

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

6:00 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

Lance Dial, Chairperson

Paul Kearney

Craig MacLellan, Vice Chairperson

Jennifer Lesky

Also, In Attendance:

Nathan Askjaer, Superintendent Student Advisory

Council Liaison

Brian Scott, Principal Cohasset High School

Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services

Mrs. Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations

Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent of Cohasset

Public Schools

All School Committee Meetings Are Recorded.

AGENDA

Call to Order – Chairman Dial called to order the regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 6:01 PM. The Chair asks members of the school committee who are present to please indicate so in **Roll Call**: **Mr. Kearney- Present; Ms. Lesky- Present; Mr. Carr- Present; Mr. MacLellan- Present; Mr. Dial- Present.**

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Remarks Chairman Dial would like to remind folks this school committee meeting is live, and members of this school committee are here in-person at the Learning Commons at the Cohasset Middle and High School. This meeting is also virtual through the Zoom feature that enables chat and ask questions, Facebook is watch and listen only to the school committee's proceedings.

Public Forum Ronnie Goodman, a resident on Sawyer Street, is here today with a raised concern that he and his neighbors would like to address members of the Cohasset School Committee. Mr. Goodman's residence is close to Deer Hill School, and he has seen flags on the wetlands behind his home. He also understands plans are being put in place for parking the school buses in front of Deer Hill School. Mr. Goodman says they respectfully disagree with that plan based on a number of different things. The one primary concern is traffic congestion because Sawyer Street gives access to the Library, South Shore Music Circus, the Osgood School, Deer Hill School, and the Recreation Department.

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Public Forum Mr. Goodman and neighbors who live on Sawyer Street are also concerned with the noise and pollution that these school buses exhalates especially when parked along route 3A at 6:00 AM in the morning when school buses engines running as a commercial bus operation in a residential neighborhood.

Mr. Goodman doesn't know why the school buses need to be parked in front of Deer Hill School and he is here to propose and suggest other plans that may help the school committee to consider. Mr. Goodman tends to recall the maintenance building that was built near the DPW, and this was to house all the school buses and he doesn't understand why the school buses can't park there anymore. Mr. Goodman and others know the school buses have been parked on private property and the owner maintains the grounds by plowing the snow and making sure the pavement is safe to walk on. Mr. Goodman and others say it doesn't make sense why the Town would pay rent to someone on this private property to put the school buses there. In conclusion, Mr. Goodman says if this new plan for housing the school buses is put in place, it will negatively impact property values along Sawyer Street. Mr. Goodman hopes the school committee can revisit this issue and come up with a plan that would be more appropriate. Mr. Goodman says at one point he saw a budget item of \$200,000 in the minutes for this new parking area for the school buses and he's curious if this money is being spent to do plans and engineering, or something else?

The Chair states for the record, Mr. Goodman handed out a notice to all the members of this school committee. Chairman Dial says this is not an item on the school committee's formal agenda and is not going to open it up to the floor for any deliberations, but the Chair does want to respond to some of Mr. Goodman's concerns at the initial stage. At this point there is no plan for the school buses. There is no plan for a parking lot, it's a plan for a depot. The \$200,000 that Mr. Goodman saw in the school committee minutes was a list of preliminary Capital requests that came off because this school committee knows they're not ready to make any decisions. They're looking at options to the expansion of the Deer Hill School parking lot and no one considered building a bus depot. What this school committee has considered doing is expanding the parking lot a bit front forward to allow parking spaces for the school buses. In order for that to work the school committee has to do some investigation along with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, the Conservation Committee, and pursuant to their recommendation this school committee is doing a preliminary investigation to where the wetlands are, because the first question of anything, is this even a possibility? The answer to that is this school committee doesn't know yet and that is what those flags are about, those flags are not a plan, no architecture plan, and not a design. The school committee is looking at other options as Mr. Goodman noted paying a considerable amount to a private individual for parking the school buses. This is a financial decision in mind, as Mr. Goodman described it if we have to invest so much of that for a 30-year payback and it's not worth it, the school committee will look at other options. This is one available option, since the school understands DPW can no longer accommodate their school buses in their facility which is why they're trying to find a new home while leasing spaces instead of using the DPW. This is a thorny issue for this school committee, we have school buses that need a place to park but rest assured the school committee is nowhere near a decision on where or what the place will be for our school buses.

Cohasset Public Schools

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Public Forum Right now, there is a place for the school buses and it's suboptimal in the Chair's view, and it makes it a lower priority for when this school committee is looking for a new Superintendent and some other things our schools are facing. It is an item that this school committee wants to solve at some point, it's not on our Capital Budget request for this year, so rest assured it's not going to happen in the coming year. To the extent that this school committee picks that back up which the Chair expects would be at some point, they'll use it as their normal process having multiple meetings to deliberate, and discuss, to consider, and respond to Mr. Goodman and the community's voice.

Mrs. Susan Owen says step one was to check out the wetlands. The Conservation Commission needs a storm water permit to show that the school buses will be within the distance that they need to be before even thinking about it. But in order to do that the school administration has to submit a set of plans which is probably what Mr. Goodman has seen. This plan has nothing to do with a school bus parking lot. Right now, the only thing the school administration is trying to do is find out if this area would be suitable because of the wetlands. The school administration can't do anything until they get that Conservation permit for storm water drainage. The storm water drainage permit would need to be put forward first.

Public Comment None

Invited Guests

• Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Nathan Askjaer)

From a student life perspective Nathan starts off with students ending their first semester. For the Senior class it's all downhill and for the juniors like Nathan it's slightly downhill, but it was a successful first semester ending February 9th. Cohasset High School will be hosting a "Credit for Life Fair" which the Seniors participate in. Students dress in attire for their part in the careers they've chosen with parent volunteers from the Town who have career paths that might be of interest to student's future. February 15th Cohasset High School will host a Trivia night for grades 9-12. Nathan believes as he's been told that the proceedings are going to help fund the Seniors Prom. There will be Semi-Formal dance for High School students on March 1st.

The school's hockey, basketball, gymnastics, swimming, wrestling, and skiing for Boys and the Girl's teams are going well. We have a young team and a new goalie for Boys' hockey and are hoping to make it to the playoffs. The Boys' basketball team had an overtime win against Mashpee at a home game here in Cohasset last Friday which was awesome to go to. Nathan noticed a lot of younger kids that go to the games, some from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade that make it loud and it's been awesome. The Girl's Basketball made a record with 8 out of 6 and they're 10th in the power rankings right now. Sarah Chenette just broke the school record for career points and that's something awesome and always good to see. The gymnastics team which Cohasset is combined with Norwell just had a high record season of 130.6 as a score in a meet against Somerset and Berkeley and they had their Senior night last Friday. Their league meet is this coming Saturday and will be their last for the season.

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• Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Nathan Askjaer)

The Boy's and Girl's swim team had a strong season, the Boy's won the league title, and Girl's took third. Swimmers are still training for the sectionals and maybe even the State, which is exciting as well. Similar to wrestling, they have a couple kids that are hoping to go to the State Tournament to compete in sectionals. They started their season with a record of 2 and 6 and ended with a record of 15 and 10, which is a really good comeback, and everyone seems to be pretty fired up about it.

As far as Arts are going with the school band concerts, all school band concerts from elementary, middle, to high school will be held on March 21st at Cohasset High School. Nathan invites folks to attend, he's in the band, he's always been, and his brothers are also in the band, so there's a lot of good music, it's always a good time and gets everyone out too.

Nathan serves as a Liaison on the Superintendent Student Advisory Council where they've had a compass plan for the past few years, and they've completed that, and that has come to an end. What the SSAC will be working on this year is drafting a new strategic plan for the upcoming years, and as always, using student voice which is partially Nathan's job with some other students who are involved in the SSAC. Nathan, who's an avid food eater, expresses how great the new chef is. Some of the meals he's made have been awesome, and actually Nathan says he's never seen kids so excited to get cafeteria food in his life. Nathan is also a member of the Student Council and they'll be hosting a ping pong tournament soon in Utility that will take place over the course of 5 days for people who are interested. It's an annual event and there's always a good turnout across all grades, boys, and girls, and it's a fun thing to do to get us through these cold Winter months and it gives people something to look forward to.

Mr. Kearney comments great job Nate! Thank you.

Ms. Lesky just loves hearing student voice sort of describing how things are going in the schools. Thank you.

Mr. Carr says he's sure this school committee will talk about Food Services in a second. We love to hear that kids notice there's improvement to the cafeteria food around here. We should get some tee-shirts that say, "Our kids wait in line for cafeteria food!" Mr. Carr is glad that Food Services is getting noticed, and this school committee is always open to suggestions on that stuff, and if there's ever anything this school committee can do that students need or want, or whatever, this school committee is very open to that. Always feel free to throw it in there, we're very appreciative for all that Nathan and his peers do.

Mr. MacLellan thanks Nathan as always for his report and asks if he sees any areas that need improvement or any other concerns because the student voice is to hear from a student initiative on things or any destructive criticism.

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• Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Nathan Askjaer)

Nathan remembers one of the school committee meetings he attended and presented earlier in the year said he'd have to wait for the year to go on so he could come up with something, but when he was writing down his notes for today's meeting there wasn't anything glaring that came to mind. There's not a real lot that could be improved on, nothing big, everything seems to be going smoothly so far. Nathan recalls two years ago when he was a freshman on student council at a school committee meeting and he talked about the equipment in the fitness room being super rusty and old but was obviously still functional and it's great to see those actions taking place. If there's something he saw improved, Nathan says he'd say the fitness room at CHS.

Chairman Dial thanks Nathan and very much appreciates his willingness to come to these meetings, we love transparency on student life.

Invited Guests

**• Spotlight on Learning: Cohasset High School - A Shot for Life Courage Cup
(Mr. Brian Scott)**

Mr. Scott says he's going to keep Nathan here, he'll be his spokesperson on this. Principal Scott says Nathan just outlined all the great stuff that's happening within the walls of the building, and there's lots of great stuff that happens outside the walls as well. One of Cohasset High School pillars is the "Vision of a Graduate" which is a scholarship serving to better good and create a good scholarship in the broadest sense. What are students passionate about and how can they use that to make a difference. One of the organizations that CHS partnered with is called "A Shot for Life" in Gideon. It happened at Catholic Memorial in West Roxbury when Mr. Scott was the Assistant Principal there and he had a senior whose name was *Mike Slonia*, and Mike was the manager of the basketball team and had an ankle injury and he couldn't ever play basketball, but he was so passionate about the sport. Mike was a massive gym person, same as Nathan sitting here, he was just a great student leader. One day Mike approached Mr. Scott to tell him he had just found out his mother has brain cancer and he wanted to do something to help and said he'd like to shoot baskets for 24 hours and set a record for the most baskets in a day. Mr. Scott said alright, what will he need from him. Mike said he'll need the gym overnight and will need a trainer. Mr. Scott said to Mike great, Mike will do all the PR then tell him what the numbers will look like. Mike said to Mr. Scott, it's going to be great, and the Mayor of Boston will be there, it'll be phenomenal. Mr. Scott said to Mike, okay, make it happen, and he did! Mayor Menino came, the Boston Police, and Boston Firefighters came, and Mike shot for 24 hours with a packed gymnasium. People took shifts rebounding for him, they took shifts getting water for him and getting him trained, and Mike did it. It was one of the most emotional things that Mr. Scott has ever seen and such a great indicator of how much influence students can have when they follow through. When Mike graduated, he ended up taking that and raised over one million dollars for brain cancer research. He's been recognized by Mass General Hospital as part of the 100 most contributing people to cancer research funding.

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• **Spotlight on Learning: Cohasset High School - A Shot for Life Courage Cup
(Mr. Brian Scott)**

Mike has branched out from basketball into soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball, and he's all-over New England now, it was just a great thing to see. His mother is fine, cancer is no more, as far as Mr. Scott can tell, and he's really doing a great job.

A few years back, Mike asked Mr. Scott that he wanted to get Cohasset involved and he said fantastic, what can he do. A lot of kids and Nathan is one of them have been participating in these kinds of ancillary fundraising activities that Mike puts on. With that background, Mr. Scott is going to turn this over to Nathan to tell folks what his role was and what they did.

Nathan says unlike Mr. Scott, he's probably a little more unbiased to it since he's been a part of it for a short period of time, Nathan thinks it's awesome. The way they use sports too with student athletes is really smart. Nathan plays soccer and has played almost his whole life and Nathan happens to be pretty solid at it. They go and identify student athletes where they're not standouts at the sport they do. Good people in the community that students look up to choose kids to represent the cause for the program. They want kids to go back and take it to their community with this image of the program. The boys and girls who were selected to compete in the All-Star Game at Union Point raised \$90,000 which was really awesome. These kids were from all over the State, up by New Hampshire and from Western Massachusetts. It was a cool experience for Nathan to play with these kids with a lot of news press there, and some former cancer patients were also there. They work with Mass General Hospital to do research for this treatment for brain cancer which is a type of immunotherapy with 100% of the money raised going to Mass General Hospital. Through the National Honors Society, Nathan was able to use this as his service project. He was also able to get the community, all the CHS teachers, families, and obviously friends behind the cost. Nathan and Tess Baird were chosen from Cohasset and she's a great soccer player and Tess is going to Maryland. Both Nathan and Tess organized a 2V2 Tournament for Cohasset High School students and Nathan was able to work with his soccer coach, Coach Willis from CHS and Mr. Rotondi the Athletic Director to get soccer balls, cones, pug nets. Nathan and Tess were able to get all grades from CHS that really turned out to be a fun event. Teams pay a registration fee that goes directly to the cause. *Mike Slonia* and others that work for "A Shot for Life" were kind enough to come out to the event to watch and help run it and provided hoodies that could be given as a prize incentive to the kids. Nathan feels very thankful to have been selected for it.

Mr. Kearney comments this is fantastic, it's awesome to see kids give back. Thank you to all the donors that stepped up to help financially for the program.

Ms. Lesky expresses how this is an extraordinary story, and Nathan is an exceptional example but even more important is being in a district that gives students a vision outside of their own sphere.

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143 Pond Street
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• Cohasset High School Program of Studies (Mr. Brian Scott)**

Ms. Lesky says this encourages students to take what they've been given in terms of their education and the support they've had and to do something good for others, that's the whole point of schools and education is to better the world in which we live. This was absolutely the perfect example of that, but the fact that we're also in a district that encourages and supports that. As a parent, and as an educator, all Ms. Lesky wants for kids is to go out and do something great. Do something that makes them feel good but also makes others feel good, this is just wonderful all around.

Chairman Dial says this is a terrific program and a wonderful contribution to the community. Mr. Dial very much appreciates Mr. Scott's leadership and encouragement of these things and Nathan's participation making the other kids happy. This is one of the many things that makes our district special, thank you.

Invited Guests

• Cohasset High School Program of Studies (Mr. Brian Scott)**

The Chair states this is an item that the School Committee will be voting on. The Chair encourages members of the school committee that these are motions we'll make, so if members of the School Committee feel they're not ready and want more time, the Chair can certainly do that.

Principal Scott says CHS has three new studies and three course offerings which is probably the most substantial with potential changes depending on the course request and enrollment with 2 in Wellness, and 1 is a sports officiating class to a response that's kind of a national shortage of referees. The MIAA and NFHS, which is the National Federation of High Schools, has put together a curriculum to teach kids to become referees. The MIAA is sponsoring part of the cost to do this, every student will be certified in basketball and soccer. If students want to do something as an independent study outside of that, CHS can find other sports as well, and that would be an offering under the loans department. It would count towards the total credits it wouldn't necessarily replace the need for students to take Physical Ed, or Wellness.

The second offering is an advanced fitness training course. This would be really for specific students with personal interest, so students who want sports specific training, students who want to have personal fitness goals, students who want to train for a 5K. In lieu of traditional PE classes where students might rotate through a circuit of different activities, this would be more targeted specifically to those students' interests. Students would absolutely utilize the weight room and some of the new technology in there. Again, they're both quarter classes that would actually take the place of PE because it is physical and will compete with a lot of other courses.

The third offering CHS has is a course in Neuroscience. Dr. Duncan, who's done a wonderful job with CHS Marine Science and Biology classes partnering with CSER is a neuroscience with a doctorate degree.

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• **Cohasset High School Program of Studies (Mr. Brian Scott)****

Dr. Duncan proposed a course on the roadsides. The CEF gave CHS some seed money to fund some of the materials for that. Principal Scott says it's going to be wildly popular. The kids are looking for academic electives, so this would be another quarter academic leg in the Science Departments that would run up against things like ecology, biodiversity, genetics, stuff like that.

The only other two things, one is here, and one is not, because it was kind of a recent change. One is just language clarification. CHS requirements is that students have to have four [20 credits], or four courses in US History. Some students would take AP US History and AP Euro which is the equivalent of four courses, but students only have two courses, and CHS is not going to penalize somebody for taking the highest level of courses and that is what the language clarification is about. The other word that came out is a word that realigned with some of the math curriculum, and they'll tweet the content to the scoping sequence a little bit and formally title Trigonometry courses to be advanced Algebra, it's almost like Algebra III.

Traditionally, CHS students take Algebra I Geometry, and Algebra II Pre-Calculus in that kind of sequence. Looking at the math sequence across the four grades and even going into the 7th and 8th grades coming up to the high school is we really want to elongate what we do in Algebra. Trigonometry can be a little bit too complex in the sense that it is abstract. Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus for Sophomores are a little bit more abstract and sometimes the developmental academics maturity of the kids can handle, folding in more Algebra which is essentially the fundamentals of Trigonometry. Then students that hit on Trigonometry topics and get it in a different time in the curriculum. This sets up better for students to then move into Pre-Calculus to set them up better to go in the higher levels of math. We're elongating Algebra II out into a more complex concept. Students can then hit the main concepts of Trigonometry. The sequence would be Algebra I Geometry, Algebra II, Advanced Algebra of Trigonometry Pre-Calculus. This takes the place of what was called Trigonometry.

Mr. Kearney is so thrilled with Wellness, especially with the sports officiating class. It's something that kids can take to college. They can do it as a side job for the rest of their lives to teach them what the rules are. Also, the advanced fitness training will open up new beginnings for students looking at becoming a personal trainer or a yoga instructor. This gives students the opportunity to go out there and understand being in that industry, it's really a high energy industry that improves people's lives. For these two instances, students teach kids how to improve their lives, this makes Mr. Kearney happy to hear.

Ms. Lesky says how exciting it is that we're offering Neuroscience, very cool. The pieces to the Wellness course are those in response to the new guidelines that the State released earlier. Do those help the district get closer to what that looks like. It all sounds great, sort of like an independent study almost for those athletes that potentially are doing athletic endeavors that don't necessarily fit into the typical physical education or the facilities that they have.

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• **Cohasset High School Program of Studies (Mr. Brian Scott)****

Mr. Carr says these are hugely popular topics in college. Kids will find their way to something new and interesting. It's a whole career field that people may not even know exists and we can bring it to them in high school. It's about putting the right tools in the toolbox, and these are great.

Mr. MacLellan would like a little bit of edification on the grading scale.

Principal Scott says every school does it differently and every state does it differently. For example, when CHS gets a student who transfers from California, they'll have 2 grades. One per semester but aren't even necessarily letter grades, and the district wants to know how that translates into what they do. Some schools will do a traditional 4.0 where everything is included. Some schools will do a 4.0 with only academic classes are included. We've seen the unhealthiness of this, kids who play the system because we don't weigh in academic courses. It's an unhealthy false sense of competition that doesn't benefit anybody, it just creates more stress.

The Chair addresses this school district has amazing offerings, thank you Principal Scott for putting this together.

Motion to approve Cohasset High School Program of Studies made by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Mr. MacLellan.

Aye - All

School Updates

• **School News (Dr. Leslie Scollins)**

February 9th CHS will be holding their 3rd year "Credit for Life" Fair from 9 AM–12:00 PM. This is wonderful for CHS Seniors to have a little taste of real-life finances they'll need after they graduate. Fiscal literacy is such an important part of what our students need to know about. This year, the district was awarded a grant in the amount of \$3,200 from the State Treasurer's Financial Education Innovation. This this year they've expanded including a panel with Q & A, 16 booths, headshot and photobooth station, mock interview station, raffle prizes, and a lunch with the volunteers following the booth fair. The panelists for 2024 are Melanie Seaborn, Head of Customer Experience at Forge; Kristen Richard, Pediatric Pulmonologist at Boston Children's Hospital; Zaid Al Rashid, Executive Vice President at Omnicom; Stephen Sheffield, Stephen Sheffield Photography and Mixed Media; and Paul Moriarty, Vice President of Commercial Banking at South Shore Bank. A special thanks to Todd and Jodie Goff for organizing the panel and to the South Shore Bank for sending a team to run the Credit Counseling booth, and the 35 faculty and community members who volunteered.

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School Updates

• School News (Dr. Leslie Scollins)


Dr. Scollins and the entire administration would like to give a huge thank you to Mrs. Nicole Fitzgerald for creating and coordinating this event, “Credit for Life” Fair. However, Mrs. Fitzgerald is looking for more volunteers so if folks have any time on Friday, February 9th, please contact Mrs. Fitzgerald nfitzgerald@cohassetk12.org. This is a true passion of hers and spends a lot of time outside of her school day to make sure this happens, it’s really a wonderful school community event.

Students at Cohasset Middle School had a “Snow in the Dark” dance last week and a lot of parents came out and helped with that, which was really a wonderful event enjoyed by all. We want our kids to have these periods of time to socialize outside of school and enjoy each other.

• District Calendar Preview 2024-2025 DRAFT

DRAFT

2024-2025 Cohasset Public Schools Calendar



July 2024

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July 2024

4 Independence Day

AGENDA ITEM: D-1

FEB 07 2024

August 2024

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August 2024

22, 26, 27 New Teacher's Orientation - Full Day

28 All Teachers' and ESP's Opening Day Including Safety Training

29 All Teachers' and ESP's Professional Development - Full Day

30 Schools Closed

September 2024

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September 2024

2 Labor Day - Schools Closed

3 Grades 1-12 - First Day of School

4 Kindergarten - First Day of School

9 PreK - First Day of School

17 JHS Open House

19 DHS Open House

20 Professional Development - Half Day

24 CHS Open House

26 CMS Open House

October 2024

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October 2024

11 Professional Development - Full Day

14 Indigenous Peoples Day - Schools Closed

23-24 PK-5 Conferences - Half Day of School JHS & DHS. Full Day of School CMS & CHS

November 2024

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November 2024

8 CHS Term 1 Ends

11 Veterans' Day - Schools Closed

15 CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen

20-21 CMS and CHS Conferences-Half Day of School CMS & CHS. Full Day of School JHS & DHS

27 Half Day of School

28 Thanksgiving Day - Schools Closed

29 Schools Closed

December 2024

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December 2024

6 CMS, DHS, JHS Trimester 1 Ends

13 CMS Reports Cards Available in Aspen

13 DHS & JHS (grades K-5) Progress Reports Available in Aspen

23-31 Winter Break - Schools Closed

January 2025

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January 2025

1 New Year's Day - Schools Closed

2 School Resumes

17 Professional Development - Half Day

20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Schools Closed

22, 23, 24 High School Finals - Half Day for CHS Students

24 Prek Semester 1 Ends

24 CHS Semester 1/Term 2 Ends

31 CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen

February 2025

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February 2025

6 Prek Progress Reports Available in Aspen

17 President's Day - District Closed

17-21 February Break

March 2025

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | TH | F | S |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

March 2025

13 CMS, DHS, JHS Trimester 2 Ends

13 Professional Development - Half Day

14 Professional Development - Full Day

21 CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen

21 DHS & JHS (grades K-5) Progress Reports Available in Aspen

23-24 PK-5 Conferences - Half Day of School JHS & DHS. Full Day of School CMS & CHS

April 2025

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | TH | F | S |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |

April 2025

4 CHS Term 3 Ends

11 CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen

16-17 CHS and CHS Conferences-Half Day of School CMS & CHS. Full Day of School JHS & DHS

21 Patriots' Day - District Closed

21-25 April Break

May 2025

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|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | TH | F | S |
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| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

May 2025

23 Professional Development - Half Day

26 Memorial Day - Schools Closed

30 Seniors Last Day of School

June 2025

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | TH | F | S |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

June 2025

7 Graduation

12 PreK & Kindergarten Last Day of School. Semester 2 Ends. Progress Reports Available in Aspen

13, 16, 17 High School Finals - Half Day for CHS Students

17 100th Day - Early Release

17 CHS Semester 2/Term 4 Ends

17 CMS Trimester 3 Ends

17 DHS & JHS (grades 1 & 2) Trimester 3 Ends. Progress Reports Available in Aspen

19 Juneteenth - District Closed

25 CMS & CHS Reports Cards Available in Aspen

30 Last Allowable Make-up Date

Approved by JC:

Bolton, Lohmeier & Bolton, Davis - SC Meetings

Shahid, Davis - School Council

Half-Shahid, Davis - Half-Heads

Approved by SC

Shaded, Underlined & Bolded Dates - SC Meetings • Shaded Dates - Schools Closed • Half Shaded Dates - Half Days

The 2024-2025 District Calendar is still subject to finalization and discussion with the CTA. This is a fairly standard process giving information to the school committee for review so the school committee can digest it and share out with the school community. At the next school committee meeting, members of the school committee will have a more robust discussion. The issue at hand now is the Town Hall discussion has come full into the school committee. With the Town Hall now being unsuitable for a voting place. The Town is looking for alternative venues for voting and the consideration is the facilities of the schools. So, the school committee is looking into where they can help out with the minimal amount of disruption, with the education of the schools so the two things that are debate, not today, what is indicated on here is the potential for a conflict with our first day of school being September 3, 2024.

Cohasset Public Schools
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School Updates

• District Calendar Preview 2024-2025

The Chair states the school committee will have a more formal presentation as unique as it is. This is also another year of the operation of our decision around starting school before or after Labor Day depending on whether it's an early start or late start with the Labor Day weekend.

Dr. Scollins says there's a couple of things the school committee might have to consider. The Administration is waiting for information about voting in November that will impact the district calendar.

Mr. Kearney would like to know before he votes on the school calendar. He'd like to know what the attendance looks like for students/staff on Good Friday. It just seems like we're just wasting our time and energy if the kids won't get a learning day by taking Good Friday off. Mr. Kearney asks the Chair if this school committee could table the calendar until we get that information on attendance. Then we can discuss if it's worth having school on Good Friday. If only half the kids are going, he'd like to know why they're having this discussion.

The school committee will discuss this at a later date, the Chair doesn't want to go into any deliberation until Dr. Scollins can give us that attendance record for Good Friday, but Mr. Kearney's point is well taken. The school committee always welcomes the community feedback so if folks want to address anything to the district calendar, he says this would really be a swell time to do so, so please keep that in mind.

Teaching and Learning

• Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)

➤ Out of District Process

Mrs. Cerwonka would like to remind everybody she spoke about out of district placements and the trajectory over the years at the last school committee meeting, and she'd like to talk about the continuation of that based on some information she requested and recently received. The slide presentation she is showing was shared to the school committee before with an additional column added to look across a five-year span. The out of district placements with whom the school district has engaged with would be the placements. The school district provides the needs of our children who are having a hard time accessing the curriculum and being able to meet any success or progress here due to perhaps their needs relative to their special education services and those schools would be Amigo School, Cardinal Cushing, Boston Higashi School, North River, Pilgrim Area Collaborative, Riverview School that partners with the Scituate Public Schools, South Shore Educational Collaborative, The Perkins School for the Blind, Ivey Street School, and Chamberlain School. Looking over the 5-year trajectory these are all the schools that mostly come up and partnered with, that they've been able to partner with, to provide services for our students, in particular our school district here.

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Teaching and Learning

- **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)**
 - **Out of District Process**

Chairman Dial would like to know what the absolute numbers for students that are out of district placements are and understand a little bit about the process, how we conclude that student needs can't be met here and how that works via the parents. What happens when a student is placed out of district. What are the continuing touch points for out of district placement with districts in the community.

There are times within Cohasset Public Schools when the Educational Team have some concerns around the placement of students. Our Special Education teachers track and watch the student's progress. They watch for the student's access to the curriculum and all the things that go into that student so they'll be able in every aspect holistically be a student in the district.

The Special Education team within that school will share those concerns with the team's Chairperson. Our team's Special Education Chairperson at the elementary level is Katherine Breen. At the secondary level, our team's Special Education Chairperson is Michael Stapleton and the team's Special Education Chairperson will reach out to Mrs. Cerwonka, Director of Student Services to share concerns.

We consult with the Special Education team and reach out to the families, and the entire Special Education team comes together. Then an IEP meeting is held at that time because a student is not making progress and they have some concerns. The Special Education department is obligated to update IEPs to meet those students' needs, what do they need to add to make this more robust and to meet the needs of the child. An IEP is what drives placement. An out of district decision would never be made outside of the 90-day IEP process. Going through an IEP process, placement is the very last thing Student Services will do because it is dependent upon the needs that are reflected in that IEP. An IEP completely drives a placement decision and at the end of an IEP, the Special Education team look at all of the things that are in the student's IEP. Where would that student land for the level of need? Are they in a full inclusion program where the level of need is low. Are they in a partial inclusion program where they are getting more special education services and the level of need perhaps from mild to more moderate. Does the student's programming look primarily self-contained where the vast majority if not all their services are taking place outside of the general education where a high level of need will be. Those determinations are what drives the placement. If in fact, that placement is considered to reach a level within Cohasset Public Schools, they cannot provide those services that are in that student's IEP and that student will need an out of district placement to really rise to that level. What Student Services will do is use what they do within the Cohasset Public School system that is FAPE, which is a restrictive environment standard to make those decisions. Student Services will make those decisions within their own schools for children who are on IEP's when considering an out of district placement.

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Teaching and Learning

- **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)**
 - **Out of District Process**

FAPE is a Free Appropriate Public Education when looking and considering an out of district placement, typically a collaborative placement is really considered to be the one that is perhaps the least restrictive standard. From there, depending upon the student needs that are identified in an IEP and if it continues to rise needing more, Student Services can look at approved public and private day programming, and approved residential day programming which is the most restrictive. If Student Services cannot find programming to meet the student's needs as identified, they'll need to look at unapproved or out of state programs that are only considered when all approved programs have been exhausted that have been identified by the State.

Parents are an integral part of the process and decision making of that Special Education team. The Special Education teams discuss placement using the IEP as the criteria and if there is an agreement with the family, Mrs. Cerwonka would then send a release of information form to the parent. Only when a parent agrees and signs these release forms, Student Services can actually start sharing information for an out of district programming and start considering that. With the background experience that Mrs. Cerwonka has prior to Cohasset Public Schools, as an out of district coordinator as well as an Assistant Director and now Director of Student Services her knowledge of how out of district programming works makes the best recommendations given the profile of the student and the programs that Cohasset Public Schools considers and upholds as a school district Student Services ask parents to provide these signed releases forms and those out of district programs will then engage with Student Services.

Typically, a release of information is for Student Services to send the most up to date IEP, progress reports, attendance, and most updated testing for that student so Student Services can have a full picture of that student for an out of district placement. Those out of district placements then respond to the Director of Student Services, Mrs. Cerwonka and this will tell her and her team at that point in time whether or not this is a good fit for that student. If the students' needs could be met in such a placement, and if they have room for that, Student Services can then reach out to the family to engage around this. If all of those things are met the out of district placement as well as Mrs. Cerwonka will reach out to parents depending upon the placement. Different programs have different ways, but the process could include a parent meeting between that out of district placement and the parent. If an out of district placement is determined a starting date is determined there are still some more things to do such as establishing transportation and Mrs. Cerwonka becomes the Case Manager for that and she always enforces with families that Cohasset students are first and foremost. That tie maintained through Student Services can monitor the student's progress, visit the student's programming, and hold Special Education team meetings at that student's school. If a student is showing readiness, then reentry into Cohasset Public Schools is the goal would then be discussed at a point in time that makes sense, but that out of district placement is always Student Services goal. That out of district placement builds the skills that students need to be able to return back to their Public School district.

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Teaching and Learning

• Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)

➤ Out of District Process

Mr. Carr asks when families agree to release information and it goes to their school district are their other options, do families need to agree to anything else at that point, or only to share information. When the student is ready to come back whose decision is that.

Families are in control of this process because nothing happens without family agreement or signature. Right from and all the way through to a Special Education team meeting there is an agreement to a placement that is a page in the IEP and without a parent's signature on that placement, that placement doesn't take place.

Ms. Lesky says it seems to her that this was initiated by the educational team. Are parents considered part of the educational team and if not, can parents ever initiate this process for an out of district placement and do parents ever initiate a placement situation.

Mrs. Cerwonka say when the educational team shares placement concerns with the Special Education Team Chairperson within that school this is just conversational, like consulting and thinking about why is the student not meeting with success and what more could the district be doing and Student Services needs to convene an IEP team meeting at which the parent comes on board to hear the schools concerns and update that student's IEP to meet that students need. As a natural part of updating in that IEP that IEP lends itself to a placement conversation piece which the parent is obviously there for. Yes, parents sometimes initiate a placement situation if they're concerned, but it is the IEP that drives it and that's the important part that Student Services reconvenes with the IEP team and then with parents.

Mr. Kearney reminds everyone how lucky this district is to have Mrs. Cerwonka. Thank you for what she does with the kids and for non-administrators this puts this all together. Mrs. Cerwonka made a great point. They're all Cohasset students and as a school committee we don't know what our kids are up against in other districts. The more we know about these other schools, we'll be able to keep an eye on these schools and see where the parents feel like they're not getting somewhere, these are still our kids. Mr. Kearney asks the Chair if the school committee could maybe have a Spotlight on Learning with the Boston Higashi School. It would be important for us as school committee members to know what these parents go through and what schools are in it.

The Chair would like to back up the scope of the school committee's responsibilities and oversight which is not necessarily to oversee these schools, but rather to understand the process by which the student is selected. Maybe for one of our next updates from Student Services, Mrs. Cerwonka could talk about how this list is developed. What are the certain qualifications that Student Services look for in these schools that are maintained by the state. To Mr. Kearney's point having a baseline of understanding about the diligence that Student Services performs looking at selecting these schools, and recommending these schools would be helpful in making sure that this school committee is doing their job for our students.

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Teaching and Learning

- **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)**
 - **Out of District Process**

Mr. MacLellan asks what happens when there's no agreement with those families. If families do not agree and the educational team thinks that an out of district placement is necessary. Is it objectively necessary when a family does not agree, will not agree to share materials, and will not agree for their child to be placed in an out of district program, then what happens!

Mrs. Cerwonka says none of that can happen without parent agreement. Parents do have to sign their child's IEP and placement pages in order for those things to happen. The Bureau of Special Education Appeals has a wide variety of avenues for Student Services to work with parents to create understanding, and agreement and they're not adversarial at all. Student Services then can appeal either the family or the district and ask for mediation so parents can present their side to an impartial mediator and a school district can present their side to see if we can all reach an agreement and have a higher level of understanding and proceed in the best way for the student. There are all kinds of avenues within Special Education to involve the Bureau of Special Education Appeals and all the groups this district has to help do that.

The Chair says there's a flip side if the family doesn't want their child placed out of district. What do parents do and there's disagreement within the district, is this the same sort of process.

Mrs. Cerwonka says it is the same sort of process, but the important part in that is the IEP and the need of the child that drives placement. Placement is not separate, nor does it come first and not a goal in itself.

Teaching and Learning

- **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)**
 - **Circuit Breaker**

Mrs. Cerwonka says she doesn't have a slide presentation on Circuit Breaker, but she would like to talk about it tonight. Circuit Breaker is a system within the State and Mrs. Owen can jump in anytime here. Special Education is a costly endeavor and there is a baseline amount that is set by the state every year providing these needs for students and that baseline amount is achieved the administration includes that in their application to Circuit Breaker and 75% of that comes back to the district to help with the costs of providing special education to students that could potentially be a very costly endeavor and that is what Circuit Breaker is intended to do. It's intended to help with that cost and intended to help schools that can help students. It is also provided to schools to start developing their own programming because a lot of the cost that get approved through Circuit Breaker are out of district costs.

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Teaching and Learning

- **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)**
 - **Circuit Breaker**

In a small district such as Cohasset, sometimes it doesn't take much for special education services to tip the scales in the school budget with special education costs. Sometimes one or two students who move into the district are perhaps high needs and out of district moves can really affect the school budget to a great degree. Circuit Breaker has something what is called extraordinary relief, and it is for exactly that. When something extraordinary happens to the school budget because of things like that such as a student has suddenly risen to a very high level of need, or maybe students have unexpectedly moved, schools can apply for that extraordinary relief. Student Services applied a couple of years back for extraordinary relief and they did receive it and it helps balance out those unexpected costs. Student Services will be applying again this year for that.

Mrs. Cerwonka says there is another relief package this year because there was such a percentage increase in private school placements and there's another to be a one time, that is a state relief package that is out there to help offset some of the percentage increase of costs of placements, and this year Student Services hopes to apply for that as well. This year Student Services will be busy not only with their regular Circuit Breaker application but also with the two relief packages the state is offering this year.

Mr. Kearney asks Mrs. Cerwonka what Student Services will need as far as the budget goes. He recalls one of the last school committee meetings they had with the administrators, a special education teacher for kindergarten and how can this school committee advocate for that. Is there anything else that Student Services will need, or can see, to put on a wish list. We really don't see it in the Capital as much as it needs to be out there. Mr. Kearney just wanted to emphasize this to the school committee because this has been brought up and this is a way to invest in the future that the district is going to get later on.

Mrs. Cerwonka advocated for this at the last school committee meeting she attended. She really sees the need for another school adjustment counselor at the elementary level that a special education kindergarten teacher could bring. A lot of this is regulation and learning for a young student on an IEP. When Student Services drills down into the primary services for students who are that young, a school adjustment counselor can really do a lot of that work. Mrs. Cerwonka would like to advocate for the district a full-time school adjustment counselor at the Deer Hill School, and one full time school adjustment counselor at the Osgood School. Then see the results with those kindergarteners and see the services that can be provided within those classes for those students. Then do another analysis to see if there's a continuing need for a special educator who is a kindergarten teacher.

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Teaching and Learning

• **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)**

➤ **Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings**

| <u>JANUARY 2024</u> | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>Meeting Type</u> | <u>Elementary</u> | <u>Secondary</u> | <u>Out of District</u> | <u>Total Meetings</u> |
| Annual Review | 5 | 12 | 4 | 21 |
| Re-Evaluation | 2 (2 eligible) | 7 | | 9 |
| Initial Evaluation | 8 | 4 | | 12 |
| Referral Source | MTSS: 3 2 (1 eligible) (1 not eligible) | MTSS: 2 (1 eligible) (1 not eligible) | | |
| | Parent: 2 | Parent: 1 (not eligible) | | |
| | CPS: 1 (1 eligible) | CPS: | | |
| | Non-CPS: 1 (1 eligible) | Non-CPS: 1 (1 eligible) | | |
| Early Intervention | EI: 3 (2 eligible) (1 not eligible) | | | |
| Independent Evaluation | | | | |
| | | | | Total: 42 Meetings |

Student Service was very busy in the month of January, 2024 especially with the 4 out of district placements that unexpectedly came to Mrs. Cerwonka. The referral source through the MTSS system is staying strong and continuing to do its work.

Lastly, Mrs. Cerwonka will be attending a Special Education Parent Advisory Council meeting known as SEPAC meeting on Thursday, February 8th at 11:00 a.m. in the Community Conference Room to have discussions on the new IEP. The Special Educators have been being trained on the new IEP as this year has gone on. At the SEPAC meeting, Mrs. Cerwonka will be talking about some basic differences between the old and new IEPs. The school committee once requested a view of the new IEP side by side comparison to what the differences are. The IEP form hasn't been updated since 2001, it was an 8-page IEP form, whereas the new IEP form is 16 pages. Student Services knows IEP meetings are going to be longer than they previously were as the new IEP will be rolled out the next school year.

Ms. Lesky asks what about students who are currently on an IEP and perhaps just had an annual review, how is that transition going to happen between now until the new IEP is rolled out next year.

Mrs. Cerwonka says the context of the IEP is not changing, it's the formatting that is changing and changing the lens of it a little bit in the formatting, but as IEPs, annual reviews, re-evaluation meetings come up this is when the shift comes to action on the new IEP.

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Teaching and Learning

• Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services)

Mr. Carr says this is a great idea anytime state leadership has a direct relationship since possession is nine-tenths of the law. Mr. Carr asks if Mrs. Cerwonka is at all concerned from parent to student, student to parent shift, self-identifying a student early in the process.

The student has ownership of their learning and there are guiding questions depending upon the age of the student that the state has put out where the student sees their strengths in things, they're good at. What are the things that are challenging for the student, what is hard for the student and not like. The guide questions self-identify a student as a learner that takes real ownership of themselves.

Mr. MacLellan will be attending the SEPAC meeting along with Mrs. Cerwonka and asks the Chair if the school committee can invite a Liaison from SEPAC to a school committee meeting at some point in time if SEPAC can do it.

The Chair says yes, and perhaps when Mrs. Cerwonka's is at the SEPAC meeting she can offer an invitation to them.

Teaching and Learning

• Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

It seems when January is upon us is when things start really moving fast in the schools. Dr. Scollins says their curriculum mapping still continues under the direction of Rock Roberts their Data Evaluation and Curriculum Director. Mr. Roberts works closely with teachers and has set up an elementary meeting for Friday, February 9th.

There are a few middle high school leaders as well as educators who have participated in the Restorative Justice Training through METCO. That just finished up for the leaders and the teachers will be following suit. Dr. Scollins says they've received a grant for that and also have additional money to buy some resources. They'll be coming up with a plan and sharing with the school committee in late spring around the next steps for growing that practice. Restorative Justice Training is for students to learn how to communicate with each other, how to be inclusive, how to make sure they're equitable, and what they're accountable for. All these pieces align with a responsive classroom which has a direct line with the elementary level.

The Winter Assessments are almost complete, and those family reports will be available in ASPEN. Both the iReady and Dibbles8 which they weren't able to do before, now have systems they can do it. Those reports will also be available in APSEN for families on February 15th and will no longer receive hard copies even though the school can always print out hard copies for those families if they choose to.

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Teaching and Learning

• Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

This past Monday, February 5th the committee for dyslexia screening was in process to make sure the schools stay within the regulations to rewrite plans and Dr. Scollins will share out to the school committee the end of this school year when complete. They're doing things that adhere to what the new law says, so they're writing it as they go along.

The PreK Professional Development is in coordination with Plymouth, Duxbury and Hingham Public Schools that spent an afternoon together last Friday. They'll be doing another round late spring together in a writing unit and they'll try that out and continue with that. Dr. Scollins says this has been successful so far and anticipates these school districts will continue to work with Cohasset Public Schools.

Dr. Scollins says they had a focus meeting on what's been going on over the past few years, looking at how educators are making strides post COVID. Both CHS and Deer Hill were two of the 66 schools that were recognized by the state. In terms of meeting exceeding expectations, they were the 10th MCAS scores that were among the highest in the state. Everything this school committee is doing to support the schools is working and this is important to know that those things are happening.

Budget, Resources and Governance

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

The PSO gifted a check in the amount of \$11,761.56 to the school that was broken down by each of the schools, so each school received some piece of this money. The Osgood School was able to get the books they were looking for along with some art materials. At the Deer Hill School they were also able to get books and some physical education materials needed. Under this grant asked for by CMS, they were able to get the lightspeed RedCat system to get it started. This is separate from the lightspeed RedCat systems the school is asking for in their Capital. Cohasset High School was also looking for some books. A huge thanks to the PSO for generously donating this money.

The Chair would like to express his appreciation to the PSO for their continued support of our schools. We're a better school district because of them and very much appreciate this gift and all they do.

Motion to approve gift from the PSO made by Mr. MacLellan, seconded by Mr. Carr.

Aye – All

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 Budget Presentation**

The Chair would like to note the aspect of the matter regarding the schools' operating budget is what is spent every year in their Capital list with investments in the schools that are outside that budget. Things that they'll need additional funding for by large, and those are from the state they're hoping will come through. This is not something at this point this school committee is voting on, this is just a point on information from feedback received.

Mrs. Susan Owen says this is a spin-off from the budget workshop the administration had for what their requests are. The FY25 budget priorities haven't changed, they've added Social Studies for grades K-12 and Science for grades 6-8 with teaching and learning. Mrs. Owen says the FY2024 appropriated budget was \$22,905,421. Their contractual salary obligations are a little over \$1M dollars, which is a 4.52% increase. This will be their 3rd going into their 4th year with most of their contracts. The Town Administrator shared with the administration through meetings the Town would have more revenue in their 3rd year. This is a 3% increase across the board to most of their bargaining units, it's the highest increase over the last 3 years. There was also a decrease in Circuit Breaker funding of \$135,501 and they'll need to make up .60% for the difference. Recently there was an increase in special education tuitions from this year to next in the amount of \$404,408 that Mrs. Owen and Mrs. Cerwonka are working on that may go up. They just found out instead of a 2^{1/2} increase to special education tuition they're looking at 4.7. Private schools are going up again so that number will change. There are some projected retirement savings of (\$180,000). The school's ask for the cost to get out the gate is \$1,396,162, a 6.1% increase, which Mrs. Owen says is high.

Requests from Student Services and staff requests at the Middle School / High School have a .20 increase with Occupational Therapy that went from .80 to 1.0 in the amount of \$14,000. They're also looking for a school adjustment counselor as Mrs. Cerwonka talked about earlier. Currently, the Occupational Therapist is split between two schools and they're hoping to add a 1.0 school adjustment counselor at the elementary school that would cost \$66,000. There's been an increase in the utilities budget to the amount of \$15,000. The Finance and Operations Department saw an increase in custodial supplies/materials in the amount of \$20,000 over the last 2 years, a lot of it was COVID driven where they had to purchase all kinds of upgraded touchless hand sanitizers and the school took on the landscaping responsibilities, to which they have to maintain the equipment and purchase additional supplies/materials for the school's additional responsibilities. The ask from school department heads was \$44,713. An additional Chapter 70 funding for full day kindergarten in the amount of \$300,000. The school was awarded a one-time funding from the Town to fund a full day kindergarten this year based on double enrollment when reported to the state for the Chapter 70 funding would increase by approximately to \$580,000 and the school would get a percentage of that which would make up the \$300,000.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)

➤ FY25 Budget Presentation

Ms. Lesky asks when adding staff does this increase benefit cost too, is this just salary, or is that included in these packages the additional cost in terms of insurance, retirement, etc. Where is that reflected.

The Chair says the school has a request to add a school adjustment counselor at the elementary level that would cost \$66,000. The true cost is only \$66,000 plus the cost of benefits, health, and life insurance which the Town pays, but then the school pays this back. Chairman Dial asks is the funding for those benefits extra costs that are already accounted for somewhere else in the nexus of the municipal financing.

Mrs. Owen says this is a summary of what the rule of thumb would cost with the additional recommendations are for FY25 budget increase requested with the school's total ask being \$1,855,875 which is a very large ask, it comes out to an 8.1% increase over the current budget.

Mr. Carr says this is a very challenging number and the school should talk with the state about some funding in some way. This is a number that they need to get their arms around pretty quickly.

Mr. Kearney would like to add to the conversation because they're talking about the budget itself, not the Capital. This is the overall of people that they rely on every day to run their schools. The one thing that Mr. Kearney noticed that they don't have is sharing this with the Town from the Facilities Manager and it's quite apparent they don't have one, they're splitting it between the Town. As they're looking at these budgets, they have to look at a facilities director, they're the only school district that doesn't have one and Susan Owen has taken on that role, which is basically two jobs in one. They did that 4 years ago when they first started, and they combined the facilities in the finances. The school committee should bring this up to Jason Earls and look at the facilities since they don't have anybody going out there and getting these bids because they're splitting it with the Town. When the school committee is thinking about staffing, they should talk about a facilities director in their next upcoming school budgets.

Mr. Carr states this is a very good point and asks are there more resources at the Town level from a facilities capability.

Vice Chair MacLellan comments how on earth are they going to fund something like this, this is an untenable figure right here, and Mr. Kearney wants to talk about adding another facilities director!

The Chair would like to go through the budget itself, whether or not they have a facilities director that should be a recommendation coming from the administration. However, the Chair does share Mr. Kearney's concern, but right now this number is very worrisome, and would like to focus on how the school committee can accomplish this number.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 Budget Presentation**

Mrs. Owen shares other staffing requests that the school considered to be on the list that wasn't put forth to the school committee. Originally the school had an ask to increase ELL from .50 to 1.0. The Technology Department asked for a new IT Technician district wide and add a 1.0 Special Education Kindergarten Teacher at the Osgood School, add 1.0 Library Media Specialist at Deer Hill School. Student Services ask is for a 1.0 Special Education Kindergarten teacher at the Osgood School. Looking at FY25 Draft Budget list for the month of January, 2024 the school has a deficit of \$554,000 has now raised to a deficit of \$580,000 for this year that the school has to replenish.

Vice Chair MacLellan asks if the school recommended a funding freeze, because this is what the school committee is looking at and it's actually a decision of what they're looking at. They're in trouble, it's a bad situation. The faculty should be amendable to trying to make some cuts, the school committee tried everything they could do to stretch making sure that they're doing everything they can for their talented educators, the people who make this school district what it is. It's money well spent, but now they need to start making some difficult financial decisions to make that more of a reality. Vice Chair MacLellan says this is a red alert situation, because that forward operating figure alone is bigger than they usually get from the Town that can't afford it.

The Chair states there is an important variable that the school doesn't have answers to yet and what the Town's available resources are. There's no insight at this point into what the Town's budget situation looks like. What Mrs. Owen, and Dr. Scollins are hearing tonight from this school committee is a little bit of anxiety about what the numbers look like. The rollover cost of staffing was unanticipated, they were premised on a few things that may or may not have realized are on the Town's budget, and those conversations need to be had. Chairman Dial does think it is a worthwhile endeavor for the school committee to look at the possibility of a spending freeze, plus areas they can find savings at the schools such as heating the schools is probably a non-negotiable item. There are things this school committee has fought hard on and tried to build out and may have to make hard decisions given what their budget looks like. If the school is zeroing in on a number, it would be 8.1% less \$300,000. The only available places to find revenue are new taxes and the school just asked the Town for \$1.5 Million dollars a year in the stabilization fund to help fund the school facilities. The question is what's the taxpayer's appetite, the school is at the mercy of the Town's ability and willingness to support the schools and they've already asked a lot from the Townspeople. The school should explore what they can do with what they have available.

Vice Chair MacLellan says it would be irresponsible of the school committee not to act upon right now, he would like to see the school committee make a motion for a spending freeze, don't know if it will be seconded, but the Vice Chair is making a motion for this.

The Chair states there's a motion on the table, hearing no second, that motion does not go to a vote, the motion is closed.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 Budget Presentation**

Mr. Kearney says the school committee should have a serious discussion about how they're going to fix their schools. If it's \$140 million dollars, give them a number and if they can't get to the number and don't have community support, then the school committee should start fixing the schools now. The idea that Mr. Kearney has sat on this committee for 3 years and they haven't done anything other than talking about getting a new school, they're sitting having conversations about not ordering school supplies they're going to have a reality conversation about that. This has happened in other districts, they build these monstrosity beautiful schools, but they can't fund them. As a school committee we need to have conversations about what we're going to do here, are we going to fix what we have, or not fix what we have, and it has to be a plan A, or a plan B moving forward. Building a new school, then cut a special needs adjustment counselor at the elementary school, Mr. Kearney wouldn't want to see that, it's not a way to spend the money. Mr. Kearney wouldn't mind sitting in a hot classroom, even though he doesn't like that idea, however if there's no teacher there, then he'd be concerned. He is concerned about the budget but also concerned about how they're going to fix these buildings at the same time.

The Chair notes Mr. Kearney's concern is a good segway into FY25 Capital Presentation. The Chair wants to build on the sentiment line that Vice Chair MacLellan motioned. Chairman Dial would like to get the Administration's views on whatever that call would be, whether or not it's a spending freeze, it would be appropriate that this be prepared for the next school committee meeting.

Budget, Resources and Governance

• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 Capital Presentation**

Continued on the following page, Mrs. Owen explains the top half on the draft FY25 Capital list with the letter C identifies regular Capital for what the school is looking for, a lot of them are repetitive with lease renewals. These items are placed with Chromebooks year to year with a 5-year projection with technology looking to replace 46 projectors at CHS. The Deer Hill School asked for 100 Chromebooks for grade 3 because other grades there are sharing these. The total Capital asks are \$844,455. The letter Q on each item line are quotes that Mrs. Owen received on almost everything except for the signage at the Middle/High School classrooms. The bottom half has the letter S next to line item which is the SPED Stabilization Fund.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

• **Budget and Finance (Mrs. Susan Owen)**

➤ **FY25 Capital Presentation**

FY25 DRAFT CAPITAL LIST

SUM of 2025

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|---------------------|-------------|
| 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 \$143,100) | \$ 69,000 | Q |
| C | Replace all Projectors with Interactive Presentation Equipment (46-CHS) | \$ 268,509 | Q |
| C | Replacement Furniture –Students/Staff (Deer Hill) | \$ 35,000 | Q |
| C | Add Chromebooks (100 - Deer Hill Elementary) | \$ 35,000 | Q |
| C | Indoor Signage in classrooms/hallways (CMHS) | \$ 50,000 | |
| C | (2) New Athletic 15 Passenger Vans (48 Month Lease) | \$ 31,946 | Q |
| C | Alumni Field Fence | \$ 80,000 | Q |
| C | Alumni Field Bleachers | \$ <u>100,000</u> | \$ 844,455 |
| S | Fire Alarms (CMHS) Engineering Study | \$ 175,000 | |
| S | Osgood School Roof (funding towards roof \$3-\$4 million) | \$ 200,000 | |
| S | Finish Retiling all Classrooms (Deer Hill) | \$ 300,000 | |
| S | Asphalt Road-Sidewalk Between DHS/JOS Needs to be Resurfaced (DHS) | \$ 150,000 | |
| S | Asphalt Road from Pond Street Needs to be Resurfaced (CMHS) | \$ 100,000 | |
| S | Replace Sidewalk and Curbing on Entry Road to CMHS (CMHS) | \$ 250,000 | |
| S | Extend Sidewalk to Pond Street (CMHS) | \$ 75,000 | |
| S | Generator for the Osgood Elementary School | \$ <u>250,000</u> | \$1,500,000 |
| Grand Total | | \$ 2,344,455 | |

C = Capital

S = Stabilization Fund

Q = Quote

The reality of getting a new generator at the Osgood Elementary School is because when the schools lost power that became a safety issue. The schools have backup generators when power is lost, this happened in the middle of the day while students were in school.

The Chair states given on what the school budget looks like, and they can't predict what the Town's budget will be, they should harbor hope that they're going to get an allocation of \$844,455 for Capital. This list represents a reasonable reflection of priorities. The alumni fence and bleachers from just the Chair's personal perspective is not a priority. Adding Chromebooks is an educational tool which is important. The signage is probably the one that's not going to get there.

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➤ **FY25 Capital Presentation**

The ones that are non-negotiable are the bus leases, the electric school bus lease are things the school has to do by contract and getting kids to school. Same with Chromebooks, those are an educational tool students need. Projectors are a huge advantage for our educators, and they definitely want that. Once we get past the fourth item line on this list, the Chair wonders if the Town will be able to fund these and the school committee should think about that as they're looking at these things. They've not officially prioritized the items on the FY25 Capital list yet as a school committee as they've often done. This won't happen tonight, but this will have to be done at some point.

Mr. Carr points out the Recreation Department might perhaps help with the alumni field fence and the alumni field bleachers that can take a couple of those things off the list.

Mrs. Owen says the school budget is ongoing. The next step is scheduling a Public Hearing for mid-March, 2024. Mrs. Owen will come back at the next school committee meeting with a date on a Public Hearing and move forward with the process. The next school committee meeting will be held at the METCO headquarters in Boston on February 28, 2024.

• **Food Service** We've heard repeatedly for the past 3 months that Food Service has been a great victory. Mr. Kearney and Mr. MacLellan want to hear from the elementary schools it's been the hardest challenge on topical changes. The Osgood School is good, but the Deer Hill School is an issue. Mr. MacLellan assumes this will be tabled for discussion at another school committee meeting.

Community Relations / Communication

• **Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons**

Mr. Carr talked with the Select Board, and they have a lot of challenges that are playing out in the local community. The Alternative Energy Committee is having discussions with folks in the community and anything they can do to lower energy costs is going to be very important, especially here in the schools.

School Committee Governance

• **Superintendent Search Committee Report**

The Chair on the Superintendent Search Committee, Chairman MacLellan states they held their first meeting last night to set up an introductory meeting to set some managed expectations and set schedules. They'll need to be trained by MASC, Master Association of School Committee's, that will happen on February 14th at 5:30 PM. Applications are due on February 24, 2024.

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School Committee Governance

• Superintendent Search Committee Report

That posting has been live for two weeks. Ms. Lesky is working on the website and webpage of where they're at. The next Superintendent Search Committee meeting will be February 27, 2024 at 6:00 PM. This will be a closed session because they'll have applications at that point. Then between now and then they'll be getting trained on the evaluation criteria for selecting candidates. Then there will be interviews and public forums throughout early March in terms of building specific staff forums, student forums, and family forums to gain insight and perspectives in addition to the surveys they sent out. Principal Scott is whittling down the student/family survey that was sent out and the Superintendent Search Committee will then send those surveys out.

• Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

There's one topic not reasonably anticipated by the Chair and that is the new Facilities Committee Chair who graciously waited throughout the school committee's budget presentation. The Chair was informed of this within the past 48 hours to come and talk to the school committee on a relatively expedited basis relating to the accelerated roof program.

Mr. Jason Earls met with the MSBA, the Massachusetts School Building Authority and opened up the program again this year. It's going to be a 2-year cycle which lines up good because the Osgood School roof just hit 25 years old which is the minimum to apply. In 2 years, the Deer Hill School roof will hit 25 years. As long as the funding is there, they'll open the program again and they'll be able to apply. Mr. Earls needs some heavy lifting from this school committee to get this wonderful little packet filled out. Mr. Earls reached out to Nick to fill out some information about the building envelope, the mechanical system that is requested on this. The main majority of this needs to be filled out by the Superintendent of Schools. There are questions that need to be filled out and Dr. Sullivan did that when they were applying for the Middle High School, it's a similar setup. Mr. Earls says it's closing fast and didn't realize the window was shorter than their previous one, it's literally the end of February, beginning of March. February 28th was one of the dates and the other is March 1st.

Mrs. Susan Owen talked with Nick about the SOI, Statement of Interest and forwarded Nick and Michelle a copy of that warrant. Nick has a lot of digging to do on his end for facilities and on the building, so they're on top of it.

Mr. Earls wants to get ahead of this and get some budget numbers. Mr. Earls has a contractor that he uses for when they analyze all the roofs and the same for the contract when he does repairs. Mr. Earls had the contractor come out and take a look and start getting him some figures because they get up to 20% to 40% in range of that back. Mr. Earls needs this information filled out by this school committee with their approval.

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School Committee Governance

• Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

Mr. Earls will then take this to the Select Board as well. The faster he gets this done the faster Mr. Earls can get on their agenda for them to approve. Mr. Earls also met with the Alternative Energy Committee about preparing the roof for solar since it's a flat roof it needs to have extra structural things there so they can put an array of solar panels on the building. Mr. Earls is working with the AEC to get all that solar stuff along with the backup of the generator can all be funded by the state and get that \$200,000 down off Capital.

The Chair notes this school committee will make sure this specific resolution is on their school committee meeting agenda for their next meeting. Mr. Earls will have full support from this school committee and from the administration too.

• Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve 4 sets of minutes as presented for 11.01.23; 12.06.23; 12.20.23; 01.10.24 made by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Carr.

Aye – All

Motion to approve 11.15.23 minutes made by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Ms. Lesky. Mr. Kearny-Aye; Ms. Lesky-Aye; Chairman Dial-Aye; Mr. MacLellan-abstain; Mr. Carr-abstain.

• Future Agenda Items

Follow up discussions with Facilities to make sure SEPAC membership will continue on with the budget. The next school committee meeting will be held at the METCO headquarters in Boston with a great spotlight on finance planning for METCO students. At some point this school committee should go into an Executive Session on collective bargaining and contracts. Those are appropriate exemptions to the rule, it would be good for the school committee to have discussion under Executive Session sooner, rather than later.

The Chair states there's no reason to go into Executive Session.

Motion to adjourn the February 7, 2024 regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee at 9:28 p.m. made by Vice Chair MacLellan, seconded by Mr. Kearney.

Aye - All

****Requires Committee Vote / Action**

*Draft of typed 02.07.24 minutes respectfully submitted,
to Mr. Carr for edit, forwarded by Kathy Bock 02.18.24*

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The February 7, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Cohasset School Committee Adjourned at 9:28 PM.

Documents/Materials used for 02.07.24 School Committee Meeting

| | |
|--|---|
| Letter of Concern for Parking School Buses on Sawyer Street... | Mr. Ronnie Goodman, Community Resident |
| School District Calendar Preview..... | Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent |
| Special Education - Out of District Update..... | Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director- Student Services |
| Special Education - Circuit Breaker..... | Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director- Student Services |
| Student Services IEP Updates..... | Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka Director- Student Services |
| Gift from Cohasset PSO..... | Mrs. Susan Owen, Director Finance & Operations |
| FY25 Budget Presentation..... | Mrs. Susan Owen, Director Finance & Operations |
| 2023 MCAS Headlines..... | Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent |