

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES  
Rochester, Massachusetts  
March 26, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.**

*This meeting was conducted in a hybrid format. School Committee, Administrators and the public had the option of meeting in person at Superintendent's Conference Room in the Superintendent's Office, 135 Marion Road, Mattapoisett, MA 02739 or via zoom.*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sharon Hartley (in-person), Katherine Duggan (remote) and Anne Fernandes (in-person).

**ABSENT:** Jason Chisholm and Robin Rounseville

**ADMINISTRATORS:** Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools (in-person) and Howard Barber, Asst. Superintendent of Finance & Operations (in-person).

Chairperson Hartley called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:**

Superintendent Nelson thanked the subcommittee for reconvening as agreed upon at the last meeting. Since then, he worked with Mr. Barber and RMS principal Ms. Letendre to review the proposed budget. They were able to reduce the budget by \$75,000 without reducing staff. He also reached out to the Town yesterday to determine if \$75,000 in reductions would be sufficient. Mr. Barber reviewed reductions that were made, including fuel escalation because it is the first year of the new transportation agreement, but this will need to be added back in next year. Reductions were also made in the professional development line but there is a separate literacy line to support the current literacy initiative. He also discussed reductions in technology and putting a hold on replacing any devices on the regular replacement cycle this year. This would also need to be put back in the proposed budget next year. Another area of reductions was facilities by cutting money added for additional building maintenance.

Superintendent Nelson explained reductions were taken from many areas but the goal was to protect initiatives like literacy and staffing. This is not a budget that has any contingencies and next year will be a tough budget season again. FY25 will have to be closely monitored as to not overspend.

**School Committee Feedback:**

Chairperson Hartley thanked the administration for working on reductions without removing staff.

Ms. Fernandes confirmed that they are preparing to speak to a \$75,000 reduction and if the Town requests more cuts, they will keep the dialogue open. Superintendent Nelson agreed and reminded the subcommittee that long-term planning needs to be considered as these changes are temporary for FY25 and will need to be considered for the FY26 budget, along with special education costs that the district is anticipating.

Motion by Ms. Fernandes to move forward with the proposed budget including the \$75,000 reduction for the Budget Public Hearing this week.

Motion Seconded by Ms. Duggan

ROLL CALL: Hartley: yes, Duggan: yes, Fernandes: yes  
Motion Passed 3-0

Meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Motion by Ms. Fernandes

Motion Seconded by Ms. Duggan

ROLL CALL: Hartley: yes, Duggan: yes, Fernandes: yes

Motion Passed 3-0

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Nelson".

Michael S. Nelson  
Superintendent of Schools