- DRAFT

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Friday, March 18, 2022, 8:00 a.m. DIGITAL MEETING

Meeting ID: 989 8326 8038 **Passcode:** 840857

By phone: +1 929 205 6099 **Meeting ID:** 989 8326 8038

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Patrick Royce. The attendance was recorded and is attached.

Mr. Royce opened the meeting at 8:02 a.m. Mr. Royce asked the Committee to review the Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2022. Upon their review, Mr. Royce asked for a motion to approve the minutes from February 18, 2022, Facilities & Finance Meetings. Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku made the motion, it was seconded by Ms. Blue. A roll call vote was taken to which Ms. Blue abstained as she was not present for that meeting. The meeting notes were approved.

Flood Update

Ms. Carpino began by explaining that Abby Kelley has the national flood program which is costly and does not provide the best coverage possible. The research was done and it was determined that while the new possible coverage does not add additional coverage to what we currently have, it is significantly cheaper. Information has been shared with that company and they are currently reviewing past claims of the school and will decide. Mr. Grennon provided an update on the meeting that is scheduled for BlueSky on Monday, March 21, 2022, which will begin the process of the ES basement renovations.

Mr. Royce inquired about any flood mitigation work that would be done to which Ms. Paluk explained that a company has not been brought in to discuss that at the moment. Ms. Paluk explained that in the meeting, she would discuss how the basement was going to be rebuilt to avoid further damage from future flooding.

Service Master provided no documentation to inform the school of the scope of work that was going to be done, according to Ms. Paluk. it was also noted that many conversations took place between August to



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October that did not involve anyone from Abby Kelley and because all of the work is not covered under the insurance, there is a very significant bill left under the responsibility of Abby Kelley. Mr. Royce inquired about whether it would be feasible to involve counsel at this step to which Ms. Paluk agreed.

While the amount that is the responsibility of Abby Kelley has not fully been determined, it was noted that even with the policy of \$500,000, only \$180,000 of it was covered for both the demolition and rebuild. The lack of communication between the agents, adjuster, and the school caused further confusion and it was determined that counsel would be the next step along with the potential of a letter being sent to the claims department head informing them this claims process was not done in good faith.

Salary Scale Presentation

Ms. Carpino provided a brief overview of the work that has been taking place since November. The co-chair of the committee, Mr. Benjamin Reilly, worked with a committee composed of different teachers from each school to come up with a salary scale that will be a stepping stone for future discussions. Ms. Carpino noted that this would be presented again during the budget meeting to demonstrate how this will work within the budget.

Mr. Reilly began by informing the committee members that the salary has not been adjusted in at least 6 years while the industry standard has been to update the salary scale every year by about 2% to account for inflation. With the standard increase of 2%, it was noted that teachers with a bachelor's degree would be paid about 13% more, while teachers with a master's degree would be paid about 14.5% more. This has also caused many people to accept jobs and then turn them down for a position that is paying them more, placing Abby Kelley in the difficult position of not being able to be competitive enough to retain teachers.

Mr. Reilly explained that every K-12 school in the district was compared to Abby Kelley based on enrollment, number of teachers, and population data, of which 100 out of the 220 distinct districts were researched. 84/100 had teacher contracts available online and 22 out of 84 were deemed recent enough to use. Based on that comparison that was done, it was noted that the cost of living averaged 1.85% and the average number of steps was 13.36, while Abby Kelley currently has 25 steps, and the average starting salary was 20% higher than our starting salary for the bachelors. The salary scale committee determined that based on the research, several actions would need to take place such as an increase in the starting salary, reducing the number

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of steps, and increasing the difference between each step, resulting in more significant yearly raises. The current salary scale for Abby Kelley was at \$40,000 when the average was \$50,000 and yearly increases were small, between 2%-3%.

With this information in hand, the suggestions from the salary scale committee were to increase the starting salary to \$47,000, which is still below standard but a step forward. It was also determined that the number of steps should be decreased from 25 to 15, which is also above standard and each step increase would come with a 3.5% raise. There would be a 6% increase for the first 2 lane changes and any lane changes after the masters is a 3% increase. With these new proposals, we would still be behind the average amounts by 5%. The budget would be reviewed yearly and a salary scale committee would meet yearly while reviewing the schools' competitiveness every 3 years.

Ms. Carpino explained that a ten-year trend of information was used to create the three-year projection and that was done to ensure that the salary scale could be sustained. Because of this, Ms. Carpino explained that no one-time funds were used in building the scale and the salary scale was forecasted with no retirements and no turnover so the projection would be higher. There were also no changes to federal or state grants going forward and kept in the state every year. Ms. Carpino noted that the budget advisory committee would consist of two instructional staff from each school which the Faculty council would nominate. At the end of the scale where the staff would max out on their raises, there would be a longevity bonus that would allow for staff to be able to stay current with the cost of living challenges.

Based on the budget calculations from Ms. Carpino, each year would be about a \$700,000 increase in teachers' salaries and this was done to make sure that we did not outpace ourselves with this projection. The salary scale update would allow our teachers to be paid a salary that is much closer to the industry standard, making Abby Kelley more competitive in attracting qualified teachers and staff. The salary scale would also have predictable and significant raises every year, allowing for better retention of staff.

Mr. Royce inquired about obtaining a list of the 22 schools that were used for comparison as he wanted to use that to compare the cost of living, stating that it would be more expensive to live in Boston as opposed to Worcester. Mr. Royce also asked for clarification on teachers not receiving a salary scale adjustment in 6 years,

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to which it was explained that there was an adjustment two years ago in which everyone skipped one level and there was a 1% adjustment through all the levels but an actual standard increase was not done in the past 6 years. It was also noted that while teachers do receive step increases, it does not include the cost of living changes.

Ms. Blue inquired about the current longevity bonus and whether there was a plan in place for it to which Ms. Carpino explained that while there was no document in place, this has been something that has been done even by her predecessor once the teacher no longer qualifies for the yearly raises. Mr. Royce also inquired about where the teachers reside and it was noted that there were not many teachers with bachelor's degrees due to not having a competitive salary scale among other institutions. Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku also inquired about whether there would be space to increase the starting scale as it is still below standard and the hiring of teachers has become difficult but is critical to which Ms. Carpino explained that while she agrees that this is not enough, it is currently what fits. She also explained that this is just a starting point and would be looking at other ways to increase the lines of revenue, which would allow for more salary increases. Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku then inquired about finding grants that support a hiring bonus which would allow for the budget to remain the same to which Ms. Carpino explained that a bonus was provided last year and there would also be a 2% bonus being given in May.

Ms. Paluk stated that there is money available for teacher diversification that does go towards helping to pay for classes and other items but it is focused on diverse teachers. It was noted that the application was not submitted this year due to the lack of structure in place that would have supported that. She explained that there were systemic changes that needed to take place for the recruitment of teachers who may not have had a traditional path into education and to also support them with additional financial compensation. Ms. Blue also inquired about the current grants and whether any of them could be influenced in terms of requesting them on our end from a proposal standpoint to which Ms. Carpino explained that Ms. Vigneux has done an incredible job of finding grants for budget items that were included so it allows for the grant monies to open space in the budget.



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Mr. Royce inquired about whether the incentives were properly aligned with the needs of the school to which Ms. Caprino explained that the first three lanes were the ones that had the most increase and that more steps allowed for staff to have the incentive to advance their education. It was also noted that the longevity bonus was a great way to retain staff. Ms. Blue also noted that it would be a good idea to see a grid to see where all the salaries land and create an overall district goal of receiving incentives.

Financial Report

Ms. Carpino began by stating that we are under the budget for the revenue from state sources. It was also noted by Ms. Carpino that the revenue was reduced by 7% and she is in touch with DESE to figure out the mistake if there was one. The Regional Transportation payment has also not been received yet so there is a difference showing as it comes later in the year. The in-district transportation is also reporting under budget by \$94,000 due to issues such as snow days and the lack of education outings due to the pandemic. The cost of gas has also increased so gas adjustment invoices have been sent, costing about \$4000.00 and it is currently being watched. The federal grant funding is also above the budgeted number and a \$200,000 ELA curriculum was received, along with a grant for \$61,000 for social, emotional, and mental health. Staffing costs and salaries are under budget by 2% and there are 3 open full-time positions at the moment.

The current benefits are under budget at 9% and based on a meeting with Ken, it was advised to budget at 9% again to be safe. A \$60,000 refund was received for HRA due to our funding of 25%, which was \$111,000 but any monies not used would be refunded. Ms. Carpino explained that this all put the debt ratio at 1.76%, compared to the required ratio of 1.15%.

Mr. Royce exited the meeting at 9:28 a.m. and Ms. Blue headed the remaining portion of the meeting.

Facilities Update

Mr. Grennon noted that there were outside cameras added outside of the middle school and the warehouse cameras are being completed at the high school. Ms. Blue inquired about having a document put together providing an overview of the different projects being completed.



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IT Update

Mr. Beltran began by stating that the main issues are still the Chromebooks and new Chromebooks being rolled out to the students and staff. The exterior cameras that were placed are now being backed up in case something were to happen to the server. Mr. Beltran also noted that updates have been done on many of the Chromebooks as they were not up-to-date and they have also been working on implementing an inventory system by next month. It was also explained that there was still a nationwide toner shortage and they were reviewing if the number of copier machines and printers were necessary in terms of cost and supply shortages.

Mr. Beltran implored everyone to think about the supplies that the teachers may need and use that information to strategically plan the devices that would be needed such as the projectors and Chromebooks as it is impacting how the students are expected to do their work.

Ms. Blue asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku and seconded by Ms. Blue. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.



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Mr. Royce opened the meeting at 8:02 a.m. Mr. Royce asked the Committee to review the Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2022. Upon their review, Mr. Royce asked for a motion to approve the minutes from March 18, 2022, Facilities & Finance Meetings. Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku made the motion; Ms. Blue seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and the meeting notes were approved.

Budget Presentation

Ms. Carpino began by stating that the budget for next year puts us at a gain of \$307,000. A six percent (6%) increase was budgeted for revenue and state sources, and the state grant has been kept at \$50,000. Revenue from federal sources was kept the same as notifications about the federal funding next year are not sent out until August. Meal revenue was budgeted for \$650,000, and an application for CIP has been submitted to assist with free lunches for the students.

An E-rate amount of \$30,000 has been placed in the budget as that is a guaranteed amount, but that amount may increase. An increase in next year's budget will be seen due to athletic fees. Next year, the middle school will offer athletics, which accounts for the rise. Ms. Blue inquired about a program where students who required assistance with the athletic costs could apply. Ms. Carpino stated that there was no official document about that policy. It was being done on a case-by-case basis.

An eight percent (8%) increase will be seen in the salary, leadership, and administration section of the budget due to regular raises and the hiring of an IT director, and IT support is included. Legal services were kept the same as \$50,000 has been spent to date, and this covers all of the legal services provided to Abby

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Kelley. The IT budget has also increased due to the demands of the school, such as projectors and computers, and Administrative expenses have increased due to condensing subscriptions and memberships in the workplace to save money. Board spending has also been added to the budget to assist with costs. Ms. Carpino also explained the steps to clean the budget and remove outdated data.

Instructional Salaries will see a thirteen percent (13%) increase due to the salary scale increase. Ms. Caprino informed the Committee that this increase would be sustainable as no one-time funds were used in the projection. Because of grants received, the instructional initiatives category was broken down to reflect zero, and the types have been moved to the proper places in the budget. It was noted that this budget item has existed in last year's budget but has been broken down more specifically in this year's budget. Pupil services, including the salaries for other student services, will not significantly increase as the regular raises and a small percentage of the increase to the salary scale.

This year, the cleaning company and snow removal company have been put out for bid. A seven percent (7%) increase will be seen in transportation due to contract changes, supplemental fuel bills, and school activities. There will be a 2% increase in food services as more students are served. Food is being brought in currently, but the kitchen staff will begin cooking for the students. Because the athletic department underspent, there was no need to increase the budget, and it was kept at \$200,000. Maintenance operations will see an eight percent (8%) decrease due to the cleaning company's changes. Maintenance has been budgeted for \$200,000, and there has been a decrease in supplies as we are no longer buying the same amount of masks and equipment to deal with the pandemic.

Insurance increased by three percent (3%). Health insurance was less than projected, so there was one percent (1%) decrease. Staff retention also decreased due to bonuses being removed from the category, leaving money for activities such as teacher appreciation week and holidays.

Mr. Royce commended Ms. Carpino on the work on the budget this year and on incorporating the updated salary scale into the budget. Ms. Carpino explained that contracted services it was composed of accounting and audit fees and professional fees. Ms. Blue inquired about the category titled other administrative expenses, which Ms. Carpino described housed the different subscriptions and memberships and currently has \$100,000. There was some discussion about breaking down categories differently and keeping things separate.



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Ms. Carpino also suggested tracking the Board spending on the back-end to assist with creating the budget based on their spending habits.

Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku inquired about whether any issues would arise if we did not receive Covid monies, to which Ms. Carpino stated that we would be able to sustain without it. Mr. Royce inquired whether it made sense to show the specific areas where the ESSR funds are going to which Ms. Carpino stated she would provide a narrative to make clear all of this information. Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku also inquired about the Foundation monies received and the line item that it falls under, and it was explained that it is not included as some of the funds come directly to the school and not the Foundation. Ms. Blue inquired about the monies categorized under the other revenue categories. Ms. Carpino explained that it houses monies that may come in for field trips, facilities rentals, reimbursements, and any additional funds that do not fall under a specific category.

Ms. Blue suggested adding the principals as advisors to the committee that Ms. Carpino has established to obtain feedback and to also include in the document to show inclusivity. Mr. Royce also spoke on the bond interest rates, fixed until June 2023 and reset. According to Mr. Royce, the concern is that because we are in a rising interest rate period, it was suggested to fix the interest rate for the remaining time through 2028 to 3.5%, which is when the bonds would mature. There would be a prepayment penalty, according to Mr. Royce, if we were to choose that option, but it is well worth the risk. Mr. Royce explained that an official vote would be taken at the Board of Trustees meeting to finalize it.

Flood Update

Ms. Carpino explained that an engineer would be at the middle school to evaluate the work that needs to be done to prevent the flooding or have measurements in place to assist with cleaning up the water that may come in.

IT Update

Mr. Beltran explained that 385 tasks had been resolved, and new batches of IDs had been issued to students. An asset management software has been connected; therefore, devices such as the printers, computers, and servers will be housed there. Mr. Beltran also noted that they were looking into another software system as the current one, Rediker, is outdated. This is expected to take a year to implement. An app store has been added for teachers and eventually will be added for students, which will help in the future. All district admins have



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received new laptops and screens. Mr. Royce requested an update on the status of the IT infrastructure and where we stand at the next meeting, which Mr. Beltran stated would not be a problem.

Mr. Royce asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Ms. Zagabe-Ndiku and seconded by Ms. Blue. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

List of Documents Provided:

Facilities Report
IT Report