SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
PERSONNEL COMMISSION VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Zoom Meeting ID: 915 0251 0400
Meeting #583
May 26, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Commission Members Present: Christine Coffey, Commissioner
Veronica Palmer, Commissioner
Karen Schwarz, Commissioner

Commission Staff Present: Dr. Karen D. White

Others Present: Nancy Magee, Superintendent

Terri Aiello Amanda Lee Lorrie Owens
Janeen Bonnevie Rocío López Veronica Pantoja
Vanessa Chavez Patricia Love Yazmine Patino
Jean Corpuz Teri Mai Denise Porterfield
Francesca D’Amato Minette Manio Dalma Sato
Kirsten Ellinger Cindy Matsuyama Claudia Schwartz
Timothy Fox Tami Moore Elvia Tapia
Krystyna Gniady Christian Morales Taufua Veu
Margie Gustafson Laurie Mouton Loriann Villanis
Diem Hoang Lori Musso Karen Williams

A. OPENING OF THE MEETING
1. Call to Order - 10:00 A.M.

2. Approval of Agenda

Action: A motion to approve the May 26, 2021, special meeting agenda was made and seconded. Motion passed, and agenda was approved as submitted.

Votes Taken, By Roll Call:
Coffey - Aye
Palmer - Aye
Schwarz - Aye

B. PUBLIC/EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent Magee stated that she wanted to go on record as saying: "As the County Superintendent, I fully support the Commission. I support its purpose and its role. She described the purpose of the Personnel Commission and how it serves SMCOE. She also emphasized why teamwork and collaboration are essential for the Personnel Commission
and the County Office of Education in supporting the 90,000 students in the County. She expressed concerns about how the Personnel Commission has conducted actual responsibilities of the Executive Director and impeded operations of the department. This effort is not constructive towards meeting the purpose of serving students. So, she urged the Commissioners to allow their Executive Director to do her job, which includes bringing the Commission an accurate budget.

Superintendent Magee addressed the Personnel Commission about false statements that were articulated at the May 19, 2021, Personnel Commission meeting about the budget as follows:

- The fiscal year of the Personnel Commission and SMCOE is precisely the same. The Personnel Commission has an earlier timeline to approve its budget because the budget is required to be submitted to the County Board as a department budget. (The Personnel Commission is a department of SMCOE organization.).
- All department budgets are submitted as one budget for full approval on June 16, 2021, for full approval. So, the concept that SMCOE sweeps out carry-over money at the end of the year insinuates that funds are being misappropriated from the Personnel Commission. This statement is false.
- Although unspent dollars are returned to the general fund, all departments draw from these funds for their respective budget.
- No department accumulates carry-over money from each fiscal year. Therefore, the Personnel Commission cannot accumulate money in its budget. There is a process to address amending a budget due to unforeseen circumstances in which a budget can be amended throughout the year. This is a common practice at SMCOE. For example, if the Personnel Commission decided to initiate a classification study during the year and was not budgeted. SMCOE can review, amend, and submit a revised budget to the County Board at either the first or second interim for their consideration.
- The variance of the thirty-thousand dollar between the two budgets being considered is due to the staff that the Personnel Commission employed and posted in last year's budget. This expenditure consists of employees earning higher salaries and longevity pay. Therefore, the thirty-thousand dollar difference that will gain by approving last year's budget will include an amount that will not be inaccessible for discretionary expenditures.
- The Executive Director completed a budget with the expertise of the Business Office. They factored all expenditures associated with staffing and incorporated them into the proposed budget. This includes a projection of the highest possible salaries and benefits for new staff. I thought it was important to discuss with all three Commissioners how the budget is developed and implemented. For the future, the Business Office should conduct a presentation about budget development that includes how a budget is compiled at SMCOE and amended throughout the year.
- The PC budget comes from the General Fund, so we are, in essence, one organization sharing one pot of money. We should consider how we can work together as one team to dive in and kick off a strong start for the new school year.

Commissioner Chair Palmer thanked Superintendent Magee.
C. ACTION ITEMS
   1. Discussion for Proposed Personnel Commission Services Budget for FY2021-22

Commissioner Chair Palmer addressed Executive Director Dr. White to summarize or comment on her proposed budget. Dr. White indicated how it was the third reading and completed with the assistance of Internal Business Services staff. Dr. White agreed with remarks from Superintendent Magee and mentioned that the two variances between the budgets were already addressed. The budget reflects a thirty-one-thousand-dollar variance due to a decrease in salaries and benefits. The second variance is reflected in the subcategories resulting from previous technological purchases that were never reflected in the budget but were paid. Dr. White further clarified that technology purchases would be presented as actual line items in the budget for transparency purposes this year.

Commissioner Schwarz requested the minutes to reflect her comments. "She would like to apologize about her vote in support of last fiscal year budget proposed by Commissioner Chair Palmer. She explained how she knew that the vote violated the Brown's Act since it was not agendized. Therefore, she would like to apologize to the entire District for this violation. She further explained how she would like to speak on behalf of supporting Budget #1 for various reasons. She also reiterated remarks made by Executive Director Dr. White and Superintendent Magee, how this budget reflects the reality of Personnel Commission Service's Staff. The fact demonstrates a reduction in Personnel Commission Services staff and developed with County Staff, in collaboration. Therefore, she believed that the budget was very appropriate and serves the department's needs, so she will vote in support of Budget 1.

Action: Commissioner Schwarz made a motion to approve Budget #1 as presented by Executive Director Dr. White. The motion was defeated, and Budget #1 did not pass.

Votes Taken, By Roll Call:

Coffey - Nye
Palmer - Nye
Schwarz - Aye

Commissioner Chair Palmer moved to proposed Budget #2 that she submitted.

Commissioner Chair Palmer addressed the Commission to clarify her rationale for approving a higher budget. She based her decision upon discussions with Commissioners from other organizations that informed her of their budget process and difficulty in obtaining additional funding when needed. Therefore, she explained how it is appropriate to retain allocated funds for discretionary spending to cover unforeseen expenditures in anticipation of unforeseen circumstances. Commissioner Chair Palmer read Merit Rules Chapter 20.15.B to reiterate how the budget was approved and how it specifically addresses the process and procedures should the County Office reject the approved budget submitted by the Personnel Commission.
Action: Commissioner Chair Palmer moved to adopt Budget 2 as the Personnel Commission Services Budget for the Fiscal Year 2021-22. The motion was passed and budget approved.

Votes Taken, By Roll Call:

Coffey - Aye
Palmer - Aye
Schwarz - Nye

Commissioner Schwarz indicated how someone from the Internal Business Office should be invited to explain the increase in funding and concerns about funding allocations in the Personnel Commission's budget. Commissioner Schwarz also expressed her support of Proposed Budget #1.

Commissioner Chair Palmer invited Staff from Internal Business Office to join the conversation for further discussion. Executive Director Margie Gustafson described the contents of last year's budget. She specifically detailed the salaries and expenses of the two former employees of the Personnel Commission Services department and implied the impacts of the reclassification of their positions. Executive Director Margie Gustafson explicitly stated that salaries and benefits are not reallocated funds which have been the practice and policy of SMCOE for at least 34 years.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Chair Palmer and Commissioner Coffey decided to reconsider their vote to adopt Proposed Budget 2 for the fiscal year 2021-22.

Action: A motion was made to reconsider the vote for Item C1.Budget 1, in light of the new information presented during the meeting. The motion passed and was unanimously approved.

Votes Taken, By Roll Call:

Coffey - Aye
Palmer - Aye
Schwarz - Aye

Commissioner Schwarz suggested that the Commissioners meet to study the budget to better understand the process.
D. PERSONNEL COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS
This is a new section that was added to the agenda based upon Commissioner Schwarz's request. This section allows all Commissioners to comment, reference a future Agenda item, and/or share something recently learned.

Commissioner Schwarz commented how she would like to, in the future, review the responsibilities of the Commissioner Chair, as well as review the policy as to who is allowed to attend the Closed Session of the Personnel Commission, and to also discuss possibly have a Personnel Commission Board Retreat. She also clarified that this section would not be a section for public discussion. Instead, it would be a place to exchange ideas and add commentary to build a stronger team.

Commissioner Chair Palmer added that she is naturally a curious person and needs to know how things work. Commissioner Chair Palmer also stated she agreed with Commissioner Schwarz about having a Personnel Commission Board Retreat in the future.

E. CLOSING OF THE MEETING
1. The next Personnel Commission meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2021, at 2:30 P.M.

2. Personnel Commission Chairperson Veronica Palmer adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Dr. Karen D. White
Ex-Officio Secretary to the Personnel Commission