

**MARION SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MARION PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Marion, Massachusetts**

**March 26, 2024  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
16 Spring Street, Marion, MA 02738**

Regular meeting of the Marion School Committee was held on Thursday, March 26, 2024 and called to order by Chairperson Nye, at 6:02pm.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** April Nye, Chairperson (in-person), Mary Beauregard (remote), Nichole Nye McGaffey (in-person) and Nichole Daniel (in-person).

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** Michelle Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools (in-person); Sharlene Fedoworicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Doreen Lopes, Early Childhood Director (as Principal) (in-person); Melissa Wilcox, Recording Secretary (in-person); staff, parents, members of the press and public.

Chairperson Nye, stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the agenda has been set, the meeting is being recorded, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the agenda will be followed as outlined. Chairperson Nye read the following statement: *This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format. School Committee, Administrators and the public will have the option of meeting in person at the Community Room of the Sippican School located at 16 Spring Street, Marion, MA 02738 or via zoom.*

**FY25 Budget Public Hearing**

Chairperson Nye opened the Budget Public Hearing at 6:03pm.

Superintendent Nelson welcomed the school committee to the meeting. He began by thanking Ms. Nye and Ms. Nye McGaffey for their participation on the Budget Subcommittee. He thanked Mr. Barber for his financial leadership throughout this process, along with the department heads and administration. They have had very candid conversations throughout a difficult budget season. He acknowledged that all of the districts in the tri-town, along with most nation-wide are in a similar situation. As discussed with the Budget Subcommittee, and the entire school committee in recent regular meetings, the cost of doing business and inflation along with contractual obligations, transportation and special educations have been leading cost drivers this year. He continued to thank Town Administrator, Geoff Gorman, along with Heather O'Brien, Judy Mooney, Shay Assad and Toby Burr, for their support and collaboration. He believes the best decisions can be achieved by having many people at the table working for the collective good. He continued that this year, they all had to think creatively and review each and every resource.

Mr. Barber thanked the Sippican school staff and administration for their collaboration during this budget season. He also thanked the leadership team, along with the Town Administrator, Finance Committee and the Select Board. Mr. Barber began his presentation reviewing the vision of the districts:

- Is dedicated to creating a safe and nurturing learning environment that offers inclusive and engaging educational experiences.
- Through collaborative relationships with our school community members, we strive to foster a respectful culture that prioritizes academic excellence and social emotional readiness.
- Our primary objective is to provide every student with the necessary skills and developed mindset to embrace future opportunities and become responsible, lifelong learners and contributing global citizens.

Next, he reviewed the core values of the districts:

**THINK:**

Cultivate a culture of academic rigor and integrity, which encourages critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and effective communication.

**LEARN:**

Strive for academic excellence in educating the whole child through authentic, rigorous and evidence-based learning opportunities that foster real world application and a continuous pursuit of learning.

**CARE:**

Ensure a caring and safe environment for all school community members by promoting a sense of belonging and respect for all.

Mr. Barber explained the budget priorities:

- Ensuring High Expectations of Teaching and Learning for All Students
- Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness Measures
- Strategic Staffing and Professional Development
- Data-Driven Decision-Making

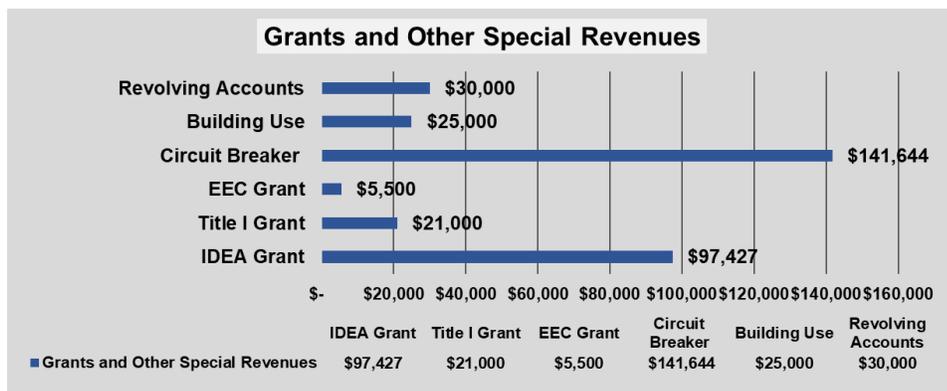
Next, Mr. Barber explained the budget development process that mainly takes place October through May.

- **Preparation and Planning:**
  - Superintendent, school administrators and other stakeholders analyze past budgets, assess current financial status and set budgetary goals for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Budget Proposal Creation:**
  - Based on the planning stage, a preliminary budget proposal is developed. This proposal outlines anticipated revenues, expenditures and allocations for different programs and departments.
  - The budget proposal may include funding for personnel salaries, benefits, instructional materials, technology, facilities maintenance, transportation and other operational costs.
- **Budget Review and Revision:**
  - The preliminary budget proposal(s) undergoes a thorough review by school administrators and budget subcommittee.
  - Adjustments and revisions are made based on feedback, financial constraints and any changes in priorities or mandates.
- **Input and Hearings:**
  - Superintendent holds meetings where the school’s Budget Subcommittee, Town Administrator and Town Representatives can provide input, ask questions and provide feedback about the budget proposal.
  - Feedback from the attendees may influence further revisions to the budget.
- **School Committee Budget Approval:**
  - After incorporating feedback and making necessary adjustments, the final Superintendent’s Budget proposal is presented to the School Committee and community at a Budget Public Hearing for approval.
  - The School Committee reviews the budget, conducts discussions and may vote to approve or make additional changes before finalizing the budget.
- **Final Budget Approval:**
  - Once the budget is approved by the School Committee, the School Committee’s Proposed Budget is presented at the Annual Town Meeting.
  - The Superintendent or designated representative attends the Annual Town Meeting to offer any additional information in support of the School Committee’s Proposed Budget.

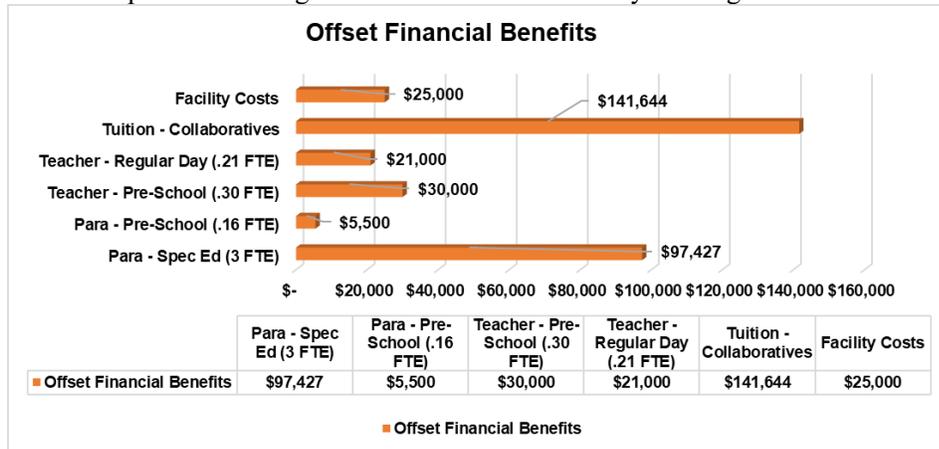
Mr. Barber reviewed next the financial overview of the budget, which is broken into two sections; grants and other special revenues, and general funds. Grants and other special revenues are alternative funding used to supplement and reduce necessary general funds. Below shows buildings and departments supplemented by alternate funding.

<u>Building/ Department</u>	<u>Funding Offsets</u>
Sippican School	\$ 153,927
Student Services	\$ 141,644
Facilities	\$ 25,000
<b>Total FY25 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 320,571</b>

Mr. Barber explained this graph, which shows where this funding comes from.



He then explained the usage of the funds as illustrated by the diagram below.



Next, Mr. Barber reviewed general funds, which is the main sourcing for academics, student services, facilities, technology and transportation. The main budgetary groups are shown below.

Building/ Department	Budget Amounts
Sippican School	\$ 4,727,449
Central Office	\$ 217,173
Student Services	\$ 801,678
Transportation	\$ 719,414
Technology	\$ 108,336
Facilities	\$ 506,730
<b>Total FY25 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$ 7,080,780</b>
<b>Total FY24 Approved Budget</b>	<b>\$ 6,666,193</b>
	<b>\$ 414,587</b>
	<b>6.22%</b>

Next, Mr. Barber reviewed a comparison between FY24 and FY25.

Building/ Department	Fiscal Year 2025	Fiscal Year 2024	Department Changes
Sippican	\$ 4,727,449	\$ 4,569,544	\$ 157,905
Central Office	\$ 217,173	\$ 213,602	\$ 3,571
Student Services	\$ 801,678	\$ 757,371	\$ 44,307
Transportation	\$ 719,414	\$ 518,500	\$ 200,914
Technology	\$ 108,336	\$ 119,877	\$ (11,541)
Facilities	\$ 506,730	\$ 487,299	\$ 19,431
<b>Total Marion Budget</b>	<b>\$ 7,080,780</b>	<b>\$ 6,666,193</b>	<b>\$ 414,587</b>

Mr. Barber also reviewed a comparison by department.

Department Code	Department	Proposed Fiscal	Approved Fiscal	Budget Variance	Proposed	Approved	FTE
		Year 2025	Year 2024		Fiscal Year 2025 FTE	Fiscal Year 2024 FTE	Variance
001	SCHOOL COMMITTEE	\$ 8,475	\$ 8,475	\$ -	-	-	-
004	SUPERINTENDENTS OFFICE	\$ 169,648	\$ 161,077	\$ 8,571	1.448	1.427	0.021
007	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	\$ 326,024	\$ 317,544	\$ 8,480	3.308	3.308	-
010	CLASSROOM TEACHERS	\$ 1,847,368	\$ 1,813,305	\$ 34,063	18.000	18.000	-
013	KINDERGARTEN	\$ 293,019	\$ 329,692	\$ (36,673)	4.000	4.000	-
016	ART PROGRAM	\$ 62,564	\$ 57,988	\$ 4,576	1.000	1.000	-
024	ELL PROGRAM	\$ 21,200	\$ 18,589	\$ 2,611	0.200	0.200	-
025	ENGLISH	\$ 249,858	\$ 206,928	\$ 42,930	4.000	3.600	0.400
037	MATHEMATICS	\$ 4,950	\$ 4,950	\$ -	-	-	-
040	MEDIA SERVICES	\$ 107,573	\$ 105,534	\$ 2,039	1.000	1.000	-
043	MUSIC	\$ 208,256	\$ 207,968	\$ 288	2.000	2.000	-
049	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	\$ 160,896	\$ 149,584	\$ 11,312	2.000	2.000	-
052	SCIENCE	\$ 4,950	\$ 4,950	\$ -	-	-	-
055	SOCIAL STUDIES	\$ 4,950	\$ 4,950	\$ -	-	-	-
061	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	\$ 36,500	\$ 41,500	\$ (5,000)	-	-	-
067	ENRICHMENT PROGRAM	\$ 101,544	\$ 93,849	\$ 7,695	1.000	1.000	-
076	HEALTH SERVICES	\$ 77,491	\$ 71,811	\$ 5,680	2.000	2.000	-
079	TRANSPORTATION	\$ 325,000	\$ 247,000	\$ 78,000	-	-	-
085	SCHOOL SECURITY	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ -	-	-	-
088	OPERATION & MAINTENANCE	\$ 506,730	\$ 487,299	\$ 19,431	1.161	1.159	0.002
093	COMPUTER PROGRAM	\$ 108,336	\$ 119,877	\$ (11,541)	0.805	0.952	(0.147)
098	EMPLOYEE SEPARATION	\$ -	\$ 9,387	\$ (9,387)	-	-	-
100	SPECIAL NEEDS ADMINISTRATION	\$ 51,313	\$ 49,391	\$ 1,922	0.322	0.317	0.005
102	PROJECT GROW	\$ 125,316	\$ 122,130	\$ 3,186	2.769	2.769	-
103	LEARNING SUPPORT CENTER	\$ 804,949	\$ 745,801	\$ 59,148	18.000	17.400	0.600
118	SPEECH	\$ 218,349	\$ 213,887	\$ 4,462	1.000	1.000	-
121	SUPPORT SERVICES	\$ 261,388	\$ 260,260	\$ 1,128	1.000	1.000	-
127	PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES	\$ 227,555	\$ 212,186	\$ 15,369	3.000	3.000	-
130	SPED TRANSPORTATION	\$ 370,414	\$ 299,931	\$ 70,483	-	-	-
133	SPED PROGRAMS W/OTHERS	\$ 394,665	\$ 298,850	\$ 95,815	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$ 7,080,780</b>	<b>\$ 6,666,193</b>	<b>\$ 414,587</b>	<b>68.012</b>	<b>67.132</b>	<b>0.881</b>

Mr. Barber explained the main changes to the FY25 proposed budget were due to contractual obligations, increased tuition placement costs in special education, equipment reduction in technology, a significant increase in transportation and an increase in custodial contracted services.

Next, Mr. Barber discussed the main reasons of adjustments. In building based expenses, union compensation along with 0.4 FTE Adjusted Teacher in Special Education and 0.6 FTE Adjusted Teacher - Reading Specialist was an estimated \$157,000 increase. In academics and professional development, a \$5,000 decrease was reflected in literacy core program and development line items. For student services, changes in programs of need was accounted for in the proposed budget for an increase of about \$45,000. In facilities, new contract agreement rates contributed to an increase of \$30,000. In technology, a \$12,000 decrease was accounted for in a programming consultant and educational equipment. In transportation, the new three-year bus contract accounted for \$85,000 increase in regular day transportation and an additional \$123,000 increase due to placement and route changes for special needs transportation.

Mr. Barber then reviewed the Governor's proposed FY25, which has a state Chapter 70 aid increase of \$11,640 or 0.8% above Fiscal Year 2024.

**Comparison to FY24**

	FY24	FY25	Change	Pct Chg
Enrollment	401	388	-13	-3.24%
Foundation budget	5,068,217	5,105,842	37,625	0.74%
Required district contribution	3,913,467	3,952,749	39,282	1.00%
Chapter 70 aid	<b>1,154,750</b>	<b>1,166,390</b>	<b>11,640</b>	<b>1.0080%</b>
Required net school spending (NSS)	5,068,217	5,119,139	50,922	1.00%
Target aid share	17.50%	17.50%		
C70 % of foundation	22.78%	22.84%		
Required NSS % of foundation	100.00%	100.26%		

Mr. Barber concluded the presentation with the following proposed budget.

Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget	\$ 7,080,780
Fiscal Year 2024 Approved Budget	<u>\$ 6,666,193</u>
Net Increase:	<u>\$ 414,587</u>
Net Percentage Increase	6.22%

**School Committee Feedback:**

Chairperson Nye thanked Mr. Barber for hard work during a difficult budget season. Ms. Daniel thanked Mr. Barber as well. She also thanked Superintendent Nelson, Mr. Barber and the administration for keeping the entire school committee in the loop throughout the budget season; therefore she felt very informed and did not have any additional questions.

Chairperson Nye opened the hearing up to any public comments/feedback in-person or via zoom. There were no public comments. Chairperson Nye closed the Budget Public Hearing at 6:33pm.

#### **IV. General**

##### **A. Approval of FY25 Budget**

###### Recommendation

That the School Committee review and approve the FY25 Budget.

MOTION: by Ms. Nye McGaffey to approve the Superintendent's Proposed Fiscal Year June 30, 2025 Budget in the total amount of \$7,080,780 for the Marion Public Schools.

SECONDED: Ms. Daniel

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beaugard; yes

Superintendent Nelson offered closing remarks, thanking Ms. Daniel for her sentiments because it is nice when the entire school committee feels informed throughout the entire process. He appreciates the willingness to have difficult conversations, working through the decision of priorities and maximizing funding and resources in the district. He thinks they have prioritized teachers and staff and is grateful for a strong strategic plan and school improvement plans, which help inform decisions in the budget process as initiatives are well outlined. He reminded the school committee that Marion, and the other districts in the tri-town always chase every competitive grant available and this year have had a grant to accept at almost every school committee meeting. He also reminded them that the core literacy program was 95% funded by grants. He again thanked the administration, town leaders and select board for their collaboration. They will also continue conversations around other supplemental finding for capital improvements and other support such as the Tabor funding which provided assistance with playground refurbishments at Sippican, which will be opening back up to students tomorrow.

##### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to adjourn at 6:38pm

SECONDED: Ms. Nye McGaffey

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beaugard; yes

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Melissa Wilcox**