



NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts

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**MEETING MINUTES – March 7, 2022**  
Virtual via Zoom

**PRESENT**

Chairperson	Craig Hansen	Member, Pepperell
Vice-Chairperson	Michael Morgan	Member, At Large ~ Absent
	Randee Rusch	Member, At Large ~ Arrived at 7:06 pm
	Thomas Casey	Member, Pepperell
	Lisa Martin	Member, At Large
	David Carney	Member, Pepperell ~ Absent
	June McNeil	Member, Ashby
	Jessica Funaiole	Member, Townsend
	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend ~ Arrived at 7:11 pm

**ALSO PRESENT**

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Milligan	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
Robin Eibye	Recording Secretary

1. Craig Hansen opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and informed the committee and audience members that the meeting would be recorded.

<b>Roll Call:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	-
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	-
David Carney	-		

2. Mr. Hansen informed the committee and attendees that the North Middlesex Regional School Committee's next scheduled meeting would be held at 7:00 pm on Monday, March 21, 2022.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

*Following review, Lisa Martin moved, and Thomas Casey seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	-
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	-
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 5/0/0.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Patrick McPhee, Ashby resident, expressed his support for the proposed budget and expressed concern over Special Education services moving to Pepperell. Mr. McPhee said he'd like the district to have a counselor in every classroom.
- Kevin Stetson, Ashby resident, said he was alarmed over the proposed budget and Ashby's assessment. Mr. Stetson asked for an explanation on the increase in staff.

**REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Chairperson's Report – C. Hansen
  - Mr. Hansen thanked everyone that participated in the budget development process over the past several months.
2. Student Representative Report – Charlie Desjardins
  - Mr. Desjardins said the high school would host a spring fling dance on Friday and a mental health walk sometime in May.
3. Superintendent's Report – B. Morgan
  - None

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN**

1. Accelerated Repair (L. Martin)
  - Ms. Martin provided an update on the accelerated repairs projects.
  - A discussion ensued about Ashby Elementary School's list of needed repairs.
  - Ashby resident Mr. Stetson talked about the AES lease agreement and asked the district to confirm if they lease the building for \$1.00 annually. Ms. Haines said typically, building leases are for \$1.00 annually.
  - Mr. Stetson expressed concerns over the extensive repairs Ashby Elementary School would need and that Ashby taxpayers would be responsible for funding all the repairs.
  - Superintendent Morgan addressed Mr. Stetson's concern and said it was a complex issue. Addressing the repairs could initiate having to bring the entire building up to current building code standards, which could cost more than the estimated worth of the building.

2. Building Committee (R. Templeton)

- None

3. Finance (L. Martin)

1. FY23 Budget: Discussion and Budget Adoption

*Lisa Martin moved, and Thomas Casey seconded the committee adopt an operational budget for FY2023 of \$ 53,209,628, an FY2023 transportation budget of \$3,982,859, FY2023 debt service of \$ 3,940,472, and to use these funds to calculate FY2023 school assessments for member towns as required by statute. In addition, the committee authorized the use of \$2,045,000 from the Excess and Deficiency Account to offset the FY2023 operational budget.*

A discussion ensued about the proposed 2.38% increase, E & D funding, Chapter 70 funding, and revenue growth.

Mr. Morgan provided an overview of the increase in staff positions in the FY23 proposed budget.

**Additions**

FT E	Location	Position	Salary	Rationale
1.0	DW	Assistant Director of Facilities & Grounds	85,000	Need to establish a second position to assist when the director is unavailable, which cannot currently be accomplished through a stipend. This is really an increase of \$59,000  10k foreman in budget  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16k savings in hiring replacement</li> </ul>
1.0	DW	Custodian/Maint	40000	Additional Custodian/Maint
1.0	DW ES	Teacher	75,000	Provide for a "contingency monies" due to move-ins or a change in homeschooling. This could be utilized at AES

				or SMS depending on class sizes.
0.0	NMS / HBMS	Student Supervisor	70,000	<p>Need for lunch coverage and additional supervision at the middle school level. This has been highly successful at NMRHS. No Change to FTE - Using General Assistant lines</p> <p>In addition, currently the building Principal and Assistant Principal cover lunch duty, which impacts them daily for up to 2 hours that they could be spending in classrooms, etc. FTE's in the budget under General Assistants (increase in amount to cover these positions)</p>
1.0	IT	Technology Technician	65,000	Need for additional support with the significant increase in district-owned devices and the transition of responsibilities for security and communication systems to the Technology Department.
1.2	HS/NMS	Nursing Staff, CNA	47,500	Need for sub-separate special education programming as well as the increase in

				workload due to COVID-19.
1.0	NMS	Therapeutic Learning Teacher	80,000	Class size in the program requires it.
2.0	VB/SMS	Counselors	110,000	Needs for additional social-emotional support due to COVID-19.

**Net Adds - 8.2 FTE**

**Reductions**

- (1.00) FTE HS World language HS (ASL)
- (1.00) FTE HS Sped Teacher not filled
- (0.30) FTE SMS Specialist reduction (0.8 FTE Reduce 0.5 Add TBD)
- (0.13) FTE DWS Specialist Speech/OT/PT
- (1.00) FTE HBMS Team reduction
- (1.00) FTE NMS Team reduction
- (0.10) FTE Adaptive PE
- (1.00) FTE Gateway Teacher (use in district admin)
- 0.79 FTE ADD Para professional net change FY23
- (0.20) FTE All Others

**Total Reductions: -4.94 FTE**

**Net Change 3.26 FTE over FY2022 Budget**

Mr. Morgan said many FTE additions/reductions were addressed by re-assigning roles based on pressing district needs. He went on to say, in essence, the district added 9.2 FTE and reduced it by 5.94 FTE. And, to offer a level-funded budget with regard to staff count, the district would need to reduce the budget by approximately \$200K or 3.26 FTEs.

Randee Rusch discussed updating the regional agreement to include a 5-year rolling average for towns' assessments. Ms. Rusch said she contacted DESE, and the process to update would require state approval before going to the three towns, which would then require a unanimous vote. Therefore, Ms. Rusch said it was not feasible to update the agreement and obtain all three towns' approval before voting on the FY23 budget.

*Randee Rusch moved, and June McNeil seconded the committee post-pone voting on the proposed budget until the week of March 14, 2022.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	No	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	No	Randee Rusch	No
Jessica Funaiole	No	Lisa Martin	No
Thomas Casey	No	Susan Robbins	No
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously failed 0/7/0.*

A discussion ensued about the need to update the regional agreement, and Craig Hansen said he supported updating the regional agreement and presenting it at fall town meetings.

The committee discussed town assessment and contributions. Ms. Haines confirmed Ashby's assessment was 12.56%, Pepperell's assessment was 4.47%, and Townsend's assessment was 4.97%.

A discussion ensued about circuit breaker funding and debt service.

Ms. Rusch and Ms. McNeil said they would support revisiting the budget with hopes of decreasing the proposed budget further.

Ms. McNeil and Ms. Funaiole said they would support using more E & D funds to lower the budget. However, the other committee members discussed their apprehensions about using E & E&D funds to reduce FY23 budgets. Ms. McNeil said that even though the towns were aware of the dangers in using E&D funds, they encouraged the district to do so.

Mr. Casey said the proposed budget was very good, and he fully supported it. Mr. Hansen said income issues, state funding, and transportation funding were the problem.

<b>Roll Call Vote: FY23 Budget Adoption</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	No	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion passed 6/1/0.*

The committee agreed to provide a detailed letter to the towns explaining the reasons behind their vote, which was mainly due to time constraints. And, they were committed to working with the towns to lower the impact of assessment and further decrease the budget. The committee agreed that all three towns needed to work collaboratively with the district and share their budgets and bottom numbers to move forward.

*Susan Robbins moved, and Jessica Funaiole seconded the committee draft a letter to accompany the assessment notification explaining the committee's thought process behind their vote to adopt an operational budget for FY2023 of \$53,209,628 and confirming the committee's unwavering commitment to progress toward lowering town assessments.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

## 2. FY22 Budget Transfer

Ms. Haines provided an overview of the FY22 budget transfer, and a discussion ensued.

*Lisa Martin moved, and Thomas Casey seconded the committee approve the transfer of \$45,790 out of Operations Maintenance Technology and \$97,333.26 out of Instructional Support, and place \$29,560 into Administration - Legal/Audits/Salary, \$90,618.26 into Pupil Services - Nursing Services, and \$22,945 into Payment to OOD and Assessments - School Committee Assessment for a total of \$143,123.26.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

4. Negotiation & Personnel (T. Casey)

- None

5. Policy (R. Rusch)

1. EBCFA Face Coverings

Randee Rusch recommended that the School Committee adopt the EBCFA Face Coverings policy as presented.

*Following discussion, Randee Rusch moved, and June McNeil seconded the committee adopt policy EBCFA Face Coverings as presented immediately.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

Ms. Rusch said the Policy Committee recommended the School Committee approve a first reading of the following policies:

1. EBAB Pest Management
2. DIE-1 Regional School District Audits
3. DJ Purchasing
4. DK-1 Regional School District Payment Procedures
5. DKC Expense Reimbursements

*Following discussion, Randee Rusch moved, and June McNeil seconded the committee approve policy EBAB Pest Management, policy DIE-1 Regional School District Audits, policy DJ Purchasing, policy DK-1 Regional School District Payment Procedures, and policy DKC Expense Reimbursements for first readings as presented.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-



June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

*At 9:28 pm, Thomas Casey moved, and June McNeil seconded the committee adjourn.*

<b>Vote:</b>			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

Documents Reviewed / Referred To:

- ★ 2021 03-07 School Committee Agenda
- ★ 2022 02-10 Minutes
- ★ 2022 02-22 Minutes
- ★ Accounts Payable Warrants
- ★ Payroll Warrants
- ★ Donations
- ★ Student Representative Report
- ★ 2022 03-03 Ashby Letter to School Committee
- ★ 2022 03-03 Pepperell Letter to School Committee
- ★ 2022 03-03 Town Letter to School Committee
- ★ FY23 Budget by Function for Adoption 3-7-22
- ★ FY23 Budget Summary for Adoption 3-7-22
- ★ FY23 Revenue for Adoption 3-7-22
- ★ FY22 Budget Detail 2-25-22
- ★ FY22 Budget Summary 2-25-22
- ★ FY22 Transfer FY22-1
- ★ Policy EBCFA
- ★ Policy EBAB

- ★ Policy DIE-1
- ★ Policy DJ
- ★ Policy DK-1
- ★ Policy DKC

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

**APPROVED:** April 11, 2022

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