

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

December 8, 2025

The warrants for bills payable were reviewed and signed by the School Committee.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Elizabeth Coughlin at 6:00 p.m. in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center. The Chair announced the meeting is being recorded for future broadcast over DCTV.

On a roll call the following members were present: John Nunes, Mary Beckwith and Elizabeth Coughlin. Chris Oliver and Kathleen Amaral were not in attendance.

Also present: Dr. Saba-Maguire, James Kiely, Student Representative Charlotte Alphonse and Ms. Genthner.

Mrs. Amaral joined the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Christine Pankowski, parent of Dartmouth students, made comments about school funding and encouraged the District and the School Committee to ask for what it needs and not what it thinks the Town will approve.

Mr. Zak Tavares, a parent of Dartmouth school children and a Town Meeting member, commented on the budget process asking if the District's needs could be quantified in order to present a clearer understanding of the cost of those needs making it easier to rally support from community.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 10, 2025 as written. The motion passed unanimously: 4-0.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

DHS Freshman Charlotte Alphonse provided updates on activities and events happening at Dartmouth High School (DHS).

- Fall Pep Rally Update
- Key Club Donation to the YMCA's Full Plate Program
- High Five Friday Update
- Fundraising Activity Update
- Winter Sports Have Begun; 259 students are participating
- Student Advisory Council will meet with the DHS Administrative Team after winter break

A portion of the agenda was taken out of order and addressed at this time.

New Business:

SMEC Request for Approval of Amended Language to its Capital Reserve Account Policy:

Ms. Coughlin invited Catherine Cooper, Executive Director of the Southeastern Massachusetts Education Collaborative (SMEC), to present the Collaborative's request.

Ms. Cooper explained the reason behind the amended language and read through the proposed changes which were provided in the meeting packet and asked for the Committee's vote to approve the language changes.

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the amended language to SMEC's Capital Reserve Account Policy, as presented. The motion passed: 3-0-1. Mr. Nunes abstained due to a conflict of interest; he is the treasurer for the Collaborative.

OLD BUSINESS

SC Policies Section D – Fiscal Management, Policy JKAA - Physical Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support; Policy IKF Graduation Requirements and Proposed New Policy IKFE – Competency Determination – Second Reading and Vote: Mr. Kiely noted the further change made to SC Policy DFD *Gate Receipts and Admissions* per the recommendation made at the first reading at the November 10th meeting to better reflect the deposit process noting the further amended policy was provided in the meeting packet as well as adding no other changes were made to the policies presented at the first reading and asked for the Committee's approval to the revised policies presented tonight if there are no further recommendations.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve changes to the policies as presented tonight. The motion passed unanimously: 4-0.

Mr. Kiely stated the policies will be posted on the District website.

NEW BUSINESS

SMEC Quarterly Report: The Chair tabled the matter for the next meeting since Mr. Oliver was not able to attend tonight's meeting.

FY27-FY36 Capital Improvement Plan (Proposed) – Vote: Mr. Kiely reported the Facilities and Fields Sub-committee had a meeting just before Thanksgiving and thanked the sub-committee members for their collaboration and noted the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Kiely noted the meeting packet also included a summary memo of year one requests ranked according to the Town priority system as well as summary sheets of all requests for the 10-year period beginning in FY27 through FY36 including a description of each request.

Mr. Kiely noted Focus Area 4 of the strategic plan which was mentioned during public comment earlier this evening is guiding our efforts adding we know we need to modernize our school facilities and it is a major component of the strategic plan.

Mr. Kiely focused on and provided brief highlights of year one requests adding it is hoped these requests can be voted on at the June and/or October Town Meeting.

Mr. Kiely included the potential impact of not "doing" what is proposed in the year one requests.

Mrs. Amaral asked if the requested bus will be compliant with accessibility.

Mr. Kiely responded currently the District contracts out for a wheelchair accessible vehicle when necessary adding the District would need to determine how often wheelchair accessibility is required to determine whether or not to purchase a new bus with that capacity since the cost is significantly greater.

Mrs. Amaral commented that school playgrounds are open to the general public noting the additional wear and tear this use creates and asked if there is any conversation with the Town around shared responsibility or shared contribution toward upkeep of the playgrounds.

Mr. Kiely agreed with Mrs. Amaral and responded at one of the meetings Dr. Saba-Maguire and I had with the Town Administrator and Finance Director it was recognized the playgrounds are a community issue and not just a school issue noting that that was without "us" driving that part of the discussion and our hope is there is some consideration for that request.

Mr. Kiely provided a brief update of the high school roof replacement project reiterating the District was accepted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) accelerated repair program (ARP) which will fund approximately 50% of the cost.

Mr. Nunes asked if there are any grants available from the State for the HVAC repair and/or replacement.

Mr. Kiely responded that the two sources we might be able to obtain are the "Green Communities" money which is limited or a possible MSBA project referring to heat pump technology which is eligible for the ARP providing some comments around the possibility of a heat pump conversion at the Quinn school which is included in the FY29 requests.

Mr. Kiely noted the monetary request for the HS track reconstruction has increased due to time and costs and our hope is to receive funding from spring town meeting noting the time constraints for the project.

Mrs. Amaral asked if the track is impacting having home track events noting the cost of transporting students to an alternate venue.

Mr. Kiely responded, so far, the District's approach of "patching" the track has worked and we are still able to use it but that is not going to work for much longer.

Discussion ensued on the possibility of a "special" town meeting in order to expedite the process of beginning capital improvement projects in a given fiscal year.

Mr. Kiely stated the next request is for a new or renovated school explaining it is critical we begin the process of replacing our three 80 year old buildings adding the request is made now not for immediate funding but to support the submission of a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) adding "our" hope is to prepare the SOI and present it to this Committee and the Select Board for a replacement of the existing Dartmouth Middle School building and submit the SOI to the MSBA in February (2026) noting the MSBA will announce the opening of its program in January (2026) there is a meeting scheduled on submitting an SOI in January ("which I will attend"); Mr. Kiely added MSBA would likely fund 50% of a school building project in Dartmouth based on the town's economic statistics.

Mr. Kiely provided comments about the stadium project request including bathroom renovations.

Mr. Kiely concluded his highlights of FY27 CIP requests noting the total cost for the requests including the new school placeholder is \$114,565,000.

Mrs. Amaral asked if the stadium renovations request includes or will allow for ADA compliance.

Mr. Kiely stated it does.

Mr. Kiely briefly reviewed requests in the following 9 years of the 10-year CIP plan.

Mr. Kiely stated the Town asked the District to use a priority ranking system when making requests and explained the ranking criteria.

Mrs. Amaral asked for the District's rationale making the bathroom renovations a 2 instead of a 1 priority.

Mr. Kiely responded we have been targeting the areas where we had significant safety concerns.

Ms. Coughlin asked for clarification regarding the school building "place holder."

Mr. Kiely explained the process of submitting an SOI and being granted funds at the June or October 2026 Town Meeting adding the other projects on the FY27 list represent actual funding requests.

Dr. Saba-Maguire added it is important to "put out" to the community what the financial implications are for this year and for the future.

Mr. Kiely concluded the presentation noting the Committee can vote on the proposed CIP tonight or take it under advisement cautioning we would not want to wait too long to begin the process on the Town side.

Mr. Nunes commented that the roof replacement, new or renovated school and stadium renovations make up the bulk of the FY27 request and if you remove those items the District is asking for \$2.9 million for the "normal" capital items.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith, to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as presented by the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations in the amount of \$114,565,000. The motion passed unanimously: 4-0.

FY27 Timeline: Mr. Kiely referred to the budget timeline which was included in the meeting packet noting he shared a similar budget timeline at the summer retreat adding it hasn't changed much.

Mr. Kiely stated we have been working on budget development; principals and directors will be submitting their budgets on Friday and reported a budget sub-committee meeting was recently held and more will be held in order to be ready to present the (FY27) budget to this Committee in February.

Mrs. Amaral asked if "buildings" should prioritize their budget requests similar to the Town's ranking rubric.

Dr. Saba-Maguire noted we do prioritize our requests when we present the budget to the Committee.

Mr. Kiely responded the District feels it "has an understanding" of what the Committee and sub-committee's expectations are; we will incorporate into the budget the needs that are necessary for us to accomplish our key strategic plan objectives which is the budget we plan to present to the Committee.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated we have been having conversations with building administrators and we are not hearing anything surprising and noted the connections being made from the school improvement plans, to the District Strategic Plan and to the budget.

The Committee decided not to use the Town's ranking system to the budget.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Saba-Maguire provided information and updates of events and activities happening throughout the District.

- Update regarding Elementary Faculty Survey around the implementation of this year's instructional schedule noting the District's emphasis to seek out teacher "voice" and to use it in decision making.
- Update on the five session "strands" regarding professional development being reimplemented noting ESPs will be included in the professional learning opportunities being offered.
- Update on proposed graduation requirements issued by the State.
- Comments on the DHS Pep Rally.
- Update on Technology; new district servers have been installed and updated backup batteries.
- Update on installation of Vape Detectors at DHS.
- Update on new Safety Protocol Training session recently held; Crisis Team putting together professional development for the district.

Report of the Chair: The Chair reported the following.

- School Holiday Concerts are happening.
- DHS Pops Concert honoree this year is James Kiely.

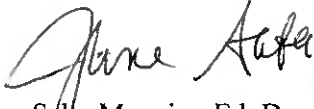
Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The Chair stated the next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School and via live stream at www.youtube.com/dhstvmedia on Monday, January 12, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to adjourn from Open Session at 7:29 p.m. The motion passed unanimously: 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,



June Saba-Maguire, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

- Agenda
- Brief
- Regular Session Minutes for November 10, 2025
- SC Policies Section D, Section I (IKF and IKFE), Section J (JKAA)
- FY27-FY36 Proposed Capital Improvement Plan (PPP)
- FY27-36 Capital Improvement Plan Summary
- FY27 Budget Timeline