

DRAFT



Pullman School District

Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday January 9, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Location

Superintendent Maxwell's Office
District Office
240 SE Dexter St., Pullman, WA 99163

Please note these are FINAL committee meeting minutes. Finance Committee meeting minutes do not require approval at a subsequent meeting.

Committee Members Present

Cameron Grow, Craig Nelson, Dagny Myers, Debbie Crabtree, Diane Hodge, Juston Pollestad, Roberta Kramer

Committee Members Absent

Arron Carter, Bob Maxwell, Pam Brantner

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Diane Hodge called a meeting of the Finance Committee Committee of Pullman School District to order on Thursday Jan 9, 2025 at 3:30 PM.

II. Finance Committee Meeting Agenda Items

A. Center for Educational Effectiveness Survey (CEE) Survey

At the January 8, 2025 board meeting, the board decided not to move forward with the CEE survey for the 2024-25 school year. While the survey provides valuable insights, the estimated cost of \$25,000 for fewer than 150 participants led the board to explore alternative survey options for gathering district feedback.

B. Salaries

Diane presented three issues regarding salary inequity. The first being the HR/Payroll Technician, a confidential employee. Despite having higher levels of responsibility and accountability than Program Managers, the HR/Payroll Technician is currently paid \$7,803 less than these positions. This salary discrepancy was discussed last year but was dropped due to the budget shortfall.

Diane noted that the salary comparison conducted last year supports an adjustment, as the HR/Payroll Technician's responsibilities exceed those of the Program Managers. Roberta confirmed that the HR/Payroll Technician position does, in fact, carry more responsibility and accountability. Juston Pollestad shared an example of the increased responsibility when dealing with upset employees regarding their payroll. Diane shared work related duty examples of the increased accountability and responsibilities. This position was deemed essential during COVID. A salary comparison from last year justifies the pay increase for this position. The adjustment would cost \$7,803, which has already been accounted for in the current budget.

The second salary issue discussed was the administrative assistant to the superintendent confidential unrepresented position that has historically aligned in salary with a recently unionized position. The unionized position recently received a salary increase, but the confidential position did not, due to its status as a non-bargaining unit employee. Both positions were initially paid at the same rate. Equity between union and non-union roles should be evaluated when their compensation levels have historically been aligned. Cost: \$3,875.

Craig Nelson expressed concerns about the rising salaries in the district's budget, emphasizing the need for caution while ensuring fairness. He noted that district staff are funded primarily through the levy, with two individuals taking up the state allocation. Diane clarified that the district is funded for seven classified staff through the state allocation and added that while teacher positions are not fully funded, the district continues hiring when needed.

Diane addressed salary inequities, highlighting that union employees are represented, and it's important that unrepresented, confidential employees also receive equitable pay. Juston Pollestad pointed out that while these positions received the same pay in previous years, one position has now unionized and is receiving higher pay. Diane explained that the unionized group now gets a 4% increase between steps, while the unrepresented position continues to receive a 3% increase. To address fairness, the district provided an additional 1% increase to all other classified groups (food service, bus drivers, maintenance) to ensure equity between union and unrepresented staff. Roberta brought up the fact that if we don't do something now, the disparities will continue to grow due to the compounding of raises between the year.

The third inequity addressed was the classified exempt salary schedule. It was originally planned to receive a 0.5% increase for the 2023-24 school year to align with the administrator salary schedule. However, this increase was not applied, and classified exempt employees did not receive the additional adjustment. In contrast, all other classified salary schedules received a 1% increase between each step. As a result, a gap in salary alignment has occurred compared to other classified positions. There is a need for a salary adjustment to bring the classified exempt employees in line with the district's intentions and the administrator salary schedule. The cost of this adjustment is \$3,508.

Diane explained that applying the originally discussed 0.5% increase was more cost-effective for the district than the additional 1% increase between steps given to other classified groups. Juston Pollestad emphasized the need to consider everyone during the bargaining process. Diane pointed out that the compounding effect is where the inequity will arise. Juston agreed, stating that we should address this disparity now and be more mindful moving forward. Diane explained that the amount was small, but she felt it was important to bring it forward. Roberta added that the longer we wait, the harder it will be to catch up with the disparity. Roberta also inquired about funding sources, to which Diane responded that unused overtime and the decision not to attend the WASBO conference in Spokane could help offset the costs. Additionally, \$30,000 was budgeted for election costs, but since no election will take place this year, those funds could also be reallocated. Debbie Crabtree asked about long-term funding solutions, and Roberta concluded that the disparity would be harder to address if we delay further.

Diane shared that she was bringing this to the attention of the finance committee because of the inequities and asked how the committee wanted to move forward. Craig Nelson indicated that in the end, it is Bob's decision. Roberta told Craig that this will be at the recommendation of the finance committee, which will go to the board for approval. It was recommended to move forward with the salary adjustments.

C. 2024-2025 Budget

Diane provided an update that, as of November, the district has exceeded its revenue by over \$1.6 million in expenditures, with the current ending fund balance at 5.89%, and a projected ending fund balance of 5.79% for August if all funds are spent.

Diane emphasized the need for setting a goal for the ending fund balance. Juston supported setting a goal above the 7.5% policy to ensure building maintenance and financial flexibility. Roberta cautioned that we need to be careful if we have a 9% ending fund balance, about not scrutinizing every small purchase. Debbie suggested being more intentional with requests for donations, like Stuff the Bus, and Juston proposed requesting items like copy paper, which are high expenses but essential.

Craig mentioned the Retired Teachers grants and noted the lack of applications from Pullman teachers, along with minimal applications for PEF and PTA teacher grants. Diane suggested setting a target goal of 9% for the ending fund balance, acknowledging it may be difficult to achieve. She reiterated that the district's goal remains not to impact student learning, which has guided all purchasing decisions related to that objective.

Bob was scheduled to discuss budget restrictions and staff restructuring, but was unable to attend the meeting. It will be added to the agenda for next month.

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 5:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Hodge