



Cohasset Public Schools
 143 Pond Street
 Cohasset, MA 02025
Continuing the Commitment to Excellence
Cohasset School Committee Meeting

Public Budget Hearing and School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Virtual Access available via Zoom and Facebook

In Attendance: Craig MacLellan, Chairman
 Ashley Colleary
 Paul Kearney
 Ellen Maher
 Lydia St. Onge

Also, in Attendance: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent
 Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent
 Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations
 Caroline Peterson, Student Advisor

Call to Order and Roll Call - Chairman MacLellan called the Budget Hearing to order at 5:31 p.m.

Roll Call: Ashley Colleary - Present, Paul Kearney - Present, Ellen Maher – present, Lydia St. Onge - Present, Craig MacLellan - Present.

Budget Public Hearing – Susan Owen presents Cohasset Public Schools FY22 Budget PowerPoint

- FY22 Budget Priorities: Elementary Numeracy, Instructional Technology, Social Emotional Learning, Safety & Facilities, Addressing Learning Gaps

- Requested School Budget

FY2021 Appropriated Budget	\$20,960,856	
Contractual Salary Obligations	\$666,442	3.2%
Decrease in Circuit Breaker Funding	\$125,732	0.60%
Decrease in Special Education Tuitions	(\$8,111)	-0.04%
Projected Retirement Savings	(\$140,000)	-0.67%
Staffing/Other Requests	\$255,000	1.2%
Reductions	(\$175,487)	-.84%
FY2022 Requested Budget	\$21,684,432	3.45%

- Requested School Budget increases

.50 Increase High School Social Studies Teacher	\$40,000	
1.0 Add Middle School Reading Specialist	\$60,000	
1.0 Add Computer Science/ Technology Specialist Middle/ High	\$60,000	
1.0 Add Grade 7 SPED Teacher	\$25,000	
Begin process of reducing FD Kindergarten Tuition	\$25,000	
Staffing/ Other Requests	\$255,000	1.22%

- Requested School Budget reductions

FY2021 Appropriated Budget	\$20,960,856
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(.50) 1.0 Retirement SS Teacher MS – reduced to .50 (enrollment)	(\$57,000)
(1.0) ESP Osgood – position not filled in FY21 (not needed)	(\$22,987)
(.50) Elementary Teacher moved to METCO Grant	(\$44,000)
Decrease utilities based on historical data	(\$30,000)
Decrease to supplies/ materials DW	(\$21,500)
Staffing/ Other Requests	(\$175,487) (.84%)

- Budget worksheet shared
 - FY21 Budget - \$20,960,856
 - FY22 Increase Needed - \$723,576
 - Total FY22 Budget Requested - \$21,684,432
 - 3.46% percent increase
- Per pupil spending, FTE information, enrollment for 2020 – 2021 and projected enrollment for 2021 - 2022 was shared broken down, Historical look at circuit breaker fund FY17 – FY21
- Osgood Priorities
 - To support social emotional well-being for students at the Osgood
 - To strengthen cultural competency & Responsiveness throughout the Osgood community
 - To format MTSS – Multi-Tiered System of Support, academic and social emotional, ensure all stakeholders can access and understand this MTSS
 - Continue to support Co-Teaching and Inclusive practices, K-2
 - To implement Math Curriculum & Support grades K-2
 - To Establish and evaluate assessments being used and analyze data to drive instruction for students to close any achievement gaps
 - To continue upkeep of the facility
- Deer Hill School Priorities
 - Cultural Competency & Responsiveness
 - Math Curriculum Implementation & Support
 - Purposeful Integration of Technology
 - Social Emotional (SEL) & Student Mental Health/ Wellness
 - MTSS Multi-Tiered System of Support School Facilities & Environment (Capital)
- CMS
 - MTSS Multi-Tiered System of Support
 - Develop a unique middle school culture
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) & Student Mental health/ Wellness
 - Cultural Competency & Responsiveness
 - Increase community Involvement in our school
- CHS

In line with the Curriculum Advancement, SEL, and UdL goals of the district, requests seek to align the district to meet:



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- The changing demands of the student academic profile (need for more authentic learning opportunities and academic electives)
- The changing demands of the student needs profile (i.e. increase in student anxiety, depression, school refusal, and unanticipated consequences of COVID-19).
- Future Budget Concerns
 - Introduction of free kindergarten
 - Development of new five-year strategic plan
 - Ongoing need to support social emotional learning
 - Enrollment trends
 - Technology integration
 - Computer science curriculum

Mrs. Maher clarified that there is a 1.5 FTE being reported but the .5 change is due to the shift of half a salary to the METCO budget. There is no change in staffing.

Mrs. Colleary clarified that we are developing a 3-year strategic plan as opposed to a 5-year strategic plan.

Mr. Kearney expressed his thanks to all who worked on the budget. He also hopes to recap the budget presentation during the regular meeting so that a larger audience can hear it.

Motion to close the public hearing by Mrs. Maher, seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll Call vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Ellen Maher – Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan – Aye

Call to Order and Roll Call - Chairman MacLellan called the Budget Hearing to order at 6:01 p.m.

Roll Call: Ashley Colleary - Present, Paul Kearney - Present, Ellen Maher – present, Lydia St. Onge - Present, Craig MacLellan - Present.

Public Comment - None

Superintendent's Report – We have had an exciting week. All elementary students have been brought back to school full time in person. He expressed thanks to all who make this happen. Dr. Sullivan shared photographs of the Osgood and Deer Hill with all students and staff back full time.

COVID update – as of last Thursday, we are still in the red. In January we had 31 school community members who contacted COVID and we had 4 in February. Of the last four weeks in session, we've had one case in the school community.

Osgood and Deer Hill drop off and pick up is a massive task because of our limitation for bussing. The cohort timing is a window that allows for spacing. Please arrive at the allotted time for your cohort so that traffic may flow. Please stick to your cohort window and keep the placards up in your car window to help drop off and pickup move efficiently.

Student Advisor Update – Caroline Peterson – As winter sports wrap up it is cool to see a lot of students get recognized by the south shore league. The entire hockey team was recognized for the sportsmanship award! A lot of seniors are being recognized as south shore all-stars, all scholastics, great accomplishments for our students. Now football is taking off. The first scrimmaged is on Friday and the players are excited



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since they didn't get to play in the fall. Principal Scott met with all of the seniors. Parents and school leadership have been coming up with plans for the spring. This week Model UN is taking place virtually. Everyone is getting through day by day. A lot more people are in person on the days they're supposed to be for cohort a and b which is a testament to people being vigilant and to contact tracing. It's really exciting to see the elementary kids back in the building. They all look so happy!

Mrs. Colleary asked if she's had any opportunity to talk to students about how they'd feel about going back to school for more in person days.

Caroline said that the feedback is mixed because people are excited to be back at school and to see friends but it's a matter of space for many. It seems like a lot of people in classroom at one time.

Preliminary Discussion Regarding Full-Time In-Person Learning at the Middle School and High School – Dr. Sullivan is looking for approval from the committee to further explore the feasibility of a return of middle and high school students to full in person learning. A timeline is presented to the committee.

March 3: Public introduction of intent regarding possible return to full in person learning for middle and high school students on April 5, 2021.

March 4: Continue discussion with faculty; begin work with CTA (meeting already set for next week) and other unions

March 4 – 9: Send survey out to families to gauge interest in full in person learning at the middle and high school level

March 4 – 17: Start formulating scheduling, plans for drop off/ pick up, lunch, etc.; begin moving furniture into middle and high school for pressure testing purposes

March 17: Deliver presentation to School Committee, asking for preliminary approval of plans

March 18 – 31: Continue collaborations with all stakeholders and unions

March 31: Deliver final presentation for Vote (special school committee meeting)

April 5: Implement full in person return pending approval by School Committee

Mrs. Colleary asked if there has been discussion about asking the CMS and CHS students for their input about this.

Dr. Sullivan wants student voice to be a part of this process and wants to be sure that plans for this move are made to eliminate stressors for students return to school.

Mr. Kearney stated that his own middle and high school kids are excited about going back to school and he supports the idea of a student survey.

Mrs. Maher suggests that the school's counselors could work with students in round table discussions in order to provide support and to help students with any anxiety they may or may not have about returning to school.

Mrs. St. Onge adds that she supports the ideas of speaking to the students and to ask for problem solving suggestions through a student lens.



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Dr. Sullivan noted that the student advisory council created a survey that was given at utility and one of the things that came out of it was the stress that students are experiencing. The students were able to express their feedback about the various learning models.

Mr. MacLellan noted that he would like to see the students back in school full time.

Dr. Sullivan shared the survey that he plans to send out to families of middle and high school students.

Jessica DeLorenzo, 132 CJC Highway – With all due respect, I am disappointed that this plan hasn't been outlined already. We all have anticipated this was going to come into play at some point this year. Why weren't surveys done already? With Commissioner Riley and Governor Baker's push districts to bring students back for months now why has a plan not been in place even if it can't be executed until April? I had asked about this plan back in January. Local districts have had phased in plans outlined for months. Again, even if they couldn't be executed until DESE lessened up their guidelines. Thank you for your work bringing elementary students back but I am disappointed that a plan isn't being presented tonight.

Mr. MacLellan states that he feels the district has remained fluid and responsive to the changes throughout this school year and that he feels the district leadership, central office, faculty and staff have done the best can do as changes have occurred.

Mrs. Colleary adds that as we have walked this road very deliberately and the buildings and facilities have limitations and limit our ability to prioritize safety as we work to get as many kids into school as we can. People's frustration is understandable but at times we need to take the problems as they're presented. We are weighing the options for how many people we can fit into these buildings that we have to work with right now and we will do our best.

Dr. Sullivan appreciates the input. We're all trying to work constructively to do what's right for our students.

Caroline Norgeot, 10 Sankey Road – Please consider prioritizing student parking for families with multiple students in a school. This would help reduce traffic. Also, please consider a plan allowing sibling in both CMS and CHS to enter the school building in the morning at the same time.

Sarah McSweeney, 14 Summer Street – Thank you for the preliminary plan tonight. There is a tremendous amount of fluidity in the environment and I appreciate the pace of getting elementary back this week and target date for middle high school of April 5. The work Dr. Sullivan and his team is putting forward is very solid. Keep up the good work.

Mae Carpenter, 10 Hill Street – I am surprised and impressed that we (you) are finding new confidence in this plan. We had heard when discussing the full time in person learning at the elementary school that there was no way to get the CMS and CHS community back in person full time. There was just no room. Where did that space suddenly come from?

Dr. Sullivan responds that we are further pressure testing and some spacing regulations have been relaxed. Beyond all of that we always feel that we try to do everything we can to do what's best for students. We decided that we are going to figure out a way to do it safely.

Mrs. St. Onge asked a follow up question about student parking.



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Mae Carpenter, 10 Hill Street – This survey is great. It seems premature to ask the final question; will you send your kids if we start full time in school before finding out if families are interested in that option. I would imagine we would send our son given no other good option, but I am not convinced it would be our first choice. Secondly, will there be a similar survey sent out specifically to the students?

Dr. Sullivan explained that if there is a scenario where we have to provide further restrictions beyond the current explanation, he would resurvey.

Motion to approve further exploration of the possibility of return to full in person operations at the middle high school consistent with the target timeline presented by Dr. Sullivan by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll call vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Ellen Maher – Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan – Aye

Kate Cunning – Hello, my name is Kate Cunning and I am a senior student at Cohasset High School. Recently, I have been conversing with many of my peers to gain a wide array of opinions upon the subject of returning to a full schedule before I reached out to the administration to express the student perspective. Currently, there seems to be a broad consensus among Cohasset High students that returning to a full schedule is going to be damaging to both our physical and mental health. Bringing back high school students who have already adapted to the cycle of learning poses an immense risk to the mental health of students.

Dr. Sullivan states that this is. Perfect example of figuring out how we can best support students as we move back to full in person learning. We definitely want to dive deeper with our student body to make sure we have those supports whether we have them already or whether we need to find new ways to support our students. He thanked Kate for her feedback and welcomes all student voice.

Finance- FY22 Budget Vote – Susan Owen reviewed the FY22 Preliminary Budget worksheet presented in the public budget hearing earlier in the evening.

Mrs. Maher commented that we will be presenting our budget to the select board and advisory board in the future months or weeks and everyone is welcome to tune in. We will post that meeting as soon as we know when it is.

Barbara Stefan, 260 Jerusalem Road – Thank you again for the middle school reading specialist. This position has been needed for years. Thanks for all your hard work.

Motion to approve the proposed FY22 budget as presented at the public hearing and summarized during the regular school committee meeting by Mrs. Maher, seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll call vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Ellen Maher – Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan – Aye

Special Education Update – **Barbara Cerwonka** – We have partnered with Seaside Consulting for a number of years to help us expand the coteaching model plus provide all of the needed training and we continue to participate with them via zoom during the pandemic. Coteaching provides benefits to all students: increased academic skills and performance, increased time and attention from teachers, direct teaching of cognitive strategies, study skills, executive functioning skills that all students receive and enhance social and classroom community sense that they get through the model are positive learning opportunities for students.



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In the current class of 2024, we see a steady increase of numbers of student being taught in the cotaught model. Coteaching model is being written into students' IEPs.

A more concrete data point to look at in terms of rationale for increasing the coteaching model is MCAS scores. The MCAS scores for the class of 2024 show that 83% of the students participating in IEPs in the coteaching model have maintained their current scoring level within a field, 17% of students in the coteaching model have increased in their scoring level.

One other area that feeds into the budget discussion is the increase of the reading teacher at the middle school, an increase of services that we will be able to offer to students. We are thrilled to be able to work hard in the area of reading support and to be able to increase that at the middle school.

Dr. Sullivan is happy to see Mrs. Cerwonka focusing on areas will support all of our students. We will certainly have to address learning gaps in reading and now we will be staffed to do that.

Mrs. Maher asked if Mrs. Cerwonka could take a snapshot of general ed students who have participated in coteaching and point to MCAS data that shows their progress and benefit from the teaching model.

School Committee Comments and Communication-

Reports from Sub-Committee and Liaisons (Policy & Standards, Budget Finance, Special Ed. PAC, Legislative Liaison, Facilities/Capital Projects/Technology/AEC, Collective Bargaining, Security, Superintendent Evaluation –

Mr. MacLellan reported progress re: the forming of the school facilities committee.

Mrs. Colleary stated that there will be a Policy Subcommittee meeting on Monday at 6:00PM.

Mr. MacLellan noted that we will need to set up the superintendent's evaluation subcommittee in the very near future.

Approval of Minutes - None

Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours in advance of meeting – Mrs. Maher shared that the school committee met with the capital budget committee to review our capital requests lists. She received a call from Brian Host of Capital Budget talking about two topics: he would be very happy to have a workshop or a forum with the school committee much like there have been forums with the town finance director to really understand capital budget process. Second, Michelle Leary received an email from MSBA which is out looking for statements of interest for their accelerated repair program and they have extended their timeline. Michelle reached out re: our rooftop air handler projects at the Deer Hill and Middle High School. The woman at MSBA and the capital Budgets committee is very interested in hearing a statement of interest from the district about replacing both the air handler sand the roofs. The caveat is that we would have to agree that the improvement projects would extend the life of the buildings 25 years which could impact the work of the school facilities committee.

Mrs. St. Onge noted that if the roof repair timeline shifted then the possibility of rooftop solar may become an achievable project.

Executive Session – no reason to enter into Executive Session

Motion to adjourn Regular School Committee meeting by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll call vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Ellen Maher – Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan – Aye



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The meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM

Mr. MacLellan reads one final public comment into the record that was not seen before we adjourned.

Lilly Reilly – Hi my name is Lilly Reilly and I am also a student at the high school. I have also spoken to many of my peers about this topic and many of us feel that a return to school will disrupt the current schedule we have all adapted to. Obviously, a full return to school is something we are all looking forward to; however, with the current COVID19 guidelines returning to school is not going to look the same. By the time any plan is enacted, the students will only have three months left in school and seniors will have even less time. It has taken a lot of time to adapt to our hybrid models however I feel that many of my peers and I have been able to overcome this successful model. From what I hear, plans to leave during lunch and then virtually learn during last period is very disruptive. In addition, teachers have adapted to teaching much smaller in person classes and returning to full attendance with sometime 35 plus kids per class will be damaging to current lesson plans and require time consuming reconfiguring.