

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Gateway Regional School District will provide an exemplary education that challenges all students in an instructional setting appropriate to their needs.

All visitors attending the school committee meeting should sign in at the security booth.

FY' 25 Budget Hearing Minutes

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024

**Gateway Main Complex
Gateway Performing Arts Center**

7:00 P.M.

7:00PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD
Nicole Daviau
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER
Jeana Briggs
Brian Forgue
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON
Pegg Dragon

MIDDLEFIELD
Tasha Strong

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL
Sarah Page

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Assistant Superintendent

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Vanna Maffuccio, Chester Principal
Melissa McCaul, Littville Principal
William Sullivan, Middle/High Principal
Chris Tamburrino, Asst. Pupil Services Dir.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Curt Robie, Ruth Kennedy, Andy Myers, Pegg's partner, Adair Laurel-Cafarella

7:05PM II. FY '25 Budget Public Hearing

- Mrs. Smidy introduced herself. She complimented Ms. Fisk, Deb Kuhn, Scott Caron and staff. There were no findings on the FY '23 Audit. She gave a presentation, which will be on the district website tomorrow.

Summary of Proposed FY '25

- There is an overall budget increase of 3.42%
- Chester is up 4.76% because we are moving an adjustment counselor from a grant to the budget.
- Littleville is up 5.6 %
- Gateway Regional School is up .7%
- District Special Education is up 16.4%
- District is up 4.7%
- Non Foundation is up .03%
- Total FY '25 Budget is up 3.4%
- The total Budget is \$17,971,670.
- Hampshire County Insurance Trust will be at the school committee meeting on March 13 to talk about their increase.

Revenue Projections

- There is an increase in low income and Student Opportunity Act money. We need to keep an eye on it because we have not qualified in the past.
- We no longer have MSBA payback.
- The school committee has decided to roll that money into a capital stabilization account. Hoping to save that money to plan for the future for the roof.
- Andy Myers spoke with Christopher Mason and there is going to be a big push to electrify schools. That is something we should look into when we plan for the roof.
- Mrs. Smidy thanked Andy, Ruth Kennedy for the business card contacts and Curt Robie for his expertise in this process.

Census

- Mrs. Smidy went over the current March 1 census and the comparison from last year to this year.

Minimum Contribution

- Minimum Contribution is set by the state Minimum Contribution, Above Minimum Contribution, Non Foundation and total assessments will be posted online.
- The total town assessment increase is 1.94%

Vocational Student Interest

- Shows the students who applied for next year, as well as how many seniors are graduating from Vocational this year. Does not include those students already there. The state sets the April 1 deadline.
- Mr. Brian Fogue ESSAR money we use for shorter term needs or programs with a set end date. Are we doing something with the extra chapter 70 money?

- Mrs. Smidy said we should be able to count on that money, but it may change. It depends on the census.
- Andy Myers said keeping the assessments under 2% is great.
- Curt Robie asked where we stand on our transportation contract.
- Mrs. Smidy said we didn't have to negotiate this year.
- Ms. Fisk said we have a five year contract and it ends next year. She has reached out to the state to see if she can negotiate just a CPI increase.
- Curt Robie asked if we had touched base with our legislators. They don't fully fund because they want to have competitive bids, but we only get one bid out here in western mass.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said there are legislators that believe they will never fund it because they think it takes away from our ability to negotiate.
- Mrs. Smidy said people are very open about it at meetings.
- Ruth Kennedy said it has been a fight for a long time.
- Ms. Fisk said the first budget is at 80% and we budgeted at 90%.
- Mrs. Smidy is really blessed to work in this district. There are so many staff members and people with integrity working to focus on what is important for students, staying focused.
- Andy Myers has heard at both the federal and state levels there might be money for preschool.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes. Last year we applied for \$750,000 and we didn't get it because we are supposed to partner with 3 daycares, but there aren't three daycares in our district. A good reason why we should receive it. They adjusted the requirements and we applied for it again. The remaining of this year would be \$50,000.00, \$350,000 for next year and \$750,000 for the following year.
- The budget adoption will be next week, Wednesday, March 13, 2024

8:50PM XIV. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart,
 School Committee Secretary