

Seymour Board of Education



Special BOE Meeting – Budget Workshop #3

January 27, 2025

Central Office

6:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Champagne, Chairperson
Kristen Bruno, Vice Chairperson (6:14 PM)
Stephan Behuniak, Secretary
Jay Hatfield
Lori Nespoli
Ed Strumello
Kristen Harmeling

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Pete Kubik
Jim Garofolo

OTHERS PRESENT: Salvatore Bucci, Business Manager
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk
Jean Falbo-Sosnovich

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:13 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairperson is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairperson's Comments portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and no longer than 3 minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All the public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

- Called 3 times, no public comment.

III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Finalizing Seymour Education Budget for 2025-2026:

Budget Overview:

Mr. Bucci provided a comprehensive overview of the budget spreadsheet, highlighting the differences between the proposed budget versions and outlining various scenarios, including those suggested by the Superintendent. The discussion focused on insurance premiums and other budget items.

Insurance Discussion:

Mr. Champagne inquired about the status of insurance premiums. Mr. Bucci explained that while discussions with Mr. Pelosi are ongoing, no confirmed figures have been received. The town's insurance rate for retirees is higher than the Board of Education's. Mr. Bucci stated there is a potential 10-12% increase in rates. Transitioning to the partnership plan would require overcoming union negotiations and a three-year commitment. Mr. Bucci expressed that rates up to 15% may not warrant a transition. Ms. Harmeling suggested using 15% as a placeholder, which was agreed upon by the board. Mr. Bucci then updated the insurance placeholder to 20%. Ms. Harmeling stressed the importance of being realistic with the budget, particularly given the uncertainty around insurance rate changes.

Pre-K Special Education, Shared Services, and Instructional Support Budget:

Ms. Harmeling requested clarification on the Pre-K special education budget, and Ms. Bruno explained changes to the kindergarten age requirements and its impact on the special education numbers. Mr. Bucci confirmed that only one ELL teacher and one Pre-K teacher were needed for the coming year. The addition of Shared Services costs from the town would increase the Board of Education's budget by 0.7%. Additionally, the Board of Education would need to cover the cost of a School Security Officer (SSO), as the town is not allocating a School Resource Officer (SRO). Ms. Harmeling recommended revisiting the instructional supplies budget, suggesting a broader focus beyond just the reading program. Mr. Bucci assured that ongoing discussions about the curriculum would help prioritize effective resource allocation. The need for additional social workers at elementary schools was discussed, along with the potential need for more paraprofessionals due to the increased Pre-K classroom. Any reductions in these proposed positions would require the Superintendent to make cuts.

Spreadsheet Adjustments:

The board requested specific updates to the budget spreadsheet. This includes adding account numbers and marking budgeted items with an asterisk (specifically School Climate Coordinator, Library Media Makerspace/STEAM, Track & Field Coaches, Math Team). The board also discussed keeping relevant columns, ensuring the final budget reflects necessary changes, and including all approved items and items excluded.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling / sec. Mr. Behuniak) To adopt and present to the Board of Finance a Board of Education FY25-26 budget of \$42,903,193 as discussed.

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Champagne, Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Nespoli

PASSES: 7-0-0

Action Items for Spreadsheet Updates:

- Include adjusted insurance rates (20%).
- Present budget versions:
 1. Level services + adjusted insurance
 2. Level services + Shared Services + Town changes
 3. All items
 4. Final BOE approved budget (as discussed above)
- Keep columns on the right and indicate budgeted items with an asterisk.
- Add account numbers and a column for excluded items.

IV. REPORTS

- A. Chairman's Report - none
- B. Superintendent's Report - none

V. ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM