

APPROVED



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday May 6, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Location

Google Meeting ID

meet.google.com/zkg-vctu-ikb

Phone Numbers

(US) [+1 240-532-3788](tel:+12405323788)

PIN: 783 984 031#

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Committee Members Present

James Montemayor (remote), Keith Black (remote), Sasha Viands (remote)

Committee Members Absent

Mindi Winter, Neil Hede

Guests Present

Brent Nielsen (remote), Marcy Conner (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Sasha Viands called a meeting of the Finance Committee of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School to order on Tuesday May 6, 2025 at 6:02 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

Keith Black made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 04-01-25.

James Montemayor seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Keith Black	Aye
Mindi Winter	Absent
Sasha Viands	Aye
James Montemayor	Aye
Neil Hede	Absent

II. Finance

A. PVPA FY26 Budget - Insurance

Reviewed the 5 year history of health insurance rate increases (see chart). Note that in 2022-2023 we increased the deductible to keep the annual increase in single digits. Blue Cross Blue Shield has sent an offer of renewal at an increase of 31.6 %. There are still options; take the offer and try to negotiate down based on willingness to renew, renew with higher deductibles which would drive the rate of increase down but also change some coverage, or go out to market. PVPA's broker is stating that going out to market would mean increases that are almost as high (20%-25%) for less coverage based on the utilization that BCBS would report.

The Committee reviewed the effect the increase would have; basically a \$3,500 increase per person or \$2,000 on the HRA if deductible were increased. We will be polling staff to see what preferences there are and will request information on plans with higher deductibles.

This is the final piece to balancing the 2025-2026 budget.

B. PVPA FY26 Budget - Transportation

Transportation is new to the budget for 2025-2026. There will be new account lines that show both revenue and expenses. The total cost of the 15 bus program will be \$1.1

million. We will receive reimbursement from the state in two forms; monthly as part of our tuition payments for transporting South Hadley students and after the fiscal year ends with regional transportation reimbursement.

For transporting South Hadley students, PVPA is eligible to receive the lesser of our cost to transport students or South Hadley's. Currently South Hadley's is lower at \$1,162.27 per student. With 27 projected students this means PVPA would receive approximately \$31,000.

The regional transportation reimbursement is a percentage that is set as part of the state's annual budget. For FY25 the rate of reimbursement was 84%. Based on this PVPA would receive \$968,145. This rate will change for FY26 so this is just for illustrative purposes.

With this in mind, the potential revenue to be receive would be just under \$1 million. Which is actually an \$81,000 savings to the FY25 budgeted cost of transportation of \$234,554. Again, this is a hypothetical picture until the FY26 state budget determines the regional transportation reimbursement percentage.

Although not required to by the state, PVPA should consider setting aside a cash reserve for the transportation program. The regional reimbursement from the state will not come until August 2026, after the close of the fiscal year, however we will have invoices monthly from the transportation company that will need to be paid. Once the cash balance is confirmed by the audit for FY25, the Committee should review this item.

This program will be a tremendous benefit to our families while also having a positive impact on the budget.

C. FY26 Budget - FTEs

An overview of the budget FTE's and salaries for FY26:

1. Per CBA teachers will receive an automatic step increase plus 2% will be added to base wages on the salary matrix = 5%.
2. Per CBA non-teaching staff will receive a 3% increase to base wages.
3. Administrative support non-union staff will receive a 5% increase to base wages.
4. Administration will receive 3%-5% increase based on a salary review using the Mass Charter Public School Association's annual salary review.

There are a couple of new positions this year that will increase the overall number of FTE's for the school, especially in the middle school:

1. The development/re-alignment of the Technical Theater Department = 1 FTE plus a Department Leader stipend. Introducing a technical career path could lead us to some grant funding in the future.
2. Academic Support HS - Math = 1.0 FTE. PVPA has a history of needing improvement on math scores since condition were placed on the charter in 2012. The Administration currently has concerns about the upcoming charter renewal and the math achievement of students. Note: this position will be removed if needed to balance the budget due to the insurance rate increase.
3. PE/Health & Wellness MS = 1.0 FTE
4. Assistant Dean of Students MS = 1.0 FTE

PVPA is focusing on the middle school in efforts to improve social emotional learning and behaviors. There are some skills that need to be explicitly taught to students and focus on a more cohesive restorative approach. We are hopeful that this work will enable teachers to focus more on teaching and less on behaviors by creating a culture where we are able to retain both staff and students.

D. PVPA FY26 Budget - Tuition

Keith Black made a motion to Budget the FY26 tuition at a 3% increase over the FY25 projected tuition of \$7,919,752 for a total of \$8,157,345.

James Montemayor seconded the motion.

The budgeting history chart that was shared at previous a meeting was shared again with the final House Way & Means projection that was released in April. This projection was slightly higher (approx \$12,000) than the Governor's budget released in January.

The unknown piece, as always, is the above foundation funding from our sending districts. There are several communities that are laying off staff and/or asking for proposition 2 1/2 overrides to balance their school budgets due to the lack of COVID funds drying up and still needing to meet student needs. The recommendation from Administration is a 2.5% - 3% increase. This will leave what we hope is a comfortable margin should major shifts in AFR take place.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

James Montemayor Aye

Keith Black Aye

Sasha Viands Aye

Neil Hede Absent

Mindi Winter Absent

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sasha Viands

Documents used during the meeting

- FY 26 Budget - Insurance Rate 5 yr History.pdf
- FY26 Renewal - Proposed Increase 4-17-25.pdf
- FY 26 Budget - Transportation Estimate 4-28-25.pdf
- FY 26 Budget - Tuition 4-28-25.pdf