

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
December 19, 2019
Held in Room 1E at the Legislative Office Building

PRESENT: Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz
Deputy Comptroller Martha Carlson
Acting Deputy Treasurer Daniel Krupnick
Senator Catherine Osten
Senator Paul Formica
Representative Toni Walker
Representative Gail Lavielle
Representative Michael DiMassa
Secretary Melissa McCaw
Office of Policy and Management, Finance Advisory Committee Clerk

Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The minutes of the June 6, 2019, meeting were adopted.

The following new transactions were considered by the committee:

FAC 2020-01 for the Department of Transportation. Transfer of \$1,000,000 from Personal Services to Pay As You Go Transportation Projects to provide additional contractual resources to address the statewide tree mortality issue.

Senator Osten asked the agency to address the status of refilling vacancies. Commissioner Giulietti responded that the vacancy count is decreasing, although the agency continues to experience turnover due to retirements, and that OPM is assisting DOT with approving refill of positions. The commissioner noted that lack of candidates with commercial drivers' licenses (CDLs) is one major obstacle to hiring, and that the department is considering providing the necessary training itself. Senator Osten asked whether pay is a problem, and the commissioner responded that DOT is working with DAS and OPM on that issue, which is a challenge for all agencies. Senator Osten asked about efforts to remediate the emerald ash borer beetle infestation. Commissioner Giulietti answered that there are other invasive pests beyond the emerald ash borer, and that DOT has spoken to Pennsylvania, for example, about the spotted fly making its way toward Connecticut. Senator Osten asked whether DOT is working with DEEP, which is dealing with the issue as it pertains to public forests. Commissioner Giulietti responded that DEEP is focusing on areas where the camping public and parking lots are. Secretary McCaw added that an item on the December 18, 2019, State Bond Commission agenda was approved to provide \$1 million to DEEP to address removal of damaged, decayed and distressed trees in state parks and recreations areas. Senator Osten expressed an interest in more broadly dealing with the issue in municipalities, as small towns typically have more treed areas but limited financial resources. Senator Osten inquired about grants for town roads, particularly for smaller towns, and asked the agency to consider recommendations for how to help municipalities.

Representative Walker asked whether candidates for positions requiring a CDL can be ex-offenders. Commissioner Giulietti responded that he was unsure, but that he would provide an answer.

Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz asked whether any discussions have occurred about engaging state technical high schools in the training process. Commissioner Giulietti answered that DOT has talked to the universities but will need to initiate a conversation with the tech and trade schools.

Representative Walker noted that regional workforce boards have funding for training.

The item was unanimously approved.

FAC 2020-02 for the Department of Education. Transfer of \$1,200,000 from the Commissioner's Network and State Charter Schools accounts to Other Expenses to support Alliance District grants in two communities and costs for students impacted by closure of a charter school.

Senator Osten asked if \$300,000 in municipal aid would be provided for Groton in FY 2021, and Secretary McCaw affirmed that it would.

Senator Osten asked whether all 135 students displaced by the closure of Trailblazer Academy in Stamford went to the Stamford public schools. State Department of Education Chief Financial Officer Kathleen Demsey responded affirmatively. Senator Osten asked if the transfer of funds covers the full cost of these student's attendance. Ms. Demsey indicated that it only covered a portion of the costs.

Representative Lavielle asked about the Commissioner's Network schools rolling off the program and Ms. Demsey indicated the department would send that information to the committee. Representative Lavielle inquired about the allocation of funding for Commissioner's Network schools in FY 2021, and Ms. Demsey indicated that information is not yet available.

Representative Walker asked if the aid provided to Groton and Thompson will be subject to minimum budget requirements. Ms. Demsey indicated it would not be subject to minimum budget requirements.

Representative Walker asked if a decision had been made to redistribute FY 2020 charter school funding from schools where students are under-enrolled to those with over-enrollment. Secretary McCaw answered that no decision has been made yet.

The item was unanimously approved.

FAC 2020-03 for the Teachers' Retirement Board. Transfer of \$300,000 from Retirees Health Service Cost to Other Expenses to support digitization of statutorily required member records prior to the agency's move to the State Office Building later this year.

Daniel Krupkick, Interim Deputy Treasurer, asked whether the board was informed about the source of funds for this transfer. Secretary McCaw noted that the source is a result of a natural lapse in the Retiree Health account, and noted further that OPM is working hard to move agencies out of leased space and the agency intends to use the funds to digitize member records and decrease storage space. Hellen Sullivan, the TRB Administrator, explained that the board entrusts the administrator to run the daily operations of the agency. Mr. Krupnick asked whether this source funds OPEB costs. Both Secretary McCaw and Ms. Sullivan stated no.

The item was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Melissa McCaw, Clerk

