

April 29, 2022

To: MERSD School Committee

From: Avi Urbas, Director of Finance & Operations

Copy: Pam Beaudoin, Superintendent of Schools

Re: Warrants for 5/2/22 School Committee Meeting

Greetings, MERSD School Committee.

Attached please find financials for Monday's 5/2/22 School Committee meeting, prior to Essex Annual Town Meeting. A summary is below.

Voucher 1049: Monthly employer payment of \$442 for retirees that enrolled in Medicare after their initial eligibility, many years ago, back when MERSD first required all eligible retirees to use Medicare as their primary insurance. Since then, all retirees enroll in Medicare when initially eligible (age 65) and in those cases, no monthly employer payment is required. MERSD saves more than \$15K per year, per retiree, by requiring them use Medicare as the primary insurer.

Voucher 1050: \$16 in taxes for meals purchased by staff through our food service program. Like with the Medicare payment, this small amount is on a separate voucher because it is paid by electronic funds transfer (required by the Department of Revenue), not with a check.

Voucher 1051: invoices approved at the April 12th MMES School Building Committee meeting, including:

- Monthly invoices for project team in March 2022:
 - \$32K to JCI Architects for standard monthly fee during the current 'close out' phase, plus \$4.3K reimbursement for our LEED certification application. The project is on track to achieve LEED Silver status for green/sustainable design, as planned.
 - \$17K to Dore & Whittier Management Partners (DWMP) for standard monthly OPM fee (owner's project manager) during the 'close out' phase.
 - \$762K to WT Rich, construction manager for work completed in March as verified by JCI and DWMP.
 - This amount is up (as expected) from the \$100-300K monthly invoices we saw in the past few months, while outdoor work was on hiatus due to winter weather, but well below the \$1.3-\$2.5 million monthly invoices seen during active building construction.
 - Recall that nearly all work is complete, with the exception of outdoor landscaping that requires spring weather, and the final, north side playground (grades 3-5). For the playground, we used the last weeks of fall weather dealing with drainage/soil remediation to ensure that the playground would be on stable ground. For that reason, concrete and surfacing had to wait until spring.
 - WT Rich is also beginning to release 'retainage,' for select vendors. This is the standard 5% hold back that they do not pay to their sub-contractors until 100% of "punch list" items are complete to the satisfaction of the architect and OPM.

- \$32.1K to Deere & Company for new MERSD tractor with loader and snow blower attachments. This replaces our old tractor (for which we received trade in value of \$8.6K) now 12 years old, which we purchased during the MSHS building project. The tractor is an invaluable asset for our facilities team, particularly when snow arrives. The footprint for snow removal is larger with the new building lots.
- \$10.9K to WB Mason for outdoor tables that allow for lunches outdoors, just outside the café, and adjacent to the K-2 playground.

Voucher 1052: main Accounts Payable voucher, totaling \$894K. Of note:

- Curriculum & Technology:
 - \$20K to Axis Computer Networks for outsourced IT support staff in March. We have hired a new Network Administrator, Don Skane, to replace Gary Jones, who left earlier this month. Don comes with 20 years of experience in public education, and has quickly identified multiple ways to improve our technology operations. We will be down to 1.0 FTE through the Axis contract beginning next week, and that last position will be also be eliminated once we hire our in-district support technician, an existing position that has been vacant and posted for a few months, due to extraordinary demand for IT staff.
 - \$3.1K to DGI Technologies (reseller for Zoom) for 50 licensed accounts. This is down from 250 licenses during the pandemic, leading to roughly \$10K in annual savings, as most users no longer need the functionality of a licensed account.
- Athletics:
 - \$7K to Bradford Ski for lift tickets. When School Committee voted to accept skiing as a new MERSD sport several years ago (it had previously been a parent-funded club), the agreement was that lift tickets would be reimbursed by parents via an additional fee on top of the typical athletics user fee, due to the larger cost structure associated with skiing (lift tickets and daily transportation).
- Special Education & Student Services:
 - \$86K in monthly transportation to out-of-district (OOD) placements. We have discussed OOD transport as a major driver in FY23, together with OOD tuitions. Although number of placements is only slightly higher, the cost per route is up significantly, industry wide, due to insufficient supply of drivers, and fuel prices. Our FY23 budget for OOD transport is \$687K, up from \$253K actual spending in FY21.
 - \$11.8K to Action Ambulance (just a name, they are not ambulances), for 3 OOD students and 1 route from MBTS to EES for our in-district programs
 - \$17K to LBK for 6 OOD students and two buses from Essex to MBTS for in-district programs
 - \$48K to Nick's Transportation for 10 OOD students and 1 in-district trip from Essex to MMES.
 - \$7.7K to VSP for five OOD students.
 - \$1.4K to Skye for 1 homeless student's monthly transportation from their current location to MERSD, which is the last district they attended, prior to becoming homeless. This cost is split with the town in which they are currently located.
 - \$6.2K to Careerstaff Unlimited for nurse sub in April, covering an extended staff leave at an average cost of \$2K/week (\$86K estimated annual rate).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Avi Urbas