

**MINUTES**

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee  
School Committee Meeting - Budget Vote  
Monday, March 25, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.  
Hoosac Valley High School  
125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

**PRESENT:** Mike Mucci, John Duval, Andrew Przystanski, Erin Milne, Mike Henault, Adam Emerson, Robert Tetlow

**ABSENT:**

**OTHERS:** Superintendent Aaron Dean

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**104167 Call to Order**

Chairman Mike Mucci called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**104168 Approval of Minutes - March 11, 2024**

**MOTION:** On Motion of John Duval and second by Andy Przystanski:

VOTED: to approve the March 11, 2024 School Committee minutes. The vote was unanimous.

**104169 Public Comment or Questions - None**

**104170 Report of Business Manager - discuss at budget vote section**

**104171 Communications -**

**A. School Calendar** - Aaron presented the FY25 school calendar to the committee. Staff will be starting 2 days before labor day weekend. Students will come back September 3, 2024. No MOU needed. ACTA voted on it. 2 options: one starting before labor day and one starting after labor. Scott Balawender spoke about the calendar. Some people were upset about the vote. Responses from teachers that they were starting so late. Scott put it up for a vote, according to bylaws, was legal. 75% wanted option A - starting before labor day. Because of DEI going on, questions came up about naming Good Friday. This current calendar is marked as "off", not listed as Good Friday. Discussed about having a set date sometime in September/October for the following year for starting dates.

**MOTION:** On Motion of Mike Henault and second by Erin Milne:

VOTED: to approve the FY25 School Calendar. The vote was unanimous.

**B. FY25 School Choice Numbers** - Aaron discussed the school choice openings with the committee. School Choice openings were limited during the covid years. Looking at class sizes for the upcoming school year, looking to fill some seats. Receive \$5,000 per student for school choice openings. Looking to expand our enrollment at the high school with the pathways. Grade 9 number looks like it will be closer to 60, pathways had a positive impact for students staying with us. Very encouraging. See attached openings.

**MOTION:** On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by John Duval:

VOTED: to approve the FY25 School Choice Numbers. The vote was unanimous.

**C. SOA Plan Vote** - Aaron went over the plan with the committee. Every year, we have to update a plan on how we use funds through the SOA. Need to justify how we spend the money. Aaron discussed positions that benefit from this plan and funds received. Positions that are needed to address the needs of our students. We had SIP and DIP that have outlined challenges and work we have been doing as a district. This plan formalizes it and how it relates to the dollars. The summary is about how we systemized our curriculum and how we review it. ELA, then proceeded to math. We have processes to look at it and be able to get high quality materials in our classrooms. Looked at P.D. the work we are doing with instructional practices. Looking at data points in terms of disparity with both the ELA and Math MCAS performance of our students with disabilities vs. all students. Going into this year, we did a lot of work with Math instruction at the middle school. Instituted things such as learning labs, planning lessons with our staff, teaching lessons and having staff observe. Looking at ways we can provide all students with access to the curriculum. We see that students with disabilities are not coming to school as much as their peers. 42.1% of students with disabilities are chronically absent in relation to 39.2% for all students; 45.1% of low income students are chronically absent compared to 39.2% for all students. Looking at engagement levels for our students. Picked three areas that we focused on as a district and map out how we are spending the money. One area is our pathways programs, introducing students to applied learning experiences. Aaron also discussed and went over the metrics. Discussed the CPPI grant - none of this would have happened without the SOA funds, which gives us free universal Pre-K programs. We get high quality materials, coaching and professional development. In the next couple years, we will receive \$2,000,000 in funding for this program. See attached SOA plan. This plan will get submitted to the state. Looking for approval from the committee. Erin Milne: what DESE really wants out of the SOA is to talk directly on how you are going to close the attainment gap. The things that you highlight, great things that the district is doing, but doesn't target the groups that are having disparities. Aaron agreed and disagreed. If you look at the metrics, we are tracking the attendance. If you look at the groups with disparities they are struggling in particular with math and our professional development is centered around math programming, developing teaching skills, developing the teachers skills to meet their needs in the classroom, are they performing those skills. While you don't see it directly because of the format of this plan, it really is geared to engage our hard to engage students and develop our staff's skill to meet the needs of those students in the classrooms. Erin Milne: The one around the high level practices with persons with disabilities is clear, but the high quality pathways, it will engage our students with disabilities, but not laid out in the plan on how those students are targeted in the support. Kristen: part of the innovation pathways designation application, we have to specifically outline a plan for access to our students with disabilities, we do have a clearly articulated plan for the pathways and the whole goal is to emulate that structure in all of the pathways whether they get innovation pathway designated or not, something we should include because as part of the pathways means access for all. The benefits to the IP pathways is that all students get access to the entire level courses and we do have a plan that outlines that. Erin Milne: the way it currently reads, it doesn't highlight that. Aaron: this format is not the easiest format to highlight everything. They are looking for some generalizations from us in terms of how this connects to our spending and the work we are doing, this plan needs to be submitted by April 1st. Could have put 10 different things that we are doing and connected it to our DIP and SIP and our plan that we have for the state for our Middle School. The other piece is the targets are not included in this plan, but DESE has it and it is linked to this plan. Erin: target students groups, you checked students with disabilities and low income, we talked about disabilities, but don't see low income students mentioned. Aaron: one of the groups that we are having trouble engaging and that was the engagement strategies we are focused on. As a district we are between 30-40% of students struggling with attendance. Mike Henault: the strategies in here are all basically Tier 1 strategies, to Aaron's point not specifically targeting that group, that in a situation were at with the improvement plans, it is a focus on Tier 1 while bringing up everyone is necessary, before we start targeting Tier 2 and Tier 3 the targets that are set by DESE are all disaggregated, a target for low income, high need students, already measuring whether this plan is successful for those groups of students. It asked you to pick 3 out of the 10 areas, but you are already doing things for all 10 areas. The best intervention for all students is strong Tier 1 instruction. Mike Henault thinks Aaron is on the right track with the plan. Would like to make a motion to accept, second by John Duval. Mike Mucci: more discussion? Erin Milne wished she could have seen the document before the meeting. Adam Emerson: at some point would like some feedback regarding absenteeism. Which grades are most problematic? One population over another? It is everywhere, we are not alone. Aaron: We have attendance teams at each level that are working on this. We have strategies, and have made some progress. Every spring does a check in on these plans Erin would like to propose an amendment to the plan: making it clear in the narrative, a sentence or two for each of these, how they are aligned with the targeted support groups, very clear that you know what that is, but it is not in the plan and would feel better voting for it with the promise that it would be added. Kristen Palatt will make that change.

**MOTION:** On Motion of Mike Henault and second by John Duval:

VOTED: to approve the amendment to the SOA plan. The vote was unanimous.

**104171 Report of Superintendent -**

**A. Budget Vote-** Erika: the budget votes were given to the committee, the towns assessment and E & D - first vote nothing has changed - wanted to highlight - assessment breakdown from last meeting, what you see for the towns are slightly different. The last 2 pages in the packet are the assessment calculation steps. The change from the last meeting was pulling out \$170,000 of E&D that specifically is being utilized for capital and not reducing foundation with that \$170,000 but moving it to capital. All you see in capital is the building project bonds, which is what our intentions were in the first place. You will see a shift of funding being utilized in over minimum and being put to capital. This does not change the bottom line. Our budget is still what was proposed before. These splits between Towns for over minimum and capital are so similar, only resulting in a \$730.00 change in Adams and Cheshire, Adams continuing to decrease and Cheshire increasing to \$730.00, due to enrollment, just wanted to point it out because the numbers from assessment shifted slightly from what you received 2 weeks ago.

**School Committee Order SC2402 - FY2025 Budget:**

Submitted herein for your approval is the FY2025 School Committee Budget totaling \$22,481,719. The FY2025 Budget consists of:

Foundation Budget:	\$20,451,161
Transportation Budget:	\$ 979,458
Capital Budget	<u>\$ 1,051,100</u>
Total:	\$22,481,719

**MOTION:** On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: To approve S.C. Order SC2402. The vote was unanimous.

**School Committee Order SC2403 - FY2025 Assessment Town of Adams:**

Submitted herein for your approval is the FY2025 Assessment to the Town of Adams for its portion of the Adopted FY2025 School Committee Budget in accordance with the Hoosac Valley Regional School District Agreement. The Assessment is as follows:

Foundation Budget:	\$ 5,382,305
Transportation Budget:	\$ 440,507
Capital Budget	<u>\$ 661,611</u>
Total:	\$ 6,484,422

**MOTION:** On Motion of John Duval and second by Andy Przystanski:

VOTED: To approve S.C. Order SC2403. The vote was unanimous.

**School Committee Order SC2404- FY2025 Assessment Town of Cheshire:**

Submitted herein for your approval is the FY2025 Assessment to the Town of Cheshire for its portion of the Adopted FY2025 School Committee Budget in accordance with the Hoosac Valley Regional School District Agreement. The Assessment is as follows:

Foundation Budget:	\$ 2,756,515
Transportation Budget:	\$ 135,355
Capital Budget	<u>\$ 207,126</u>
Total:	\$ 3,098,995

**MOTION:** On Motion by Adam Emerson and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: To approve S.C. Order SC2404. The vote was unanimous.

**School Committee Order SC2405 - Appropriation from Certified E & D:**

Submitted herein for your approval is a request to appropriate \$245,000 from E & D as certified by the Department of Revenue for the purpose of reducing the FY2025 Foundation Budget assessments to the member towns.

Be it hereby ordered that the \$245,000 be appropriated from certified E & D for the purpose of reducing the FY2025 Foundation Budget assessments to the members Towns of Adams and Cheshire

**MOTION:** On Motion by Erin Milne and second by John Duval:

VOTED: To approve S.C. Order SC2405. The vote was unanimous.

**104173** Chairman's Report - None

**104174** Unfinished Business - None

**104175** New Business -

**104176** Action Items

**104177** For the Good of the Order

John Duval: congratulations to the girls/boys basketball teams and thanked Mike Mucci for his last 7 years on the board.

Adam Emerson: congratulations to the team, and thanked Mike, not only for your service but his leadership as you have been chair more than you should have been. Brought an approach that was very well balanced.

Erin Milne: congratulations to basketball teams and cheerleaders and a greatest musical.

Andy Przystanski: Thanked Mike for his service, as a new member has been great learning from his perspective

Mike Mucci: the musical was fantastic. Been an honor to be a part of this committee for 7 years. A tremendous commitment of time, but giving to the community, took a lot of pride in. Enjoyed working with everyone and wishes continued success to the school district.

**MOTION:** On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary