

OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Budget Subcommittee
135 Marion Road
Mattapoisett, MA 02739

November 20, 2025 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Smith, Chairperson (in-person), James Muse (in-person) and Matthew Monteiro (remote).

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Howie Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Shari Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Silas Coellner, Principal - ORRJHS and Melissa Wilcox, Recording Secretary.

I. Meeting to Order

Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

II. General

a. FY2027 Budget Discussion

Superintendent Nelson welcomed the School Committee members and reviewed the ORR FY2026 Budget passed last year with an overall increase of 4.73%. He reminded the members that Rochester was responsible for the largest portion of the budget, followed by Marion and then Mattapoisett based on enrollment and the Regional Agreement. The School Committee completed negotiations last year with all four ORR union associations, so staffing projections are based on contractual obligations. He continued that Plymouth County Retirement and insurance expenses were driving factors in last year's budget and the administration is concerned that the previously approved 8% increase built into the current fiscal year budget will not suffice as health insurance expenses increase nationwide. Transportation and facilities including utilities were driving factors last year as well, and will continue to be for FY2027.

Next, Mr. Barber provided a quick overview of the budget process. The administration has been meeting to discuss current expenditures and operating expenses. Superintendent Nelson reviewed enrollment projections from NESDEC for each grade level at ORR. He added that there are currently 119 school choice students in grades 7 through 12 and 19 will be graduating. There are about 165-170 students anticipated from Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester to be entering 7th grade at ORR in the fall.

Principal Coellner shared his requests submitted for FY2027 budget consideration. His priorities are an increase in funds to offer more of a variety of extracurricular clubs and interscholastic sports at ORRJHS due to student demand and staff interest. He also requested an administrative assistant position to support the Assistant Principal and Director of Guidance. Superintendent Nelson shared, on behalf of Principal Devoll, that Mr. Devoll's main goal is to maintain level service and staffing at ORRHS. He is also working with Early Education Coordinator Doreen Lopes in relation to adding a staff member to the Chapter 74 program due to increased student interest and a current waitlist for the program. He added that Ms. Lopes and Mr. Devoll did apply for a grant that could be a possible offset but they have not heard if it will be supported yet. Superintendent Nelson continued with Mr. Devoll's interests of replacement plans for teacher computers and Promethean boards along with a team chair stipend position in special education which would need to be negotiated.

Next, Dr. Fedorowicz reviewed requests from the Office of Teaching and Learning, including maintaining the Open Architect data dashboard, common assessments training, a math consultant for continued professional development at ORRJHS and materials for Investigating History as the grant that has previously funded this is no longer available.

Superintendent Nelson and Mr. Barber explained the current budget drivers will again be contractual obligations and payroll, facilities expenses and their concerns with current projected rates for insurance next year. Superintendent Nelson informed the School Committee that the District needs to discuss the ORRHS gymnasium bleachers as there are safety concerns and replacement parts are no longer made. He has advocated with local representatives and toured the gym, sharing the quote to address the bleachers and the gym floor was about \$300,000 in hopes of receiving funding support.

School Committee Feedback:

Mr. Muse highlighted the administrative assistant position discussed by Mr. Coellner. He agreed that paperwork, mandates and state requirements have all been increased and more has been asked of the District. Mr. Monteiro stated that he and member Frances-Feliz Kearns have also advocated with local officials for funding to support ORRHS gymnasium improvements and they will continue to do so, but also need to think about other options. Ms. Smith recognized that it will not be an easy budget season yet again for the District, but they must keep the best interest of the students as the priority.

III. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 5:35 p.m. by James Muse

Seconded by Matthew Monteiro

Motion Carries (3-0)

Roll Call: Smith (yes), Monteiro (yes), Muse (yes)