

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

REGULAR MEETING OF THE COHASSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

6:00 PM

Learning Commons

Cohasset Middle/High School

Virtual Meeting - Cohasset 143TV/ Zoom

In Attendance:

Ted Carr, Secretary
Lance Dial, Chair
Paul Kearney
Craig MacLellan, Vice Chair
Jennifer Lesky

Also, In Attendance:

Ella Lynch, (SSAC) Superintendent Student Advisory
Council Liaison
Jason Earls, School Facilities Committee
Casandra O'Brien, Instructional Technology Specialist
Lindsey Kay, Instructional Technology Specialist
Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Special Education (Virtual)
Sue Owen, Director of Finance & Operations
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

All School Committee Meetings Are Recorded.

AGENDA

Call to Order

Chairman Dial welcomes everyone to the Regular Meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 6:00 PM. This meeting is being held in-person at the Learning Commons in the Cohasset Middle/High School. This meeting is virtually through Zoom only and will not be virtual on Facebook, somehow the Facebook application is not cooperating for this meeting today. **Roll Call: Mr. Kearney- Present; Mr. Carr is not here yet; Ms. Lesky- Present; Vice Chair, MacLellan- Present; Chairman Dial – Present. They have a quorum with 4 of the 5 members who are present.**

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Remarks

Chairman Dial notes they have an action-packed school committee meeting agenda tonight with lots of things going on. Chairman Dial along with members of the Cohasset School Committee say they would remiss if they didn't recognize the outset from yesterday's announcement.

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Opening Remarks

The Chair addresses that Marshfield announced a new Superintendent which just happens to be our Superintendent, Dr. Patrick Sullivan of Cohasset Public Schools. The Chair and members of the school committee certainly wish Dr. Sullivan the absolute best in his future endeavors over in Marshfield and they certainly recognize all of his contributions to Cohasset Public Schools. Our schools are certainly better because of Dr. Sullivan having been here, even though Dr. Sullivan's departure is sad in some ways, but the fact that Dr. Patrick Sullivan has been here is something to be celebrated. Chairman Dial states later on in tonight's agenda the school committee is going to talk about the formation of a Superintendent Search Committee that will kick off the process for finding a successor to Dr. Patrick Sullivan. The school committee will have a more formal way to recognize Dr. Sullivan's tremendous accomplishments and contributions to the district at one of their later school committee meetings.

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan says first of all, this particular opportunity was very unique and special to him. Marshfield is where he grew up and went to school, Dr. Sullivan was also a teacher and Principal in Marshfield for 20 years. His four children ranging from high school to elementary attend schools there. This decision wasn't made easily, but for Dr. Sullivan this completes his career arch, and is something he's worked his whole career on, and this was an opportunity for him to take and he's very happy to be the new Superintendent of Marshfield Public Schools. Dr. Sullivan wants everyone to know the job doesn't start until July 1, 2024, and until July 1st, he'll be completely committed to Cohasset Public Schools. Dr. Sullivan has loved his time here in Cohasset and if he hadn't been offered the job in Marshfield, he'd be happy to stay here. Cohasset is a wonderful community with amazing students, a very active, and fantastic family based, with an amazing staff. Dr. Sullivan is very proud to be the Superintendent of Cohasset Public Schools and will continue to work diligently to make sure students have the best educational opportunities and will be very supportive of any role he can play in the transition process to assist in any way to the school committee that they see fit. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan has been very humbled by his opportunities here in Cohasset and will remain very thankful and very committed until he moves to Marshfield.

Public Comment - None

Invited Guests

• Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Ella Lynch)

This is Ella's first time as a representative of the Superintendent Student Advisory Council to the school committee. Ella is a junior who attends Cohasset High School and is involved with the Student Council, Superintendent Student Advisory Council, and the National Honors Society.

Mr. Carr arrives at 6:04 p.m.

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Invited Guests

• Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Ella Lynch)

Ella also participates in Clubs such as the Debate team, the Math team, and is on the Track team for Cohasset High School. Ella says there's definitely been a lot going on and going well with student life in Cohasset High School. Their Winter sports have just started up and last week CHS had their Holiday Band and Chorus Concert. Some members of the high school band and chorus also got the opportunity to go to the Osgood and Deer Hill School to play holiday music for them, which was really fun. Ella also attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony which was really great for her. The Student Council hosted a Pickleball Tournament today during utility with a lot of people who participated that were really excited and was really fun to watch. The Debate team had their first meet a couple of weeks ago, which went great with some success there, and the Math Team had their first and second meetings which went great as well. Countries were assigned to students for the Model UN conference in March, 2024 and the countries assigned were India and Afghanistan. Ella says this is going to be a pretty cool opportunity for those students. All the students and teachers are looking forward to the upcoming Winter break.

Mr. Kearney says Ella did a good job for her first-time reporting as a Liaison of the Superintendent Student Advisory Council. Mr. Kearney mentions he had the pleasure of being a judge on the Debate team, which was great, and why he missed the previous school committee meeting. There were schools from Scituate, and Hingham, and it would be nice if Cohasset had some sweaters that had our logo on them. Mr. Kearney noticed the other schools had them and it would be a great idea if Cohasset had their own sweaters.

Mr. Carr comments great job on the report, it was awesome! The Holiday Concert was great and well attended. It was fun to see young people with tremendous talent in one place. The school committee looks forward to having Ella back here again, she did a nice job of reporting.

Ms. Lesky says it's such a gift to this school committee for a window into what's going on with the student report, it hits on everything from athletics to academics, next to the Arts and to students' social life. Thank you, Ella's report was very well done.

Mr. MacLellan thanks Ella and being willing to do this. It gives the school committee a little bit of coverage of what's happening in the schools. Great job!

Chairman Dial says these reports are very important, like Ms. Lesky just noted this school committee gets a good idea of what's going on in the schools from a student's perspective because our role as a school committee is to make our school's great for all students. Thank you for taking time out of your evening to come here and talk to us and we look forward to seeing Ella come back.

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Invited Guests

• School Facilities Committee (Mr. Jason Earls)

Chairman Dial states this school committee used to have a standing agenda item for the School Facilities Committee when they had an overlapping membership on the School Facilities Committee. Mr. MacLellan would report on what's going on in the School Facilities and then as we changed membership at that committee, that fell off. The Chair notes this is just a reminder for people who may be watching or listening, and for members of this school committee itself.

Jason Earls says the School Facilities Committee was informed to assess the conditions of all schools with the preliminary report for items from the Capital priority list and they are working through that. What was brought forth were two articles at the Town meeting that passed. Currently they're working on the Feasibility Study which Mr. Earls will go a little deeper into in a bit. At the present time, the School Facilities Committee is trying to prioritize items on the Stabilization Fund list with a lot of items and a lot of big-ticket items. The School Facilities Committee is trying to pick through items to prioritize this list and Mr. Earls will then bring the School Facilities Committee priority list to the school committee and to the Select Board for the next Town meeting.

The School Facilities Committee had their meeting last night and as a committee they formed a Sub-Committee for the Feasibility Study to send out a request for a proposal to get some firms in to help them with this Feasibility Study. Once this gets going the wheels will start turning in motion, the School Facilities Committee will send an email to *Michelle* suggesting membership and have her reach out to parties involved to see if they have time for it. Once that is completed, the Town and *Michelle* will be ready with a list. Mr. Earls says they looked at the list briefly today that has everything on the list and Mr. Earls will bring this to the school committee for approval at a later meeting.

As for the bigger ticket item, which is the Stabilization Fund, Mr. Earls requested some information from the Facilities Director of the Town, Nick Beradi. One of the big tickets items the School Facilities Committee is looking at right now is roof replacements, which is one of their top priorities. Mr. Earls notes there was some talk with the AEC, Alternative Energy Committee about solar and Mr. Earls would like to know where that stands. If they can get that, then most likely they can get the roof's paid for through grants from the state. Mr. Earls is trying to push this one way or another so the School Facilities Committee can actually have something to present to the School Committee, the Select Board, and to the Town about how they're going to start allocating this money. Unfortunately, they did not get accepted by the MSBA, Massachusetts Schools Building Authority. They are going to march forward and apply again, and they'll just keep at it, and go from there.

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• School Facilities Committee (Mr. Jason Earls)

The Chair states there was one question that was brought up to him on the MSBA that connects with the roofs. Chairman Dial asks Mr. Earls if there is an accelerated repair program that is a separate entity every couple of years, this might be an open window for application to that.

Mr. Earls says yes, but it's been closed for the past three years. The School Facilities Committee just recently learned it was open again and they can apply for that. From Mr. Earls' understanding if correct, it's basically the same time frame, early April.

The Chair notes he wanted to raise this because we want to make sure we don't miss that window because it's an open window that closes.

Mr. Kearney says first and foremost thank you for this report so that we can fully understand. It's gone from really nothing to putting applications together. The Stabilization Fund and the work that Mr. Earls and the School Facilities Committee do are just so good, and Mr. Kearney really appreciates this. Mr. Kearney also notes maybe we can reach out to Senator to ask if they can try and educate us on what other school districts are doing because they represent the towns surrounding Cohasset such as Weymouth that just did a study for a middle school. Senator might be valuable for us to see what we could do to move this forward, because basically, we're kind of stuck in neutral now. We talk about getting a new school here that we're not going to get. Meanwhile, we have these problems that persist such as air conditioning in the gymnasiums that we still need to accomplish. As far as the Stabilization Fund is concerned, this school committee is trying to prioritize what we can do now, what we can do tomorrow, what we can do the next day. We should basically have a really thought-out plan of what we can accomplish six months from now, from a year, or from five years to ten years from now. Mr. Kearney was hoping the School Facilities Committee could take the opportunity to kind of see if there's an appetite for a \$200 million dollar school. Personally, Mr. Kearney doesn't think that this Town would go for it because of where we're at as far with the funding between 25%, where we only have 7,000 homes in this Town.

Mr. Earls says that is part of the Feasibility Study, that was the bigger step to get that piece of paper together. Mr. Earls will present this next month to the School Committee and the Select Board as the School Facilities Committee starts rolling this out.

Mr. Carr says this is great and thanks Mr. Earls for coming here to talk to the school committee tonight. Mr. Carr notes he's a liaison with the Alternative Energy Committee and they're eager to talk about roofs and solar opportunities for this Town.

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• School Facilities Committee (Mr. Jason Earls)

Ms. Lesky thanks Mr. Earls for the School Facilities Committee perseverance sticking with this through some hiccups. This is critical to this whole project to keep the momentum going. Ms. Lesky looks forward to close collaborations going forward and working together to prioritize the needs for our school buildings.

Jason Earls would like to note that the School Facilities Committee has one open position that this school committee needs to appoint. The Select Board has two which will be going on through January. Mr. Earls prefers someone that has children in the school system that has a good background in finance with buildings and maintenance background, somewhere in this field.

The Chair thanks Mr. Earls for taking the time out of his evening to talk about this with the school committee. Thank you for all the work that Mr. Earls has done with the School Facilities Committee. The Chair's only comment to Mr. Earls is to make sure we work closely together, especially with the Finance Facilities Committee and Sub-Committee on the prioritization of the funds for the Stabilization Fund and the giant Capital expenses. We want to make sure that we're going in the same direction. We don't want to have a situation that crosses recommendations and whatnot. The Chair very much appreciates everything Mr. Earls does and is looking forward to hearing more about the Feasibility Study as that develops.

School Updates

• School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)

Dr. Sullivan notes Ella did a nice job pointing out and capsulating what has happened in the last couple of weeks. However, Dr. Sullivan would like to mention in addition to the middle and high school holiday concerts with the high school going to the Osgood School and playing music for them was really a wonderful scene. This was really a sing-along with our youngest students and our high school students. One of the things that is so special about Cohasset is these traditions where the students who are actually performing remember when they were students watching these "rock stars" perform for them. Ms. Moriarty, Director of Fine Arts and Music, always does a wonderful job for grades 6-12. Ms. Moriarty does a fabulous job orchestrating that, it was an amazing moment. Ms. Moriarty called Principal Farrell to refer to this as their "Holiday Stroll" to reference the fact our students perform at every grade level.

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School Updates

• School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)

Families strolled down the halls to the cafeteria to do arts and crafts with their children that was very warm and absolutely adorable to see. This year was special because Principal Farrell added a story called the “Twelve Days of Winter,” which was very participatory and a great job by Principal Farrell and to anyone who is listening, the students were great! The Deer Hill School will have their concert tomorrow night which was delayed because of the storm on Monday.

Dr. Sullivan’s only last update is to thank everyone, particularly our staff, for working hard, especially during Monday’s storm. It’s not an exact science predicting what’s going to happen and listening to forecasts. It looked fine when leaving in the morning, but the storm was a bit more violent than we guessed. During that day, a determination was made that it was better to have our students in the buildings where it was warm. Not a great learning environment, however learning happened at every grade level and our teachers and other people worked together to make sure everyone was safe, and learning was happening. They were able to serve a hot lunch at every building and Dr. Sullivan really wants to thank the staff at all levels, and the principals at all levels, for everything they did. He also would like to thank their safety officials who were great and worked very collaboratively with Dr. Sullivan to make sure they made the right call on what to do with that circumstance. Dr. Sullivan tried to be as communicative as he could over the time when this was happening and also the day they had off. They will make up that day and they’ll add it to the calendar and Dr. Sullivan will put this in his newsletter and make the adjustment on the school website to note the last day of school, this shifts one day forward for everyone. We’re all looking forward to a nice Winter break and for our very well-deserved staff and certainly our students and families are looking forward to as well.

Teaching and Learning

• Elementary and District Digital Literacy & Citizenship Curriculum (Dr. Leslie Scollins, Ms. Casandra O’Brien, Ms. Lindsey Kay)

Casandra O’Brien is an Instructional Technology Specialist at the elementary level. Lindsey Kay is an Instructional Technology Specialist at the middle high school. They’re both here to give an overview of Digital Literacy & Citizenship for grades K-12. An overview of devices and things that go on with technology, not just in the classroom, but while in class. For grades K-2 they use 12 shared iPads in all classrooms. For grades 3-5 they have 12 shared Chromebooks and there are 1:1 Chromebooks for Grades 4 & 5. The district uses Clever as a Single Sign-On (SSO) for students to access digital resources for grades K-8. This can also be a launching place for teachers to share links in addition to improving the classroom. The curriculum is based in the state of Massachusetts and the ISTE Standards (International Society for Technology in Education). Students in grades K-5 have technology class once a week.

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During common planning time, this rotates as an additional technology class with Instructional Technology Specialists who meets weekly with the elementary computer lab instructors to collaborate on lesson planning and curriculum. Digital Citizenship lessons are introduced in grades K-2 and reviewed and reinforced throughout the school year. Common Sense Media for Education is the curriculum used and embedded in keyboarding without tears.

Lessons Include

That's Private! (Personal Information)
Media Balance is Important
Pause and Think Online
How Does Technology Make You Feel
Safety in My Online Neighborhood
Tech Activity Transition "Pause for People"
We the Digital Citizens

For grades 3-5 at the Deer Hill School, Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum, students learn how to use the Google app for education tools which is increasing and spiraling on learning that increases skills. Students use Google Forms to collect data information looking across all sorts of things. Grade 5 students use 3D Printing for projects. Students can also touch on navigating the MCAS Online test practice so they can be prepared for doing that. Grades 4 & 5 also touch on Media Literacy. At the elementary level, students also have computer class for one period twice a week. Once a month the Instructional Technology Specialist's meet with classroom teachers and go over ISTE student standards.

Mr. Kearney says this is great stuff! He's a preventive type of person and this is a very proactive approach to how important it is not to post something that might be seen 10 years from now. Mr. Kearney says he's so blessed to be on this school committee to see all the hard work our educators do, but with the same breath he feels like we don't get this message out to the parents. Every parent in Cohasset should see what we offer at every level. Parent participation shows what we do here like the Bark app which is fantastic, and every parent should know about this. If somebody is listening out there these things take a lot of time and effort from our administrators, and he doesn't feel like parents are listening enough. As a parent himself this is such useful information we use every day, and he wishes parents would get this information.

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Superintendent Patrick Sullivan notes the last two slides shown by Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Kay presentation are really the impetus of this conversation. First of all, we need to gather data on what our students are going through and what they really need for their particular age group level. This shifts as technology shifts downward and moves all over, more importantly what we do with that data moves that to our strategic plan. We did this when we had Safe Harbors here at a school committee meeting and we brought people together around physical, social emotional safety, and it's really crucial for us to bring this to the community and the families into the school and to talk about what we're teaching and what we're doing so that we have this balance. Having the conversations at the family level with the school's presence and thought partnering would provide a lot of support for families. It would also provide us with a lot of information on what we can do to better support students and families when they get home. Dr. Sullivan really sees that as they look at their strategic plan, look at Wellness, look at family and community engagement, social, emotional learning. All those five competencies that we talk about are woven into this.

Dr. Sullivan says today was to really just give the school committee a sense of what we're doing, but we know there's a desire for a deeper level of engagement and partnership and that's something we need to commit to in the next strategy plan.

Mr. Carr asks if every student at the elementary level shares an iPad or Chromebook to work with. For instance, coding that's amazing! We're teaching coding at that age. Thank you both for the work you do, it's great!

Ms. Lesky agrees it's both a communication issue and a cultural issue of alluding to a community wide engagement on the issues around safety, on-line behavior, ethical use of technology that is both a school and a home thing. Ms. Lesky asks how often teachers in general see issues that started on-line for students entering their school day. Is it hurt feelings, distractions, whether it's coming from gossiping about schoolwork, or gossiping about each other. When are children explicitly taught how to diffuse, redirect, stand up for someone, who the trusted adults they should talk to, what should not concern, or concern them. What sort of messages are taught explicitly at the elementary level.

There's a lot from middle school, it weaves it way in and out. It can't escalate while in the school building because their phones are put away. At the elementary level they're told to lock, report, take a screenshot, and share with an adult those sorts of things.

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Mr. MacLellan says he really worries about this stuff because no one sitting in this room experienced childhood with this threat to the level that our students are living. This is almost in a sense difficult for what is actually needed, and what is actually relevant. Mr. MacLellan just wanted to preface his remarks he's very concerned about this area. There's also the conversation of how much this is the school, how much was done by parents, the community and the burden should equally be shared, not everyone would subscribe to that.

Mr. MacLellan appreciates both Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Kay for what they presented today on everything they're currently doing. A school system is really a complex entity and there's so many different elements to it. We're just trying to keep our finger on the pulse of any possible problems, concerns, areas for improvement. This is certainly one of those areas that has evolved. Mr. MacLellan says Mr. Kearney is right on the point where we need to share this with the community more, so parents totally understand because there is no understanding. The point of having these conversations is to be critical of ourselves and what discussions families are having with their children at which level. The use of digital devices and social media is hurting our students in healthy development in those areas. Only so much of this can be cured through instruction. There are maturity issues, self-control issues, supervision issues, there's all kinds of things that go into this. Is our curriculum still completely relevant? How often are we reviewing this. How do we broaden the elementary student's exposure to these concepts throughout the day. Mr. MacLellan is seeing much more robust exposure at the middle and high school level to these concepts. He feels that elementary students are not frequently getting enough of that. We worry about the standards, and we worry about the basics such as math, writing and reading. Is there any room to integrate these concepts in a little bit more robust fashion especially for our younger students, late elementary and middle school students. We want our students to always think twice, this is a very risk prone area, and he feels we could be able to do more.

Dr. Sullivan says philosophically this is a conversation we need to have, certainly what we filter down to the younger grades. Also, philosophical when we think about what students are capable of handling in terms of a conversation. We can't teach a 1st grade student the concepts that a 1st grader is going to deal with if that 1st grader has these devices. With that said philosophically there are certainly things that are trickling down there's some more substantive concepts that we can really work on together.

Dr. Leslie Scollins mentions they had their health, and physical education curriculum come together on December 7th. They'll be reviewing that with all the new standards.

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(Dr. Leslie Scollins, Ms. Casandra O'Brien, Ms. Lindsey Kay)**

Dr. Leslie Scollins says this has been a large topic of conversation specifically around this. We had a Health and Wellness table; we had teachers teaching wellness to the community. All of us were there for grades K-12. Dr. Scollins agrees this is something that we do need to look at and we're looking at and we'll continue to do that. As we regroup and look at this, we need to decide how we're going to approach this attentionally to the younger age group.

Chairman Dial says this is a journey, not a single meeting. This may be something we can come back to in the Spring. The Chairs ask Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Kay, Principal Sullivan, and everyone in administration to please come to any members on the school committee if there are things that we can do as a committee to help out. If it's a funding issue with capital needs, or programs where we can put out for our students, whatever it is to help us protect our children from these potential risks of these things and recognize they have the school committee's full support on this.

Ms. Lesky asks about recommendations for parents like the Bark app that is very impactful, it was very specific on these generalized ideas. Our schools have parent/teacher nights around literacy, mathematics, etc. Perhaps we can have parent/teacher nights around technology with smaller round table discussions or even presentations about specific actions parents can take on how parents can be more thoughtful in managing technology in the digital world at home might be helpful.

The Chair notes we have a Sub-Committee on Community Relations, this might be a job for that sub-committee to get together and talk particularly on how we can better engage parents on this issue with the school. First, we'll need to find out who's on the sub-committee and then we'll get a report and have these reports at the end of our school committee meetings that will help this fire going and keep our eyes on.

• Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

The curriculum mapping is still at the front of what we're doing, in particular with Rock Roberts who is helping those committees. We do have a Wellness meeting in early January, and we'll be meeting with the Wellness Committee on the first Monday in February. There's lots of things happening as we're coming up to Winter break as you heard from Ella's report. Dr. Leslie Scollins says there's all different things they look at. When they have meetings with the Reading Specialist at Deer Hill specifically, they're looking at writing prompts and how students are writing, and teachers are drilling down to see where those patterns are with student's strengths and where needs are for opportunities for how they're going to address that.

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• **Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)**

Chairman Dial asks is the data that we’re looking at proving out that we still have work to do with our writing and are we seeing more evidence of that. Hoping the new Director of Data, Evaluation, and Curriculum does well in that. The Chair would be interested in one of the upcoming academic initiatives updates that will give us some more specifics on what is seen and especially the things that our administrators are putting in place, especially with writing, that’s what we’re really interested in.

Ms. Lesky asks what kinds of data will be shared out. Is it all standardized measures whether or not this includes teacher surveys, how many formally graded written assignments are students doing each year. How did the curricular tools that the district uses could better support our performance on standardized testing. How our real-life work in the classrooms is supporting and/or needs adjustment to better support the standardized testing data.

• **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

➤ **Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys**

<u>NOVEMBER 2023</u>				
<u>Meeting Type</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Out of District</u>	<u>Total Meetings</u>
Annual Review	9	8	2	19
Re-Evaluation	5 4 eligible 1 not eligible	6 4 eligible 2 not eligible		11
Initial Evaluation	4 MTSS: 1 eligible	1 MTSS: Parent: 1 eligible		5
Initial Evaluation Referral Source	Parent: 3 1 eligible 2 not eligible CPS: 3 Non CPS:	CPS: Non CPS:		
Total: 35 Meetings				

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• **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

➤ **Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys**

Student Services has received a lot of parent surveys and all of them have been 100% positive. Mrs. Cerwonka is always happy to send out those surveys along with students' IEPs to hear back from families on how things are going.

➤ **Basic Rights Presentation**

This month Mrs. Cerwonka attended the annual Basic Rights Presentation at a SEPAC meeting that was very well attended. There were some nice questions and feedback received from SEPAC members. The Basic Rights presentation can be easily found under Student Services on the school website. This is always a good thing to share for clarification with families. If anyone should have any questions around Special Education, Mrs. Cerwonka encourages them to visit the website, it's a good place to look and a nice resource.

• **In District Programming and Out of District Programming (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka and Mrs. Susan Owen)**

The Chair states he believes just for context was requested by himself to see other ways we can maximize our own resources instead spending it on building district programs.

Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka shows four years that she's been here in the district just to have some perspective about the kind of programming that we're talking about, the types of programming that exist, the number of students who are currently out of district and the percentages for each area. In the 2021 school year there were 24 students receiving education in an out of district programming. Twenty percent of those students were in Residential Placement. Thirty percent were in what we consider to be private schools, which means that it's not collaborative which is considered more of a public entity. Thirty-three percent were in Collaborative, and seventeen percent were in other which typically means that we partner for example with Scituate around some programming that they provide for students that perhaps our students may benefit from. This is where things were in terms of out of district programming when Mrs. Cerwonka started.

A Collaborative is considered more of a lesser restrictive environment than a private placement. One of the things Mrs. Cerwonka noticed when she came on board was a disproportionate number of students who were outplaced because of issues around social, emotional mental health that could possibly be served in the district. There was a lot of work that was done very early on from the time Mrs. Cerwonka came on board. We added a school Psychologist at the secondary schools, specifically at the middle school instead of servicing both the middle school and the high school. We placed a school Psychologist at each school and built capacity to do counseling for them in addition to testing.

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Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)

• In District Programming and Out of District Programming (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka and Mrs. Susan Owen)

We added a social worker and added consultants to our district as a whole. In addition to that we started to build in some features of our programming at the secondary level that would really lead towards building into what we have, which is therapeutic programming.

In terms of out of district programming we're looking at our own programs. We've built out therapeutic programming for more opportunities for students at the middle school and the high school here in Cohasset. We really turned our focus on expanding our PreK programming and we've doubled that and what that is going to enable us to do is to look at those students who are with us as preschoolers, (*3-4-year-olds*), and what are the needs that we see there. What can we build into our Osgood and Deer Hill School programming, specifically into some of our programs that we have there such as *STARS and TLC*. This will enable us with some of our very young students are at a higher level of need of service that will enable us to address those needs and keep those students in-district as well. This is our next lens and our next focus for being able to address the needs we see and through expanding some of our existing programming, keeping more and more students in-district.

Student Services does see students who come here from out of district for programs in Scituate that we partner with students who may not be necessarily getting a diploma and need some services beyond the age of 18 years old that will require services until they are 22 years of age. Those numbers are so very low, and really expanded it to more of a pre-vocational programming for students at the high school. We'll continue to build on that and build things into it. We're fortunate to have a neighbor who has programming that is more vocationally based and is a much bigger district. We have the capacity to do something like that so we can partner in a very fiscally responsible way to provide the needs for some of those students.

Chairman Dial says we've got the number of students who are out of district 24, 21, 20, and 22 for each of the years. What the Chair would be interested in is each one of those students have a reason that are out of district for whatever that reason is, obviously we don't want to share any confidential information in a public forum. Chairman Dial is curious if we collect those reasons and give us an abstract on what categories they fall in and in those reasons suggest what we should be investing in. The Chair asks if a breakdown on this is available that Student Services would be able to put together.

Mrs. Cerwonka says this is something that she can speak about at this moment. Our students who are outplaced residentially clearly have a high level of need that we cannot provide.

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Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)

• In District Programming and Out of District Programming (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka and Mrs. Susan Owen)

Students who were here in the 2020-2021 school year who were outplaced privately, a majority of them looked as if those reasons were social, emotional, and mental health, and perhaps felt that it was not being addressed as robustly here and they needed that support elsewhere. Since then, we've really built out staff and that programming and addressed that and we've seen those numbers go down. We've seen some numbers go up in the Collaboratives that's a lesser restrictive environment. While there is a proportion of students who participate in a particular program or Collaborative, the grade levels are widely varied for those students. This would entail the building of three programs for a very small number of students to retain those students in our district and provide appropriate programming for them which would mean three (3) teachers, and probably nine (9) ESPs, or Paraprofessionals, additional occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech, and language therapist, adaptive Physed. The cost breakdown of all that is equal to higher than what it is for us to partner with our collaborative and the South Shore Collaborative is ours. It can get very tricky because of the age range that cannot be crossed with students more than 48 months apart. Students of such different ages participating in the program even with similar disability, programming can get very tricky.

Building programming was something Mrs. Cerwonka really did in her previous district, which was a larger district. She can recognize where that tipping point is and can grow something out and retain students and where we need to really use the resources that we have. One of the things that Mrs. Cerwonka is looking at very seriously is students who are coming in at PreK with programs that do always develop and change for our elementary programming, our STARS and our IEC Programs is the complexion of the needs of the student changing and what do we need to do to make sure we're going to be able to meet those needs so those students don't have to go out of district.

We want to retain our own students and provide them with the services they need here in the district and not pay out-of- district tuition. There's also the potential for our building and the district's ability to actually makes some revenue from hosting non-district students whose district does not provide the services and then they come to Cohasset and pay the out of district tuition to Cohasset. Now it's the reverse, not only are we paying the additional out of district tuition, but we're also making the out of district tuition dollars from other districts. We can actually turn a negative number into a positive number and that will help to expand the programming in years to come.

Chairman Dial very much appreciates Mrs. Cerwonka's report and going forward and to underscore the purpose of this agenda item. It sounds like Student Services is looking at building programming as a priority. Let's continue to keep our eyes on that tipping point where it may become prudent for this school committee's vestment.

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Teaching and Learning

• Activity Participation Rates Update (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)

This is in response to a specific request Mr. Kearney made for a future agenda item. This activity participation list shows we're growing sort of the breath of activity that we have here at every level. We have 994 which exceeds our total enrollment by 2.37% which means the average student participates in 2.37 activities during their school year.

Mr. Kearney thanks the Chair for bringing this up, it's nice to be heard! To see this list of clubs and activities we have here is incredible. We never really talk about how everybody is part of a Club. Mr. Kearney never knew about the Debate team and that was such a good thing where he was asked to be one of the judges on the Debate team and that was such a great thing to do. These are the things where parents can get more engaged. It would be nice if we could send this list out to families once in a while. Keep the kids busy, there's so much more to do other than playing video games.

As we develop a new school format for the school website, we should have a community resource page for each school building. The school committee has been trying to create a community resource book for all family members on what they do and for people that want to get involved and/or willing to volunteer distributing this. This was once a goal for this school committee, that just didn't happen. As we develop our new school format to the website, we'll have a page for community resources. This is where we have our approved vendors who put information there.

Budget, Resources and Governance

• Gift from Cohasset Education Foundation (CEF), Various Purposes (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

We received a gift from the Cohasset Education Foundation who donated a check for \$23,554.50. We have Buddy Benches, Picnic Tables at the Osgood School, ADHD Professional Development at the Osgood School, and district. SEL Paths Curriculum at Deer Hill. Code HS Curriculum at Middle School. EF Printed Agendas at the High School. Neuroscience Electric Course, and D&D Supplies at the High School. Items are funded by our CEF that come through applications that are submitted by our staff. The CEF reviews them, a very good process for determining what indeed is needed that they can fulfill. Our CEF is always very respectful, and they try to accommodate everyone and everything. We're just incredibly thankful for our CEF, they're a great educational foundation. Thank you very much CEF for your continued support of our schools and our students. These are great initiatives, and very much appreciated.

Motion made by Mr. MacLellan to accept gift as presented from the Cohasset Education Foundation for various educational purposes, seconded by Mr. Kearney.

Aye-All

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• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **Monthly Update–FY24 November Finance Report** - As of November 30, 2023 the School Department has expended \$7,201,676 out of the \$22,905,421 budget awarded (40.71%) and we are 41.67% through the year. We have encumbered supplies and materials on purchase orders in the amount of \$2,123,286. There is a remaining balance of \$13,580,459 which will be expended by salary accounts and any other school department needs that cannot be anticipated or have not yet been entered as a purchase order. Unfortunately, last month our SPED Tuitions went down a little bit and our deficit this month has gone up. A new student moved into the district who was a collaborative school placement. SPED Tuitions were budgeted at \$940,275 and are currently encumbered on purchase orders. Our deficit from October **-\$473,741** to November is **-\$544,423**. We'll be watching that as Mrs. Cerwonka is looking at programming for Special Education to keep our students here in the district. Mrs. Owen reached out to the Town to have them put on their radar that we may or may not be asking for money from the Stabilization Fund to help offset this deficit. Our utilizes are higher than they were last month, some of it is based on cost and some of it is based on usage. From the draft of our FY25 budget we're looking to increase our utility budget for our Special Education Tuitions budget.

Individual Schools Budget

School	Budget	Expended	Encumbrances	Balance	% Used	FTE
Osgood	\$3,993,308	\$1,218,170	\$142,257	\$2,632,882	34.06%	53.10
Deer Hill	\$4,071,421	\$1,112,884	\$110,906	\$2,847,631	30.05%	44.30
Middle	\$4,138,878	\$1,054,847	\$ 21,693	\$3,062,339	26.01%	46.0
High School	\$7,097,617	\$2,138,566	\$343,638	\$4,615,413	34.97%	66.80

Circuit Breaker funding received in FY23 was \$1,170,609. This amount was carried over in its entirety into FY24 as part of the budget. This amount was based on a 75% reimbursement rate.

Circuit Breaker funding expected to be received in FY24 has been posted at \$1,034,108, a decrease of \$136,501 which will be rolled over in its entirety into FY25 as part of the budget. The reimbursement rate has remained at 75% for several years. Circuit Breaker is a state program providing school districts with reimbursement for some of the costs incurred for providing “Free and Appropriate Education” to students with special needs.

➤ **Circuit Breaker**

Year	# of Students	% Reimbursement	Reimbursement Amount
FY24	14	75%	\$1,034,108
FY23	18	75%	\$1,170,609
FY22	18	75%	\$ 701,856
FY21	14	75%	\$ 648,533
FY20	19	75%	\$ 726,908
FY19	14	75%	\$ 592,920
FY18	13	75%	\$ 534,554
FY17	14	75%	\$ 446,704

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• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY24 Voted Capital List**

	<u>APPROVED</u>
1) Bus Lease (2024-2027) (District) 8 Diesel	\$ 90,000
2) Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540- 3 Yr. Lease)	\$ 52,000
3) Replace Smart Projectors/Panels in All Rooms (CMS)	\$ 155,161
4) Replace iPads at Deer Hill and Osgood School to include (253 iPads & cases, charging station)	\$ 93,960
5) Continue to replace furniture-Teacher/Students Deer Hill* adding a new grade 3 class.	\$ <u>35,000</u>
Grand Total	\$ 426,121

➤ **FY25 DRAFT CAPITAL LIST**

	<u>Sum of 2025</u>
c Bus Lease (8 Diesel Buses)	\$ 150,000
c Electric Bus Lease	\$ 25,000
c Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540-3 yr. lease \$143,100)	\$ 69,000
c Replace all Projectors with Interactive Presentation Equip (46-CHS)	\$ 254,908
c CMS Enhanced Audio in Classrooms (Lightspeed Redcat)	\$ 40,000
c Finish Retiling all Classrooms (Deer Hill)	\$ 300,000
c Replacement Furniture –Students/Staff (Deer Hill)	\$ 35,000
c Add Chromebooks (100 - Deer Hill)	\$ 80,000
c Indoor Signage in classrooms/hallways (CMHS)	\$ 50,000
c (2) New Athletic 15 Passenger Vans (48 Month Lease)	\$ 31,946
s Fire Alarms (CMHS)	\$ 1,000,000
s Bus Parking Lot (Deer Hill)	\$ 250,000
s Asphalt Road-Sidewalk Between DHS/JOS Needs to be Resurfaced (DHS)	\$ 120,000
s Asphalt Road from Pond Street Needs to be Resurfaced (CMHS)	\$ 100,000
s Replace Sidewalk and Curbing on Entry Road to CMHS (CMHS)	\$ 250,000
s Extend Sidewalk to Pond Street (CMHS)	\$ 50,000
s Alumni Field Fence	\$ 80,000
s Alumni Field Bleachers	\$ <u>100,000</u>
Grand Total	\$ 2,985,854

- c Capital
- s Stabilization Fund

Mrs. Owen is happy to report at this point in the school year, without the usual concerns with utility costs and unforeseen tuition expenses, the budget is proceeding based on projections.

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• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 DRAFT CAPITAL LIST**

At the Special Town Election, a new School Special Purpose Stabilization Fund was passed which will provide the district with a \$1.5M fund from which we can pay for important repairs and maintenance projects. Thank you for all the support for the schools and for our students and staff.

Thank you to the community for their support and getting this passed.

Our grants are pretty similar from year to year; however, we did receive four (4) new grants for this year. **METCO Restorative Justice; Expanding High Quality INSTR Math; Open Science Middle School Implementation; Investigating History Implementation.** FY24 grant funds are used to employ approximately 12.40 additional staff.

The Finance & Operations Director, Mrs. Owen, worked diligently with the school's Revolving Funds to bring those balances down, most balances are under \$100,000. For the item line School Kindergarten, the balance shows (\$78,297), which it's not. Technically, the schools do not have access to the \$300,000. This is an account on the Town's side, we track it here through the Revolving Account and the Town will transfer the \$300,000 at the end of the year. The School Use of Facilities Revolving deficit (\$12,120) is going down slowly, but it's going down.

School Lunch has a high balance because of the upgrades done in the cafeteria's last year and the year before. Now that we have a new Food Services Director Vinny, we'll be looking at some new equipment such as new freezers, refrigerators, and all kinds of items for the cafeterias. These accounts cover the salaries of approximately 25.70 personnel whose jobs relate to the account from which they are paid.

➤ **Preliminary FY25 Budget**

They've met with the leadership team several times. It's a collaborative process, and they meet 3 to 4 times a year to look at data and to look at their requests. At this stage, everything is on the table here. They haven't started to go through any process whittling down based on whatever may be coming our way. These are the cold hot facts of what they feel they really need. It's a rough draft and we'll talk more on this in a workshop at the next school committee meeting. We're always committed to showing people what we need because if we don't show that, nobody will realize what we need. There really are not many asks, our Rollover costs are a little over \$1M which is a 2% or 3% increase. We also had a decrease in Circuit Breaker and need to make up the difference of \$136,501.00 which was talked about already. There was an increase of 404,408 because of SPED Tuitions, and \$180,000 for projections and retirement savings. The projections for our requests will be for the next five years. Our approach was to make sure we have a certified technology teacher teaching technology.

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• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **Preliminary FY25 Budget**

Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Kay who came today are Instructional Technology Specialists, they both are teaching, but we also have people who teach these classes who right now are amazing, but they're not certified. We encourage them to get certified in technology and the district deserves a certified technology teacher in front of our students at all levels. We feel we could possibly hold off on this for another year because we're going to get a good product from our current staff knowing that they're being trained simultaneously. The list is a very broad preliminary request from our leadership team.

➤ **FY25 Capital Update/Possible Revision to Priorities**

FY25 DRAFT CAPITAL LIST

	Sum of 2025
c Bus Lease (8 Diesel Buses)	\$ 150,000
c Electric Bus Lease	\$ 25,000
c Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540-3 yr. lease \$143,100)	\$ 69,000
c Replace all Projectors with Interactive Presentation Equip (46-CHS)	\$ 254,908
c CMS Enhanced Audio in Classrooms (Lightspeed Redcat)	\$ 40,000
c Finish Retiling all Classrooms (Deer Hill)	\$ 300,000
c Replacement Furniture –Students/Staff (Deer Hill)	\$ 35,000
c Add Chromebooks (100 - Deer Hill)	\$ 80,000
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s Extend Sidewalk to Pond Street (CMHS)	\$ 50,000
s Alumni Field Fence	\$ 80,000
s Alumni Field Bleachers	\$ <u>100,000</u>
Grand Total	\$ 2,985,854

- c Capital
- s Stabilization Fund

The Finance Committee met with the Sub-Committee to extend out to the Facilities Department, the Assistant Town Manager, and Ellen Maher who is the Liaison. We wanted to get a better feel of the Stabilization Fund despite the Capital Fund to get clarity on who's deciding on what we would decide on. Some of this was on regular Capital that a year to year like the lease for the electric bus, replacement of Chromebooks, replacing the projectors. We replaced all the projectors at the Middle School last year and this year we're asking this for the High School.

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• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 Capital Update/Possible Revision to Priorities**

The list represents some of the items that are priorities. We need true numbers that was talked about and then put away some of this money, not spending the whole \$1.5M allocation right away. This will take care of a lot of items, then next year there will be a little bit more put aside for roofs because we'd have less items to take care of, next year will be a full investment in roofs. The progression of money that we could really advocate for the Town is a plan to be ready when indeed we're putting in a new roof. The new roof would be for the Osgood School, our most needy.

At the next Finance Committee meeting we're going to talk about the budget and Capital. We'll have discussions with the DPW and Facilities to really drill down on some of these costs, these are just rough estimates.

Ms. Lesky asks when this information comes will that defer to any maintenance causing additional expenses. Example, leaky roofs that are leaking, then ending up doing interior renovations or repairs due to leaky roofs and/or leaky windows.

The Chair has questions on a couple of agenda items on the Stabilization Fund. The school bus parking lot is needed, but it's also an economic issue so before we ask for the money, we need to know what the price is because if it's not worth to do, it might be less costly to continue to lease and that becomes a different decision for us to make.

• **Superintendent Update, Potential Formation of Search Committee**

The Superintendent Update is that Superintendent Patrick Sullivan will be leaving Cohasset next year. The potential formation of the Search Committee is on our agenda today because the school committee did not know our Superintendent would be leaving us with certainty. The process to replace a Superintendent is really important and request this to be on the agenda as a voted item at our next school committee meeting. The Chair would like to gather some thoughts from this school committee on how that Search Committee could be constituted on the membership would look like on a monumentally vote on it for the next school committee meeting. We'll need to know how many stakeholders in total, such as the staff, faculty, principals, parents. The MASC is a great resource, also NESDEC where they're pretty well aligned. They get stakeholders to form a committee who is the Screening Committee, then they both do a survey to various stakeholders. They also do focus groups with the stakeholders who are folks like teachers, students, families, and they get information to create what's called a "Candidate Profile". They advertise appropriately to screen for applicants, and they go through the applications with the Screening Committee, they pick candidates to bring in for interviews and they create interview questions based on the candidate's profile. They have those interviews, then it all comes back to this school committee to determine who the next Superintendent will be.

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• Superintendent Update, Potential Formation of Search Committee

Mr. Carr states he was on the Search Committee twice because he was the Select person for the Superintendent of Cohasset, it's exactly like that. We had a Union Representative from the schools, we had a Select person, we had an odd number of nine (9). We had a Professional group brought in that they hired. From Mr. Carr's perspective, having an outside person come in was excellent. Mr. Carr also suggests we should see if the CEF and/or our PSO has someone to consider. Our stakeholders are very important in putting this all together.

Chairman Dial recommends that this be put on the agenda for the next meeting to talk about the position statement for the district that we'll post, in the interim we could circulate individually so people can see where it is we're starting from and then we can come up with some ideas and adopt one at our next school committee meeting creating the Search Committee planning. Let's keep that in mind for our agenda planning, this will be a major component at that meeting.

Budget, Resources and Governance

• Food Service

We're excited to announce we have hired a new Food Service Director, Vinicio Cordon. He will provide creativity, excellence, collaboration, and a student first approach. Vinicio will be traveling between all our schools over the next few weeks looking for suggestions and input as well as getting to know the staff and students. After the holiday break, Vinicio is going to spend some quality time at the elementary school.

• Transportation

Work has started on the charging station for our new electric bus and as soon as the work is complete our new electric school bus will be delivered and put to good use.

Community Relations / Communication

• Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons

The Chair is the liaison to the Middle School Council and that meeting was cancelled because of the storm on Monday.

School Committee Governance

• Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair - None

• Approval of Minutes - None**

• Future Agenda Items

(1) How can we get students to utilize their lockers at the High School to unlock the stigma students seem to have with using their lockers. (2) Thank you letter from members of the school committee for folks who donate via the school donation website page.

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School Committee Governance

• Executive Session

The Chair states there is no reason to go into Executive Session for this meeting, but we will likely have an Executive Session for the next school committee meeting so please keep this in mind.

Motion made by Vice Chair, MacLellan to adjourn the December 20, 2023 meeting of the Cohasset School Committee at 9:12 PM, seconded by Ms. Lesky.

Aye – All

Documents/Materials Used at Meeting

December 20, 2023

K-2 Digital Literacy Slide Presentation – Osgood School.....	Casandra O’Brien, Lindsey Kay, INST
K-2 Digital Citizenship Presentation – Osgood School	Elementary and Middle High School
Digital Literacy & Citizenship-Deer Hill School-Grades 3-5	
Communication Skills - Grade 4	
Health Class - Grades 3-5	
Digital Literacy & Computer Science - Grades 6 [or] 7	
Guidance Grade - 7	
Intro to Research - Grade 8	
Health & Wellness - Grades 6-8	
Coding & Technology – Grades 9-12 (1 quarter)	
Wellness – Grade 9 (1 semester)	
Wellness – Grade 10 (1 quarter)	
Wellness – Grade 12 (1 quarter)	
What Can Families Do	
DigCitCommit.org	
Bark.us	
Data Sharing on (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys.....	Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services
Out of District Information.....	Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka
List of Activity Participation Rates Update.....	Superintendent Patrick Sullivan
List of Accepted Grants via Donation CEF Gift	Mrs. Susan Owen, Director of Finance and Operations
FY24 November Finance Report.....	Mrs. Susan Owen
FY24 Voted Capital List.....	Mrs. Susan Owen
FY25 DRAFT Capital List.....	Mrs. Susan Owen
FY25 DRAFT Budget.....	Mrs. Susan Owen

(Draft) Typed Minutes Submitted by:
 Kathleen Bock, December 29, 2023