

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
FOWLER SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HALL
APRIL 26, 2018**

Present: Justin Hemm (Late), Mary Mertsch, Mary Brannelly, Dawn Capello, Bethlyn Houlihan
Administrators: Dr. Robert Gerardi, Jr., Superintendent, Jennifer Gaudet, Assistant
Superintendent, Michelle Resendes, Business Manager

Public Hearing on the proposed FY19 School Budget in accordance with MGL:CH71;S38N.

Ms. Capello made a motion to open the public hearing meeting as Mr. Hemm will be late at 7:00 p.m. 2nd by Ms. Mertsch. The motion passed 4-0.

The School Committee received official correspondence via email from parents and we are required to report it out and attach them to the minutes.

The law states that any correspondence should be attached to the minutes of the meeting. We will not be reading them tonight in order to hear all the audience members here. We also receive emails all year long particularly this time of year.

Mary Brannelly and Mary Mertsch had worked with representatives of the Board of Selectmen (David Gavin and Michelle Steele) and the Finance Committee (Ken Estabrook and Jill Prendergast). We started off the budget request at 7.29 % and when we went into the February public meeting, we had 5.14 %. We then had a \$466K deficit.

We worked well with the sub-committees. We only had a certain amount of money to spend. Two weeks ago we had a deficit of \$466K and we then went before the BOS one more time. The Town Administrator planned for a 10% insurance premium increase. The town had the number of \$227K coming back to the town. The town gave that amount to the school committee by unanimous vote. Next time you see a member of the BOS, please thank them.

Dr. Gerardi said this year we continued to talk to the MEA about difficult budget discussions and we wanted to be positive up until the last minute. We have a document here tonight and these are the difficult decisions we have every year. These are the recommendations for this year. We had to give out layoff letters before we got the extra money. We were also able to rescind letters already.

Ms. Mertsch reviewed the initial list of recommendations for the audience that made up the \$466K.

Public Comments

Marcy Ohs, a sixth grade Special Education Teacher, spoke of the difficulties due to decreasing the guidance staff.

Teacher time is taken away when guidance is taken away. It is very hard on the students when we pull back support staff.

Parent: Asked about the Title I paraprofessionals and the K-8 Instructional coaches.

Parent: Who is responsible for coaching the teachers? We still have one coach.

Parent: There is concern about the actual instruction. We need a plan for the coaching.

Parent: What does MLT stand for? It is the Maynard Leadership Team. This is composed of Principals, Assistant Principals and all Administrative Team.

Dr. Gerardi said that all of these items on the list have been discussed by the MLT.

Terri Morrison – Math Coach

Her position was cut and she wanted to come and tell the committee what a math coach does.

There is a lot of confusion around what coaches do. Main focus is:

1. Professional development
2. Data
3. Intervention

Her focus is in math. In professional development, she works with teachers, parents and in improving student learning. We have a big impact on learning. She has received feedback from parents and teachers.

Title I Intervention has been big here in Maynard and we are very proud of it. We have the need for intervention in math for our students.

Our Title I intervention starts in Kindergarten and we use data to plan Title I intervention. She is concerned that when her role is gone, what will happen to math in Maynard?

She is really sad and concerned that the Title I Paras are going to be cut.

Mr. Charbonneau spoke in support of the Guidance Counselor at the High School.

Ms. Duddy, GM teacher, asked if at any point administrative cuts were added to this reduction list? What are the administrative models in other towns? We have a consultant to assist the administration, is that position going to stay on?

Dr. Gerardi said we have continuously cut the administrative positions every year. This year we are cutting the data position. We have discussed the reductions with the MEA president. We struggled with this and with all the positions.

Ms. Mertsch said that is her third year on budget sub-committee. We really dug into the administrative reductions last year and also compared ourselves to other schools administration.

Ms. Gaudet said that the consultant was brought back for specific reasons. We had a CPR review focusing on EL by DESE, and he had been doing that work all last year. Also, he has been an administrative substitute this year because of the cut back in Assistant Principals last year.

At the last MLT, we invited MEA representatives and felt that teachers were not comfortable debating what teachers to cut. We start by protecting only those positions that are legally and contractually state mandated. In terms of having difficult conversations, no one is taking lightly these decisions. We understand the impact on teachers and the impact on students.

Ms. Capello stopped the discussion on the public hearing at this time.

The School Committee deliberated at 7:40 p.m.

Ms. Mertsch commented that Ms. Morrison has been a tremendous value to the district and the test scores are up. We have had many discussions about the coaching positions.

Ms. Capello questioned what would be the impact of the High School math cut?

Ms. Gaudet said the courses that were eliminated were Accounting I; AP Calculus and Accounting II. Then a decision was made to reallocate the remaining FTE's.

Dr. Gerardi said that in addition, it would jeopardize our CH74 offering.

Ms Brannelly made a motion to approve the FY19 School Committee Budget as presented. 2nd by Ms. Capello.

Mr. Hemm apologized for being late and asked what the number is we are trying to get to? \$239,628.

Mr. DiSilva, BOS Chairman, sent a note to say he hoped to find another \$200K for the schools.

Ms. Houlihan said she understands that we need to make hard decisions and getting money in June does not help us. Another reason to consider a program rather than a person. We ended up cutting custodians last year, because we were higher than other districts in similar size with custodians. We had so many people come to our meetings on their behalf. What is the status with that?

Ms. Capello said the DPW now oversees the custodians.

Ms. Resendes said the town manages the custodians, but their salaries are in our budget. The grounds position custodian also went to the Town.

Dr. Gerardi said we discussed staffing with Aaron Miklosko. Next year they will look at the custodian positions.

Ms. Capello called the motion was on the floor for the FY19 budget approval. The motion passed. 5-0

A motion was made by Ms. Capello to close the public hearing. 2nd by Mr. Hemm. The motion passed 5-0.

The regular session school committee meeting opened at 7:55 p.m.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Brannelly to accept the minutes of April 12, 2018 as written. 2nd by Ms. Houlihan. The motion passed 5-0.

Chairperson's Report

Mr. Hemm opened the regular meeting and was pleased and thankful with the level of email communication that he received. It was very thoughtful and collegial that citizens understood the positions we are placed in and thankful for the level of engagement.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerardi stated that Mr. Hemm's obligation was ALICE training. The last meeting we had a Green Meadow parent who expressed concern about the active shooter presence. For our young parents, they weren't here when we had the forums two year ago. For the younger students, we call it an intruder drill. The safety committee asked to be on the next agenda to give a timeline of what has been happening and update the committee and the decisions they have made. They are also looking at the Sandy Hook Say Something Free Resources.

Ms. Capello said maybe we could make this a part of the Kindergarten introduction.

Ms. Gaudet said the communication task force is working on the first task of building parent handbooks around what you need to know and school buildings procedures.

Dr. Gerardi wanted to thank our MEA negotiations sub-committee and the MEA president for all the work they have done.

Mr. Hemm said there has been some good work done and is thankful for the collaboration.

Student Representative Report

None

School Choice Participation 2018-2019

Principals have identified that no are seats open for the next school year. Dr. Gerardi recommended we remain a school choice district with no available seats in the next school year. A motion was made by Ms. Capello to remain a school choice district with no open seats for the next school year. 2nd by Ms. Mertsch. The motion passed 5-0.

Citizens Comments

Parent: wanted to express her concern about the size of the immersion class. The Kindergarten class was 27 students. The first grade is 28 students. That is an enormous amount of students.

Ms. Gaudet said that Kindergarten and Grade 1 this year are averaging 21. The other classes will average 21and Immersion will remain at 27.

Parent: She was volunteering in grade 1. For the first few months of school she felt it was difficult for the teacher and paraprofessional to take on such large classes. Teachers need to be fully supported.

Next year's class size for Spanish immersion. Grade 3 is 24; Grade 4 is 19; Grade 5 is 22.

Ms. Houlihan asked if the kindergarten class sizes had any help in place to support students and parents.

Ms. Gaudet said that it is important to know that 25-27 is not unusual class size. We continue to work with all students in all classes and grades.

Meg Sullivan, MEA President, appreciated coming to an agreement. She hopes and is encouraged that there is collaboration moving forward, and also that there is more money in June. She also asked for collaboration with teachers if any funds become available.

When we heard that our instructional coaches were being cut, it was a concern. Our literacy coach also helped the immersion teacher that came to Fowler. We are concerned about class sizes in the younger grades. We strive for academic rigor. We strive to keep students here and not leave for other schools. How can we collaborate and continue to move forward when we are faced with cuts?

Mr. Hemm wanted to remind everyone here tonight that we have a revenue issue in this town. This year, more than any other, we spent more time with other town boards. We need to mobilize the citizens to have conversations about what we value in the town. It needs to be a year round conversation with other elected representatives. We need to look at how we increase revenue and spending in town. We have fought the hardest this year and it still wasn't enough. We still had to trim positions. I thank the committee members tonight because of the time and effort in this process and now it's a year round process. If you feel strongly about public education, take that passion, take the values that you are sharing to other elected officials and when you start thinking there is one pot of money, that they understand the message also.

Member's Comments

Ms. Mertsch: Tuesday is voting day. Last year the town gave us \$275K at town meeting and that was not counted as part of our operating budget.

We entered into this budget with a \$275K deficit as a result of that. The money we got this year is part of the operating budget and we can start next year without a deficit. We hope the future is brighter.

Ms. Brannelly said by adding the additional \$227K, it increases our base next year. Hopefully, it should not be as painful.

Ms. Houlihan wanted to thank everyone for everything that you do everyday. I'm sorry we have to have these conversations. Part of the passion and energy conversations help us prioritize. If we can start conversations earlier and turn that towards our whole picture as a town, and people speaking to the town, we need to decide to make rough decisions about the whole town.

Ms. Capello said that there is a bill at the State House now, called the foundation budget review. You can contact Kate Hogan and Jamie Eldridge to support them working on education funding right now. They need to know what is important to us. Kate Hogan fought today for senior citizens funding. As a state we are \$1B per year underfunded in education.

She also thanked those involved in the teacher contract. Great things for the staff and students are coming. We are hopeful that that will pass.

Ms. Brannelly said that in the past, we got interns from local colleges and also we used to have guidance interns.

Ms. Gaudet said we have had high school guidance interns every year.

Also, a reminder for the May 11 Senior Project presentation and they are looking for panel participants. Anyone can contact the high school for more information.

Ms. Houlihan said there are so many good things going on in the district. We need to recognize that for a small district we are rocking it. Even with the cuts, it so obvious how much you all care.

A motion was made by Mr. Hemm to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote to enter into executive session without the intent to return to open session at 8:30 p.m. The motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools