

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
AUDUBON HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025
7:00 P.M.
MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order:** In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act of 1975, the Audubon Board of Education transmitted notice of the meeting, scheduled at 7:00 pm in the Audubon Junior-Senior High School Media Center to the Retrospect newspaper and the Borough Clerk and by postings on the Audubon Public School District website and at the Main and the Pine Street entrances of the Junior-Senior High School.

II. **Roll Call**

SY 2023-2025

 X Ammie Davis

 X Stephen Wilson

 X Sara Kuhlen

SY 2024-2026

 X Alison Lipsky

 X Mark Gatti

 X Bill Wilson

SY 2025-2027

 A Danielle DiFrancesco
Arrived at 7:03pm

 X Allison Cox

 X Andrea Robinson

SY 2025 Mt. Ephraim Representative

 X Jonathan Maxson

Student Representative to the Board

 X Jane Poponi

Apprentice Student Representative

 X Helena Kuchmek

III. **Call Meeting to Order**

IV. **Flag Salute**

V. **Presentation(s):** Presentation of the 2025-2026 Budget

VI. **Participation:** (Agenda Items Only)

Tricia Martel, AEA President, read a statement regarding the 2025/2026 Budget that was presented tonight. In summary, Ms. Martel commended the Board on the use of tax levy incentive aid; however questioned the new Administrative position of Supervisor of Instruction.

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board has set aside two portions of this Board meeting for public comment on any school or school district issue that a member of the public feels may be of interest to the residents of the school district.

For the first portion, public comments are invited on matters pertaining only to the agenda for tonight's meeting. For the second portion, public comments are invited on all matters pertaining to the school district.

Participants should announce their name, address, and any group they may represent, if applicable. The Board reserves the right to limit public discussion. Public discussion of a topic will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes, and individual speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard. Reference bylaws #0167 of the Audubon Public Schools Board of Education Manual.

The Board uses the public comment period as an opportunity to listen to citizens. Not all issues brought to a Board meeting will be resolved at that particular meeting. Complaints stated or actions requested by the public may be taken under advisement by the Board for investigation, discussion, actions, or disposition at a later date or time. The public comments sessions are an opportunity for citizens to share their opinions and remarks with the Board; it is not a question and answer session. The Board may or may not respond to public comments at the time they are made and is under no obligation to do so.

The Board does not endorse public comments nor will the Board be held liable for comments made by members of the public. Any individuals who may be the subject of public comments, including district employees, shall retain all rights against defamation and slander according to the laws of New Jersey.

All motions are voted on by all members unless otherwise marked with a +.

Board of Education Goals

Through oversight and advocacy in committee meetings, regular monthly meetings, and through a close review of Superintendent recommendations, the Board will

- ❖ continue to provide equitable access to a rigorous curriculum while focusing on improving student achievement and decreasing achievement gaps.
- ❖ work to maintain a cost-effective budget that provides for educational resources, supports a preventative maintenance program, and encourages & facilitates long-range facility improvements while remaining fiscally responsible.
- ❖ foster a safe and positive school climate and culture in order to positively impact student motivation, engagement, and achievement.

XII. GOVERNANCE: Chairperson – Alison Lipsky; Committee Members – Danielle DiFrancesco, Sara Kühlen, Jonathan Maxson; and Alternate – Andrea Robinson

XIII. OPERATIONS: Chairperson – Allison Cox; Committee Members – Ammie Davis, Stephen Wilson, Mark Gatti; and Alternate – Danielle DiFrancesco

MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 1

Motion by Mr. S. Wilson and seconded by Mrs. Cox

1. Motion to approve the following resolution for the Adoption of the 2025/2026 School Budget:

WHEREAS, the Audubon Board of Education adopted a TENTATIVE budget on March 19, 2025 and submitted it to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval, and

WHEREAS, the TENTATIVE budget was approved by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools on April 16, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the budget was advertised in the legal section of the Retrospect Newspaper in May 2, 2025, and

WHEREAS, in the proposed FY2026 State Budget, certain districts had the opportunity to apply to the Commission of Education to increase expenditures, including an allocation of Tax Levy Incentive Aid, in order to satisfy the thoroughness and efficiency standards established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-46.

WHEREAS, the Audubon Board of Education is below local fair share and spending below adequacy to be eligible to participate in this program.

WHEREAS, the Audubon Board of Education is eligible to increase expenditures by \$1,000,000.00 and qualify for Tax Levy Incentive Aid in the amount of \$ 47,619.00

WHEREAS, the Audubon Board of Education has been granted approval to increase expenditures based on the following reasons: to provide a thorough and efficient education.

WHEREAS, the FINAL BUDGET including the increase in accordance with the tax levy incentive aid was presented to the public during a public hearing held in the Audubon Junior-Senior High School Library Media Center on May 7, 2025.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has now determined to make modifications to the Tentative Budget as follows:

Revenue Budget Line Item	Description	Tentative Budget	Final Budget	Change	Explanation
10-1210-000	Tax Levy	\$14,391,551.00	\$ 15,343,932.00	\$ 952,381.00	Tax Levy Incentive Program
10-3190-000	Other State Aid	\$ 0.00	\$ 47,619.00	\$ 47,619.00	Tax Levy Incentive Aid
Total		\$ 14,391,551.00	\$ 15,391,551.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	

Budget Appropriation Line	Description	Tentative Budget	Final Budget	Change	Explanation
11-1XX-100-XXX	Total Regular - Instruction	9,226,012	9,263,012	37,000	The original budget included the elimination of security and upgrades to prevent Phishing and antivirus needs. With the tax levy incentive aid measures, these supplies will remain in the 2025-2026 school year. Other funds used to create a permanent long term sub position.
11-2XX-100-XXX	Total Special - Instruction	2,877,918	3,032,918	155,000	New position to offer Small Group Instruction for the Preschool Program and three new part-time paraprofessional positions originally eliminated in original budget due to state aid notice on 2/27/25

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11-401-100-XXX	Total School-Spon. Co/Extra Curr. Actvts. - Inst	297,327	303,327	6,000	New stipend position to allow direct supervision for teachers when building principal is split between locations
11-000-100-XXX	Total Undist. Expenditures - Instruction (Tuition)	1,189,324	1,383,944	194,620	Anticipated needs of Out of District Placements for the 25-26 school year.
11-000-211-XXX	Total Undist. Expenditures - Attendance and Social Work	97,690	149,690	52,000	New HR/registrar position
11-000-218-XXX	Total Undist. Expenditures - Guidance	767,505	982,505	215,000	The original budget included the elimination of the Mental Health Counselor position. With the tax levy incentive aid measures, this position will remain in the 2025-2026 school year. Other funds used for additional mental health platforms in grades 3 through 12, programs and activities for SEL K-12 as recommended through the strategic plan and an increase in full time status for a guidance counselor.
11-000-222-XXX	Total Undist. Expend.-Edu. Media Serv./Library	369,302	419,302	50,000	Increase of a part-time position to a full-time position
11-000-223-XXX	Total Undist. Expend.-Instr. Staff Training Serv.	42,860	172,860	130,000	New Supervisor of Instruction position as recommended through the school district's strategic plan
11-000-270-XXX	Total Undist. Expend.-Stud. Transportation serv.	915,520	975,900	60,380	Anticipated needs of transportation for out of district placements for the 25-26 school year.
12-000-400-XXX	Facilities Acquisition and construction serv.	101,451	201,451	100,000	Renovations for preschool program for all safety measures to be satisfied

BE IT RESOLVED that in consideration of the above, the Board of Education hereby adopts the following FINAL Budget for the 2025/2026 school year pending final approval from the Department of Education

	2025/2026 Budget	Audubon Borough Tax Levy	Audubon Park Tax Levy
General Fund	29,611,098.00	15,035,112.00	308,820.00
Special Revenue Fund	1,876,979.00		
Debt Service Fund	1,856,013.00	1,163,839.00	23,905.00
Total	32,344,090.00	16,198,951.00	332,725..00

WHEREAS, the Audubon Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1,1 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, that the Audubon Board of Education established \$ 50,115.00 as the allotted maximum expenditures for 2024/2025 school year and has expended \$ 17,597.00 as of this date.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audubon Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursement in accordance with N.J.A.C 6A: 23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$ 52,900.00 for the 2025-2026 school year.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audubon Board of Education includes in the proposed budget the adjustment for increased costs of Health Benefits in the amount of \$ 195,430.00. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

BE IT RESOLVED that as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d) the general fund appropriations include a \$50,000.00 withdrawal from the Maintenance Reserve Account for use on required maintenance activities for a school facility as reported in the comprehensive maintenance plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-20.5.

Motion to Approve Item(s) 1 through 1: S. Wilson Second: A. Cox

Roll Call

<u>X</u> Ammie Davis	<u>X</u> Stephen Wilson	<u>X</u> Sara Kuhlen	<u>X</u> Johnathan Maxson
<u>X</u> Alison Lipsky	<u>X</u> Mark Gatti	<u>X</u> Bill Wilson	
<u>X</u> Danielle DiFrancesco	<u>X</u> Allison Cox	<u>X</u> Andrea Robinson	

VOTE FOR ITEM 1

Motion approved by unanimous roll call (10-0)

XIV. EDUCATION: Chairperson – Andrea Robinson; Committee Members – Sara Kuhlen, Johnathan Maxson, Bill Wilson; and Alternate – Alison Lipsky.

XV. HUMAN RESOURCES: Chairperson – Ammie Davis; Committee Members – Allison Cox, Stephen Wilson, Mark Gatti and Alternate - Bill Wilson

XX. Public Participation: (Open Discussion) - NONE

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XXI. ADJOURNMENT

1. The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Audubon Junior-Senior High School Media Center.
2. Motion by Mr. Wilson seconded by Mrs. Cox to adjourn meeting at approximately 8:40pm.
Motion approved by unanimous roll call (10-0)

Motion to Approve: S. Wilson Second: A. Cox

Roll Call

<u>X</u> Ammie Davis	<u>X</u> Stephen Wilson	<u>X</u> Sara Kuhlen	<u>X</u> Johnathan Maxson
<u>X</u> Alison Lipsky	<u>X</u> Mark Gatti	<u>X</u> Bill Wilson	
<u>X</u> Danielle DiFrancesco	<u>X</u> Allison Cox	<u>X</u> Andrea Robinson	

The Audubon Board of Education reserves the right to add and/or delete motions or make changes to motions in this agenda up to the time of the meeting and during the actual meeting.

Deborah Roncace
Business Administrator/Board Secretary