

Berlin Board of Education
Finance and Operations Committee Meeting
March 9, 2023
MINUTES

In Attendance: Mathew Tencza, Chair
Julia Dennis
Adam Salina

Also in attendance: Brian Benigni, Superintendent of Schools
Jeffery Cugno, Director of Operations
Ashley Dorsey, Director of Finance
Linda Holian, Director of PPS
Denise Parsons, Director of Human Resources
John Schmaltz, Director of Security
Sal Urso, Principal - McGee Middle School

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Tencza at 7:07 am via Zoom.

II. McGee Outdoor Classroom

Mr. Cugno reviewed the proposed site plan for the anticipated outdoor classroom project at McGee Middle School. Mr. Cugno also shared pavilion examples and aerial photos. Following a review of the physical space, Mr. Urso and Mr. Schmaltz presented the existing safety protocols for staff and students when using outdoor spaces as part of teacher instruction. Members of the group shared concerns that there is no physical barrier shielding the classroom space given the proximity to the road. Mr. Cugno noted guardrails or bollards will be installed to protect the space from motor vehicles.

III. Juneteenth Holiday

Ms. Parsons shared information of the new Federal and State holiday, Juneteenth. In recognition for the holiday, the Berlin Town Council elected to close all town offices/ departments. Ms. Parsons explained, it is problematic when school buildings are open when town offices/ departments are closed, particularly the facilities department, and made the recommendation to recognize the holiday for all 12-month employees. This would not affect teachers. Ms. Parsons noted in the event where snow days impact the Juneteenth holiday, school will be held and applicable staff will receive a floating holiday in lieu of Juneteenth.

IV. Budget

Mr. Benigni discussed his concerns regarding the 2023-24 school budget and what the impact on the district would be if the desired percentage increase is not obtained. Several members requested a tiered approach to review what various levels of cuts would look like to the district. Ms. Dennis also expressed concerns of significant cuts and requested the F&O committee meet with the Chairman of the Finance Board and the Mayor.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley L. Dorsey
Director of Finance