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Loudoun County School Board, Finance and Operations Committee Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, 2024

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[00:00:01] Hello, everyone. I'd like to call this February 20th meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee to order. My name is Arben Estreffi. I'm joined by Chair Mansfield and Mrs. Griffiths and our wonderful staff. I've been informed that we don't have any public comments, so for item two public comment, we'll just move on. We'll move to item three, the minutes.

[00:00:25] I'd like to entertain a motion to approve the February 6th minutes of the Finance and operations committee do I have a motion I second motion okay so we have we have a motion by mrs. Griffiths do we have a second okay it has been properly seconded and we'll just take a quick vote all those in favor awesome so it

[00:01:00] has been voted to approve the minutes unanimously so the minutes have been approved we'll move on to item four approval of the the consent agenda so just entertaining a motion to approve the consent agenda do I have a motion I move to approve the consent agenda it's been moved by chair Mansfield do I have a second I second seconded by mrs. Griffiths and we will then take a quick

[00:01:39] vote on that motion all those in favor aye that motion to approve the consent agenda will pass unanimously and that brings us to item five action items first action item being 5.01 business and financial services ifb i24321 secondary music instruments and furniture for new

[00:02:08] schools and ongoing needs do I have a motion this motion is with the understanding that we're going to be listening Mr. Pearson is going to be talking afterwards yes uh I'm I'm moved that the Loudoun County School Board award if I have be number 1 2 4 3 2 1 secondary music instruments and furniture for new schools and ongoing needs as per the attached recommendation from March 1st 2024 through February 29th 2025 thank

[00:02:48] you there's a motion by chair Mansfield do I have a second go ahead and second that actually if we could have discussion oh that's right typically do as is the motion discussion I thought it was a motion second and then discussion and then discussion I'm sorry I missed this I'm sorry good keep us in check please so no worries so that I have seconded it and we'll open it up for discussion at this point thank you so I'll actually make some opening remarks regarding the questions that was posed during the last committee meeting

[00:03:25] the team we went back and researched the question about the rental and what this purchases for and while the I think the primary purpose of the purchase is for the opening in the new schools and replenishing supply or certain equipment that we do allow per policy our 40/20 fees and charges the charge of renting of equipment that each school I don't know if it's actually school but LCPS does have a small inventory of instruments that each school is able to allowed to rent out. Policy sets the amount not to exceed \$100, and it's really a way

[00:04:04] to allow students a more affordable access to renting instruments. When we looked a little further, this is a practice that we've had in place in terms of allowing the schools to charge for the rental of music instruments. I think we put back that it dated back to the 70s the revenue that is generated goes back to the school's individual school activity fund it's not a revenue stream for the the school operating fund at the district level in terms of scope it's a relatively small amount of funds

[00:04:39] that are generated we're generating about 150,000 to 200,000 tops and that's across all the schools that may actually rent out any instruments the funds that are generated are then used to support the music program with some examples being providing accessories such as reeds or additional support for the music program we also took a look at this in terms of wanting to gauge the hundred dollar max rental fee compared to what the price is you know out in the public and it is considerable considerably less which I think further

[00:05:18] supports you know being able to provide you know more equitable access to the program further I also asked Miss Philia regarding you know we don't want to be in a position of competing with a private business and to to her knowledge or anybody's historical knowledge we've never had a vendor a private musical company vendor come up and express a concern that we were offering offering this and Mr. Pearson is here and is able to answer any additional questions that you may have specific to this so I do have a question so why would we do

[00:05:55] this as opposed to just providing for people who needed it for free like if we had a scholarship kind of a thing available I mean first of all I mean I understand I was a music major myself and I understand the the need for I mean first of all we had to rent all the equipments and and there were scholarships available but why would we if we're going to have this and buy this already why are we forcing children who might or students who might not be able to even have a hundred dollars provide that that is a great question and our

[00:06:32] policy does take into account what you are asking about there is a provision in the policy 40/20 regarding waiving of fees so there's there's kind of two two things in play here if if a family in our criteria has typically been that they are deemed eligible for free reduced lunch so they are free free and reduced student then they are able to have fees and charges waived so they could actually have access to an instrument and we would waive that fear charge but recognize that there can also be a family who doesn't meet that

[00:07:10] criteria and who could still have a need then still by offering a lower amount We're still trying to provide that other opportunity versus it being all or nothing. And it really has been, you know, the discussion, and it's an ongoing discussion, is, you know, trying to define need.

[00:07:32] And so LCPS's historical definition of need has been the qualification for a free and reduced lunch. And I hope that answers what you were asking. What is the price difference between what we rent for? And I understand it's probably per instrument or per, you know, a bassoon is going to be different than a clarinet, let's say.

[00:07:58] What we did look up, I can share, I believe it was a trumpet that we looked up just as an example. To rent it from a private provider's \$38 a month plus another \$38 for the accessory kit. So it's \$38 a month, whereas us for the entire year, it's \$100.

[00:08:15] And the prices would vary from those, if you're going to rent a tuba or whatever. The prices would definitely vary, whereas with us, they're \$100, no matter what instrument. It looks like it's the same for renting a violin kit and other things like that.

[00:08:34] So this would be for orchestra and for band. Do you guys still do the same?

[00:08:51] What would happen is if a kid who had a tuba, you're not going to have the kid bring it on the bus back and forth. They would have access to the, they would have to, okay. Okay, I'm satisfied.

[00:09:06] Anybody else? Any other discussion? As a parent that had to buy instruments for my children, I have never heard of this before, that we had instruments on hand. Who is being notified that we have instruments on hand?

[00:09:25] And let's say a student has a violin and the strings break or whatever. Are there extras, you know, so that other children can use instruments on hand? mean I feel like we're purchasing these and they might be sitting and where other kids might want the opportunity to get an instrument it should be encouraged that kids play instruments so if you have extra you know I'd like to know more about who are you advertising to sure so there's two layers to this first

[00:10:04] of all the at the ground level with the director working with the student community from the time they get students signed up for and placed on an instrument to enroll in band or orchestra they are communicating with the parents through that so that's a community level school level communication directly to that that group of folks they provide information on local vendors and what instruments are available through that process they find out which students cannot afford an instrument and they offer that to them the default in the band

[00:10:38] an orchestra world is to own an instrument but if you can't do that but most folks do but we do not want that to be a barrier so that's where we support oftentimes at the beginning of the year in September I'm getting requests from schools for additional inventory and so we make very quick

turnarounds on providing some things to schools for them to provide there if they they do this collection of fees that they have they can provide some additional accessories to support that student and make sure they have everything that they need.

[00:11:08] So the second layer, the first layer was the communication with the parents themselves directly at the school level. The second layer is the coordination between my office and the schools in meeting their needs. And we differ, you know, every school's needs are different. Every program is different. So we try to be responsive to those unique needs in each circumstance.

[00:11:29] Yes. Just with my own experience, I did get something from the teacher at the beginning. And they do advertise the places to get your instruments, but they never, I don't recall it ever saying that if you're not able to get an instrument, reach out.

[00:11:50] It was just, this is where you go, go get it. So, again, I think what happens is this organic conversation between parents. First of all, usually it's confidential. Like, the teachers themselves may not know who the students in need are.

[00:12:09] But when they show up and they don't have an instrument, they will work through the principal and with the parent to get them what they need. But, again, in that world, the typical default is you buy an instrument. I don't know to what example, to what extent, or where they communicate that that instrument's available if they don't need it.

[00:12:30] But I know that we rent out hundreds of instruments a year, so somehow that message is getting in at that level. It's not broadcast, I guess, everywhere because we'd be buying about 14,000 instruments for everyone because we have about 14,000 students in the instrumental program.

[00:12:49] I had one more question for you. In that regard, with purchasing all these instruments, do instruments sit unused where other schools might be able to use them?

[00:13:04] Are you moving them around to all the schools and letting them know, hey, we have these extra instruments? And what about kids that might not think about playing an instrument, encouraging them through, you know, moving these supplies around? We have an extra saxophone.

[00:13:21] We have an extra trumpet. Are you doing that at this time? Yes, absolutely. In fact, it was tongue-in-cheek when we first started, but we have a barter list, as we call it, the old trading post. And that's where it started as the orchestra program mushroomed from 20-some students in its first year while I was here to over 3,000.

[00:13:41] it's close to four thousand now we were going through some great growing pains doing a lot of sharing as we've had schools you see this in other areas of the division uh where our schools that are in high growth mode and it's rapid like we're we don't have enough instruments inventory at the same time we we do a lot of uh trading with other schools pull it in inventory into something and then i supplant that with whatever we can't provide then i provide for my budget uh there there are instruments that one of our goals and the purposes for doing this is we do want to keep a certain level of inventory in each school so that if a

[00:14:18] student's instrument has to go in the shop any any students they don't have to sit there for a week or two to get that instrument back so yeah we've supported that as well thank you you're welcome any other discussion yes so I guess I just really want to tighten up the process of who can get the

instrument and who can't and and follow a process of some sort just just so that it's not willy-nilly, if that makes, you know, this person might get it, but this person might need it, and they don't know about it.

[00:14:52] I mean, I think that there needs to be some better process of some sort, if that makes any sense. I mean, I'm all for people learning how to play an instrument, and I'm all for let's get more people playing music that we can, because I think music is important for our souls and for our culture.

[00:15:11] And it's been a long time since I've been in a band. So thank you very much. I'm done. Thank you. From my side, I'll just kind of note the discussion that we had is more around the process or how to make this process more equitable or, you know, fine-tune that process.

[00:15:35] And also a point well taken from Mrs. Griffiths on the notification, just how students who may have this need and their families get communicated around this. But I think the original intent of the discussion in the last F&O meeting was to really look at the need for this contract.

[00:15:53] And I think from my side at least that's well established and we've gotten now into the process of it. You've gotten some good inputs from some of the members. But I think from my side, I think the need is definitely there. And I think we did get some clarity around how that impacts the budget and where the funds actually go.

[00:16:16] Once the rental fees are taken into account. So no other comments from me. Yes, miss Griffiths. I just want to point out that music is very important and Counselors on hand at the schools when they're dealing with kids on a one-on-one basis I would hope that our entire it. I'm going to piggyback off of Miss man Mansfield here Tighten up the process where we have counselors talking to kids and suggesting, saying, hey, we have instruments.

[00:16:53] Do you want to join the band or, you know, if you have a supply at one school and they're not being used, I think that should always be suggested to kids through counseling or some other means. And I don't know if Ms. Mansfield has another idea for that on how to tighten the process so more kids can enjoy music.

[00:17:18] I mean, I think it's more, I think it would have to be the counselor and or the teacher. I mean, we never know where, what kid connects with which teacher, who they connect with, and so leave it a little bit more.

[00:17:35] But I think we need to figure something out. But as far as the original thing is whether or not to okay this, I'm fine with taking a vote on it. Any other discussion? Yes, Ms. Griffiths.

[00:17:52] I'm okay to vote on this, but just to reiterate, I would like to tighten up the process. some more kids have the opportunity they may not know their families may not know better advertising tighten up the process so more kids have an opportunity you know to play an instrument and well I guess you know we'll end up okaying this but very important the kids know they can there's instruments and they can play music and you know have an interest in that sort of thing thank you thank you I'm seeing no other discussion we'll go ahead and take a vote on the

[00:18:30] motion all those in favor the motion passes unanimously and so we'll move on to the next action item which is 5.2 business and financial services RFP r2 0 to 5 1 instructional supplies and related services renewal do I have a motion yes I move that the Latin County School Board renew RFP our 20 to 5 1

[00:19:07] instructional supplies and related services from March 20 March 1st 2024 through February 28 2025 and we bring it to the school board as a consent item thank you we have a motion from chair Mansfield is there a second I second so properly seconded by mrs. Griffiths and just open it up for any discussion if there are questions or yes as I mentioned in the last meeting I would like to see I don't know if we can do it but what I'd like to see is more

[00:19:46] storage of supplies for the teachers so they don't have to pay for their own supplies I believe the fees were 250 or the paint payout was 250 for teachers that have been around a certain amount of time and new teachers I'm sorry I'm getting it backwards \$100 for teachers that have been around a while in 250 for new teachers and I think it's a constant need to have supplies and we should have a lot of these items on hand so I don't know how you can speak to that to make

[00:20:22] sure if a teacher runs out of the hundred dollars what is that they're spending their own money and I don't think they should have to do that so having supplies on hand that they can go to in the schools so if you would like to speak to them as well I don't have anything more specific dad than what we discussed last time other than we have we had committed during the last meeting we would bring another item back looking at exactly all the questions that have been brought up so we have targeted either late March perhaps early April because it's going to take time for us to really gather information you may

[00:21:01] recall the discussion of how with 98 schools each school has their own culture each principal may have their own process so it's going to take us some time to really gather all the information as well as you know pulling the historical information of the amount of money that's left over each year that that goes on spent as well as perhaps possible you know recommendations or options to consider in terms of what we can and can't do in terms of trying to have some standardization across the division recognizing each school you know has their unique needs so other than that you know it's a late late March

[00:21:38] early April we do plan on coming back to and have this as an information item um, separate from the, the contract that's, you know, you know, before you this evening. Yes. Ms. Griffiths, please. I happen to know, uh, a lot of parents order the kits that end up on their desks, you know, when school starts. But, um, I guess my concern is during the year that to make sure the teacher's not spending their own money and they have enough, uh, supplies to last the year. And I realize all the schools are different, but everybody I know of at different

[00:22:18] schools, they've all had to, taxpayers have had to go out and get their, run in, you know, school season, get all the supplies and go to the schools and donate. So if there's any way we can work on that, I really appreciate it. And you said you will bring this back. So I, that's much appreciated.

[00:22:38] Thank you. Thank you. Any other discussion on this? Seeing no other discussion, we can go ahead and take a vote. All those in favor of the motion, say aye. Aye. Aye.

[00:22:53] The motion passes unanimously, and I'm guessing this will be brought to the school board as a consent item on the February 27th, 2024 school board meeting. We'll move on to item 5.3, Business and Financial Services, RFP, R2-4253, Benefits Consulting and Actuarial Services.

[00:23:16] i have a motion yes chairman i move that the loudon county school board awards are two four two five three benefits consulting and actuarial services to a on effective march 1st 2024 through february 28th 2025 and that this be brought forward to the school board as a consent item on the 27th thank you it has been probably motioned um is there a second i second thank you scryffitts

[00:23:49] is there any discussion seeing no other discussion we'll take this to a vote all those in favor aye this motion passes unanimously we'll move on to the next action item 5.4 support services contract award ifb 24-501 weight room and press boxes at dominion high school heritage high school and potomac falls high school this is an action item that didn't come in through as an information

[00:24:27] item and I remember the discussion actually we can discuss this afterwards which is motion so do I have a motion I motion that we discuss the contractor work for IFB number 24 - 501 the weight room and press boxes at Dominion High School Heritage High School and Potomac Falls High School wonderful Thank You Miss Griffiths so this has been motion to have a second a second Thank You

[00:25:00] chair Mansfield any discussion yes I could just be a stickler about the motion the motion was to recommend the award and not to discuss it so if we can just make sure sorry about that I just want to make sure that okay wonderful so we'll do we need to motion for it again or I think it would probably better if you just read the recommended action there as the full motion sure I think that

[00:25:33] then I'll clarify the record would you like to restate the motion I motion that the Finance and Operations Committee recommend to the Loudoun County School Board to approve the contract award of FB number 23 - 501 weight room and press boxes at Dominion High School Heritage High School and press boxes at Potomac Falls High School to Sorenson Gross Company in the amount of four million six hundred seventy thousand dollars and authorizes the chair of the school to sign the final contract documents upon presentation thank you do I have a

[00:26:12] second second thank you chairman's field it has been seconded we'll take it to a vote all those in favor aye aye yes so we'll vote and then oh I'm sorry it has been seconded let's discuss it okay so staff would you like to talk to this motion I'll talk through this one so we are seeking approval for this project where we're doing a weight room addition and press boxes at Dominion High School and Heritage High School.

[00:26:47] We are doing press boxes at Potomac High School. And the history of this project is we receive funding in November 14th of last year. The Loudoun County School Board of Supervisors approved supplemental funding for the weight room expansion, press boxes, and tennis court lighting at these three locations.

[00:27:08] So this contract award is for the press boxes the weight room additions and the tennis court lighting will be executed under a separate contract and with that i'll take any questions is there any questions or further discussion ms griffiths i see that this is under the capital improvement program yes any additional questions

[00:27:34] or discussion seeing no other discussion we'll take this to a vote all those in favor aye the motion passes unanimously and this will go to the full board on consent agenda correct i'm sorry did

[00:28:08] you say consent agenda yes okay thank you wonderful we'll move to item six information items starting with our only information item 6.1 support services Parkview high school schematic design review pass it over to all right excellent so I'm excited to walk through the the new Parkview high school replacement design with you we'll start with the site layout here and this is being

[00:28:46] presented as an information item only if we recall from the board and we talked last week this is part of our process we'll bring these to you at this stage of the project to make sure you're informed of what we're doing and receive any comments and questions you may have so I can see my cursor here so

the current Parkview is here and the plan for the site is we're building the new high school over here and the way this will project we executed is starting this fall we will start building this school after we remove the current

[00:29:23] athletic fields over here and that will be constructed for approximately three years and then at that point the school the school open up in school year 27 28 and then the next year we will spend that time working on taking down the existing school and building these fields so a couple things about the site that I want to point out is even though it's a relatively compact site it turns out to be a very functional layout we have a two-and-a-half story school here we have a new stadium here which is orientated in a favorable way it's

[00:29:59] orientated north-south which is is preferred over east-west orientation which is currently there we have ample parking we have all turf fields here so we're using this baseball field also as a second practice field as well it's the first time we've done that we have our turf softball field and we have additional parking over here for our tennis courts and also access to these fields so all the athletics is consolidated in this area so the first floor plan is laid out

[00:30:35] in such a way where we have we have the auditorium and music in the front here with access towards the fields we have our gyms Ox gym and primary gym with access towards the fields we have our cafeteria and kitchen in the back and this was located in such a way where we can have you know an abundance of natural light we're able to have our senior court here outside which is nice and this backs up to the the park here so this is a nice place for the cafeteria

[00:31:07] to be we have our main offices in here at the entryway special ed down here CTE and with our child development on this corner of the lot right here and then the second floor we start to have we have our media center here and you can notice here that these are sec two-floor two-story spaces so that's what this represents our gym and our auditorium of two-story spaces so they take out this space and then we start to see our classroom blocking here we call it and

[00:31:44] you'll also see that here in the half of the third floor where we essentially have our classroom block here that's repeated from the second floor in this view you can see this in perspective and this is where again this is where our current school is here in this area and our new school will be here and you can kind of see how it all kind of lays out here's the park back here to the proximity to it another view looking at from the other way you could see our you know a bus drop-off will be here bus parking in our drop-off will be through

[00:32:23] this area here front door will be right here and this is again these are really early drawings and we did share with this community as you're aware and this drawing shows the how the front facade will look which we think is very important to you know to showcase how you know this will be an impressive building and have an impressive front entryway and then lastly so with practice fields has been a lot of work going on with regards to figuring out what do we do with practice fields and athletics during the course of

[00:33:01] construction because we're going to have essentially fields taking down for the period of about four years in total so if we walk through this we start construction this October which means we'll take down the existing fields and our plan is to we've been looking at other places where we could build a turf fields in order to get us through this period of time and we've looked at we're looking at Seneca Ridge

middle school as a practice field that we could build and Parkview would use that as primary practice field from August 28 until August 2028 when Parkview new fields were complete so between through the

[00:33:41] course of construction until their fields were completed park for you'd use this as their practice field a punk from this fall and before from this fall until the fall of 28 yeah three years to build a building and then one year to build the new fields oh this right here so this is the de million Dominion

[00:34:17] stadium right here so the thought on this is we have second practice fields turf fields built into our CIP for future future years so the thought would be was we would build this field at the middle school to be used for Parkview in the interim period and then it would be given to Dominion as their second practice field once Parkview has their fields completed and also add that we are very appreciative of all of the work that Mr. Ferry has done I know he's here tonight to try to coordinate this we have looked at all different types of scenarios to try to find a way because these students are going to be displaced

[00:34:54] for four years and we're trying to find a way for that to not have a huge impact on their programs and their interest in playing sports and activities after school so this will include lights and a track so we'll provide the full ability for them to practice we looked at partnerships with Parks and Rec they got same problem we do there they have way too many kids and way too few fields and so this seemed to be the best way to do that i'll just offer one caveat we are waiting back from the county of loudon to just confirm there's no issues with adding this to the scope so essentially what we're asking you to do is consider we are planning to add this to the scope of the

[00:35:31] parkview high school project which means we would pay for it out of funding for that and so we've reached out to the county just to make sure i don't think that's going to be an issue but we'll report back but wanted you to have an awareness because if we're gonna bring this on line in time for the fall we've got to start it's a tremendous amount of work to get done to take this natural grass field and turn it into an artificial turf field and we may have to do that in phases we don't get it all done but we want to make sure those kids have a place to go

[00:36:00] chairman's field thank you chair straffi so what is the difference between what What are the pros and cons of an artificial turf field as opposed to a grass field?

[00:36:24] So I will start that and ask Mr. Ferry to fill in any of the gaps I missed. But when we started this program, we were amazed at how much more utilization you get. It can rain and you can go right back to work. You don't have to worry about the condition in the field. You don't have to worry about them getting dead spots and tripping hazards and those types of things.

[00:36:43] And it can just be used over and over. It can also have permanent markings for football, soccer, and lacrosse and be a combination field. And so there are many advantages to that. Immediate drainage. So as soon as we have a storm, immediately you can go back to play on that because the water just drains down through it and goes off.

[00:37:03] Anything I missed, Derek? Also, the maintenance that we put into our grass fields, the costs over time, Probably, if you include irrigation and herbicide and pest control, probably exceeds the cost of installation of these fields.

[00:37:23] And then the safety of these fields, obviously, the conditions, it's always at a level playing surface. When you have grass fields, you can have some undulations, some of the places where we, typically in La Crosse, we tear up gold mounds, which is where the face-off, and the face-off.

[00:37:41] So in those situations, we have grass that is worn away, and we won't be able to re-germinate it during the season. So it becomes a safety hazard for our athletes that are playing. So this just makes sure we always have a consistent playing surface. And, again, avoid the use of herbicides and pesticides, and obviously field paint as well, which is an aerosol, which is also a pollutant into our atmosphere.

[00:38:06] So from an environmental aspect, I also think there's some worth in it. Further discussion? So I'll just add, and I've said this before, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Basquelli, that I was at the community meeting, the Parkview design schematics meeting with the community.

[00:38:28] And I think I shared the sentiments of a lot of the community members that we were just really wowed and floored by the design and how much community input informed some of the decisions that were made regarding the new school and the design. really hearing from other folks on the team that you know none of the input from the community was filtered in any way that it came straight to the team I think that that energy you could really see it in the community so want to continue that and I know that the the sports activities in the fields that is a big big topic for the community as well and so I would only ask that we continue in

[00:39:07] the same spirit that we've had so far in terms of engaging the community on on those decisions and whatever direction it goes i don't know how the timeline will be for these types of decisions you mentioned that we're kind of under the gun um to to really just finalize what we're going to be doing because we're going to be breaking ground in the fall so maybe you can just give a little bit more information as to what that timeline could look like and how we'll plan to re-engage the community when it comes to this specific topic yeah i mean we plan on having another community meeting once we develop the design a little bit more as you can see what we presented

[00:39:44] with floor plans is fairly rough, so we have another meeting that we will have that will have a more detailed level of information that we'll share, including what you're describing with the fields. MR. Wonderful. Thank you.

[00:40:03] Any other discussion? Seeing no other discussion, I think that concludes this information item. We'll move on to new business. Is there any other new business or any new business?

[00:40:18] no new business, we'll go ahead and adjourn this February 20th Finance and Operations Committee meeting. Thank you very much.



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