

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

April 14, 2025

The warrants for bills payable were reviewed and signed by the School Committee.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chris Oliver at 6:00 p.m. in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center.

On a roll call the following members were present: John Nunes, Mary Beckwith, Kathleen Amaral, Elizabeth Coughlin and Chris Oliver.

Audrey Kertscher, DHS Student Representative to the School Committee was present.

Also present: Dr. Saba-Maguire, James Kiely and Ms. Genthner.

The Chair announced the meeting is being recorded for future broadcast over DCTV.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nathan Silva stated he was pleased with the FY26 budget noting it addresses one of the problems the District faces but it does not solve all of the District's them.

Christine Pankowski, a parent of Dartmouth students, provided comments on the reduction of teachers and the negative impact it has on children's education.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 24, 2025 as written. The motion passed: 5-0.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the Executive Session Minutes of March 24, 2025 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until the matters under consideration are resolved. The motion passed: 5-0.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Audrey Kertscher, DHS Senior, reported on activities and events happening at Dartmouth High School (DHS).

-Spring sports update

-DHTC presenting "High School Musical" from May 1st through May 3rd; tickets can be purchased on line.

-DHS Business, Innovation and Technology Department (B.I.T.) is hosting a Career Fair tomorrow (April 15th)

-Student Counsel Spring Bulb Fundraiser is ongoing; information is posted on ParentSquare

-After Prom Committee is hosting 2 upcoming fundraisers April 29th (Dine In or Take out at

Cask and Pig) and on May 10th *Wicked Sing-a-long* at DHS; information for both events can be found on ParentSquare.

-13th Annual Prek-12 Art Show to be held on May 8th at DHS

-Once we return from April break, DHS seniors will have 22 days of school left and several fun events are being planned.

SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS – Dartmouth High School: Ryan Shea, Dartmouth High School (DHS) Principal, stated tonight's *Spotlight* which focused on the DHS *Spectrum* podcast noting Annica Dupre, a DHS Junior and host of the podcast was competing in school tennis match and was unable to participate in tonight's *Spotlight*.

Mr. Shea stated the *Spectrum* podcast noting it is available on Spotify and encouraged people to "like" and subscribe.

Mr. Shea provided a brief history of the podcast which is a division of the *Spectrum*, the school's student led newspaper, noting Wilbur Higgins, lead teacher for the DHS English Department, is the advisor.

Dartmouth High School students Andrew Moniz, associate editor of the *Spectrum*, and Mikey Burke, staff writer, provided comments about the school newspaper including the podcast noting the recent inclusion of cartoons and video games as well as sharing their experiences being part of the school newspaper and podcast.

Audio excerpts from recent podcast interviews were provided including DHS Education Support Professional Joe Cote, MA State Representative Chris Markey, MIIA Director Dr. Robert Baldwin, and DHS Cafeteria Manager Harmony Pires.

The Committee expressed its appreciation and thanked the students for their presentation and for the work they do at the *Spectrum*.

Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Audra Thomas and Stephanie Yermalovich, Interim Principal and Assistant Principal of the Quinn Elementary School respectively, to introduce the new Assistant Principal of the Quinn School.

Dr. Thomas thanked the administration for its support in providing three retired administrators to assist with the administration of the school this school year: Valerie Brower, Karen McCarthy and Darren Doane.

Dr. Thomas introduced Dr. Rebecca Hurley who was recently hired as an assistant principal for the Quinn School noting she will start on July 1st.

Dr. Hurley spoke briefly and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to join the Quinn administrative team.

PRESENTATION

George H. Potter Elementary School Improvement Plan: Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Rick Porter and Melissa McHenry, Potter School Principal and Assistant Principal respectively, to

present their school improvement plan (SIP) noting tonight is Mr. Porter's last time reporting a school improvement plan.

Mr. Porter stated Mrs. McHenry will present tonight's school improvement plan and asked for the Committee's indulgence in order to express his thanks to Committee members (past and present) for their unwavering support over the years; his gratitude to the superintendents and central office administrators he has worked with over the years and currently, to colleagues at the Potter and Quinn school and to the Dartmouth community for its trust.

Mrs. McHenry thanked Mr. Porter for his mentorship and collaboration.

Mrs. McHenry began noting the Potter School Improvement Plan (SIP) is "rooted" in our District Improvement Plan adding she was on the District Strategic Planning Committee which developed the District Improvement Plan and looked forward to the opportunity to bring "it" to the Potter School.

Mrs. McHenry presented the Potter SIP addressing each of the four focus areas as well as providing action steps and measures of success for each area: Teaching and Learning; Safe and Supportive Schools; Family and Community Engagement; and Budget and Capital Improvements, through four categories: School Based Action Steps, Timeline, Led By, and Measures of Success.

Ms. Beckwith asked how members of the data team were chosen.

Mrs. McHenry responded she asked for volunteers and selected a cross section of people so that one group would not have more representation than another: there are 2 classroom teachers, 2 interventionists and 2 coaches along with the school psychologist and herself on the team.

Mrs. Amaral stated her appreciation for the 5th grade leadership program and asked if the peer mentoring program is for all of the grades.

Mrs. McHenry said it could be.

Mr. Oliver asked about the WIN (What I Need) block scheduling.

Mrs. McHenry responded that it has been in place; teacher feedback reflected a desire for a schedule.

Dr. Saba-Maguire noted this is work taking place across the district's elementary schools.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Amaral to approve the Potter School Improvement Plan. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

ORGANIZATION OF COMMITTEE

Appointment of Chair:

Dr. Saba-Maguire sought nominations for Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Ms. Amaral moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to nominate Elizabeth Coughlin as Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Ms. Coughlin accepted the appointment.

Appointment of Vice Chair:

Ms. Coughlin sought nominations for Vice-Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Ms. Amaral to nominate Mary Beckwith as Vice-Chairperson of the Dartmouth School Committee. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Ms. Beckwith accepted the appointment.

Appointment of Secretary:

Mr. Nunes, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to appoint Dr. Saba-Maguire, Superintendent of Schools, as Secretary to the School Committee. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Dr. Saba-Maguire accepted the appointment.

Chairperson Comments:

Ms. Coughlin thanked the Committee members for their support.

School Committee Assignments:

Sub-Committees

Policy Committee	Mrs. Amaral & Ms. Beckwith
Fields & Facilities Committee	Mr. Nunes & Mrs. Amaral
Budget Committee	Ms. Coughlin & Mr. Oliver (Mr. Nunes back-up)

School Assignments

The Committee agreed to continue its current practice not to assign individual members a school and that members will actively engage with and be informed about all schools.

District and Town Committees

Dartmouth Education Foundation	Ms. Coughlin
Southern MA Educational Collaborative	Mr. Oliver
MA Association of School Committees	Mr. Nunes
Negotiations Representative	Mr. Nunes (Mrs. Amaral and Ms. Beckwith - back-up)
Technology Committee	Mr. Oliver and Ms. Beckwith
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee	no appointments were made
Town Open Space and Recreation Plan Steering Committee	Mr. Nunes (Ms. Coughlin - alternate)
Curriculum Council	Ms. Beckwith

Ms. Coughlin noted there was no longer a need to assign a member to the Town Charter Committee as its work has concluded.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed FY26 Budget – Further Discussion and Vote: Dr. Saba-Maguire thanked the Select Board, Finance Committee, Gary Carreiro (Interim Town Administrator) and Mr. Kiely along with parents present tonight who have been incredibly supportive since last year when it became clear that without some creative thinking we were looking at serious budget challenges and the possibility of losing some important positions and their willingness to explore solutions from multiple perspectives has been invaluable to us.

Dr. Saba-Maguire continued noting the District's financial challenges stem from rising special education expenses, State mandates, increased transportation costs and the need to remain competitive and attracting and retaining high quality educators adding these are not optional expenditures but necessary investments in our students and mandated obligations under mandated state and federal law.

Dr. Saba-Maguire recognized the Town's financial constraints; we remain committed to working together to find responsible and sustainable solutions while ensuring that Dartmouth students continue to receive the education they deserve.

Mr. Kiely thanked the Committee, District staff and the Town for its support in the budget process noting tonight's budget proposal solves one of the issues the District's faces it limits our reliance on one-time reserves over time and eliminate the imminent ESSER cliff that we have been concerned about for five years.

Mr. Kiely provided an explanation of the revised, proposed budget which was provided in the meeting packet: removal of the human resource position from the administration category of the budget a \$120,000 decrease to the proposed budget; incorporation of \$245,000 of the former ESSER funded positions that are currently being funded by school choice reserves into the operating budget in the instruction classroom staff category.

Mr. Kiely reported this revision creates a \$125,000 increase to the proposed operating budget.

Mr. Kiely stated the overall FY26 budget was revised to \$55,478,511.01 an increase of 4.4% adding we originally proposing a 4.1% increase over the FY25 budget.

Mr. Kiely noted there has been positive conversation with the Town side of government regarding "this" adding nothing has been formally considered; the hope ultimately is we receive support and a recommendation for Town Meeting.

Mr. Oliver asked how many FTE positions does the \$245,000 represent.

Mr. Kiely responded the way we are looking at it right now it would be approximately 4 positions.

Mr. Oliver commented that an override will be needed to support the school department.; Mr. Oliver made comments about the kindergarten stabilization account.

Mr. Nunes stated he would like to see an HR person but he will vote for this budget.

Mrs. Amaral stated this budget doesn't fix the issue, it's a compromise that says "it's okay that we underfund education in this community" adding she does feel better about this version of the budget but she doesn't feel good about it.

Ms. Beckwith agreed with Mrs. Amaral that "we" have done our part this year and "this" is probably as good as we can do adding we have to think immediately about the coming years.

Ms. Coughlin agreed with Committee members' comments noting she would like to see an HR director and to not forget the unfunded requests adding she thinks this is a responsible budget but it does not reflect how she views education and how she hopes this community values education.

Ms. Coughlin stated we do need to ask the community for more money.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the FY26 budget appropriation for Potter School Classroom Teachers in the amount of \$2,050,283.14. The motion passed: 4-0. Mr. Oliver abstained.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the FY26 budget appropriation for the total budget, excluding the item voted individually in the previous motion, in the amount of \$53,428,227.87. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Surplus Equipment – Discussion and Vote: Mr. Kiely sought authorization to dispose of surplus items listed in the memorandum provided in the meeting packet noting this will allow "us" to dispose of the surplus per the Town's policy.

Mr. Kiely stated there will be an online auction and any funds received will go to the Town.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Amaral to declare as surplus the equipment as listed in the memo from our Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations dated April 14, 2025. The motion passed: 5-0.

2025 Summer Sports Camps: Mr. Kiely sought approval to run the summer sports camp for students entering grades 2 through 9 which will run from June 16th through July 25th noting we are not proposing to raise the fee to participate and any profit earned will go to support the physical education and athletic programs in the District.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the Summer Sports camp as presented. The motion passed: 5-0.

New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High (Voke) School Committee– Vote on Reappointment of One of Dartmouth's Representatives: Ms. Coughlin opened discussion on the matter.

Mr. Oliver reported he received correspondence dated March 17, 2025 from Michael Watson, Superintendent of New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, and explained the process of appointing Dartmouth's representatives to its School Committee.

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to reappoint Dr. Cynthia Marland to the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee. The motion passed: 5-0.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Saba-Maguire provided information of work being done in the district that is aligned to the District Strategic Plan as well as current activities and events that are happening.

-Teacher and Learning Update: professional development update; MCAS testing update; update on summer reading thanking the school PTOs for their support of summer reading; DPS students participating in a regional Civic Showcase to be held at UMASS/Dartmouth on May 27th and DMS is holding its own showcase tomorrow; final workshop of the Playbook Initiative will be held right after April vacation.

-Budget and Capital Improvement Update: Mr. Kiely provided an update on the Long Term Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Committee which is preparing to make a presentation at Town Meeting that will include projects at DHS, DMS, DeMello School, Potter School, Quinn School and Memorial Stadium; the CIP Committee is proposing a series of public forums including a date in August for school projects.

Mr. Oliver asked who the stakeholders are that sit on the CIP Committee.

Mr. Kiely responded that the CIP Committee has had discussions about expanding membership of that committee noting a school committee member does not sit on the CIP Committee adding he represents the school department.

Mr. Oliver responded the discussions the CIP Committee is having warrant a school committee member "at the table."

Mr. Kiely stated he has referenced to the CIP Committee that he can only represent the views of the school department and not the school committee.

Mr. Kiely provided an update on the Fire Alarm System Project at DeMello and Potter regarding their funding from the Town.

Mr. Kiely stated what he thought would be considered for funding is \$50,000 of the \$250,000 requested for technology hardware replacement adding all other requests on the list are not "up" for consideration for funding.

Dr. Saba-Maguire provided an HR update.

-Family and Community Engagement Update: Career Fair being held at DHS tomorrow; Dartmouth Natural Resource Trust (DNRT) has offered some opportunities for families over the April vacation which have been provided to families through the electronic backpack.

-Safe and Supportive Schools Update: DHS partnership with Dunkin to help with student attendance; the Dartmouth Police Department has arranged for the Department of Homeland Security to come and do a safety assessment of our facilities (5 buildings have been assessed thus far)

Report of the Chair: The Chair had nothing further to report.
-Music Update

Mr. Nunes asked for a status of minutes from the Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School Committee.

Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School and via live stream at www.youtube.com/dhstvmedia on Monday, May 5, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to adjourn at 8:27 p.m. into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining where an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's bargaining position (DAA and DEA) and not to reconvene in open session. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



June Saba-Maguire, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

Agenda

Brief

Regular and Executive Session Minutes for March 24, 2025

Potter School Improvement Plan Presentation

DHS – Spotlight on Kids (PPP)

Memo - Revision of Proposed FY26 Budget

Memo – 2025 Summer Sports Camp

Memo – Surplus Inventory