

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

6:45 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
Paul Kearney
Craig MacLellan, Vice Chairperson
Jennifer Lesky

Also, In Attendance:

Steve Rotondi, Athletics Director, Cohasset Public Schools
Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

A Public Hearing on School Choice was held prior to the Regular School Committee meeting for Wednesday, April 24, 2024 with members of the Cohasset School Committee.

All Cohasset Public School Committee Meetings Are Recorded.

AGENDA

Call to Order

Vice Chair MacLellan called to order the regular school committee meeting for Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 7:03 PM. All members of the Cohasset School Committee who are present are asked by the Vice Chair to please indicate so with **Roll Call**: **Mr. Carr-Present; Mr. Kearney-Present; Ms. Lesky-Present; Mr. MacLellan-Present; Mr. Dial-Abstained.**

Opening Remarks

The Vice Chair would like to remind everyone that Public Comment is the section or portion of the agenda for the school committee meeting that is reserved for comments, concerns, thoughts, or questions that are not related to something that is already on the agenda. If someone has a thought, concern, or question about something that is on the agenda, please reserve that thought, concern, or question until the school committee meeting arrives to that point on the agenda to raise that concern, thought, or question. If anyone has an issue that is not on the agenda, please feel free to utilize the Q&A feature on Zoom if watching or participating remotely to make that comment.

Public Comment

No Public Comment is perceived.

Invited Guests

• Athletics Update (Mr. Steve Rotondi)

The Athletics Department here in Cohasset Public Schools had another successful season in their Fall and Winter sports, with Winter sports just ending, obviously the Spring season has a long way to go.

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Invited Guests

• Athletics Update (Mr. Steve Rotondi)

There were two major accomplishments from the Winter Season. Jack DeMello, a senior who attends CHS won the Individual State Championship coming in at 53! Jack is a great swimmer for CHS, and that was certainly a big goal of his to accomplish. Four years ago, CHS had Bonnie Greer who was Cohasset's first female that scored 1,000 points in school history. Sarah Chenette who plays on the Girl's Basketball team has now joined Bonnie being the second female scoring 1,000 points. Sarah will also graduate from Cohasset High School as an All-Stars Scholastics leading female scorer in basketball. With Bonnie and Sarah's achievements, all the accolades have been rolling in for a lot of the student athletes, but specifically with Bonnie and Sarah, Mr. Rotondi wanted to highlight the trifecta of just getting recognized as All Star Scholastics by the Boston Globe, Boston Herald, and the Patriot Ledger that will be shared out soon to everyone in the community. Every team made it to the post season as they did in the Fall and every team participated in tournaments which was great. They had multiple All Stars for each sport who were recognized and highlighted this Winter season.

This year, student participation rates for Cohasset Public Schools still continues to be one of the highest in the State with 86% of student athletes who participated in a school sport. That number of 86% gets big eyes when other Athletic Directors come to Mr. Rotondi's meetings who strive for just 50% participation in their school sports. As the school sports turn to the Spring season there's participation right now with a lot of surveys going out to see how many sports a student has and how many sport offerings are given to students.

Before the April vacation, Principal Scott and Mr. Rotondi went to the Scholar Athletes Banquet which is always a nice evening. Each school in the league selects two Scholar Athletes, a male and a female to be represented by their school with a banquet dinner with their families invited. This year they had a guest speaker, Cohasset's Coach Phil Mahoney who did a fantastic job. Phil spoke to all the Scholar Athletes that were selected. Mr. Rotondi wants to highlight that Angelina Grimes and Charlie Lankow from Cohasset High School were the two of their Scholar Athletes selected.

Pushing forward to the Spring sports season, so far everyone is off to a good start, and everyone is looking forward to having a successful Spring season. There were some students who wrote letters of intent to play Division I, or Division II Scholarship in the Fall. During the Spring Season all the school athletes come together and wish the Senior Athletes who are going on to play college sports next year, which will be a significant number. Year after year they're able to prove that they could stay here in Cohasset and play sports at a high level, be successful. and the Ivy Leagues finds them, and students can then sign up for a Division I Scholarship.

Mr. Rotondi has another update on the Alumni Field scoreboard which is something the Athletics Department has wanted to improve for some time now with it being an outdated scoreboard. Mr. Rotondi says they have some donors that want to help the Athletics Department get a new scoreboard. As of now Mr. Rotondi has received some renderings, quotes, and options. The donors want to support this and want to have this as a whole school scoreboard on the Alumni Field. The final touches are being put forth so that hopefully Mr. Rotondi can then come to another school committee meeting and present these renderings and share discussions on something the Athletics Department could see as receiving a gift, where they're very close to receiving this. Mr. Rotondi will keep the school committee updated in hopes of getting the school committee's approval on this great news.

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Invited Guests

• Athletics Update (Mr. Steve Rotondi)

Mr. Carr comments this is fantastic and really great, Congratulations! This just shows how their educators care very much about wellness, especially here in Cohasset. Sports activities are really important which leads to a well-rounded education, and all of this is terrific news!

Mr. Kearney thanks Mr. Rotondi for doing a great job with the kids. The kids are really happy with Soft Ball being at its all-time high. They have 20 kids on the team shared together with Cohasset and Hull where it's now a full squad. Volleyball has been added, which was competitive the first year with this past Fall being a real accomplishment. Thank you to all the coaches, assistant coaches, and everyone that helped.

Ms. Lesky echoes her thanks and appreciates Mr. Rotondi's report. Ms. Lesky is especially appreciative of the celebration of the Scholar Athletes because those two things actually go hand in hand to complement one another. The busier they are, the more they get done. That sort of offset of physical activity would be intellectual activity which is important, and she really appreciates that part of the program they have here in Cohasset.

School Updates

• School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)

Dr. Sullivan shares some exciting news that's been literally just taken hot off the press. The US News World Report once again reported that Cohasset Public Schools was selected with school distinction. Their rating is way up there in the State being number 32, with 700 plus in the country, which obviously is a pretty amazing feat. Not that the rating means everything, but it's nice to get those accolades when they do come in with the community honored.

The 2nd Annual Mosaic Event was a wonderful event and Dr. Sullivan is so happy this came to Cohasset. It really serves as a model for everything they believe that is important in bringing the community to create family like schools and really to extend their schools with families. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan extends his sincere thanks to Aleisa Gittens-Carle, METCO Director and to anyone who is attached to any of the diversity groups here in Cohasset. This was a full community effort, with the School's Food Service department providing delicious food. There were Irish dancers, and Mariachi bands, with all the wonderful cultures that are really inspirational with the diversity they have in the district.

At the Joseph Osgood School and Deer Hill School there were a few curriculum engagement activities held recently. The JOS school had a math night which was successful, and one of the reflective elements from this is their hoping to do this earlier in the year for next year. They also had a really interactive, engaging map activity day for grade 3 at the Deer Hill School. Students and families had interesting and challenging math games that are part of their "Bridges" Math Program where students were actually teaching family members how to play, this was really strategic and thoughtful. Students actually had voice around which games would be part of it and picked three games where they learned how to teach family members. Grades 4 and 5 will have their map activity days on Monday and Tuesday next week.

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School Updates

• School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)

The Joseph Osgood School had a fantastic Neurodiversity presentation given by Ms. Hart and Ms. Larson that was very interactive for students. This will be paired with an Autism Celebration next Tuesday to which they're really looking forward to engaging the students' reactions to this, with so much material to learn there. Dr. Sullivan was very impressed with the way Ms. Hart and Ms. Larson interacted and engaged with all students.

The electric school bus has arrived! Dr. Sullivan was told a grand ribbon cutting ceremony will be this coming Friday at the circle by the school thanks to the Alternative Energy Committee, an organization that Mr. Carr is very proud to be part of. Tonya Bodell, Chairperson of the Alternative Energy Committee really spearheaded her persistence and deserves a lot of credit for this electric school bus to be here in Cohasset.

There were two fantastic field trips over the April break. One was to Panama and the other was an amazing trip to Europe. These two trips were very successful and Dr. Sullivan thanks the educators and is very appreciative for spearheading these school trips. They are very committed educational professionals who deserve a lot of credit. It's their own time and they're making a huge difference for students. At a later school committee meeting they hope to appropriately invite students who went on these trips to speak a little bit about their experiences.

Teaching and Learning

• Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

Cohasset Middle School has a consultant who is working with students and looking at how to create an accelerated math curriculum program there with math teams. Dr. Scollins met today with the Instructional Leadership Literacy team and was asked to speak on why administrators have a commitment to wellness in the district. There were some students who came that brought so much value to that committee. This was one of the best things they ever did last year inviting students to these meetings.

MCAS testing continues with a little bit of a break that will start up again in May for Math and Science and Civics for 8th grade students.

Dr. Sullivan says coming off this school year they'll have a bigger picture from a data perspective on MCAS that the district has on students should pay off anything meaningful that moves with Superintendent Shannon at the helm which will be great.

Budget, Resources and Governance

• Gifts from Cohasset Parent School Organization (PSO) **

The Cohasset PSO gave two gifts, one in the amount of \$2,390 for the Amusement Park High School field trip. The other gift is in the amount of \$1,000 for funds raised from the Multicultural Mosaic Event that recently happened.

A motion was made by Ms. Lesky to accept the two (2) gifts from the Cohasset Parent School Organization as presented, seconded by Mr. Carr.

Aye – All

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)

➤ Monthly Budget Update

As of March 31, 2024, Ms. Owen reports the School Department has expended \$15,793,824 out of the \$22,905,421 budget awarded (72.62%) and they are 75% through the year. They've encumbered supplies and materials on purchase orders in the amount of \$841,247. There's a remaining balance of \$6,270,350 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.

SPED Tuitions were budgeted at \$940,275 and are currently encumbered on purchase orders. The shortfall in SPED Tuitions has decreased from **-\$445,970** to **-\$436,518**. This is a decrease in the amount of \$9,452 based on a tuition adjustment. At the School Committee level, they've voted and approved a request to draw funds from the SPED Stabilization Fund to help offset this deficit. The request as of now is for the Town to get approval from the Advisory Select Board that will then assure the \$200,000 to help offset the Special Education Fund deficit.

<u>School</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Encumbrances</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>% Used</u>	<u>FTE</u>
Osgood	\$3,993,308	\$2,663,526	\$ 58,776	\$1,271,006	68.17%	53.10
Deer Hill	\$4,071,421	\$2,595,294	\$ 29,317	\$1,446,810	64.46%	44.80
Middle	\$4,138,878	\$2,464,477	\$ 4,836	\$1,669,566	59.66%	46.0
High School	\$7,097,617	\$4,884,098	\$106,049	\$2,107,471	70.30%	66.80

Circuit Breaker

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 as \$1,034,108, 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. This year they've applied for the "Extraordinary Relief Fund" through Circuit Breaker which is a program that allows school districts to claim the "Extraordinary Relief Fund" when Special Education costs exceeds 125% of the previous year's claimed costs. Reimbursement numbers will be released next week, paid out in May, 2024, and cannot be carried over into the next year. Something new that they've applied for is a program called the "Reserve Relief Fund" which is to help offset the 14% increase to Private School tuitions this year. Reimbursement will be paid out in May, 2024 and can be carried forward one year.

➤ FY24 VOTED CAPITAL LIST

APPROVED

Bus Lease (2024-2027) (District) 8 Diesel	\$ 90,000
Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540- 3 Yr. Lease)	\$ 52,000
Replace Smart Projectors/Panels in All Rooms (CMS)	\$ 155,161
Replace iPads at (JOS) to include (253 iPads & cases, charging station)	\$ 93,960
Continue to replace furniture (DHS) Teacher/Students adding a new grade 3 class	\$ 35,000
Grand Total	\$ 426,121

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)

➤ Monthly Budget Update

➤ FY25 School Committee Voted 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)	\$	52,000	Q
C	Replace all Projectors with Interactive Presentation Equipment (46-CHS)	\$	225,481	Q
C	Replacement Furniture –Students/Staff (Deer Hill)	\$	35,000	Q
C	Add Chromebooks (100 - Deer Hill Elementary)	\$	35,000	Q
C	(2) New Athletic 15 Passenger Vans (48 Month Lease)	\$	31,946	
TOTAL		\$	554,429	

S	Fire Alarms CMHS (CMHS) Engineering Study	\$	175,000	Q
S	Safety of Buildings-lighting, health & infrastructure considerations, and signage	\$	250,000	
Middle School/High School				
S	Finish Retiling all Classrooms at Deer Hill	\$	300,000	
TOTAL		\$	725,000	

C-Capital

S-Stabilization Fund

Q-Quote

The FY25 school committee voted Capital list above will be discussed and voted on tomorrow night, Thursday, April 25, 2024 at the Capital meeting.

At this point in the school year, the only concern is the special education tuition deficit which will offset the balance by the Circuit Breaker Extraordinary Relief Fund and the SPED Stabilization Fund.

• Facilities/Custodial

During the April break lots of things happened. They've upgraded HVAC controls at the two (2) elementary schools. The Cohasset Middle School elevator has been fixed. Replacing ceiling tiles, Osgood School elevator had an inspection. Painting was needed in areas in the school buildings. Deep cleaning of the MS/HS bleachers, and lots of other projects are still going on.

• Transportation

The electric school bus has arrived, and the training process has started. The electric school bus will take over one of the daily bus routes.

• Food Service

The Senior Skipper Café is now open and serves meals to the senior students at Cohasset High School. There is new signage at the Elementary Schools which showcases daily menus and options for lunch and breakfast.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)

Mr. Carr says he's so glad Sue is on their team. She brings her math skills to all the financial reports the school committee needs and thanks her for always being so informative.

Mr. Kearney echoes the same, and thanks Sue and the whole administrative team. Mr. Kearney would like to see a list of all the "asks" by departments so they can check off these things that have been "asked" for. Also add to the school's donate page the targeted "asks" on the school's website as well as in Dr. Sullivan's newsletters.

Ms. Lesky thanks Ms. Owen, she always brings forward the financial complexities of running a district as well as just being accountable to the constituents surrounding the district.

Vice Chair MacLellan asks if a list of what forms the funds that are distributed to each school building would be helpful to see. Mr. MacLellan noticed CMS having the lowest number in the revolving account compared to other school buildings. Secondly, Mr. MacLellan requests if the new Director of Food Service could prepare some sort of wish list, a plan for the 2024-2025 school year roll out for the Food Service Department to present to the school committee at one of the school committee meetings before the end of this school year.

Community Relations / Communication

• Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons

Mr. Carr updates Lance Dial and himself went to the Budget and Finance Committee where they received some feedback on one of the Capital items the school committee is very interested in, which was how they would spend the money if they were able to get it. It was a successful meeting, and reports were submitted to appropriate parties. Mr. Carr will keep members of the school committee informed of the next steps they'll need to take. Articles are moving forward from other various committees. Mr. Carr plans on attending the Capital meeting tomorrow with others and will provide any feedback he can at another later school committee meeting.

Mr. Kearney reports he attended a Wellness meeting today to see how they could improve the space within the Fitness Center and expand the Wellness Center with Yoga classes, ping pong tables, a meditation area where kids can go just to take some stress off of them. He also says this space would be such a better environment that fits well with the Wellness Center. Mr. Kearney hopes the Select Board takes their recommendations from the Sub-Committee where they voted to move ahead with these things that will improve better health for the children of Cohasset.

Vice Chairman MacLellan reports he'll be attending a Food Service and Nutrition Sub-Committee meeting next Monday at Noon at the Osgood School to explore what further improvements can be made to the Elementary Food Service Program.

School Committee Governance

• School Choice Vote **

A motion was made by Mr. Carr that Cohasset Public Schools does not declare itself as a receiving district for the Inter District School Choice Program for 2024-2025 school year, seconded by Ms. Lesky. **Roll Call Vote:** Mr. Carr-Aye; Mr. Kearney-Nay; Ms. Lesky-Aye; Mr. MacLellan-Aye.

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School Committee Governance

• Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

There were no topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

• Approval of Minutes **

There are no Minutes to approve by members of the school committee at the April 24, 2024 regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee.

• Future Agenda Items

- Students who went on the recent Europe Trip and other trips to and invite them to one of the school committee meetings to talk about their experiences abroad.
- Inviting the new Food Service Director to present plans for Food Service for the 2024-2025 school year.
- More robust conversations about School Choice for better understanding the details of the inner work for this program.
- More in-depth discussions with the School Facilities Committee and its charge, and how this is going to work with the School Committee.
- Inviting Officer Taylor to recognize that he does listen to the school committee where he started up the RAD Program with a concerned citizen who brought this to the school committee's attention and Officer Taylor did his job and got that done.
- Invite Officer Taylor to talk openly to the community on substance abuse and diversion efforts.

• Executive Session¹ ** #2. Strategy in preparation for negotiations with Nonunion Personnel

A motion was made by Mr. Kearney on April 24, 2024 at 8:05 p.m. the Cohasset School Committee will move into Executive Session¹ M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(a) for reason #2. Strategy in preparation for negotiations with Nonunion Personnel. The Cohasset School Committee will not reconvene in an open session, seconded by Mr. Carr. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Carr-Aye; Mr. Kearney-Aye; Ms. Lesky-Aye; Mr. MacLellan-Aye.

¹ Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) mandates that in order to go into Executive Session the Committee must:

1. Do so on a roll call vote
2. State the purpose for executive session.
3. Indicate whether the body will reconvene in public session

• Adjourn **

The regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, April 24, 2024 adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

**** Requires Committee Vote / Action**