

School Committee Budget Workshop

March 12, 2025 / 12:05–1:56 PM / Middle High School Learning Commons

Attendees: Chris Reed / Jake Foster / Theresa Whitman / Erica Spencer /

Call to Order 12:05 PM

FY26 Budget Review and Strategy Discussion

- Pam reviewed updated budget figures and walked the group through each funding option and its impact on the towns.
- Pam shared that Brendhan Zubrick communicated Essex's position to level-fund the school budget, noting that any growth would require an override.
- Pam clarified the updated E&D carry-forward amount (\$500K vs. previously estimated \$350K).
- The group reviewed override mechanics and town meeting processes, with Q&A to ensure mutual understanding.

Funding Components Discussion

- School Choice: Group supported Pam's recommendation to hold on determination until after budget determination and reduce by \$100K.
- OPEB: Decision deferred pending further review.
- Stabilization: No interest in utilizing funds.
- E&D: Mixed feedback; approach still under consideration.
- FTE Adjustments: Pam to revise one option to retain a principal position while eliminating the facilities manager role.

Override Strategy Discussion

- Members discussed timing and messaging for potential overrides in each town.
- Considered various outcomes and emphasized need for a unified, well-communicated strategy.

Adjourned: 1:56 PM