Seymour Board of Education

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2026
Seymour Middle School
6:30 pm

Committee Members Present: Kristen Harmeling
Kristen Bruno
Lori Nespoli

Others in Attendance: Dr. Susan Compton
Salvatore Bucci
Shannon Levey

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance – Ms. Harmeling called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairperson is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairperson's Comments portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and no longer than 3 minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All the public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

- **Bob Koslowski, Pearl Street:** Mr. Koslowski stated that he had requested to be placed on the agenda to discuss the School Resource Officer (SRO) position at Seymour High School. He expressed concern that the high school has not had an SRO for the past two years and noted that the district has used private security to provide coverage. He stated that he believed the Board of Education should assist with funding an SRO. Mr. Koslowski stated that he supports having an SRO at the high school but expressed concern about the cost. Mr. Koslowski also stated that, according to the Chief of Police, officers had previously not expressed interest in the high school assignment, but that one or two officers have recently expressed interest.
- **Dave Bitso, Police Commissioner:** Mr. Bitso stated that he had also requested to be placed on the agenda. He indicated that his request had not reached the Chairperson. Ms. Bruno stated that she was aware of his request and that he had been encouraged to address the Board during Public Comment.

Public Comment was called three times. There were no additional speakers.

III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Financial Statement

Mr. Bucci presented the monthly financial report and provided an additional report reflecting the year-end closeout. The report included line-item allocations, final allocations, and year-end transfers.

Ms. Harmeling requested that substitute salaries for instructional paraprofessionals be broken out separately within the report. She noted that this is the largest area of concern and that the current format makes it appear as though the paraprofessional line item has been significantly overspent. She stated that additional detail would provide greater clarity and make the information more understandable. Ms. Harmeling noted that while special education and transportation expenses can be difficult to predict, paraprofessional costs should be more predictable and easier to explain.

Ms. Harmeling asked Mr. Bucci to provide additional information regarding health insurance expenses, specifically why the final expense came in approximately $150,000 lower than projected. Mr. Bucci explained that the difference was related to employee elections for coverage. Ms. Harmeling stated that additional specificity regarding the reason for the change would be helpful.

Ms. Bruno asked whether more employees elected health insurance coverage than anticipated. Mr. Bucci explained that enrollment changes throughout the year, with employees joining and leaving the plan. He stated that the projection included information received during open enrollment and that this year was not as impacted by employees enrolling in coverage as in previous years. He noted that approximately three to four additional employees joined the plan during the year.

Ms. Nespoli requested clarification regarding tuition reimbursement, specifically line item 240. Dr. Compton explained that this has become a significant expense due to language in the teacher contract allowing teachers to advance their education through planned programs. Mr. Bucci noted that there is currently no limitation in the contract regarding the number of teachers who may participate. Teachers are reimbursed $300 per credit.

Mr. Bucci explained that the Business Office does not manage the planned program process. Dr. Compton and Ms. Levey oversee the process and ensure that all required documentation is reviewed and maintained. Mr. Bucci acknowledged the importance of supporting teachers in furthering their education but noted that the district should review the financial impact of the program.

Ms. Nespoli asked what prevents a teacher from receiving tuition reimbursement and then leaving the district for another position. Mr. Bucci stated that there is currently nothing in place to prevent that from occurring.

Ms. Nespoli asked how the district's tuition reimbursement program compares to other districts. Dr. Compton explained that reimbursement programs vary among districts. Ms. Nespoli stated that, due to the increasing cost of the program, it may warrant further review.

Ms. Bruno suggested that during future negotiations, the district review data regarding the number of employees receiving tuition reimbursement and whether recipients remain employed with the district afterward. She noted that the district has historically encouraged staff growth, professional advancement, and promoting from within.

IV. REPORTS

A. Board of Education

1. Chairman Comments - Ms. Harmeling acknowledged the concerns expressed regarding the Board of Education budget and stated that she respects the perspective of those who believe the budget has been reduced. She clarified that the Board's budget request has been reduced year after year, which results in the district beginning each budget cycle with the challenge and uncertainty of determining how to fund the programs and services needed for students.
2. Board Member Comments - none

B. Superintendent's Report

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM

Prepared by Shannon Levey,

Board Clerk