

MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 7, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: M. Ogden, Chair, Topsfield
T. Currier, Middleton
W. Hodges, Topsfield
C. Bolzan, Boxford
D. Casamassima, Middleton
J. Horrigan, Boxford
J. McLean, Boxford, Vice Chair, Boxford
M. Alexander, Middleton
Z. Bhujju, Topsfield (zoom)
E. Clements - Boxford
K. Petrone, Middleton (zoom)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Harvey, Superintendent

- A. **Call to Order** – M. Ogden, Chair, called the Regular Meeting of the School Committee of February 7, 2024, to Order at 7:00pm, at the High School Library.
- B. **Present Budget Overview to Town Officials** – M. Harvey reviewed the timeline of the budget overview process from October 3, 2023, to May Town Meetings. He reviewed the 4.5% increase in operating assessments.

Revenues were reviewed, including a projected decrease of \$388,000, the updated Cherry Sheets, E&D review and the recommendation that there be no changes to athletic and co-curricular fees in FY25.

Salary cost increases, staffing adjustments, successor CBAs to be negotiated, and other contractual salary obligations specified in the CBAs were reviewed.

Recommended staffing adjustments and the impact on the Operating Budget were reviewed which results in a 1.8 reduction in FTEs and savings of \$180,000.

Operating costs are assumed to increase by 2.8% or \$452,000. No new services or programs will be added. This includes level service discretionary expense requests from principals, department heads and operational unit directors. Contractual service contract increases were reviewed for transportation and janitorial services. OOD tuition placements and related costs were reviewed.

Capital costs, including debt service expense were reviewed. The Comprehensive Capital Plan was presented on February 1, 2023. The Administration supports the prioritization of the HVAC, Roof and BMS (Building Mgmt. System) project with an estimated cost of \$30 million to begin in FY25 with a request of \$5 million to fund the estimated cost of the OPM and Design associated with the HVAC, Roof and BMS projects.

The FY25 Updated Assessment Overview was reviewed as well as the Assessment by Town.

Michael White, Boxford Finance Committee, asked if a building committee would be appointed for the capital plan. Discussion regarding the pros and cons of appointing a building committee and when they could be appointed and engaged. The DCI sub-committee is discussing this option.

Marshall Hook, Topsfield Select Board, asked how the combination of the Performing Arts Department Heads would impact the students and the program. M. Harvey explained how the programs would be combined.

Dan Volchok, Boxford Finance Committee, asked for clarification of the teaching positions, FTE choir director hire and the Department Head responsibilities. The Department head would still teach according to contractual requirements.

Rafael McDonald, Topsfield Select Board, added that that Department Head also covers and plans activities as well as teaching. He wants to ensure there will be no impact on the students. M. Harvey stated that the Administration is doing everything possible to not impact the students.

Kosta Prentakis, Middleton Select Board, asked if the peaks and valleys of E&D could be regulated to lessen the impacts on the budget.

Dan Volchok, Boxford Finance Committee, added that E&D could be used for onetime expenses so as not to impact the budget.

John Erickson, Middleton Finance Committee, asked that E&D be used to fund capital projects, not operating expenses.

Michael White, Boxford Finance Committee, asked if the Director of Teaching and Learning would alleviate some of the duties of the Department Heads. This position will provide guidance to the Department Heads and make sure the curriculum is aligned and coordinated. Further questions and discussion with regard to enrollment, class sizes, elimination of teaching positions and the addition of the Director of Teaching and Learning position ensued. Dan Volchok, Boxford Finance Committee, added that over time there will be shifts with the Department Heads teaching more and having less administrative duties and will be more efficient over time. W. Hodges added that this position will help improve educational evaluation and assessment which is needed and would be helpful to both educators and students.

Rafael McDonald, Topsfield Select Board, asked when the public budget hearing is scheduled. March 6, 2024, is the scheduled public budget hearing, public comments are always available to be made during the meeting. The community relations sub-committee will be holding an open meeting at 5:30 before the next Committee meeting.

M. Ogden presented the Category priorities which total over \$1million and she reviewed the projects and costs. J. McLean added that the list of Category 3 projects is fluid and is a

projection as to what capital items we may be looking at in the future.

The next meeting will be held February 14, 2024, at 7:00pm.

A Motion was made by W. Hodges to adjourn at 8:18pm, it was seconded by M. Alexander and unanimously approved by Rollcall vote:

T. Currier – yes	C. Bolzan – yes	D. Casamassima – yes	
E. Clements – yes	K. Petrone – yes	M. Ogden – yes	J. Horrigan – yes
J. McLean – yes	M. Alexander – yes	W. Hodges – yes	Z. Bhujju – yes

MOTION: Adjourn

VOTE: 11-0, Motion Passed

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. FY25 Administration's Recommended Budget Presentation