

*Cohasset Public Schools*  
143 Pond Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025  
*Empower Students to Improve Communities*

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, March 13, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

Learning Commons  
Cohasset Middle and High School  
143 Pond Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025

Streamed Live on Cohasset 143TV  
Zoom (*chat enabled*)  
Cohasset Live Streaming Facebook  
(*watch / listen only*)

**In Attendance:** Ted Carr, Secretary  
Lance Dial, Chairperson  
Paul Kearney  
Craig MacLellan, Vice Chairperson  
Jennifer Lesky

**Also, In Attendance:** Keith Grasmann, CHS French Exchange  
Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations  
Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

**All School Committee Meetings Are Recorded.**

**AGENDA**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Dial called to order the regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. **Roll Call: Mr. Kearney-Present; Ms. Lesky-Present; Mr. Carr-Present; Mr. MacLellan-Present; Mr. Dial-Present.**

**Opening Remarks**

Mr. Dial would like to remind folks attending virtually that public comment is for comments they want to make to the school committee about something that is not on the agenda. To make a meta comment about something on the agenda, a member of the school committee will respond to online comments when the meeting arrives at the appropriate agenda point.

**Public Comment**

None

**Invited Guests**

Chairman Dial notes Ella Lynch, Liaison on the Superintendent Student Advisory Council graciously attended the Superintendent Search Committee last evening, and Ella was an invited guest for today's school committee meeting, she is attending the Model UN, therefore the Chair is exempting Ella from her presence for today's school committee meeting.

**Invited Guests**

• ***Cohasset High School French Exchange \*\* (Mr. Keith Grasmann)***

Mr. Grasmann has been participating in the French Exchange program since 1999. In previous years, Cohasset High School use to host a French Exchange, but when COVID occurred it stopped. This is Mr. Grasmann's first year teaching at Cohasset High School and is here today to propose a French Exchange for next year to students April 16, 2025 – April 29, 2025 for any student who attends a French Language class at CHS.

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• ***Cohasset High School French Exchange \*\* (Mr. Keith Grasmann)***

Mr. Grasmann is working with a Company FORUM Prometour with Victoria Courdent. Mr. Grasmann notes there's a lot more soup to nuts tailoring to the needs of specific student population to things such as social justice and more immersion activities that are going to be more present than other exchanges that Mr. Grasmann has seen other schools do.

Mr. Grasmann has been in contact with a Normandy French school teacher so this French Exchange will occur just outside of Normandy for CHS students in a French language class who are interested. There will be a sign up for students on March 22, 2024 to start the registration going. Mr. Grasmann has been working with a teacher in Normandy to gather information and make the matchings for students. This is a one-on-one pair up, whoever the student is matched up with. Students will spend 3½ days in Paris and get right to the home exchange for the weekend. Students will tour Normandy throughout the week during the daytime and meet with their host families and have the entire afternoon and dinners with them at their homes in France. Students from Normandy will come to Cohasset where Cohasset families will host students as well, and the proposed timeline for this will be October 13, 2025 – October 24, 2025. Students from Normandy stay with a Cohasset family with that CHS student that will be going to Normandy and stay with that student's family in Normandy for a week. The FORUM is a liaison that Mr. Grasmann works with filling out a number of questions that detail the profile of Cohasset High School. There are other schools in France doing the same thing where they match students pretty much based on school vacation time. There are three different times for every Spring break which is the first delineation of what works and doesn't work. From that, they're offered a couple of schools and talk with the teachers and arrange how this will work. The French school is a private school, and their willing to have many, many students. Cohasset High School has a limit between 10-15 students, with 15 being a comfortable max for a trip like this. A photo of the student is attached to a number of questions making sure students feel comfortable staying with families. Students from Paris that stay with Cohasset families go to Boston, Plymouth, Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Students from Cohasset who embark on the French Exchange will tour Normandy during the day having different experiences and CHS students return to the host family's homes with their French student.

Mr. Kearney asks is this trip just for high school students because there's a Europe trip the same time and will students have to make a choice between the French Exchange trip and a Europe trip.

Dr. Sullivan says Principal Scott of CHS would know, and he would avoid any conflict of having these two events at the same time. The Europe trips are done every other year.

Chairman Dial asks if there's a central list of upcoming trips, this would be good to put on the school's website as well. This would help the school committee overall when approving these trips so there's no conflict.

Ms. Lesky says this trip sounds exciting and very academic. It's culturally based rather than tourism based, which is really appreciated and such an amazing and wonderful opportunity for our students. Ms. Lesky loves the idea of homestays, but there are parts to this that make her nervous as well. Like any new thing has a little bit of risk with it along with some nerves with it. Also, love the alternating mirrors, having juniors and seniors seems to make a lot of sense from the perspective of having more years of French under their belt before heading off into Normandy to tour around. Such an amazing opportunity that will really change students' lives, a forever memory.

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Mr. Carr says a lot of these trips the school committee considers fit into a week off, and this trip is a 14-day trip. How would the school accommodate these students with their work in other classes at CHS. Do students from CHS as a policy have any issues with yearly attendance who go to France get any attendance credit. How many students take French classes at CHS. Is it a requirement of the students from here that go there required to take the family dates in October.

Mr. Grasmann says any student missing any work needs to make it up, and he's somebody that lets teachers know early in advance that these students will be missing work so teachers can start prepping work ahead of time. There are 5 students from the Senior class, 15 Juniors, 25 Sophomores, 19 Freshman. It's a double commitment, the French students come here first to Cohasset in October, 2024 and CHS students go there during Spring break next year in 2025, and this is done within the school year. Mr. Grasmann has meetings with CHS families to propose activities and make sure families know this is what it looks like to host a French student, it's a learning experience for families as well.

Dr. Sullivan says students are approved for excused absence for this trip and course credit too. We talk about authentic learning and the need for it, and for this trip, there's no better authentic learning experience than this.

Mr. MacLellan asks do chaperones from the FORUM manage tours through day 5, then CHS students switch to their host family. When students stay in hotels for the first 5 days, what is the extent of supervision for our students. How many students stay in a room and is there segregation between genders. Is there some kind of routine check, lights out at a certain time, knock on the door to make sure students are alright. When students go out in groups will that be chaperoned or unsupervised, or do students go out in Paris by themselves. This trip is an amazing educational opportunity for our students, but as always anytime our students are crossing borders, he's super concerned about security and supervision. Mr. MacLellan appreciates Mr. Grasmann's candor and all his patience with his questions, and thanks him for bringing this opportunity to CHS students.

Mr. Grasmann along with another chaperone, Lauren Spencer, will stay in Paris for the entire trip with CHS students. They travel to different places in Normandy via motorcoach bus and they guide everything with the students. During the weekends CHS students and their host family decide what they'll be doing. Since 1999, based on the rooms they're given, Mr. Grasmann divides them up and the chaperones are in the middle of the division between the boys and the girls, and this has always been done that way. Students will also have WhatsApp on cell phones, so chaperones know who's supposed to be with whom, when they're coming back and check off exactly who's supposed to be where they are. Students go right to their hotel rooms when it's time for room time, and hotel room time is lights out time.

The Chair shares everyone's enthusiasm on this, especially thanks to Mr. Grasmann for coming here and taking the initiative to bring the French Exchange back to CPS, and very much appreciates what Mr. Grasmann is doing. The only question Chairman Dial has if the Company FORUM has a screening, or a qualification program for the host families, such as background checks or anything like that. Is there a requirement for the other families in France that have children enrolled in schools, so there's some level of where these families are coming from. Chairman Dial says they'll need some baseline of knowledge where and whom students stay with. He would feel more comfortable knowing the families the students stay with.

Mr. Grasmann reiterates no, it's just like for Cohasset families, they don't have background checks for Cohasset host families, and this hasn't been done with Cohasset's prior history with the French Exchange.

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Students are paired up in May and June, so they'll have Facetime, Zoom time, emails back and forth. Students will see each other's pictures and have a profile of who they are, where they live, phone numbers of family members. It's based on recommendations and there are a number of different criteria required for these students. If they have more than 15 students, they need them to be seniors. Students foremost taking AP French, then French IV, commitment in this year's Senior class. They look at students' participation and interest in the class, the Guidance Counselor, and the school Principal recommendations, which is much of the covert background check Mr. Grasmann receives from Cohasset host families.

Mr. MacLellan asks if Mr. Grasmann can explore more essentially a CORI, criminal background check for both sides. He imagines the French schools would have a procedure in place just as our schools do.

Mr. Grasmann will speak with the company FORUM and the concierge he's working with, Victoria Courdent, and bring this to their attention.

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan agrees 100% that they should pursue that. In this day and age, it's a safety issue, for a little more clarity on what indeed the FORUM is doing with that.

Chairman Dial says the school committee needs a higher level of support on security. An open question on whether or not what assurances they can get about the host families backgrounds before sending CHS students over to France.

***Motion to grant the school committee's approval of the trip, subject to satisfaction of the school committee's inquiry into the host families' security, made by Vice Chair MacLellan, seconded by Ms. Lesky.***

***Aye - All***

**School Updates**

• ***School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)***

March is a long stretch for all of us, it's not Winter, it's not Spring, it's just here. Some exciting events happened in CPS that keep on going. Right now, CPS is in the midst of a Readathon, and our PSO has been so instrumental in this with an invited guest, Joan Meschino, State Representative who read to the entire Deer Hill School last Monday, a great story about teamwork, and students were very supportive and into it, a wonderful event. Thank you Representative Meschino. Dr. Sullivan read to students in Ms. Schneider and Ms. DeLeo's class and had Brian Lice, an author who read to the students at the Osgood School. The Readathon is an exceptional event and will continue throughout this week and next week as well.

The Cohasset Cares Sustainability Showcase is always a wonderful combination of work done by our students in their research classes. In one particular case, students worked with an expert where students asked that expert information regarding a variety of sustainability projects seen by everything around us ranging from beekeepers to widest climate effect, marine life, water pollution, team tech usage to preserving open space. There were some fabulous and exciting presentations, and an exceptional job by our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at CMS.

Some Cohasset High School students received 3<sup>rd</sup> place who finished in the State Competition bringing their fabulous work they did with CSCR on eelgrass to the competition.

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**School Updates**

• **School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)**

The Susan B. McNamara Innovation Common has more of a completed look, a nice job done by our Facilities. All the new furniture arrived, which really turned out to be a truly amazing space for our students.

Recently, the Cohasset PSO held a dance for students at the Deer Hill School. Dr. Sullivan was told it was out of this world. Everyone danced and Principal Sullivan was so enthused by the enthusiasm of the families. This was a wonderful event enjoyed all around. Thank you to the PSO and the Deer Hill School community for their help with that.

Dr. Sullivan would like to give a shout out to the CPS sports teams. The Girl's Basketball team got to the MIAA Elite 8, but lost in overtime to South Hadley, although Sarah Chenette did hit 2 foul shots with no time left, Dr. Sullivan was told. That was not a surprising outcome for her, Sarah is a very clutch player. The whole sports season was excellent and a very successful Winter Sports Season. Congratulations to our Athletic Director, Mr. Rotandi, all the coaches, and of course all our student athletes, and families.

There will be a College Admissions Night on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the CMHS auditorium for CHS Juniors and their parents. It's a panel discussion for families who are interested with Representatives from some Universities that talk about the college admissions process.

Another wonderful event will be coming up that tie right into our culturally responsive teaching, and family engagement practices. It's called MOSAIC which was a wonderful event last year that shows the multicultural families in Cohasset. This was really a proud melting pot of everything that CPS has that's going on. This event will be on April 11, 2024 from 6:00-8:00 PM at the CMHS. They'll be groups from different cultures performing, food made and served by different families.

• **2024-2025 District Calendar \*\***

The 2024-2025 District Calendar has been presented to the school committee a couple of times in draft form. There has been some feedback from the community since they last left off. There was a survey sent to the community on behalf of their Town Hall request to utilize the schools for potentially voting which would require the movement of a Professional Development Day that is currently scheduled to fall on October 11, 2024. The school committee could potentially move that to November 12, 2024, but they thought as a committee this was a community decision. The school committee received feedback from the community with 534 responses from the survey. There were 465 responses that preferred Friday, October 11, 2024 which is "Indigenous People's Day." There were 69 responses to another date for Tuesday, November 5, 2024 which would be a No School Day.

Chairman Dial wants to make this clear to folks from his perspective. The decision of where Professional Development Day falls is a school committee decision about the District Calendar with advice from the Administration. The Chair doesn't want folks to take a precedent they were seeking public feedback for future Professional Development Days. This was a particularly specific situation and the school committee decided this should be considered by the community's feedback from that survey.

The CTA decided that Professional Development Day on a primary and election day were neutral, but there were some comments and concerns from the CTA about the lack of consistency for students in November with the amount of school days off if voting did occur on November 5, 2024 at the Deer Hill School. Obviously, Thanksgiving has always been observed for 2 days, Thursday and Friday, and there is no school on November 11<sup>th</sup> in honor of Veteran's Day.

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## School Updates

### • 2024-2025 District Calendar \*\*

DRAFT

### 2024-2025 Cohasset Public Schools Calendar

July 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

July 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
4	Independence Day					

AGENDA ITEM: *D-1*  
**MAR 13 2024**

January 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	New Year's Day - Schools Closed					
2	School Resumes					
17	Professional Development - Half Day					
20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Schools Closed					
22, 23, 24	High School Finals - Half Day for CHS Students					
24	PreK Semester 1 Ends					
24	CHS Semester 1/Term 2 Ends					
31	CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					

February 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
6	PreK Progress Reports Available in Aspen					
17	President's Day - District Closed					
17-21	February Break					

February 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

March 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
13	CMS, DHS, JOS Trimester 2 Ends					
13	Professional Development - Half Day					
14	Professional Development - Full Day					
21	CMS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
21	DHS & JOS (grades K-5) Progress Reports Available in Aspen					
23-26	PK-5 Conferences - Half Day of School JOS & DHS. Full Day of School CMS & CHS					

April 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

April 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
4	CHS Term 3 Ends					
11	CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
16-17	CMS and CHS Conferences-Half Day of School CMS & CHS. Full Day of School JOS & DHS					
21	Patriots' Day - District Closed					
21-25	April Break					

May 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
23	Professional Development - Half Day					
26	Memorial Day - Schools Closed					
30	Seniors Last Day of School					

May 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
23	Professional Development - Half Day					
26	Memorial Day - Schools Closed					
30	Seniors Last Day of School					

June 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
7	Graduation					
12	PreK & Kindergarten Last Day of School, Semester 2 Ends, Progress Reports Available in Aspen					
13,16,17	High School Finals - Half Day for CHS Students					
17	180th Day - Early Release					
17	CHS Semester 2/Term 4 Ends					
17	CMS Trimester 2 Ends					
17	DHS & JOS (grades 1 & 2) Trimester 3 Ends. Progress Reports Available in Aspen					
19	Juneteenth - District Closed					
25	CMS & CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
30	Last Allowable Make-up Date					

June 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

September 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
2	Labor Day - Schools Closed					
3	Grades 1-12 - First Day of School					
4	Kindergarten - First Day of School					
9	PreK - First Day of School					
17	JOS Open House					
19	DHS Open House					
20	Professional Development - Half Day					
24	CHS Open House					
26	CMS Open House					

September 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
11	Professional Development - Full Day					
14	Indigenous Peoples Day - Schools Closed					
23-24	PK-5 Conferences - Half Day of School JOS & DHS. Full Day of School CMS & CHS					

October 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

October 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
11	Professional Development - Full Day					
14	Indigenous Peoples Day - Schools Closed					
23-24	PK-5 Conferences - Half Day of School JOS & DHS. Full Day of School CMS & CHS					

November 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
8	CHS Term 1 Ends					
11	Veteran's Day - Schools Closed					
15	CMS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
20-21	CMS and CHS Conferences-Half Day of School CMS & CHS. Full Day of School JOS & DHS					
27	Half Day of School					
28	Thanksgiving Day - Schools Closed					
29	Schools Closed					

November 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
8	CHS Term 1 Ends					
11	Veteran's Day - Schools Closed					
15	CMS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
20-21	CMS and CHS Conferences-Half Day of School CMS & CHS. Full Day of School JOS & DHS					
27	Half Day of School					
28	Thanksgiving Day - Schools Closed					
29	Schools Closed					

December 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
6	CMS, DHS, JOS Trimester 1 Ends					
13	CMS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
13	DHS & JOS (grades K-5) Progress Reports Available in Aspen					
23-31	Winter Break - Schools Closed					

December 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
6	CMS, DHS, JOS Trimester 1 Ends					
13	CMS Reports Cards Available in Aspen					
13	DHS & JOS (grades K-5) Progress Reports Available in Aspen					
23-31	Winter Break - Schools Closed					

Bolded, Underlined & Italicized Dates - SC Meetings \* Shaded Date - Schools Closed \* Half Shaded Dates - Half Days

The CTA thought Common Planning Time was lost on half days that occur during the middle of the week and the CTA was hoping that a Monday and a Friday would be more equitable for Common Planning Time in terms of grade level teams if things were done on a Monday or a Friday because they don't have Common Planning Time scheduled.

*A Motion was made to approve the 2024-2025 District Calendar as presented at the March 13, 2024 regular school committee meeting by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Vice Chair MacLellan.*

**Aye - All**

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**Teaching and Learning**

• **Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)**

On Thursday, there is a half day for students, Professional Development Day. Some Elementary and Middle School staff will be participating in a workshop that explores how trauma, stress, anxiety, and other mental health concerns impact core neurological functioning and behaviors. This is in consideration given to students from communities experiencing pre-existent traumas, and an additional focus will be given on how to prioritize SEL, and trauma may improve inclusion, equity, and ultimately life detectors of students. There will be some therapeutic interviewing in the real world and enough class skills introduced presented by Dr. Richard Booth who is a licensed mental health counselor at Brown University and private practice. This is a grant funded by the CEF, thank you CEF. It's important for our staff and inevitably for our students. On Thursday, the Middle and High School Faculty Staff will be participating in building based work where they can work on curriculum mapping.

Friday will be a full Professional Development Day which is a no school day. They'll have Elementary grade level teachers, Special Education teachers, and Reading Specialist teachers participating in training on our Reader's Workshop with Consultants from TLA. All other Elementary teachers will work on curriculum mapping. This is their big curriculum mapping day, that's really important as they're looking at everything they're doing. They're making sure there's no gaps in what they're supposed to be teaching, and really looking at their curriculum review cycle to determine if anything needs to slide up based on those needs. The Middle and High School teachers are doing the same curriculum mapping and the school Therapists, and Counselors from all schools are participating in an online mandated reporter training created by the Massachusetts Office of Child Advocate. This should be a very productive and important Professional Development Day, particularly in line with that curriculum mapping initiative they've been working on all year. It's hard to build upon things unless it's mapped out to what oneself is doing and what oneself should be doing, and this will be a really solid subject for everyone. It will be up to date by the end of the year.

Ms. Lesky asks if the reporter training really mandated?

Dr. Sullivan says every single teacher gets mandated reporter training at the beginning of the year. Our school Counselors have to do an online depth reporter training based on their role every year. They have the Norfolk County ADA come in to do so much with mandated reporter training, and the entire school staff is very versatile.

**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

• **Budget Discussion (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Before Ms. Owen discusses the school budget, the Chair would like members of the school committee know that they're not being asked to approve anything at this point, they have some extra time. There are some variables that still need to be filled in, and there are some contingencies that still need to be understood, and some potential avenues that haven't yet to be explored. This is an information session, and the Chair encourages members of the school committee to ask questions to fulfill their oversight role with this.

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan and Ms. Owen are working with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager and had very productive and hopeful discussions. As Chairman Dial mentioned, this is a tighter year for CPS and they're doing the best they can with this.

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**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

**• Budget Discussion – FY25 Budget as of March, 2024 (Ms. Susan Owen)**

The basic rollover costs have a 3.73% increase due to salary reductions and retirements, which haven't changed. Ms. Owen and the School Administration have met multiple times with the Town Manager and the Assistant Town Manager, and they assured that \$855,253 is covered, and to have no worries about that.

Dr. Sullivan would like to explain a little bit about the projected salary reductions due to retirements because it might not be clear to folks who are listening. When they have folks who retire, typically because it's the year's end, and of course the education that they acquire throughout their careers are typically at the top step in their consummate. They are usually able to hire the best candidate, but it's very rare when someone at that level is moving to another district. Typically, there's a savings occurred on that retirement. This is an estimate on that and some other financial matters where they'll be saving, and the Town took that into account and covered the rollover.

Chairman Dial wants folks who may be listening to have clarification on the terminology Dr. Sullivan just mentioned. Nothing is yet covered or guaranteed at this point. They're receiving indications from the Town there's available funding in the amount of \$855,253 to cover their rollover costs. The salary rollover, the machine that came up with that assumes a steady state of staffing. They do not have a steady state of staffing, they know that they have a few retirements coming up so that is why they start with 1.035% because that is what their machine calculates. Then they have to adjust that to the people they know who aren't going to be here and they know that they're on a higher level of the staffing. All of their staffing is paid based on years of experience and assume they hire replacements at a lower salary level and that's what that number is. They believe, assuming they're replacing their retiring staff with lower paid staffing according to their contract, that their actual expense for next year is \$855,253.

Ms. Owen states they have a decrease in what they're receiving in Circuit Breaker that moved from this year to next year in the amount of \$136,501 and they'll have to make up that difference. Circuit Breaker is a reimbursement that is given for special education tuitions, and other services. There's a formula as always and a base, for example, if tuition is \$100,000 the base is \$52,000, they take that off. Then, get 75% reimbursement every year of the tuition back which has held at 75% steady for years. It's not just with tuition, it can be service hours, and all other kinds of things.

Obviously, they're going into next year with an increase in special education tuitions, and that is an additional \$464,425 that includes the rate hikes with 14% for this year for private schools. Ms. Owen did some thorough research and reached out to *Michael Cowotts*, who is a Massachusetts Social Business Manager, to have someone put that question out there about what the other districts are doing, because CPS is not alone. That 14% increase in private tuition pretty much devastated everybody, a huge hit. Another suggestion given to Ms. Owen was to use Quarter 1 Circuit Breaker from next year, whereas every year Circuit Breaker is a practice and is done in a lot of districts. What was received last year hasn't been touched and rolled over in its entirety to cover this year. All the payments CPS will get this year are rolled into next year. The first payment of next year would be used for the next year with 75% of Circuit Breaker next year going into 2026. Some districts use the money for Circuit Breaker the year it comes in and there are other districts that use this year to year because there's no funding. The school's has been lucky enough to roll 75% over each year.

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**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

**• Budget Discussion – FY25 Budget as of March, 2024 (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Last year, the school district received a one-time funding from the Town to fund a free full-day Kindergarten based on conversations that Ms. Owen had with *Mark Abramson from Bettergov*, a consultant with DESE who actually teaches DESE Chapter 70 classes. However, when Chapter 70 came out on a spreadsheet a week or two ago from the Town it was only about a 60% increase. Ms. Owen then reached out to Rob O'Donnell, the finance person at DESE, stating that the snapshot of the data and information at the time this was given to Ms. Owen was true. However, the snapshot from last year going forward is now part of the formula that is very complex, even more complex online and complicated. Fast forward till present, that inflation rate was cut to 1.35% for the FY25 budget that was unforeseen.

The Chair would like to embark on a couple of points. One point is the Finance & Operations Department received some information that the formula changed, but the application of the formula didn't change. The application formula changed in a way that was unexpected to CPS at that time. The school budget now has this inflation rate because we're in a period of high inflation, the formula required the state to pay out more money. When we went into a period of lower inflation, that number came down. The simulation that was run at that point in time suggested high inflation, when the actual inflation numbers were plugged in, they saw a lower number. For the FY25 budget, \$300,000 of contributions from Chapter 70 that the district ended up with \$91,000 from those contributions. That \$91,000 is included in the Town's estimates for \$855,253 and the district is left with a gap of \$300,000.

Also, the Chair states free full-day kindergarten is an overall budget issue and is just a way presenting this, but this is an overall budget and is presented in full context because it's easier to explain and hasn't changed. It's not just the free full day of kindergarten that underlines the problem, they have a budget shortfall from all the spending. This is where the FY25 budget is, and the district is working to find solutions.

Vice Chair MacLellan would like to add something before departing discussions from the inflation rate issue. The point that the Chair just made on the overall budget issue with the free full day kindergarten. The issue with the inflation rate is not only the simulation or was presumed to be a relative consistency in terms of the inflation rate and didn't realize and did not end up being capped. The state allows a formula for a 4 ½ percent inflation rate cap. Despite the fact the actual inflation rate may be several points higher than it's ever had. In fact, in the two preceding fiscal years, one was 7% and the other 8%. Districts are still operating and many of the costs are based on contracts, whether it's leases or salaries. Those things aren't necessarily considered when at the actual circumstance at the time is negotiated. It seems to him, they're getting the worse on both sides, that's why they have to budget at a higher cost so when it then comes out, they don't get penalized because the inflation rate goes down and the district gets less money. It was a perfect storm, he just wanted to add that caveat to what Chairman Dial just stated.

Chairman Dial mentions there was an article in the Boston Globe today how other districts are hurting across this Commonwealth because of the change and the inflation factor. This district has engaged with Senator O'Connor and had a meeting with financial leaders from DESE to talk about the formula, its application to Cohasset to whether there were any levers to pull to help with this situation. While that meeting was not fruitful, it did certainly raise to Senator O'Connor's office which was actually his suggestion that perhaps there's something about the inflation rate overall and the fact that districts were short changed money in years with inflation higher than 4 ½ percent.

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**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

**• Budget Discussion – FY25 Budget as of March, 2024 (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Now that inflation is below the max, perhaps there's some legislative solution where districts are made whole and where the inflation rate is held constant to make up for the periods where the gap is not there, that is not what the formula is now. The Chair just wanted to highlight that because it helps point out there are people who are thinking about this and there may be some changes to the formula, but that does not help the school district with the numbers, it might be something that may help going forward. The Chair asks if anyone out there is civic minded and wants to reach out to State Representatives to talk about Chapter 70, this would be a fantastic time to do so to help their school district.

Ms. Owen says obviously they've tried to make savings without cutting salaries. The FY24 budget had four (4) ESP's positions that were unfilled for this entire year. The Director of Student Services, Mrs. Cerwonka comfortably said her department didn't need 2 out of the 4 ESP's, which saw a savings of \$50,000 cutting out those 2 ESP positions at the time that are set around Special Education associated with Individual Education Plans. The leadership teams and department heads prioritized unnecessary supplies/materials in the amount of \$19,887 in reductions and \$5,000 reduction with subscriptions, savings close to \$75,000 towards their deficit for the FY24 budget.

This year there's a new SPED Fund called the *Reserve Relief Fund*. This is to help districts offset that 14% increase in private tuition and supposed to help districts dig out of the hole. Private school tuition is a much higher rate because private schools can run anywhere from \$100,000 to \$300,000 for just one (1) school year. Payments are supposed to be made in May which can be carried into next year. Ms. Owen says whatever that payment might be will fill in the blank.

The Chair wanted members of the school committee to be aware of where they are in the budget process as well as informing the Town public to be aware of where the school committee is in this process, so this is transparent as they work through this.

Ms. Owen says the budget hearing needed to be postponed after conversations with the Town Administrator, the Town meeting is in June instead of May which will give time on both ends to figure out how to meet these numbers that will be available to the district. They're hoping that DESE will release payments in May for the new SPED Reserve Relief Fund to fill in the blank.

Ms. Lesky asks if they'll find themselves needing those two (2) ESP's having families move into the district, or a student who is newly diagnosed and qualifies for special education services. Ms. Lesky feels this is a population that seems to be at the crux of some of their budgeting issues. The reality is losing some flexibility because they don't have the funds.

Mr. Kearney says they don't want to cut special needs programs to balance the budget. This was brought up at a Sub-Committee meeting last Summer and he'll bring this up again if need be.

Vice Chair MacLellan asks Ms. Owen if there's any creative way that they could repurpose any money from the Revolving Account to help with this.

Ms. Owen wants to say no, but she can certainly look at it again. Since Ms. Owen has been working in the district, the Revolving Account numbers have been way too high, but that's not the case anymore, the numbers are where they're supposed to be.

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**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

• **Capital Budget Discussion (Ms. Susan Owen)**

**FY25 DRAFT CAPITAL LIST**

C	Bus Lease (8 Diesel Buses)	\$ 150,000	Q
C	Electric Bus Lease	\$ 25,000	Q
C	Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540-3 yr. lease \$143,100)	\$ 69,000	Q
C	Replace all Projectors with Interactive Presentation Equipment (46-CHS)	\$ 225,483	Q
C	Replacement Furniture –Students/Staff (Deer Hill)	\$ 35,000	Q
C	Add Chromebooks (100 - Deer Hill Elementary)	\$ 35,000	Q
C	Indoor Signage in classrooms/hallways (CMHS)	\$ 50,000	
C	(2) New Athletic 15 Passenger Vans (48 Month Lease)	\$ 31,946	Q
C	Alumni Field Fence	\$ 80,000	Q
C	Alumni Field Bleachers	\$ 100,000	\$801,429
S	Fire Alarms (CMHS) Engineering Study	\$ 175,000	
S	Osgood School Roof (Funding Towards Roof) (\$3-\$4 Mil)		
S	Finish Retiling all Classrooms (Deer Hill)	\$ 300,000	
S	Deer Hill and Osgood School pavement replacement	\$ 1,025,000	
S	* Asphalt Road from Pond Street Needs to be Resurfaced (CMHS)		
S	* Replace Sidewalk and Curbing on Entry Road to CMHS (CMHS)		
S	* Extend Sidewalk to Pond Street (CMHS)		
S	* Generator for the Osgood Elementary School		
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$ 2,301,429</b>	
<b><u>NEXT YEAR</u></b>			
	*Asphalt Road from Pond Street Needs to be Resurfaced (CMHS)	\$ 100,000	
	*Replace Sidewalk and Curbing on Entry Road to CMHS (CMHS)	\$ 250,000	
	*Extend Sidewalk to Pond Street (CMHS)	\$ 75,000	
	*Generator for the Osgood Elementary School	\$ 250,000	

**C = Capital**  
**S = Stabilization Fund**  
**Q = Quote**

The top half of the FY25 Capital list has not changed at all, most of these items are reoccurring leases and asks every year. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan would like to put this in context for everybody out there. They have a division of Capital expenditures and a Stabilization Fund approved by the Town for \$1.5 million dollars, and the items their working with the Town Facilities were selected for those items. There's a list of regular Capital and the Q's means there are direct quotes and items with no Q's means there's no direct quotes. This was all talked about at the Sub-Committee with some varying thoughts on it, this is why this is being brought up to the school committee to get their complete thoughts to it.

The bottom half of the FY25 Capital list is from the Capital Stabilization Fund which is \$1.5 million dollars to hit big ticket items. Ms. Owen talked with the Town's Facilities about what items are important to put forward.

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**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

• **Capital Budget Discussion (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan says the FY25 Capital budget list was presented to the Sub-Committee and this list is being brought back to the school committee for their thoughts on it. There was an original list of Capital items that was talked about with the School Facilities Committee, however receiving a quote to an item changed the numbers on this list. This was not unanimously agreed upon by the Sub-Committee, it's something for the school committee to discuss upon. The only item with no quote is for the Middle/High School indoor signage in classrooms and hallways. The rationale here is they're in a situation where they have to be fiscally conscious about how much money is spent on school grounds, in terms of big-ticket items. The school district did fund a beautiful turf and track that was needed for safety reasons and will still move into the suggested life of a track and turf. As the school district gets closer and closer to eventually being accepted versus some serious renovation or taking this school building down and building a new Middle High School building. They have to be conscious of the amount of money they spend on the school grounds. The rationale behind this is to make sure they maximize their expenditures on the grounds they know will impact for years to come, which is the Deer Hill School and the Osgood School. Paving the sidewalks outside of the Deer Hill and the Osgood School makes sense because from a visual standpoint it also shows folks that they're making a difference and they're doing something that is needed, and folks need to see that.

The draft form of the FY25 Draft Capital Budget list has some changes to the numbers from their proposed Stabilization Fund to spend, in light of new quotes for the paving. The list presented today by Ms. Owen is what's coming out of the School Finance Sub-Committee.

Mr. Carr says the Sub-Committee meetings are a great way to kind of flush this stuff out. They're very passionate about spending. There's a great deal of thought about how much they do spend on the campus grounds as they pursue changes here. As they're looking at all this, they're going to make thoughtful recommendations based on real information as they look at this. They'll meet regularly on this where there was a great deal of change in thought driven by how much pavement costs. They have limited resources that have great needs, and they want to accomplish it. There was a great deal of consensus about spending associated closely to quality education for all educators and students.

Vice Chair MacLellan would like to address an issue that was touched upon at one point on this topic. There may be a little bit more urgency for them when deciding whether this year is the year to go with the pavement projects, especially where Mr. Kearney reports they need to get additional quotes of costs in order to really ascertain what that will cost. The Deer Hill School is what the school committee has been heavily advocating for, and the sidewalks need to be repaved there, it's a safety issue, and an important consideration. In terms of timing, they have the Recreation Center Summer Program which is an enormous service for this community and typically utilize the Deer Hill and Osgood School campus for that. They're about to register at the end of this month and they'll obviously get to planning and it will definitely impact the staffing and programming because they'll need to shift gears and do this from Cohasset High School campus grounds that will affect the summer programming and staff.

Mr. Kearney says he'll definitely address the Sub-Committee on what Mr. MacLellan just stated. It's basically necessary, and it's really a big safety issue. There's one thing they don't have and that is a School Facilities Director that most school districts have. Utilizing the one-time funding to hire a School Project Manager where this person reaches out to contractors, and vendors for these quotes for these projects. To be honest, having one (1) quote is not enough and this new Project Manager we could hire would make sure these projects are done correctly, from start to finish.

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**Budget, Resources, and Governance**

• **Capital Budget Discussion (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Chairman Dial very much likes Mr. Kearney's point and it's a fabulous idea but with any project they're going to commit too are the school resource experts advising them to whether it's not or the right pathway to go. The status of those roads and sidewalks shouldn't be a million-dollar cost, or policy. The fire alarm project is potentially a million-dollar project as well as the roofs at the Osgood School and Deer Hill School that shouldn't be an 8-digit project. From Chairman Dial's view they should definitely take the time looking at the paving and he's not opposed to the idea of doing the pavement, it does seem to be a logistical reason brought up by Mr. MacLellan on the Summer Programming at the Recreation Center but raises ability to catch a breath getting these projects done. To the Chair's view this is not the year for the paving project and would advocate they take this \$1.5 million dollar fund and repurpose and bank this for either the fire alarm engineering study which will be a seven-digit expenditure or bank this for a new roof at the Osgood School, or Deer Hill School. That seems to be more in line for the purpose of the Stabilization Fund, this fund is for these large Capital items related to their school buildings. They've had multiple conversations in the formation of the Stabilization Fund that could be used for external ideas and not out of the gate expenditure for paving when the school committee told this to the Town with the idea of maintaining school roofs, school windows, and aging school facilities.

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan says these projects are hard to fund and hard to get done and that's just a fact. The closer they can move to a project is actually doing a project which is why they should go for this. Things feel like they're kicked down the road too often and nervous this money won't come up again and they won't ever see this as an opportunity for a campus that is going to be there forever for a long time.

• **Disposal of Surplus Materials (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)**

Materials are adhered to item F3 on the Agenda, and a letter from Kathy Cerruti who's their Librarian Specialist at CMHS. Ms. Cerruti is in the midst of a library collection refurbishing project alongside a consultant at the Follette Library. There are actually 2,371 non-fiction books in total they need to read and purge because of the fact these books are dated from 1973. At the CMHS Library they have a partnership they've worked on under Ms. Owen's direction with Ms. Cerruti and the PSO over a 5-year period to refurbish those books. When the PSO is ready to provide that as a gift, they'll invite the PSO along with Ms. Cerruti to present that. Right now, the PSO is looking for permission to dispose of these books that are of no-good use to them, and there's a lot of them.

The Chair asks Superintendent Patrick Sullivan how many books they have in the library. That number of books, 2,371, seems like they might have a lot of empty shelves afterwards. The Chair loves the initiative but the timing from the school committee's standing point, but if the school committee needs to approve the destruction of 2,371 books, they want to know a little bit more about the process and what the criteria would be disposing these books. Therefore, the disposal of surplus materials is tabled for the next school committee meeting and invite the PSO and CMHS Librarian Specialist for a brief presentation on the process to this to members on the school committee.

• **Food Service**

The Director of Food Service is hoping to have the Senior Café up and running in April, 2024. The heating warmer unit is already in there, they're just waiting for the POS system. Victor Cordone has also been focusing more on the elementary level introducing different types of food to students, and the schools there now have signage. The new chef is making changes, but he wants to do it cautiously and courteously at a safe pace to keep up with.

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**Community Relations / Communication**

**• Discussion Regarding Proposal to Utilize Deer Hill School for June 8, 2024 Town Voting**

Chairman Dial mentions that the school committee was approached by the Town because Town Hall is in a difficult situation where folks normally go to vote. For those who voted in the most recent election noticed the voting was held at the Wilcutt Commons since the Town can't use the Town Hall. The Town is looking for other places and they reached out if they could use Deer Hill School or any of the schools for their June 8<sup>th</sup> Town's Elections. The Chair along with Dr. Sullivan looked at any safety implications and found none. They've accepted the Town's request and provided the Deer Hill School for the Town's voting location for Saturday, June 8, 2024.

**• Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons**

Ms. Lesky says the Deer Hill School Council met and talked about developing a new school plan with surveys and they're continuing with that and actually connected with the CEF President, Megan Barry who said their next grant cycle ends on April 5, 2024, and they're planning on having a Dine and Donate event this Spring that will be posted to social media pages and a portion of those proceeds will go and support the CEF who does so much for our schools.

Mr. Kearney attended a Sub-Committee meeting with Food Services that was fantastic. Invited guests came to the Deer Hill School and Principal Sullivan sat down with the committee and had lunch with us. There were some suggestions where they're trying to figure out the timing for the students who have to wait in lines to get their lunch. One of the things they talked about was putting the salad bar inside and after doing some research Mr. Kearney says this would be inexpensive and salad bars would increase the time for the children to eat because they're waiting in line 5-10 minutes to get into the salad bar area. Having two ways in would expedite the lines and be able to serve more students in this area. Overall, Mr. Kearney is very impressed with the Food Services and hearing the kids from around the Town who are really happy with the meals and Mr. Kearney really appreciates the school administration and the great job Ms. Owen did.

Mr. Carr says the Alternative Energy Committee continues to meet with their building group about the roofs, that seems to be going well with good discussions. They'll also be meeting tomorrow that Mr. Carr will be attending with a discussion of the State's new incentive program that allows schools that have a shared school district to be able to get fully granted vans and vehicles that are electric or hybrid. The language in a shared school district would indicate any school district that has a relationship especially around special education may use help from another district. It can be considered, and Mr. Carr will keep folks tuned in to that.

**School Committee Governance**

- *Vote for Statement of Interest for Cohasset Middle School \*\****
- *Vote for Statement of Interest for Cohasset High School \*\****

The resolution to the Statement of Interest for Cohasset Middle School, and the Statement of Interest for Cohasset High School has strict language within the Statement of Interest format that will need to be submitted by Superintendent Patrick Sullivan no later than Friday, April 12, 2024. The resolution will be read in its entirety at the next school committee meeting.

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**School Committee Governance**

• **Superintendent Search Committee Report**

Chairman MacLellan of the Superintendent Search Committee reports that he has been updating the community fairly regularly and there isn't much more to update on because they're still in the confidential part of the process. The Superintendent Search Committee now has seventeen (17) applicants and they're reviewing them, then interviewing the candidates. It is the Superintendent Search Committee's intention to have the three (3) finalists recommended to the school committee at the Special School Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, 2024. On March 19, 2024 the Superintendent Search Committee will be meeting to determine which three (3) candidates of the seventeen (17) will be the finalists that they'll be recommending to the entire school committee for consideration in this process.

• **Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair**

There are no topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

• **Approval of Minutes\*\***

Mr. Carr states there are no minutes for approval.

**School Committee Governance**

• **Future Agenda Items**

Chairman Dial would like an inventory of all school trips. Also, be responsive to common planning time that was discussed by CTA and put that on the shelf, so they'll have time to see if there's any substance to discuss at a future school committee meeting. Vice Chair MacLellan says in response to the community's concern about our elementary students and their ability to sort of navigate the digital world. They've had a presentation on that and what they offer for digital citizenship here in the schools. Vice Chair MacLellan reached out to the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office to explore what programming they may have in place where they obviously deal with issues with children, abuse, and bullying. The Norfolk County District Attorney's Office doesn't have anything in place but indicated to Vice Chair MacLellan they've received a lot of similar requests. Mr. MacLellan recently met with *Christine McDougall* who is a Liaison at the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office and they're going to actually try and build a program designed to all grade levels, age appropriate, to deliver a real meaningful curriculum around safe and responsible use of technology where they converse with one another and post things about themselves. This will be piloted here in Cohasset and at some point, this will be presented to the school committee.

**School Committee Governance**

• **Executive Session<sup>1</sup> :**

The Chair announces there is no reason to go into Executive Session.

**Adjourn\*\***

***Motion to adjourn the regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 8:55 PM made by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Vice Chair MacLellan.***

***Aye – All***

***\*\*Requires Committee Vote / Action***

*Respectfully Submitted by  
Kathy Bock  
March 24, 2024*