



NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
 Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES – November 18, 2024

PAC, North Middlesex Regional High School, 19 Main Street, Townsend, MA 01469

PRESENT

Chairperson	Lisa Martin	Member, At Large
Vice-Chairperson	Randee Rusch	Member, At Large
	June McNeil	Member, Ashby
	Will Hackler	Member, Townsend
	Thomas Casey	Member, Pepperell ~ Absent
	Patrick McPhillips	Member, Pepperell
	Jill Twigg	Member, Pepperell
	Bill Burg	Member, Townsend
	Lisa Bloom	Member, At Large

ALSO PRESENT

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
Gary Burboa-Reese	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Lisa Comeau	Title I & Literacy Director
Robin Eibye	Recording Secretary
Anne Marie Tuccirone-Mahan	Director of Human Resources
Jeremy Hamond	Director of Operations

Chairperson Lisa Martin called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

COMMUNITY BUDGET FORUM

Forum Moderator, Scott McDermott welcomes Senators John Cronin and Edward Kennedy, and Representative Margaret Scarsdale.

Panel members Will Hackler, Finance Chair; Mary Daughraty, Ashby Town Administrator, Andrew MacLean, Pepperell Town Administrator, Nelson Mui, Townsend Town Administrator, Brad Morgan, Superintendent of Schools, and Nancy Haines, Business Manager, introduce themselves.

Andrew MacLean highlights the shift in resources from state funding to town funding over the past 25 years. McLean presents data showing a 2.5% increase in state funding over the past 25 years, while North Middlesex budgets have tripled, leading to reduced town services and increased taxes. MacLean’s presentation includes charts comparing state funding and NM’s budgets, showing the significant impact of reduced state support. McLean emphasizes the need for state funding to keep up with inflation and the increasing costs of education, urging the state to restore its financial commitment. *Full presentation attached.

OUR MISSION: At NM, we are committed to creating a diverse learning environment where students are provided a meaningful education through academic, social, and emotional learning experiences. Together with parents, caregivers, and the community, students are encouraged to ignite and embrace their individual potential to find success within NM and beyond.

Superintendent Brad Morgan reiterates the importance of funding both town services and education for an attractive community. Superintendent provides early projections for the school district's FY26 budget, noting that departments have not yet submitted their budgets. He discusses projected increases in costs for insurance, retirement, transportation, utilities, out-of-district placement, and collective bargaining agreements. Morgan highlights challenges of maintaining a balanced budget with limited state aid and the need for a 3% increase in funding from the towns. Morgan presents a budget increase of 4.43% from FY25 to FY26, emphasizing the significant gap between the proposed increase and the towns' ability to fund it. **Full presentation attached.

The panel accepts questions and comments from attendees.

State Senator John Cronin addresses the audience, acknowledging the state's failure to provide adequate funding and outlining areas of focus for legislative action. Cronin emphasizes the need for regional transportation reimbursement, special education circuit breaker reimbursement, and minimum per pupil aid.

State Representative Margaret Scarsdale praises the School Committee and towns' efforts to address the budget issues and calls for better prioritization of school funding. Representative Scarsdale suggests that the state should pass emergency funding for the 211 "Hold Harmless" districts to address the current crisis.

The forum and School Committee meeting ended at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: December 3, 2024
