

**TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
November 22, 2024**

Call to Order

Dan Brown called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 8:00 a.m. on November 22, 2024, in Room 102 of Building 600, 1100 West 45th Street, Austin, Texas and via Zoom.

In addition to Mr. Brown, Board members Ernest Worthington and Lee Sonnenberg were present.

TSBVI staff members present were: Christina Hoke, Director of Accounting; Brian Swegle, Director of Operations; Cyrenna Villegas, Director of Procurement; Scott Brackett, Director of Information Resources; Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Gemma Cooper-Langdale, Budget Analyst; Cheryl Williams, Director of Human Resources, and Ann Du; Chief Financial Officer.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of the October 7, 2024 Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2024 Finance Committee meeting as presented in Committee was made by Mr. Sonnenberg. Mr. Worthington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of approval of new Nolan County farm contract

A new farmer, James Parrot, is taking over the lease from the previous tenant, Richard Osborne. In the lease, Mr. Parrot has asked for the option to plant grain in order to rotate the soil, not for profit. Ms. Coleman noted that all instances of "1/3" of the rent will be changed to "1/4" of the rent, and the first sentence should read "cotton or grain". Mr. Sonnenberg made a motion to approve the lease as amended in Committee. Mr. Worthington seconded it.

Consideration of Approval of Investment Report

Ann Du reviewed the Investment Report for the 2 months of fiscal year 2025, ending October 31, 2024. The total market value/book value was \$ 1,411,315. Earnings for the period were \$7,125. Mr. Worthington made a motion to approve the Investment Report as presented. Mr. Sonnenberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Donations Report

Ann Du reviewed the Donations Report for 2 months of fiscal year 2025, ending October 31, 2024. Total donations received since September 1st, 2024 were \$12,106.00.

Consideration of Approval of Receipt of Gifts and Donations of Over \$500

There were two donations over \$500: \$10,000 from Margaret A. Neal in memory of her daughter Diana Neal, one for \$2,000 from the Schwab Charitable on behalf of Rao Family Fund. We received a third donation after October 31, to be included on the next Donations

Report, from an anonymous donor of \$50,000 on November 12. Mr. Sonnenberg made a motion to accept gifts and donations over \$500. Mr. Worthington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Approval of Request for Expenditure of Gifts and Donations

There was one request to expend funds to improve the Fine Arts departments by purchasing musical instruments. Mr. Worthington made a motion to approve the expenditure of funds. Mr. Sonnenberg seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Budget Reports

Ann Du reviewed the Appropriated Funds Operating Expenditure Report for 2 months of fiscal year 2025, ending October 31, 2024. The target for expenditures was 16%, and the agency total was 16%. The percentages expended by strategy were Classroom Instruction - 18%, Residential Programs - 17%, Short-Term Programs and Summer School – 13%, Related and School Support Services – 16%, Outreach – 14%, Teacher Preparation – 2%, Central Administration – 16%, and Other Support Services – 16%.

Review of the Legacy Revenue report

For 2 months of fiscal year 2025, ending October 31, 2024, TSBVI had collected \$228,224. The projected revenues target was 16%, and TSBVI was at 21% of projected collections.

Review of the Legacy Operating Expenditure report

For 2 months of fiscal year 2025, ending October 31, 2024, TSBVI had expended \$100,160. The benchmark was 16%, and 7% had been expended.

Report from Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Du stated she completed the Rider 4. drawdown in October 2024 to align our contract staff's salaries with that of AISD. In the drawdown, a \$7,000 stipend was included for each classroom teacher that works with visually impaired students, which is new for the 2024-2025 school year, and the projected salary increase for all contract staff, which passed in the November 2024 Voter Approval Tax Rate Elections (VATRE). The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is auditing our Federal Fiscal Year 2023 (FFY23) annual School Health and Related Services (SHARS) report. Ms. Du submitted all requested information to them in August 2024, and HHSC asked for additional information related to salaries and benefits of substitute employees in November 2024. We are still awaiting our final settlement notice from HHSC to determine our final SHARS funding for FFY23. Now, that Accounting had completed its Annual Financial Report, it will be working on the Non-Financial Report, which is due 12/31/2024. The CPA Contract Management audit process has begun. Ms. Villegas has been busy working with all 3 auditors to gather/compile requested audit information. Ms. Hoke is retiring December 31, 2024.

Report from Information Resources Director

Managed Security Services (MSS) Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) alerted the TSBVI IR department on October 22, 2024 that malware from an unknown source attempted to execute within our environment. Our endpoint protection software performed

an automatic quarantine to stop the activity. We coordinated with DIR and our 3rd party cybersecurity monitoring service to remove malware and prevent further access to our network. Additional post-incident responses included reviewing any improvements we can make to our security configurations and practices, performing guided password resets for privileged user accounts, and engaging in user education campaigns. We have one more post-incident meeting scheduled with DIR to review what we can learn from the event and finalize any further action items. Once this has concluded, we will consider the event 100% completed, and Mr. Brackett will detail any resulting projects. IR met with AT&T to schedule a DIR-funded Cybersecurity Assessment and Penetration Test; this project will begin in January 2025 and finish in March 2025. These assessments will verify our current security posture and help us set priorities for what to work on next. IR has completed paperwork required to move forward with AT&T to install a managed Network Detection and Response (NDR) solution. Hardware will be installed in our network that will constantly scan for suspicious traffic and take semi-automated actions to protect against bad actors. This is the network counterpart to the EDR (Endpoint Detection and Response) initiative that we have been rolling out for all State-owned devices. Our accessibility coordinator, Jim Allan, is retiring in January. We have been working for the last few years to utilize Mr. Allan's time to train employees in the areas of Content authoring/editing, IT Support, and Web development to ensure that accessibility is embedded in TSBVI at as many levels as possible. However, it is our goal to hire a full-time accessibility coordinator after he retires. We are very happy for Jim, but we are going to miss him very much. Regarding the Windows 11 upgrade, IR has begun the process, as Windows 10 will no longer be supported in October 2025. All desktops have been updated, and the IR team is now working through laptops. The endpoint protection replacement project is almost completed. Antivirus protection has been completely installed, but there are still some web content filtering agents to install on staff computers. Content is still filtered at our Firewall, and this additional layer is primarily in place for student safety. We will perform final installations as part of the Windows 11 upgrade project. Concerning the print shop printer replacement project, the old printer has been removed. The new printer was delivered and is working well. We are waiting for an outstanding billing issue to be resolved to close the project. Our old printer has been removed from their system, but they are still sending invoices. They are aware of the issue and have assured us they are not billing us. We will close the project out when invoices have ceased.

Report from the Human Resource Director

Ms. Williams reported that Human Resources continues to focus on recruitment for primarily support roles, e.g., Weekends Home, Residential and Teacher Aides. HR is also recruiting for several contract positions that are difficult to fill mid-school year. These include a part-time teacher in Short Term Programs, a grant-funded Curriculum position, and O&M specialists in Outreach, etc. Regarding recruitment and retention, HR is developing an Onboarding Survey to be sent to new hires within 30 days of hire with a projected December 1st rollout day. Finally, the AISD salary increases are being calculated and will go into effect immediately, and contract staff will receive retroactive pay, as well.

Report from the Operations Director

Mr. Swegle stated that many projects are getting wrapped up. Operations removed four damaged trees from campus due to extreme weather variations. Mr. Brown asked if we'd

be replacing any of the trees. Mr. Swegle replied that TSBVI is asking Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) to review the irrigation system and campus well to better handle water needs on campus, and this is a factor in the decision to replace the trees or not. The Sunshine Road and Burnet Road pedestrian gates are fully operational. The warehouse position has been posted, and we've received three applications so far. The mechanic position has been posted, and we've received one application. We've had issues with two of our buses that drive the Weekends Home routes. One bus has been repaired, and we are waiting on a significant repair for the second. These issues reinforce the need to assess and replace multiple fleet vehicles.

Adjournment

Mr. Brown entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sonnenberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Worthington seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 a.m.