



## East Greenwich School Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 5, 2024  
6:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting: Cole Middle School & Via Zoom

### Minutes

#### Those in attendance

**School Committee:** Ms. Alyson Powell, Chair; Ms. Nicole Bucka, Vice-Chair; Ms. Clare Cecil-Karb (arrived at 6:02pm); Mr. William Hangan; Mr. Kevin Murphy (arrived at 6:05pm); Mr. Tim Munoz; Dr. Eugene Quinn

**Additional Attendees:** Dr. Brian Ricca, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of Student Services; Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mr. Robert Wilmarth, Director of Facilities; Mrs. Amy Healey, School Committee Clerk

#### I. **Call to Order**

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

#### II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

#### III. **Public Comment**

#### IV. **Action Items**

- A. School Committee approval of lease of Auto Scrubbers

*On a motion by Ms. Cecil-Karb, seconded by Mr. Hangan, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the lease. Mr. Murphy was not present for the vote.*

#### V. **Budget Workshop**

- A. Student Services

Mr. Marcaccio began with an explanation of student services and said that it involves a lot of things that go on in the district and is not only special education. Areas include mental health services, MTSS, MLL, homelessness and related services and reading and math intervention. Much of student services overlap with teaching and learning. The

Guiding Question is “Does this meaningfully reflect the “ALL means ALL“ driver of our strategic plan?

- Student Services - Strategic Plan Alignment
  - Priority 1 - Excellence in learning
  - Priority 2 - Distinguished teaching and talented staff
  - Priority 3 - Efficient and innovative systems
  - Priority 4 - Engaged community
- Student Services FY 24 Successes
- Student Services FY 25 Priorities
- Student Services Budget FY 25 - FY 25 Overview
  - Proposed Budget FY 25 \$2,936,845
  - Approved Budget FY 24 \$2,706,110
  - Increase FY 25 → FY 25 8.5%
  - Reasons for increase:
    - Tuitions
    - Contract Staff
    - Inflation

Mr. Marcaccio highlighted both staffing challenges and diplomas opportunities for all.

Dr. Quinn stated that these increased expenses are expected and that it is important to examine dollar amounts, not only percentage increases.

Mr. Munoz suggested changes to the budget presentation in order to make it persuasive.

- show the number of faculty, staff and students touched by these programs.
- align the successes with the priorities of the strategic plan
- show multi-year initiatives
- State the impact on students' lives
- show what will happen if programs are cut
- show the budget in a format other than UCOA

Ms. Bucka pointed out that East Greenwich is well below the state average for out of district placements, that there is no special education consideration in state funding and that professional development is inadequate. Mr. Marcaccio said that professional development funding is included in the teaching and learning budget.

Ms. Cecil-Karb said that it is the community's obligation to provide the best schooling for students even if it means sending them out of district.

Dr. Ricca pointed out that the increase in the student services budget is ½ of 1%.

## B. Facilities

Mr. Wilmarth presented the facilities budget.

- FY 25 Overview - Proposed Budget \$2,536,874
- Facilities, Equipment, Employees
- FY 24 Unbudgeted Expenditures
  - High school roofing repair \$110K
  - High school heating repair \$196K
  - High school FA panel upgrade \$31K
  - Hanaford portable classroom \$135K
  - Meadowbrook FA panel repair \$11K
  - Cole hot water tank replacement \$80K
- Budget Increases
  - Costs previously paid by Town: rubbish, sewer, modular lease
  - Salary and Benefits, Utilities, Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials, Building Improvements
- Fiscal Year 2024 Successes
- FY 25 Considerations

Mr. Wilmarth said that Meadowbrook, Cole and EGHS will be where projects are focused because they are the schools that will stay online.

There was a discussion about how projects will be funded and the need to plan for ongoing maintenance.

Mr. Munoz asked about dedicated funds in the capital reserve.

Dr. Ricca said that the fund balance is being drawn down quickly.

Mr. Munoz asked whether there are other sources of funding available. Mr. Wilmarth replied that he explores grants as they become known.

Ms. Bucka inquired about the cost of services previously covered by the Town now being paid by the District. Ms. Powell said that there needs to be a MOA regarding the change in services.

## C. Personnel and D. Administration

Mrs. Baker presented the Administration and Finance and Personnel budgets

Administration and Finance Budget FY 25

- Fiscal Year 2024 Successes
- FY 25 Overview
  - Proposed budget FY 25 \$4,523,700

- Increases in expenses and new expenses
  - Legal & Settlement Fees \$200,000
  - Local Transportation Increase per contract and additional bus needs \$339,146
  - Local Bus Monitor Increase per contract \$100,500
- Approved budget FY 24 \$3,819,175
- Percentage increase from FY 24 to FY 25 18.4%

#### Personnel Budget FY 25

- FY 25 Overview
  - Proposed budget FY 25 salaries
  - Approved budget FY 24 salaries
  - Percent increase from FY 24 to FY 25
- FY 24 current staffing FTE, funding changes and new positions included in FY 25 budget
  - .40 Facilities Clerk moved to 1.0 FTE
  - Positions acquired from Cares Act, ESSER III, & Title I Grants
    - 1.0 elementary math specialist at Eldredge and Hanaford
    - 1.0 elementary math specialist at Frenchtown and Meadowbrook
    - 1.0 guidance counselor
  - Additional positions added for FY 25 student services or negotiated contracts
    - 4 Paraprofessionals (2 RBT certified)
    - Elementary Grade School Leaders (16)

#### New Personnel Requests FY 25 (unbudgeted) - Cost with benefits

- Social Workers 1.0 (Student Services) - \$104,780 Step 7
  - Guidance Counselor 1.0 (Cole) - \$98,809 Step 7
  - Math Teacher 1.0 (EGHS) - \$119,081 Step 10
  - Spanish Teacher 1.0 (EGHS) - \$127,784 Step 7
  - Custodian Supervisor (District) - \$70,569
  - Building Interns/Substitutes (6) - \$130,794
- Total: \$660,028

Ms. Bucka asked what salaries are not in the personnel budget. Mr. Marcaccio said that would be contracted/purchased professional services.

Ms. Bucka asked why guidance counselors are being added when the special education audit said that we were adequately staffed in that area.

Mr. Podraza explained that the staffing recommendations take into account the use of Title I funding.

Dr. Ricca said that the budget is facing a decision between additional people or buildings and pointed out that the facilities budget consistently is taken from. Ms. Powell talked about the interconnected relationship between the two.

Ms. Bucka said that the special education audit recommended the reallocation of general education paraprofessionals and asked whether that was in the budget. Mr. Marcaccio said that the only general education paraeducators are in kindergarten; all other paraprofessionals have some special education responsibilities. Dr. Ricca said that recommendation will be looked at in the future as well as a different approach to the budget.

Mr. Marcaccio recommended regular updates to the School Committee on the progress of progressive thinking around staffing.

#### E. Information Technology

Mr. Scheib explained that the passing of Dr. Arnoff created a lot of challenges for the department. With no transfer of knowledge, it was necessary to look into how things were done.

- Introduction
  - Director of Technology
  - Systems Administrator
  - SIS Manager
  - Network Specialist
  - Technician
  - Chromebook Repair Technician
- IT - Mission of the East Greenwich Public Schools
- Successes in FY 24 and Continuation in FY 25
  - Virtual Computing Infrastructure Replacement
  - Student Devices
  - New website
  - Enhancing cybersecurity

Ms. Bucka asked about training on the new website platform. Mr. Scheib said that there is extensive training included in the platform. Webmasters need to keep up on training and updates on their pages.

Ms. Bucka asked for an examination of the District's 1:1 device policy. Mr. Scheib recommends talking to teachers and learning about how the devices are being used at each grade level.

Dr. Quinn pointed out that the elimination of the entire IT budget would save only \$500,000. Ms. Powell said that there is a cost of keeping these devices up to date.

Mr. Scheib shared that RIDE has said that all state assessments need to be taken on district devices. Ms. Powell says that simultaneous assessments using devices is beneficial for the testing.

Mr. Scheib was complimented for stepping in and shepherding the department during this time.

## **VI. Adjournment**

*At 8:28 pm, on a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn.*

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey  
School Committee Clerk

*Approved 3-19-24*