

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting
Nipmuc High School, Auditorium
Monday, March 14, 2022

Committee Present:

Sean Nicholson, Erick Brown, Kerry Laurence, Phil DeZutter, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence

Administration Present:

Maureen Cohen, Superintendent of Schools
Cheryl Kirkpatrick, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Jay Byer, Business/Finance
John Clements, Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School
Mary Ann Moran
Janice Gallagher
Wendy Bell, Principal Memorial Elementary School

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Kerry Laurence.
Pledge of Alliance was recited

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to approved the agenda

VOTED: Unanimously

Approval of the Open Session Minutes from March 14, 2022

MOTION: On a motion of Erick Brown, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve Open Session minutes from March 14, 2022

VOTED: Unanimously

II. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS - NA

III. STUDENT'S COMMENTS

Student Rep Michel announced the vertical band concert at 7 pm on Thursday. He was happy to announce the 7th & 8th grade bands joining the concerts. Michel stated the mask flexible policy has been positive for students. Students are livelier and more smiles and it has been a positive experience. The transition to normal break system will also be positive for the school.

Student Rep Diya stated the DECA state competition this past weekend. There were fun activities and workshop for the students to attend. Fundraiser for the Class of 2023 was held at Chipotle and Class of 2025 is having a fundraiser at Yummie Bakery in Westboro.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS AND ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

District Updates - Dr. Maureen Cohen

- Dr. Cohen added the student representatives and herself had a great conversation last week and plans are being made.

- Dr. Cohen updated the School Committee that Dr. Kirkpatrick is leading the search for the new Clough principal. 3 finalist candidates are visiting the school this week to get tour the school and meet with Dr. Cohen.
- Reminder of a special school committee meeting on March 15 to discuss mask policy
- Thursday 3/17 is Inspired Learning Day
- Plans are being made for faculty student basketball game

FY2023 Budget Presentations – Maureen Cohen

Dr. Cohen presented the FY2023 Budget. Highlights of the presentation follows:

- Student population will be 2,141 students and a breakdown of race and ethnicity was shown
- Importance of MURSD experience today for all students in the district
- Dr. Cohen noted the Strategic Plan, Inspire, was developed in 2018
- Outline of the events over the last 2 years; commented progress was made despite the challenges however impact of program has been affected.
- Return of investment allows many amazing programs such as DECA; Music (2s the national average of students); 1:1 learning model program; \$14M in merit scholarship funds; athletics; top 10%; Spanish Immersion program; 1100 pieces of student work on display; Inspired Innovation Center; St. Math, iPads, Math curriculum, small groups;

Efficiencies

- Share Services with Municipal Partners
- Preventive Facility Maintenance
- Shift to Digital Processing for Forms and Assessments
- Reallocation of contractual services to in-district service delivery

Reductions:

- Reduction in teaching positions, adapting to shifting enrollment and needs (Grade 5, Grade 5, Grade 6, HS History, HS English, HS Technology, MS Mandarin, reduced French to .5)
- No Library Media Center Specialist at HS/MS (parent volunteers, 1 library/media aide)
- Contracts for Solar Net Metering supplies the district with over 90% of electricity saving the district over \$100,000 annually.

Savings and Reallocations

- Grant funding: Project Lead the Way (K-12), StMath (K-4), Foundations (K-2), ELL Teacher, Tech Replacement
- Investment in LED lighting in all four schools resulted in a reduction in kWh usage of 25%.
- Reallocated grade 4 teacher from Clough to Memorial ES for enrollment
- Negotiated utility supply agreements to lock in costs at better rates.

SWOT of the District:

<p>STRENGTHS Talented and dedicated staff Forward-thinking strategic plan Parent collaboration and support High quality core instructional materials and technology Commitment to SEL PLTW in grades 7 and 8 Bridge fully staffed. Intervention coordinator to support</p>	<p>Opportunities Innovation Pathways and Grants Community partnerships Shared resources and personnel across both elementary schools. Shared resources and personnel across MS//HS Shared services with municipal partners resources</p>
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<p>MTSS Robust music, art, technology and Physical offering.</p>	<p>Expand use of VHS WIN Block</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES Limited HS tech/ humanities offerings Limited MS world language/wellness Increasing class sizes Staff attrition due to budget uncertainty Limited recurring funds allocated for technology replacement Insufficient athletic facilities</p>	<p>THREATS Negative impact of uncertain budgets on staffing, enrollment, resources, & culture Limited funding beyond fixed costs Aging facilities and infrastructure Reduced state aid</p>

Strategic goals of the district are
Engage: Design authentic learning experiences that integrate Portrait of a Learner competencies and engage students in deeper learning.
Support: Develop and improve multi-tiered systems of support to ensure equitable access to meaningful, grade-appropriate learning through increasing staff understanding of inclusive practices, application of Tier 1 supports, and effective use of student data to inform instruction.
Understanding: Reconnect with our students through a strengths-based approach where students are known well, celebrated, nurtured, and have a sense of belonging and social-emotional curriculum is integrated PK-12.
 This guides what is needed in the budget.

FY23 Budget Development Goals include
Level Services: maintain class sizes, programs, and services that are currently provided to our students.
Critical needs/mandated positions: Address the most critical needs of students as we emerge from the pandemic. Meet mandated requirements.
Strategic Investments: Advance our district’s strategic objectives and initiatives outlined in the district strategic plan Inspire
Partnering with member towns and leveraging grants

Thus, focus is Optimal Class Sizes, Student Safety/Supports and Robust offerings

Key Investments- Proposed Staffing

<i>Maintain Level Services/ Optimal Class Size</i>	<i>Critical Needs/ Student Safety</i>	<i>Critical Needs/ Mandated Positions</i>	<i>Strategic Improvements/ Robust Offerings</i>
Grade 4 Teacher (Clough)	ES Assistant Principal	Library/Media Specialist (HS)	Math/Computer Science Teacher (HS)
.8 Grade 5 Teacher (MS)	Athletic Trainer from PT to FT	Wellness Teacher (MS)	Stipend for eSports and Robotics Club
Tech support staff (shared cost/service with Upton)	School Resource Officers in all four schools (Cost neutral)	English Language Teacher (Grant Funded)	Library/Media Aide (MS) (Reallocate position from HS to MS) (Cost neutral)

Outline of past, present and future planning needs:

<i>Department</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>FY23</i>	<i>Future Planning</i>
Academics	Instructional Coach, Math K-8, Science 6-8, Reading Specialists	ST Math, Foundations, MS Wellness	HS Soc. St., & ELA, MS World Lang, Instructional Coach
Athletics	Added E-Sports, summer clinics to support programing, new uniforms	FT Athletic Trainer, Replace Scoreboards, Cheerleading Mats, Fitness Equipment	Recurring uniform funds, improve fields, resurface gym floor, LT outdoor facility
Facilities	Miscoe backstops, stairs, parking and driveway, Well on football field, Security cameras, Sound system Nipmuc & Miscoe,	Nipmuc Boilers, Miscoe & Clough Water Treatment, Memorial AC Media Center	Roofs, Carpets, Doors, Energy Management, Concrete Stairs, Aging Equipment, AC units
Music, Visual, Fine Arts	Music instruments, Computers for Graphic Arts,	Marching & Concert equipment Return to festivals,	Choral Risers, Instruments, iMacs for Music/Art, Media Arts Instructor, Miscoe Stage Floor
Professional Development	iReady, Thrively, Panorama, Bridges Math, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Applied Behavioral Supports	Multi-tiered Systems of Support, Co-Teaching, Project-Based Learning, Guided Reading	Multi-tiered Systems of Support, Co-Teaching, Project-Based Learning, Early Literacy Instruction
Student Support Services	School Psychologists, Digital Assessments, Adjustment Counselors, BCBA	Skill-based Courses, Specialized programming	PK expansion, Inclusion Teachers, OOD Coordinator, Align Pre-K-12 Services
Technology	1:1 for staff/students, WiFi upgrades, Renew PC/MacBooks	ECF Grant for 7-12 iPads, Streaming equipment,	Recurring Funding for iPads, Additional Tech Support Staff

FY23 Initial Budget Proposal is \$39,909,817. This is a 2.1% increase over last year's request.

State Revenues:

<u>Regional Transportation</u>	<u>Circuit Breaker</u>	<u>Charter School</u>
Governor: \$77,801,545	Governor: \$414,619,357	Governor: \$219,424,271
FY22: \$82,178,615	FY22: \$373,333,860	FY22: \$154,604,742
FY21: \$82,178,615	FY21: \$345,154,803	FY21: \$117,357,887

State Aid – Level-funded for FY23

Chapter 70 (2,100 x \$30/student)	\$12,511,846	\$12,574,216	\$62,370	0.50%
Transportation Reimbursement (est. 75% of FY21 actual)	\$1,269,020	\$1,179,965	(\$89,055)	-7.02%
Charter Tuition Reimbursement	\$24,316	\$51,477	\$27,161	111.70%
Total State Aid	\$13,805,182	\$13,805,658	\$476	0.00%

District Revenue – increase E&D contribution to \$700,000

E&D	\$600,000	\$700,000	\$100,000	16.67%
Vision, Sped Tuition, Interest	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0	0.00%
Debt Service Bond Premium	\$3,309	\$2,206	(\$1,103)	100.00%
Transfers In-Revolving Accts	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0	0.00%
Interest	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	100.00%
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	100.00%
Total School District	\$853,309	\$987,206	\$133,897	15.69%

Upton Assessment –(MLC 56%)

Minimum Local Contribution	\$9,543,250	\$10,105,781	\$562,531	5.89%
Transportation & Fixed Assets (Net of State Aid)	\$1,123,250	\$1,427,631	\$242,674	27.10%
Operational Additional	\$2,437,937	\$2,111,634	(\$326,303)	-13.38%
Subtotal (not including debt)	\$13,104,437	\$13,645,046	\$540,609	4.13%
Debt Service				
Long Term Debt Clough/Memorial School	\$326,809	\$308,467	(\$18,342)	-5.61%
Long Term Debt Miscoe Green Repair	\$79,126	\$77,563	(\$1,563)	-1.98%
Subtotal Debt Service	\$405,935	\$386,030	(\$19,905)	-4.90%
Total Upton Operational Assessment (Including debt)	\$13,510,372	\$14,031,076	\$520,704	3.85%

Mendon Assessment (MLC 44%)

Minimum Local Contribution	\$7,697,151	\$7,935,812	\$238,661	3.10%
Transportation & Fixed Assets (Net of State Aid)	\$895,531	\$1,128,968	\$233,437	26.070%
Operational Additional	\$1,943,689	\$1,651,884	(\$291,805)	-15.01%
Subtotal (not including debt)	\$10,536,371	\$10,716,664	\$180,293	1.71%

Debt Service				
Long Term Debt Clough/Memorial School	\$314,941	\$300,583	(\$14,358)	-4.56%
Long Term Debt Miscoe Green Repair	\$70,164	\$68,631	(\$1,533)	-2.19%
Subtotal Debt Service	\$385,106	\$369,214	(\$15,892)	-4.13%
Total Mendon Operational Assessment (Including debt)	\$10,921,477	\$11,085,878	\$164,401	1.51%

Net Revenue Increase

\$39,090,339	\$39,909,817	\$819,478	2.1%
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Total Estimated Revenue School Choice/Circuit Breaker

	FY22	FY23	\$ Change	% Change
School Choice Appropriation	\$920,000	\$800,000	(\$120,000)	-13.04%
Circuit Breaker Reimbursement	\$774,812	\$896,786	\$121,974	15.74%

Jay detailed the grants the district received in FY22 and the anticipated amount for FY23

Anticipated Expenditure Increase and Decrease”

Salaries - Current Employees	\$970,332	Negotiated 2.5% COLA plus step/lane changes
Salaries - New Positions	\$427,408	Restoration/Level Service/Strategic Investments
Health Insurance	\$284,200	Based on estimated 8% increase
Worcester Retirement	\$88,753	9.6% increase
Transportation	\$83,200	Pre-K - Grade 12 Transportation to/from School
Out-of District Tuition & Transportation	(\$712,167)	24 Students, a Reduction of 7
Application of FY22 IDEA 240 Carryover	(\$322,248)	Carryover Grant Funds must be used in FY23
Total	\$819,478	

Potential Threats:

Non-resident Vocational School (Norfolk Aggie)

For FY23, there will be 9 students from the district. There are 11 new applications however the budget is accounting for only 4 new students. With tuition at \$24,572 for each student, there is the potential of an increase of \$175,000 in tuition charges if the students are accepted and attend. Jay noted

there would not be an increase in transportation. Unfortunately, the district will not know the final enrollment until mid-July at the earliest.

Other potential threats include:

- Tri-County Vocational with tuition at \$18K and transportation at \$46,800 for a total of \$65,800.
- SpEd out of District where current requests are in team process.
- FY23 Health insurance is at 9.6%
- Potential new students who move to district over the summer
- Facility issues could include water treatment, HVAC, Energy Management, Hot Water Tanks and Cost of oil/gas.

Jay noted potential offsets are a lower % increase for health insurance and/or increase to transportation reimbursement.

Jay commented Remaining Budget Variables:

- Health Insurance
- Finalization of non-resident vocational tuitions
- House and Senate budgets
- Potential retirements and staff movement
- Enrollment shifts
- Kindergarten and SI Kindergarten registration

Phil DeZutter commented showing the true operational budget by incorporating the grant monies would be good. It was noted the increase the difference between towns is due to student enrollment.

Phil DeZutter asked about the current year expenditures and how the FY22 budget is performing. It was noted it would be discussed at the Budget Subcommittee.

Next Steps:

- Budget Subcommittee (March 7)
- Mendon Presentation (March 9)
- Budget Hearing (March 14)
- House/Senate Budgets (Mid May)
- Mendon Annual Town Meeting (May 6)
- Upton Annual Town Meeting (May 5)

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND Q & A

Sean Nicholson – impact of grants to the school district. Dr. Cohen stated it depends on the types of grants and described what some of the grants pay and if these grants were not received funds would be needed out of the operational budget. Sean Nicholson commented the work of the staff has greatly helped the district do more

Sean Nicholson asked about salaries line. Jay stated the salaries are about \$23M

Steve Matellian – looking for tracking of student enrollment in the future? Dr. Cohen commented there has been a decline over the last 10 years however the projection is over the 10 years it will increase. NESDEC is projecting the shift between Mendon and Upton could be a 40%/60% shift.

VI. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION OF THE MURSD FY23 BUDGET

APPROVAL OF FY23 Budget

Approval of the FY23 Budget

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve the FY23 Budget (motions follow)

VOTED: Unanimously

Motion #1 To set the operational budget for the **Mendon-Upton Regional School District** for the **2022-2023** fiscal year at **\$39,909,817**, that consists of general operations within the levy limit of **\$39,154,573**, and debt service outside the levy limit of **\$755,244**.

Motion #2 To assess the Town of Mendon **\$11,085,878** that consists of the following:

1. Minimum Local Contribution	\$7,935,812
2. Non-Discretionary Charges (<i>Transportation & Fixed Assets</i>)	\$1,128,968
3. Discretionary Charges (<i>Operational Additional</i>)	\$1,651,884
4. Long Term Debt Clough/Memorial School	\$300,583
5. Long Term Debt Miscoe Green Repair	\$68,631

Motion #3 To assess the Town of Upton **\$14,031,076** that consists of the following:

1. Minimum Local Contribution	\$10,105,781
2. Non-Discretionary Charges (<i>Transportation & Fixed Assets</i>)	\$1,436,868
3. Discretionary Charges (<i>Operational Additional</i>)	\$2,102,397
4. Long Term Debt Clough/Memorial School	\$308,467
5. Long Term Debt Miscoe Green Repair	\$77,563

Motion #4 To appropriate **\$13,805,658** from State Aid that consists of the following:

1. Chapter 70 Funds	\$12,574,216
2. Regional Transportation Reimbursement	\$1,179,965
3. Charter School Tuition Reimbursement	\$51,477

Motion #5 To appropriate **\$987,206** from the following School District Sources:

1. Vision SpEd Contracted Services	\$75,000
2. Transfer-in from Revolving Accounts	\$150,000
3. Medicaid Reimbursement	\$50,000
4. Debt Service Bond Premium	\$2,206
5. E&D Appropriation	\$700,000
6. Interest	\$10,000

Motion #6 To appropriate **\$1,696,786** from the following (*non-operational*) Revolving Accounts:

1. School Choice	\$800,000
2. Circuit Breaker	\$896,786

VII. Other Matters Not Anticipated by The Committee Within 48 Hours of the Posted Meeting

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Field Trip Approval 3/28

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Phil DeZutter to adjourn

VOTED: Unanimously

Sean Nicholson, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath