MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

January 22, 2025

MEMBERS' PRESENT:	J. McLean, Chair, Boxford	T. Currier, Vice Chair, Middleton
	E. Clements, Boxford	M. Ogden, Topsfield
	A. Heaphy-Tenney, Topsfield	K. Petrone, Middleton
	L. MacInnis, Middleton	C. Bolzan, Boxford
	J. Horrigan, Boxford	M. Alexander, Middleton
	W. Hodges, Topsfield(zoom)	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Harvey, Superintendent
J. Sands, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Procurement Officer

A. **Call to Order** – J. McLean, Chair, called the School Committee Meeting of January 22, 2025, to Order at 7:01pm, at the High School Library.

B. **Remarks from the Chair**
J. McLean informed the Committee that Budget season begins tonight.

C. **Public Comment** –
Che Elwell, Chair of Topsfield Finance Committee and Matiely Lugo-Gomez, Finance Committee Member, spoke regarding the budget increase and asked that the increase be capped at 2.5%. Student enrollment has declined by 600 students and employees have numbers have declined by 8 in the same timeframe.
Tri-Town Council YAB reviewed some of the findings from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to the Committee. The also invited the community and Committee to their full presentation of the results on January 28, 2025, at 7:00pm in the small cafeteria. Areas of concern will be discussed.

D. Student Advisory Board Update – None

E. Superintendent's Recommended Budget Presentation
M. Harvey reviewed the FY26 Budget Process which began in September and will end with a budget adoption on March 19th and Town Meetings. A Level Service Budget is recommended for FY26 which is a continuation of the current services, programs and operations of the District. This reflects an increase in the Operation Expenses in the amount of $3,728,655 (9.2%) and an increase in Operation Assessment in the amount of $3,190,196 (9.6%). This is the highest-level service increase in a number of years.
The FY26 Budget Assessment Overview was reviewed which included total expenditures showing the 9.2% increase and total funding sources.
FY26 Assessment by Town was calculated by using the 5-year resident enrollment per the Regional Agreement.
Key Assumptions Highlights for FY26 were reviewed. Revenues are currently budgeted to increase by $538,000 or 7.2% compared to FY25. Chapter 70 reflects preliminary figures from the Governor's Budget which will include an increase of $75 per student.

Transportation reimbursement and Charter School tuition reimbursement will be updated when the Cherry Sheets are released. There is an interest income increase of $52,000.
Excess & Deficiency figure of $713,000 reflects the amount certified by MA DOR which exceeds 4% of the District's operating and capital budget, which is an increase of $259,000.
Expenses are budgeted to increase by $1.32 million (5.4%). This is based on the CBA for the Teachers Union and the upcoming negotiations with four other unions. Three 1 to 1 Paraprofessionals will be added to accommodate the needs of incoming 7th grade students requiring specialized services in their IEPs. There are no other changes to staffing.
Total Operating Costs are assumed to increase by $2.41 million (14.9%), which incorporates an increase of $1.27 million in OOD tuition, Special Education transportation and consultant costs. There is also an increase in OOD placements for 7 students. Healthcare and dental premium increases were also incorporated. Total Operating Costs reflect an increase of $184,000 (11.5%) in non-salaried maintenance costs, including $98,000 (19.2%) in increased electric and gas utility costs and $51,000 (10.0%) increase in the Janitorial Services contract costs. An increase in retirement costs in the amount of $131,000 (12.5%) increase. No new services or programs are being offered.
Capital Costs, including debt service recommended at $690,000 in FY26, which reflect priority projects which have been identified and supported by District Leadership and the DCI Subcommittee. The Capital Costs including debt service projects were reviewed including the estimated costs.
The Major Expense Category Analysis was reviewed by line item, comparing FY25 and FY26 and reflecting the increases. 90% of the total expense increase of $3.73 million is comprised of salaries, OOD tuition, transportation and consultants, benefits, maintenance and utilities and retirement funds.
The FY26 Budget Calendar was presented to the Committee.
K. Petrone asked how the salaries in the District compare to other districts. Masco is similar to other districts. The current contract contains an agreed 3.75% increase with additional steps.

F. Capital Planning Update

M. Alexander presented the update to the Committee. The DCI Subcommittee has worked with the Administration to understand and prepare for extensive capital projects. These projects are divided into 3 categories. Category 1 includes roof, HVAC, and Building Management System; Category 2 includes turf fields; and Category 3 includes all other projects. These categories have remained the same. The Capital Plan Strategy recommendations include a request for $690,000 in May 2025 for the HVAC study, Track/Softball field study, internal elevator modernization and press box lift replacement; the "Big Ask" in May 2026 for Categories 1, 2 and subset of 3; MSBA application for the roof and HVAC heat pump; and a single field/stadium.
Category 1 summary, including roof, HVAC and BMS was reviewed with a breakdown of the roof expenses and HVAC & BMS expenses broken out. The Biennial MSBA application window has opened.
Category 2 summary, including fields and stadium was reviewed. 3 options were considered by DCI and the Administration. DCI recommends proceeding with the permits for 2 fields and move forward to execute the currently designed stadium field.

Category 3 summary including all other projects was reviewed. Not all projects can be executed concurrently, so DCI has prioritized the projects. Priority 1 for prioritizing projects is safety; compliance with the law; critical maintenance; and immediate measures needed to keep our schools open and all programming functioning. Priority 2 includes preventative safety measures, preventative maintenance, cosmetic maintenance and measures needed to enhance our schools and programming. The projects included in the "Big Ask" are the Softball/Track & Field feasibility study to comply with Title IX and ADA compliance; high school and middle school elevator modernization which is a complete redo of the elevators; press box building lift replacement project; and HVAC electrification study.
DCI and the Administration discussed the Press Box Lift. DCI formally supports the Administration's recommendation to include scaffolding for one year in the FY26 operating budget recommendation.
J. Horrigan stated that the press box could be funded/sponsored by football boosters or by sponsors.
M. Ogden added that infrastructure should be maintained by the District and the entire school community uses the press box, not just football. Discussion followed regarding the use of the press box by other sports.
M. Alexander reviewed the 24-month execution schedule with the Committee for the projects, and Town Meeting funding.

G. <u>Review School Committee Goals</u>

J. McLean reviewed the School Committee goals set at the Retreat in August. The deliverables under Capital/Facilities goal have the completion dates extended as they are underway, but not complete.
Develop Athletic Field Improvement Plan Goals were extended to FY26.
The Budget Goal of working with Administration to develop and approve the FY26 Budget is on target.
Governance strategic goals include the Strategic Plan, and those deliverables are on target.
A. Heaphy-Tenney asked to add headings to the Agenda. Scorecard/Metrics will be addressed by the Director of Teaching and Learning. W. Hodges added that this is not in the School Committee's purview, it is up to the Administration to set up the metrics.
Policy and Community Goal is predominantly on target, the evaluation of the Anti-Racism Committee is being discussed this evening.

H. **<u>Anti-Racism Subcommittee Charter Review</u>** –

J. Horrigan presented the updated charter to the Committee. There is a proposed name change from Anti-Racism Subcommittee to Views on Climate and Learning Subcommittee. This change expands the subcommittee to SEL and equity. The Mission Statement and Objectives were reviewed with a grammatical error corrected.
M. Ogden stated that the original resolution of the Anti-Racism subcommittee included most of the language being proposed. The original resolution was passed in 2021, and the Mission Statement and Objectives should be tied to the original resolution. This subcommittee is intended to make recommendations to the School Committee and has no other authority.

J. McLean added that the proposed name is confusing, and the human rights reference is outside the scope of the School Committee. He asked that the sentence referencing Amendments be stricken.
T. Currier discussed the end of the charter and his objection to a charter when no other subcommittee has a charter.
L. MacInnis added that it appears more students are encompassed under the Anti-Racism title.
W. Hodges stated that this proposed change is a significant departure from the original intent of the Anti-Racism subcommittee. The original name has a narrow connotation, and these proposed changes are a good starting point.
J. McLean asked that Section 4 be removed from the proposed Charter.
A motion was made to approve the Charter with the edits discussed by E. Clements, seconded by A. Heaphy-Tenney and approved by rollcall vote:

W. Hodges – yes	**A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
C. Bolzan – yes	**K. Petrone – no**	**J. Horrigan – yes**
T. Currier – no	**L. MacInnis – yes**	**M. Ogden – yes**
E. Clements – yes	**J. McLean – yes**	

MOTION: Approve new Charter
VOTE: 9-2-0, Motion Passed

I. <u>Superintendent's Report</u>

M. Harvey congratulated the students who performed in MMEA.
Tri-Town Council YAB is hosting a discussion January 28^{th} at 7:00pm to review the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
The next MS Parent coffee is scheduled for 1/24 at 8:30am and the HS is 2/14 at 8:30am.

J. <u>Sub-Committee Reports</u>

<u>Community Relations</u> – held a community dialogue prior to this meeting tonight and OOD placement and trade like class offerings were discussed. The next dialogue is scheduled for February 26^{th} at 6:00pm.
<u>DCI/Building Committee</u> – met last week with Community Relations to put together the communication campaign for the Capital Plan.
<u>Anti-Racism/VOCAL</u> – met today before the School Committee meeting and the charter was approved.
<u>Policy</u> – the last of the policies will be presented at the next meeting.
<u>Liaison Updates</u> – T. Currier thanked the FC members who attended this meeting. M. Ogden does not have a date to meet with the Topsfield FC. J. McLean attended the Boxford Select Board meeting last Monday and provided an update on the Capital Plan and budget challenges. He was asked to keep the budget at a 2% increase.
<u>Negotiations</u> – Paraprofessionals met and unanimously ratified our best and final offer. The other unions have asked to start negotiations.

K. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of January 8, 2025, Minutes.
2. Warrants in the amount of $1,642,136.08.
3. Approve DECA Field Trips to Boston and Orlando, FL.

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, by T. Currier, seconded by M. Alexander and approved by rollcall vote.

W. Hodges – yes	**A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
C. Bolzan – yes	**K. Petrone – yes**	**J. Horrigan – no**
T. Currier – yes	**L. MacInnis – yes**	**M. Ogden – yes**
E. Clements – yes	**J. McLean – yes**	

MOTION: Approve Consent Agenda
VOTE: 10-1-0, Motion Carried.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm.

Submitted By: ______________________________ Approved: ___________________
Lynn Viselli, Recording Secretary Date

Per the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the list of documents that were either distributed to the Masconomet School Committee before the meeting in the packet or at the meeting.

1. Agenda
2. Superintendent's FY26 Recommended Budget
3. Capital Planning Update
4. School Committee Goals Update
5. Anti-Racism Charter
6. Consent Agenda