Minutes
Region 14 Board of Education
Budget Presentation to the Boards of Selectmen and Boards of Finance
of the Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury
Monday, March 23, 2026; 6:00 p.m.
Woodbury Middle School Cafeteria
OFFICIAL MINUTES – BOARD APPROVED – MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026

Present:
Chris Matta, Chairman
Alice Jones
Jim Crocker
Carol Ann Brown
Caren Lipinski
Michael Carbonneau
Bridget Calabrese

Absent:
Tikva Rose

Also Present:
Brian Murphy, Superintendent
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations
Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee members of the Towns of Woodbury and Bethlehem

I. Call to Order
Chris Matta called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and acquaintances were made

III. Presentation of the Superintendent's proposed 2026-2027 budget to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance of the towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury

- Superintendent Brian Murphy presented the 2026–27 budget of $44,757,503 — a 4.6% increase (~$1.9M), below last year's initial ask of 4.9% and below the current state average of 5.1% and last year's average of 5.4%
- Budget supports the district's goals and meets the needs of all students and staff
- Nearly 75% of the budget is salaries and health benefits, with very limited discretionary spending

The Regional School District 14 Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or disability in its programs, activities, and employment practices as set forth in compliance with the Office of Civil Rights, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. Any person having inquiries concerning Regional School District 14 Public Schools' compliance with Section 504, Title VI or Title IX should contact Dina Ericson, Director of Student Services, Regional School District 14, 5 Minortown Road, PO Box 469, Woodbury, CT 06798 (203) 263-6356

Staffing changes

- Eliminating 1 full-time first-grade teacher at Mitchell Elementary — enrollment dropped to 2 kindergarten sections, only 2 first-grade sections are needed next year instead of 3
- Adding 1 full-time Spanish teacher for grades 4–5 at Mitchell, a position that was cut two years ago
- Exploring a shared technology specialist between Region 14 and the Town of Bethlehem — credited to First Selectman Ray Butkus' suggestion
- After two budget defeats, the district has cut nearly 6 full-time positions over recent years, which Brian flagged as increasingly impactful on operations

Health insurance cost spike

- Health insurance premiums are increasing ~16% for Region 14 — accounting for $764,141 of the total budget increase
- Tina confirmed the district went out to bid; Anthem came in lowest at ~16%, one competitor bid 19%, another bid 33%, and United Healthcare declined to bid at all
- The district is not locked into a long-term contract and plans to go out to bid again next year
- Double-digit health insurance increases are common across CT school districts this year

Special ed and out-of-district costs

- Region 14 currently has 14 students placed out of district for special education — up 2 from last year
- Out-of-district placement tuition and transportation costs are rising, contributing to a nearly $200,000 increase on that budget line
- Brian noted Region 14's out-of-district special ed population is smaller than comparable districts, but costs are still significant and unpredictable year to year
- By law, the district must fund both tuition and transportation for these placements

Budget line item Q&A

- A question-and-answer period followed, during which discussions addressed legal counsel, additional purchasing services, constables and security, special education and magnet school tuition, as well as repair and maintenance budget lines.

IV. Adjournment

Chris Matta adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patricia Paige
Board Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk
Minutes created with assistance of Circleback AI"