



**NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts**

**MINUTES – March 2, 2023**

Virtual

**PRESENT**

Chairperson	Lisa Martin	Member, At-Large
	Randee Rusch	Member, At-Large
	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend
	William Hackler	Citizen Member

**ALSO PRESENT**

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
Robin Eibye	Recording Secretary
Jeremy Hamond	Director of Information Technology
Brad Brooks	Director of Special Education

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

- Lisa Martin opened the meeting at 8:03 a.m. Ms. Martin announced the Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via teleconferencing, practicing social distancing, and in accordance with the Governor’s suspension of specific open meeting laws.

<b>Roll Call:</b>			
Randee Rusch	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
William Hackler	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Brad Morgan	Yes	Nancy Haines	Yes
Robin Eibye	Yes		

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

- *Randee Rusch motioned, and William Hackler seconded to approve the Finance Committee meeting minutes dated February 10, 2023, as presented.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Randee Rusch	Yes	Susan Robbins	Abstain

William Hackler	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
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Vote: The motion passed 3/0/1.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. None

**OLD BUSINESS – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN**

1. FY23 Budget
  - No update
2. FY24 Budget
  - Superintendent Morgan provided an update on State funding and said the funding put the District in a difficult position. Mr. Morgan said he had reviewed the budget multiple times and could possibly get it down to a 4.43% increase over FY23 by using all ESSER funds, eight position reductions, one school bus reduction, and initiating minimum enrollment class sizes at the high school.
  - Nancy Haines said the State’s funding equated to an additional \$30 per student over FY23.
  - Randee Rusch said the Proposition 2 ½ tax levy did not sustain towns over long periods.
  - A discussion ensued about the proposed increase, E & D funding, Chapter 70 funding, Special Education costs, collaborative schools’ increases, ESSER funding, and revenue growth.
  - The Committee discussed eliminating the need for overrides and whether or not the District and towns would vote in favor of needed overrides.
  - Mr. Morgan said if the District used all remaining E & D funding and \$700,000 in School Choice funds, Townsend and Ashby might not need overrides, but Pepperell would still require an override fund the budget. The District would need to get down to a 2.33% increase over FY23 to bring Pepperell anywhere close to where they need to be.
  - A discussion ensued about budget options, staff cuts, contractual obligations, and timelines.
  - Ms. Rusch asked if the District used E & D funds and how it would affect the District’s credit ratings and future borrowing.
  - The Committee discussed budget options and the ramifications.

*Randee Rusch motioned, and William Hackler seconded to recommend a 6.34% increase over FY2023 to the School Committee for approval.*

- The Committee talked about Town Meeting dates and confirmed that Pepperell’s Town Meeting would take place on May 1<sup>st</sup>, Townsend’s Town Meeting would take place on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Ashby’s Town Meeting would take place on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
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Randee Rusch	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
William Hackler	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 4/0/0.

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**NEXT MEETING**

- The Committee agreed to meet again on Friday, March 7, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- *At 8:59 a.m., William Hackler motioned, and Randee Rusch seconded to adjourn.*

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>			
Randee Rusch	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
William Hackler	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 4/0/0.

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Documents Reviewed / Referred to:

- 2023 02-28 Finance Agenda
- 2023 02-10 Finance Minutes

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

**APPROVED:** March 10, 2023

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