

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

PUBLIC HEARING ON FISCAL YEAR 2025 SCHOOL BUDGET MINUTES

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

5:30 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:

Lance Dial, Chair
Paul Kearney
Craig MacLellan, Vice Chair
Jennifer Lesky

Also, In Attendance:

Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

The purpose of this meeting is to invite public comment, as the law requires, on the School Committee's deliberation on and certification of the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 School Budget.

Chairman Dial called to order the Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2025 School Budget for Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 5:30 PM. Members of the Cohasset School Committee who are present are asked by the chair to indicate so in **Roll Call: Mr. Kearney-Present; Ms. Lesky-Present; Mr. MacLellan-Present; Mr. Dial-Present.**

The purpose on the agenda, and the one purpose only is for Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2025 school budget. The Cohasset School Committee has had multiple discussions over the prior weeks with many details about the 2025 school budget from previous to most recent school committee meetings. Members of the Cohasset School Committee will continue to have debates to approve the school budget that will then go to the Select Board for inclusion on the Town warrant, or at least be funded by the Town.

The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Priorities are Teaching and Learning, Social Emotional Wellness, Resources, Communications and Engagement. The Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriated Budget is \$22,905,421 with Contractual Salary Obligations/Roll Over Costs \$1,335,253 which is a 5.82% increase. The Projected Retirement Savings are at \$180,000. Some of the obstacles that they're facing is a decrease in Circuit Breaker Funding from last year to this year in the amount of \$136,501 to make up obviously for this year. They had an increase in Special Education Tuitions \$464,425 and will use Quarter 1 in Circuit Breaker Payment from FY25 in its entirety into FY26 with their first payment approximately being \$258,527. This will increase Special Education to \$342,399. The Circuit Breaker Funding can be used from the current year or previous year.

There were four (4) ESP positions that were unfilled and have been unfilled for the entire year with a savings of \$50,000. The additional funding from the SPED Reserve Relief Fund is still unknown at this time and DESE will release this sometime in May, 2024 with that unknown payment. This is to help offset the districts who suffered a big hit with a 14% increase in Special Education to Private Tuitions.

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The Cohasset Public School Department Leadership Team tried to be really lenient on what they asked for on supplies/materials, and subscriptions for a savings of \$19,887. The total reductions to the FY25 budget at this point is \$74,887 with more to come with the SPED Reserve Relief Fund. Mrs. Owen says they can use the SPED Reserve Relief Fund this year to which they're not planning to do, or they can use it next year. The Extraordinary Relief Fund that they'll be receiving this year has to be used this year. The overall budget requests all together are \$22,905,421 with their roll over requests are \$1,155,253 and the increase to Special Education of \$342,399 brings to date the reductions of -\$74,887 with a total amount of \$1,422,765 for the FY25 requested budget amount of \$24,328,186, an increase of 6.21% which is higher than most years.

Several times during the year the leadership team does an exercise where they look at data, both quantitative and qualitative, looking at the needs in the district that project 3 years out looking for these positions. They're always projecting forward to ensure the growth of the district.

Requests made but not able to fund

.20	Increase OT from .80 to 1.0 Middle School/High School	\$14,000
1.0	Add School Adjustment Counselor Elementary	\$66,000
	Increase to Utilities Budget	\$15,000
	Increase to Custodial Supplies/Materials Budget	\$20,000
.50	Increase .50 ELL to 1.0 District Wide	\$40,234
1.0	Add Grade 4 Teacher Deer Hill School	\$66,000
1.0	Add IT Technician District Wide	\$60,000
1.0	Add Technology Teacher Osgood School	\$66,000
(1.0)	Cut Technology ESP Osgood School	(\$40,234)
1.0	Add Technology Teacher Deer Hill School	\$66,000
(1.0)	Cut Technology ESP Deer Hill School	(\$40,234)
1.0	Add Special Education Kindergarten Teacher Osgood School	\$66,000
1.0	Add Library Media Specialist Deer Hill School	\$66,000
(1.0)	Cut Library ESP Deer Hill School	(\$41,235)

Future Budget Goals - FY25 Working Draft from Leadership Requests

Continue to expand support for Social Emotional Learning
Continue to expand Therapeutic Offerings
Continue to expand MTSS Tiered Supports
Expand Technology Integration
Explore the implementation of Elementary Foreign Language
Continue to build Computer Science pathway for Students
Continue to focus on the Safety and Security of Buildings

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Future Budget Goals - FY25 Working Draft from Leadership Requests Continuation

Upgrade Facilities
Continue focusing on Culturally Responsive Teaching/Diversity, Equity, Inclusive Practices/Resources
Continue to expand the Arts and Music Offerings for grades K-12
Explore needed adjustments that are determined through curriculum review process and cycle
Explore the hiring of Elementary Assistant Principals
Continue to expand English Language Arts and Math Resources for grades K-12
Explore the hiring of Science Specialists at the Elementary level
Expand Vocational Innovation Offerings for Students
Expand Project Based Learning options for Students
Continue to expand Health, Physical Education, and Wellness Offerings/Facilities

All these positions are paying off, seeing a lot of growth, and not nearly done. Absolutely made some growth coming off of COVID with support in place that helped reduce that gap more than most places. The positions advocated for in early numeracy, early literacy, and throughout the district are paying off which are seen in their MCAS scores and AP School Honor Roll where they were highly ranked. They're making great strides because of the budget decisions they can afford, and they'll continue to keep that in focus.

Future Budget Goals and requests for additional positions can be found on the school website.

Motion to adjourn Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2025 School Budget for Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 5:54 PM was made by Vice Chair MacLellan, seconded by Ms. Lesky.

Aye – All

*Respectfully Submitted on April 11, 2024
By Kathleen Bock*