

Slate Valley Unified Union School District
Finance Committee Mtg.
Monday, February 8, 2021
5:30 PM

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Approved Minutes

Attending: Cheryl Scarzello, Glen Cousineau, Tim Smith, Kris Benway, Chris Cole, Casey O'Meara, Brooke Olsen Farrell, Tara Buxton, Rebeckah St. Peter, Rick Wilson, Christine Pouliot

Call to Order: Glen Cousineau called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Christine Pouliot made a motion to approve the agenda with no changes; this was seconded by Tara Buxton.

Approval of Minutes of January 11, 2021: Rick Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2021 with no changes; this was seconded by Tim Smith.

CRF Update: Cheryl sent out a Covid Update Summary to Board Members this afternoon.

COVID-19 FEDERAL FUNDING SUMMARY

Vermont school districts are being provided with additional federal revenues to address costs related to responding to the COVID-19 emergency through several federal acts. The first enacted on March 27, 2020, was the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act which included the Elementary and Secondary School Educational Relief (ESSER) Fund and Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). The State of VT further carved out of the CRF an Indoor Air Quality Grant Program and Child Nutrition Equipment Grant. In December 2020 additional federal funds for schools were appropriated through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act aka ESSER II funds. FEMA funds were determined not to be available for school districts.

Each funding source comes with its own requirements and restrictions:

CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT FUNDS:

CRF: March 1 – Dec. 30, 2020; \$82 million allocation for preK to 12 schools; SVUUSD revised application \$700,855

- CRF differs from all other grants in that the costs must be incurred (not obligated) by Dec. 30, 2020.
- LEAs should apply for 100% of eligible costs already incurred between March 1-Sept. 2, 2020, and also projected eligible costs for Sept.- Dec. 30, 2020.
- AOE recommends that if a cost during the period is both CRF and ESSER eligible, that the LEA apply for CRF.
- Some of the uses of Slate Valley's CRF funds have been for: bus monitors to perform COVID safety checks, overtime for custodians, an additional nurse, supplies for students for outdoor classrooms, substitutes for staff absences related to COVID, cleaning supplies, IT equipment, supplies for nurses

CRF School Indoor Air Quality Grant Program (administered by Efficiency Vermont): March 1 – Dec. 30, 2020; \$18 million allocation; SVUUSD received \$136,350.78 on 12/22/2020 with the following amount for each school: BVS - \$21,821, CES - \$13,057.05, CVS- \$8,317, FHU - \$30,602.35, FHG - \$31,769.38, OVS - \$30,784

The legislature initially allocated \$13.5 million of the state's CRF allocation to Efficiency Vermont for school indoor air quality projects. The legislature allocated an additional \$4.5 million to cover the balance of the applications that they have received from school districts.

- CRF differs from all other grants in that the costs had to be incurred by December 30, 2020.
- The AOE recommended that if a cost during the period is both CRF and ESSER eligible, that the LEA apply for CRF.
- The funds were used in each school to make improvements and repairs to ventilation systems and specifically to nurse's offices.

CRF Child Nutrition Equipment Grant: \$4 million allocation; SVUUSD approved grant \$6,500

- Costs for supplies and equipment to provide meals to children during COVID-19 emergency.
- CRF differs from all other grants in that the costs must be incurred (not obligated) by Dec. 30, 2020.
- Slate Valley received a grant to cover packaging supplies and containers for delivery of individual student meals to classrooms in all schools and for a refrigerated display cabinet for Fair Haven Union HS.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF (ESSR) FUNDS:

ESSER: March 13, 2020 – September 30, 2022; \$28 million allocation for K to 12 schools; SVUUSD Allocation - \$465,356, application not submitted at this time

- ESSR will be used for costs similar to CRF that extend past December 30, 2020.
- Allowable uses of funds is related to preventing, preparing for and responding to COVID 19.
- All estimated costs must be in an approved award amendment by April 29, 2021
- ESSER funds should be used for all eligible COVID-19 costs from Jan. 1, 2021-Sept. 30, 2022.
- ESSER funds should be prioritized over other sources of funding wherever possible.
- LEAs can apply for 100% of eligible costs from July 1- Dec. 30, 2020, that cannot be covered by CRF.

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (CRRSA) ACT FUNDS:

ESSER II: March 13, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2023; \$148 million allocation for K to 12 schools; SVUUSD allocation is unknown at this time

- ESSR II will be used for costs similar to ESSR that extend past December 30, 2020.
- Allowable uses of funds are related to preventing, preparing for and responding to COVID 19.
- School district will be required to provide a detailed accounting of the use of ESSER II funds, that includes how the district used the funds to measure and address learning loss among students disproportionately affected by the coronavirus and school closures including: low income students, children with disabilities, English learner, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness and children and youth in foster care.

FEMA: We have been notified that school districts are not eligible for FEMA funds. The amount that was on the FEMA application was also included in the CRF application per the direction of AOE.

ESSR funds \$28 million available for Vermont. ESSR II funds \$149 million for the whole state. Cheryl said she expects that Slate Valley's ESSR II allocation will be greater than the \$465,356 allocation for ESSR I. The purpose of these monies is to support the lack of progress or lost progress based on Covid, remote learning and loss of classroom time. At this time the district has available approximately \$1.5 million of COVID relief funds available to it. Any ESSR II funds can be spent into the year 2023. Possibly these funds could be used for Ventilation in the new remodel plans at FHUHS and the Middle School.

Budget Update: Brooke stated that we need to determine who will be doing the bulk of the talking at the Informational Budget Meeting. Brooke also needs to know what the Board expects of Cheryl and Brooke during this meeting. The Informational Meeting is on 2/22/2021 at 7p.m. The printed Annual Report arrived at the Central Office today. Brooke indicated that will be distributed to the areas where they are usually available. Cheryl once again reviewed the Budget slides that could be shared during the informational meeting. This budget is \$122,201 less than FY21 and \$213,253 less than FY20. She reviewed the articles that are included in the warning and also the changes to Equalized Pupils. She indicated this is not a significant difference. Less by 1.2 equalized pupils, as it was finalized after the warning had to be printed. Yield was proposed by House Ways and Means on 1/27/21 and Cheryl updated this in the Informational Presentation. 4 out of the 6 towns in the district are seeing a decrease in their tax rates. BVS and OVS have an increase due to the CLA, which drives the tax rate up. She also talked about how the surplus monies are slated to be used.

Discussion ensued by Board members wondering what information taxpayers would be seeking in terms of the changes with this year's budget proposal over last years. Cheryl has provided a lot of information to Board members that would assist them in having adequate understanding and information to share with voting taxpayers about our budget development process.

Warrants: Will be reviewed and signed by Finance Committee members and approved at the 2/8/21 SVUUSD Board Meeting.

Tim Smith made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Non-Union Salaries with Brooke at 6:10 p.m., this was seconded by Tara Buxton. Tim Smith made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. with no action taken. This was seconded by Tara Buxton.

Agenda Building:

Other:

Adjourn: Tim Smith made a motion to adjourn at 6:30 p.m.; this was seconded by Tara Buxton.

Next SVUUSD Finance Committee Mtg. - March 8, 2021 -- 5:30 p.m.