

Newburyport School Committee
Finance Sub-Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 26, 2026
8:30 AM
Central Office Conference Room

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:32 AM.

Present: Andy Boger, John Ricci, Juliet Walker (remote via Zoom)

Guests: Sean Gallagher, Ethan Manning

2. Approval of Minutes

- o [January 22, 2026](#)

Motion to approve by Ms. Walker, seconded by Mr. Ricci. Approved 3–0.

3. Budget Transfers

There were no transfers.

4. Overnight Trips

The committee discussed the overnight trip [form](#). Mr. Ricci will review and follow up.

5. User Fees

The committee discussed a [proposal](#) to adjust the FY27 (2026–2027) athletics [fee schedule](#).

Superintendent Gallagher provided additional [information](#) in support of the recommended fee changes, including comparative information on the costs families may incur to participate in AAU/private leagues.

Ms. Walker shared that she would like to consider phasing out athletics fees in the future, but recognized the challenges of making significant changes during this budget cycle.

Key points discussed:

- Athletics user fees generate approximately \$250,000 annually, covering only a portion of the over \$1 million total cost to operate the athletics program.
- Newburyport's athletics fees were described as mid-range, if slightly on the low side, compared to peers.
- Ms. Walker requested additional information for a future meeting, including:
 - i. Participation by sport
 - ii. Revenue and costs by sport
 - iii. Number of waivers granted (based on income)
- The committee discussed whether fees present a barrier to participation; noting that with approximately 75% of the student population participating, fees do not appear to be a major limiting factor, though accessibility remains a concern.
- Members noted that if user fees are not increased (or are eliminated in the future), reductions elsewhere would be needed to offset lost revenue.
- Members discussed promoting optional donations during registration.
- Mr. Ricci suggested exploring whether higher-participation sports should move to a higher tier and discussed the possibility of conducting a survey.

Middle school athletics:

- The committee discussed that the district has not charged for middle school sports for the past three years. Members discussed whether to:
 - i. Cap the budget or participation levels, or
 - ii. Consider a nominal fee for middle school athletics.

Members discussed potentially implementing the recommended tier changes while keeping tier prices unchanged, and adding a nominal middle school participation fee.

Discussion to be continued at the next sub-committee meeting.

6. School Choice

The committee reviewed school choice [enrollment data](#). Superintendent Gallagher reviewed the school choice enrollment process, including lottery procedures and relevant state requirements.

Mr. Ricci suggested further exploring international students as a potential additional revenue source.

Members discussed the benefits of school choice related to diversity, enrollment stability and revenue, noting that while school choice has contributed to disruption at certain grade levels in some instances, concerns among families appear to have dissipated.

7. Other Business

Mr. Boger announced that he is working with Councillor Zeid to schedule a joint meeting of the School Committee Finance Sub-Committee and City Council Budget & Finance Committee on Thursday, March 12, from 4:00–5:00 PM, in the Nock Library.

8. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Monday, March 9, 2026, at 8:30 AM, Central Office.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Ricci, seconded by Mr. Boger. Approved 2–0.

Adjourned at 10:03 AM.