

Budget Hearing, Hearing to Set the Property Tax Requirement and Regular September 2021 Board Meeting

Monday, September 13, 2021 7:00 PM  
High School Media Center

As advertised in the *Pilot-Tribune*  
and on the school website  
fortcalhounschools.org

BUDGET HEARING

-Budget Hearing Called to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Four administrators and 76 visitors were present.

-Note Nebraska Open Meeting Laws

-Excused Absences: There were none—all present

Roll Call:

Mike Bonacci: Present

Josh Christensen: Present

Mike Conrad: Present

Jon Genoways: Present

Amanda Schrum: Present

Kelli Shaner: Present

-Purpose of the Hearing: Review of Proposed 2021-22 Budget: David Genoways gave a review of the budgeted receipts. Nothing has changed since the August work meeting. He explained the percent of changes either up or down and that it came in about 25% under what had been budgeted. Federal receipts are what we get allocated and they were up about 7% over what was budgeted. He stated he is conservative in this process. The expenses show any additional entries since the work meeting and the monies to depreciation have been included which made a slight change. Expenses reflect an increase in salary and benefits, and operations. Monies have also been moved to ESSER II which fall under COVID expenses. There is an overall 10% increase in the budget. The updated anticipated levy figures show a give back of 2¢ not the 1.25¢ that was first discussed.

Board of Education Comments: There was no further discussion.

Public Comments: There were no public comments or questions.

Adjournment of Budget Hearing: The Budget Hearing was adjourned at 7:08 PM.

HEARING TO SET PROPERTY TAX REQUIREMENT

-Hearing Called to Order at 7:15 PM. Four administrators and 76 visitors were present.

-Note Nebraska Open Meeting Laws

-Excused Absences: There were none—all present

-Roll Call:

Mike Bonacci: Present

Josh Christensen: Present

Mike Conrad: Present

Jon Genoways: Present

Amanda Schrum: Present

Kelli Shaner: Present

Purpose of the Hearing: 2021-22 Property Tax Requirement Information. David Genoways said that with the addition of some late expenses after the Budget Work meeting, the new asking reflects a 2¢ reduction instead of the 1.25¢ previously reported. The total tax requirement is 1.1244.

-Board of Education Comments: There was no further discussion.

-Public Comments: There were no comments or questions.

-Adjournment of Hearing to Set the Property Tax Request: The Hearing to Set the Property Tax Request was adjourned at 7:17 PM

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING AGENDA

### ROUTINE BUSINESS

-Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:17 PM. Four administrators and 76 visitors were present.

-Note Nebraska Open Meeting Laws

-Excused Absences: There were none—all present.

-Roll Call:

Mike Bonacci: Present

Josh Christensen: Present

Mike Conrad: Present

Jon Genoways: Present

Amanda Schrum: Present

Kelli Shaner: Present

-Approval of Agenda: Moved that the agenda be approved as presented. This motion, made by Amanda Schrum and seconded by Mike Bonacci, passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

## REGULAR AGENDA

-Recognition of the Fort Calhoun Education Association (FCEA) as the bargaining agent for negotiations: Moved that the board of education recognize the Fort Calhoun Education Association (FCEA) as the bargaining agent for negotiations. This motion, made by Kelli Shaner and seconded by Amanda Schrum, passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

-Public Participation: Justin Thompson spoke that the board met in violation of the open meeting law when the members were contacted individually by phone to get input on instituting a mask mandate. He stated this has been reported to the State Attorney General.

-Claims for September: Moved that the claims for September be approved in the amount of \$242,651.24 from the General Fund and \$63,983.78 from Savings & Depreciation. This motion, made by Amanda Schrum and seconded by Mike Bonacci, passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea. Mr. Green reported on claims for bus parts and repairs, textbooks, ESSER expenses, and the district's yearly insurance premiums.

-Motion by Amanda Schrum and seconded by Kelli Shaner to approve the claim from Abe's Trash in the amount of \$989.28 passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Abstain, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

-Consent Agenda: The Consent Agenda includes: Approval of the Minutes, Approval of the Treasurer's Report, Approval of the Control Budget, Approval of the Food Service Report, Approval of the Transportation Report, Approval of the Receipts Report. Moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. This motion, made by Kelli Shaner and seconded by Amanda Schrum, passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

### Standing Committee Reports

Finance: Amanda Schrum reported on reviewing the proposed budget and budget document, Mr. Wagner's deployment and compensation, and a lengthy discussion and future planning about COVID, masking in the schools, and a suggested plan to move forward.

American Civics: The American Civics Committee as reported by Kelli Shaner also reviewed the proposed budget and budget document, Mr. Wagner's deployment and compensation, and a lengthy discussion and future planning about COVID, masking in the schools, and a suggested plan to move forward. This committee is recommending that moving forward the superintendent be responsible for COVID plans.

COVID-19 - School District Measures to Mitigate Spread of COVID-19: Moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent of Schools to take all reasonable steps necessary to secure the health and safety of those who enter into the school environment and to minimize the disruption to education services caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This authority will include lifting the current requirement that masks to be worn indoors in all Fort Calhoun schools and buildings, as well as the authority to re-institute the requirement if the Superintendent deems that action to be necessary. This motion made by Amanda Schrum and seconded by Josh Christensen. Mr. Green gave a draft plan that includes keeping the mandate through 9/17; starting the week of 9/20 if any building reaches a positivity rate of 5% or higher it will move to a 14 day mask mandate with all schools being notified and masks required on all school vehicles; if either school is under mandate, masks will be required for all spectators at all indoor activities; any elementary mandate will not include pre-school students; and continuing to follow Three Rivers guidance on cluster/outbreak with a cohort protocol for core groups. A plan will be put out on Friday with complete information for parents and students after speaking to other superintendents, the health department, administrators and the COVID team. He will follow the percent of positive cases in the schools to determine if masks are necessary with the elementary probably being at a lower percentage as they can not get vaccinated. The health department is leaning to the 10 day isolation again because of household contact. Another consideration is a 14 day masking after Christmas break while students have not been in school. He reiterated that no decision is taken lightly and he gets his information from as many sources as possible to decide. Our goal is to keep kids in school and he believes masks slow the spread. He is an educator and understands that wearing masks could jeopardize academics but they are required for the rest of the week.

Mike Conrad addressed the crowd saying each speaker would be allowed 3 minutes and asked they speak in a respectful, considerate tone as we are "all focused on keeping our kids safe".

Josh Christensen: We should focus on all of us being here. He will support what Jerry Green recommends as he has been elected by the board and he should ultimately be making these decisions. If masks help us stay in school then agree, if not, not in favor. He feels they are more of a hindrance rather than for safety and health.

Jon Genoways: Supports the superintendent as he is making the hard decisions. Our goal is to keep the kids safe and in school and activities. He's all for however we have to do this.

Mike Bonacci: Appreciates all the people in attendance. He leans to err on the cautious side. He liked optional masks, but the administration has his support.

Kelli Shaner: We all want the best for our kids and we all want the best way to educate kids in the COVID environment.

Amanda Schrum: She supports the administration. Our main goal is kids' health and keeping them in school.

Mike Conrad: The board's main goal is keeping the kids safe. This is the best place for them to be. He continued by giving the parameters of a Public Participation. It is limited to 3 minutes per person and asked only one time per person. He also asked speakers to defer if the topic has already been presented.

Sara O'Connor: Opposed to the mask mandate. She presented information from studies supporting her position, and those relevant to other coronaviruses. She believes masks are harmful and pose an "experimental treatment on healthy kids". She said there is no proof they are safe and listed examples of detrimental side effects.

Angie Kubicek: Doesn't understand requiring a mandate as she said those under 17 have mild to no symptoms. The ACP reports that more kids' deaths come from flu than COVID. She wants the option to make the best decision for her kids as numbers in the elementary are at a lower percentage and symptoms less severe.

Theresa Macdissi: Stated she is a Pulmonary Critical Care PA, has attended Fort Calhoun Schools and is now a resident of the District. The masks are not 100% but we need to weigh the benefits as kids are 1 in 4 of the cases right now and not eligible for vaccine. She gave a list of medical experts who are recommending masking in schools. She wants us to give them every chance to be healthy. No one knows the lasting effects in kids from contracting COVID and we can go back in history to see that complications can arise for years.

April Becerra: Commended the board and administration for having masks and wants them kept. In looking at the experts for guidance, the numbers now are more than 4 times higher than last year for kids and provide "clear evidence" to mandate masks. They help in the fight to keep kids safe.

Chelsea Bahle: Would like to keep masks optional and cited a box she had just purchased that stated "does not protect against viruses". She suggested trying something new like investing in air purifiers or filters rather than masks. When kids have had it, they can't give or get it again.

Amy Huntzinger: In favor of masks. Hospitals are full, ER's are full, there is a shortage of medical personnel and the flu season is now coming. We should keep them safe and keep them

in school. The Delta variant is affecting more children this year and is around 200% more contagious. She listed statistics regarding kids and said they can pass it on to older household members. Kids are highly influenced by peers and teachers so let's set the example to keep kids healthy and safe.

Nolan Springer: Have recently moved to town and learned to love it in a short time. He loves the core values, neighbors and sense of community. Forcing to mask is wrong, Mr. Conrad, without medical or parental consent. Urged the board to carry out what the town wants and the choice should lie with parents. We are teaching children to be careful. School boards are elected and he suggested to respect this choice so we can

Kristin Dworak: Listed cases from the school website that got us to a mask mandate. She stated that it is a 1.5% infection rate which shouldn't warrant an emergency mask mandate and understands the safety of the children but let parents make the choice. She scanned the room with her arm and said you "see all these people in public without them".

Justin Thompson: Stated this motion gives ultimate control to one person who has different ideas about mask mandates. There is no difference in safety in wearing or not wearing a mask and the openings in the masks are 1000 times larger than virus itself. You yourself admitted you are "an educator who doesn't have as much time to research this as a health professional.

Joey Iwen: We need to trust in their direction. Had a friend who wore a mask and no one else did but got COVID by the not masking of others. That's how we're going to get through this. This is a small percentage but we don't want this to be in our community.

Liz Sevcik: She appreciates having an objective standard and we are making a move in the right direction in the number of deaths. The American Association of Pediatrics says the rate is 1000th of 1% in children but exposure would build their immune systems as we have to expose kids to things and not forbid it. She is for what parents want.

Liz Wayne: Thanked the board for their service and said both sides agree and are excited and proud of our school and administration. The way the mask mandate was put in place without parents and stakeholders was her opposition. They should have had the opportunity to take part in the discussion.

Tammi Kruse: Said this is political and not about the schools.

Matt Dierks: It is the teachers' jobs to remind the kids and they qualify to make these decisions. He asked "if Three Rivers is running the show or are we"? Are they qualified? We are losing our country and he is passionate about that. This is political and is dividing everybody. How can we decide when science and experts don't agree subjectively.

Joni Hallberg: In asking her granddaughter how school was and her mask, she said they got to go outside to recess, take their masks off and get a breath of fresh air.

Cydney Martzahl: Felt masks are increasing the incidences of depression and suicidal behavior

because of the fear to go to school if they have to wear a mask. It is tough for facial recognition, letter forming and pronunciation with lower grades and that is why her child no longer attends here. Have we used the expertise of the Douglas County Health Department? Do we want to be like OPS or unique. It is important to be tight knit but this has impacted our community and our kids.

Brandi Preston: She said she had known and respected Mr. Green for a long time. She has worked in the Omaha mayor's office and in that capacity with Adi Pour from the Douglas County Health Department. Masks should be a choice and the school should use the CARES money in positive ways. She is hoping there will be no upcoming vaccine mandate.

This motion passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea. Mike Conrad thanked all that spoke for their participation.

#### -Budget Resolutions

##### •General Fund Budget

The board moved that the General Fund Budget for the 2021-22 school year be set at \$12,613,698.00 with a property tax requirement of \$4,806,897.00 resulting in a tax rate of 0.9500000. This motion, made by Kelli Shaner and seconded by Mike Bonacci, passed.

Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

##### •Special Building Fund Budget

The board moved that the Special Building Fund Budget for the 2021-22 school year be set at \$955,270.00 with a property tax asking of \$505,989.00 resulting in a tax rate of 0.100000. This motion, made by Amanda Schrum and seconded by Josh Christensen, passed.

Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

##### •Bond Fund Budget

The board moved that the Bond Fund Budget for the 2021-22 school year be set at \$817,442.00 with a property tax asking of \$819,702.00 with a tax rate of 0.162000. This motion, made by Mike Bonacci and seconded by Amanda Schrum, passed.

Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

##### •Qualified Capital Purpose Fund

move that the Qualified Capitol Purpose Fund Budget for the 2021-22 school year be set at \$168,650.00 with a property tax asking of \$161,916.00 resulting in a tax rate of 0.032000. This motion, made by Jon Genoways and seconded by Kelli Shaner, Passed.

Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

-Resolution Setting the Property Tax Request: Moved that the board of education pass this Resolution Setting the Property Tax Request- WHEREAS, Nebraska Revised Statute 77-1601.02

provides that the Governing Body of Fort Calhoun Community Schools passes by a majority vote a resolution or ordinance setting the tax request; and WHEREAS, a special public hearing was held as required by law to hear and consider comments concerning the property tax request; NOW THEREFORE, the Governing Body of Fort Calhoun Community Schools resolves that: 1. The 2021-22 property tax request be set at: General Fund: \$4,806,897.00 Bond Fund: \$ 819,702.00 Special Building Fund: \$ 505,989.00 Qualified Capital Purpose Fund: \$ 161,916.00 Undertaking Fund: 2. The total assessed value of property differs from last year's total assessed value by 4.32 percent. 3. The tax rate which would levy the same amount of property taxes as last year, when multiplied by the new total assessed value of property would be 1.212127 per \$100 of assessed value. 4. Fort Calhoun Community Schools proposes to adopt a property tax request that will cause its tax rate to be 1.244 per \$100 of assessed value. 5. Based on the proposed property tax request and changes in other revenue, the total operating budget of Fort Calhoun Community Schools will increase or decrease last year's budget by 5.34 percent. 6. A copy of this resolution be certified and forwarded to the County Clerk on or before October 13, 2021. Motion by \_\_\_\_\_, and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ to adopt Resolution #2021 2-2 Voting Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Voting No \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2021.

This motion, made by Amanda Schrum and seconded by Josh Christensen, passed.

Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Mike Conrad: Yea, Jon Genoways: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea

-Board Member Reports: Amanda Schrum said this was Mr. Wagner's last board meeting before his deployment and she presented him a card signed by the members. Mr. Wagner thanked everyone and received a standing ovation. Mike Conrad again thanked all for their participation and thanked the board and administration for what they're going through. He also said the budget was such that "we are proud to be giving money back" again. Josh Christensen thanked all who were still there, said there may be a question about how the mandate came about, and thanked Mr. Wagner for his work and service.

-Administrator Reports:

Mr. Wagner: Thanked the board for their support as he deploys, said he can't believe its his last board meeting until he returns, Mr. Mike Mallette is doing a good job taking over his new role, the Science program through the Foundation is blossoming, and having confidence in Mr. PJ Mallette during this difficult time. The PFE Walk-a-Thon is coming this week, SEL (social/emotional learning) has started in the elementary school, the timeline for the language arts adoption is on schedule, and upcoming professional development and events.

Mr. Wemhoff: Gave information on Homecoming week and the Alumni weekend; meeting with ESU #3 for a Powerschool build to accommodate the new Music, Science, English and Technology classes; working with ESU #3 for Marzano training for teachers; and working on the process for the curriculum alignment. He will also attend the Conference principal's meeting.

Mr. Christensen was supervising an activity and his report included Fall sports and activities, upcoming Homecoming Week activities, and correcting the problem with moisture in the NFHS camera on the football field.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Green: Reported on board goals and their progress; a COVID-19 plan to be out by Friday; the elementary parking lot, and adjusting the lights to accommodate neighbors; irrigation and sod should be done soon; working on a solution for water coming in on the new gym under the north

doors, the concrete area poured at the PLC for their table and bench outside space, the new special education van and the need for seatbelts for some of the students we transport, and that Mr. Wilson is doing a fantastic job for us. The ESSER III application is complete and been submitted for the next round of CARES money. He and board members will be attending the upcoming Area Membership Meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business the president declared the meeting adjourned at 8:38PM.