

MEETING MINUTES

Budget Committee members in attendance included Board Chair Jonathan Light, Vice Chair Amber Langeworthy, Ken Kohl, Nicole De Graff, and Robert Brew.

At-Large members in attendance were Patrick Walch, Hollea Puzio, Nancy Cameron, and Patty Gutierrez.

Absent: At-Large member Elaine Doornbus.

District staff in attendance included Acting Superintendent Jodi O'Mara, Brett Yancey, Melissa Stalder, and additional as audience members.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Light welcomed everyone. The Springfield School Budget Committee meeting came to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Chair Light led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

A. Chair of Committee

Chair Light called for nominations for board Chair.

Director Kohl nominated Patrick Walch.

NOMINATION: Director Kohl nominated, Director De Graff seconded the nomination in favor of Patrick Walch to serve as Budget Committee Chair.

Chair Light called for a roll call vote asking each board member to indicate if they approve of Patrick Walch to serve as Budget Committee Chair: Director Brew - Yes, Director Kohl - Yes, Director De Graff - Yes, Director Walch - Yes, Director Langworthy - Yes, Director Gutierrez - Yes, Director Puzio - Yes, and Chair Light - Yes.

The nomination unanimously passed, 8:0.

Patrick Walch was chosen as Budget Committee Chair.

— Director Nancy Cameron entered the meeting at 6:04 p.m. —

B. Vice Chair of Committee

Chair Walch called for nominations for Vice Chair.

Director Kohl nominated Nicole De Graff.

NOMINATION: Director Kohl nominated, Director Puzio seconded the nomination in favor of Nicole De Graff to serve as Budget Committee Vice Chair.

Chair Walch called for a roll call vote asking each board member to indicate if they approve of Nicole De Graff to serve as Budget Committee Vice Chair: Director Light - Yes, Director Brew - Yes, Director Kohl - Yes, Director Cameron - Yes, Director De Graff - Yes, Chair Walch - Yes, Director Langworthy - Yes, Director Gutierrez - Yes, and Director Puzio - Yes.

The nomination unanimously passed, 9:0.

Director Nicole De Graff was chosen as Budget Committee Vice Chair.

4. 2026-2027 BUDGET MESSAGE

Acting Superintendent Jodi O'Mara presented a balanced 2026-2027 school year budget, emphasizing student success, family support, and personalized learning. The cost of providing the level of education students deserve continues to outpace available funding. Despite careful planning, the budget faces a \$7.9 million deficit, necessitating significant staffing and operational reductions to present a balanced budget. The budget aims to minimize impacts on students and preserve support for those with the greatest barriers to success.

Key adjustments include:

- \$610,000 increase in classified staffing.
- \$1.6 million reduction in certified staffing.
- \$500,000 cut in capital improvement budget.

5. BUDGET DOCUMENT OVERVIEW & PRESENTATION

Chief Operations Officer Brett Yancey and Finance Director Melissa Stalder presented.

Melissa Stalder explained the budget process, including early work sessions, staff input forms, and community forums.

A. Input Opportunities

The proposed budget was distributed to the community and posted publicly one week in advance for review. The budget reflects extensive community input from staff, families, students, and community members. The budget reflects a comprehensive view of the financial plan and operational impact for the coming year.

B. Document Overview

- The Superintendent's Budget Message
- District and Budget Overview
- Economic and Enrollment
- Department Summaries
- Staffing Summaries

C. Options and Expectations

Ultimately the Committee's expectations is to approve the proposed budget, set the permanent tax rate, and approve the tax for bonded debt, however there are options for the Committee prior to approval:

1. Approve the budget as proposed
2. Increase appropriations
3. Decrease appropriations

D. Beginning Budget Assumptions

- A \$7.9 million budget deficit.
- "Rollover" staffing levels from current year, adjusted for enrollment.
- Contractual obligations included.
- Prior transfers included.
- 5.0% unappropriated Ending Fund Balance included.

E. Summary of Proposed Adjustments

- Reductions in certified staffing levels (\$1.6 million).
- Eliminate transfer to instructional materials fund (\$800,000)
- Eliminate transfer to technology fund (\$800,000)
- Reductions in administrative staffing (\$753,000), capital improvement budget cut (\$500,000), and subscription-based technology arrangements (\$350,000)
- \$323,000 increase in the unappropriated fund balance to address anticipated enrollment declines.

F. 2026-27 General Fund Revenue & Expenditures

- Increases in property taxes, other local revenue, and state school fund.
- \$3.2 million decrease in expenditures, primarily in staffing and insurance costs.
- Purchase services, supplies and materials, capital outlay, and other objects show varying adjustments.
- Budget Goal - To produce a balanced budget with a net decrease in expenditures of \$3.2 million.

G. 2026-27 Other Fund Revenue & Expenditures

- Grants, nutrition services, co-curricular, student body, debt service, and other funds all show decreases..
- Decline of grant funds:
 - \$1.2 million reduction, including similar reductions in other funds.
 - The nutrition services fund decreased by \$225,000, and the co-curricular fund shows a reduction.

Student Body Fund and Debt Service Fund

- Students control about \$3.2 million through their student governance and ASB, managing the debt service fund.
- The debt service fund increased by about \$708,000, including predetermined payments for geo bonds and other loans.

- A \$420,000 rise in the capital projects fund.

Capital Outlay and Internal Service Funds

- Capital outlay versus capital projects.
- The voluntary early retirement fund has a \$540,000 balance, drawing down \$100,000 annually.
- The internal service funds include the self-insured insurance fund for medical, dental, and vision benefits, costing approximately \$540,000 annually.
- The voluntary early retirement fund balance is \$540,000, being drawn down around \$100,000 each year.

H. Staffing Review

- Staffing levels as of July 1, 2025:
 - 602 certified
 - 628 classified
 - 81 administrators
- The adopted budget included a 0% cost of living adjustment (COLA), with any future COLA requiring reductions.
- In August, a 12.6 FTE reduction was made for classified staff and a 2 FTE reduction for administrators to offset a 2.5% COLA.
- In January, a 36 FTE reduction was necessary to meet a 4% COLA, due to the timing of the collective bargaining agreement.

Mid-Year Reductions and Proposed Budget

- 50.6% FTE reductions were made after the adopted budget, with additional reductions recommended for the proposed budget.
- The proposed budget includes additional reductions:
 - 12 certified staff
 - 10 classified staff
 - 11.5 administrative staff
- Total reduction from adopted to proposed budget is 33.7 FTE, with a 6.4% district-wide reduction.
- Staffing Goal - To retain as many staff in front of students as possible.

Attendance and Social Work Services

- Reduction in salaries for attendance and social work services.
- Three staff member reductions.
- Overall scope of attendance services remains flat when considering other funds.

Yancey presented a comprehensive view of staffing levels across all funds to show the total district-wide picture. The reduction in the general fund is balanced by increases in other funds, allowing for the reclamation of about 12 staff members.

I. Next Steps

The district's financial management was discussed, with the aim to maintain stability. The budget is managed with the intention of underspending to maintain stability, with a projected ending fund balance of \$14.8 million.

- The importance of extracurricular opportunities for students, which contribute to a robust student experience was highlighted.
- The board considered staffing reductions and the impact on student experience.
- Assumptions have been built into the budget and reductions in force will be discussed with the board on Monday.
- The school board will set parameters for bargaining, and the budget meets all existing collective bargaining agreements.

6. BUDGET QUESTIONS AND/OR CLARIFICATIONS

Director Kohl sought clarification on the board's authority to adjust individual funds.

Yancey explained that the board has authority to adjust appropriations by up to 10% within each fund.

Director Brew requested a comparison of staffing levels to enrollment changes.

Yancey explained that staffing levels have not decreased at the same rate as enrollment, partly due to adjustments in other funds like the student investment account and high school success.

Director Kohl inquired about the student-to-EA ratio and the benefits of having more instructional EAs, suggesting they look into cost changes of the life skills program and its impact on staffing.

Yancey explained that the high ratio is due to a significant life skills program and the cost-effectiveness of EAs compared to teachers and noted the need for further discussion with Lin-Benton Education Service District regarding Kohl's suggestion.

Director De Graff asked about the reserves and best practices for fund balances, referencing a board policy of a 5% minimum. De Graff inquired about the sustainability of the spending plan.

Yancey explained that best practices range from 8% to 12%, with conservative accounts suggesting 15%. Yancey expressed confidence in the team's expertise and planning.

Director Light questioned the financial repercussions of maintaining a low ending fund balance.

Yancey explained that downgrading from rating agencies can increase borrowing costs and impact bond issuance.

Director Cameron asked about the allocation of ending fund balance as a one-time revenue source.

Director Brew asked about significant unknowns in the current situation, referencing last year's SEA contract as a past uncertainty.

Yancey mentioned there is an ongoing collective bargaining process with OSEA, and a settled contract had not yet been reached.

7. PUBLIC INPUT

Director Light read aloud the posted public input disclaimer and guidelines.

Cliff Schutte, a middle school teacher, raised concerns about the impact of budget cuts on staffing and emphasized the need to understand the broader impact on students.

Quillen Enya, an SHS freshman, highlighted the importance of activities such as band, orchestra, and choir in marginalized communities.

Heather Quaas-Annsa emphasized the importance of prioritizing support for marginalized students, discussed declining enrollment and rising costs, and stressed the need for thoughtful stewardship and long-term planning.

8. ACTION ON 2026-2027 SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Board members expressed concerns about the impact on staffing and student enrollment and debated approving the \$262,263,855 budget for 2026-2027. Some board members expressed a need for more time to consider the decision.

MOTION: Director De Graff moved, seconded by Director Kohl to approve the 2026-2027 Springfield School District Budget as presented.

Chair Walch called for a roll call vote asking each board member to indicate if they approve the 2026-2027 Springfield School District Budget: Director Light - Yes, Director Brew - Yes, Director Kohl - Yes, Director Cameron - Yes, Director De Graff - Yes, Chair Walch - Yes, Director Langworthy - No, Director Gutierrez - No, and Director Puzio - No.

Motion passed, 6:3.

9. NEXT MEETINGS (if needed)

~~May 14, 2026, 6:00 p.m.~~

~~May 21, 2026, 6:00 p.m.~~

Chair Walch announced that a budget meeting would not be held next week.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Having concluded all business, Chair Patrick Walch adjourned the Springfield School Budget meeting at 7:32 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Trenay Ryan, LCOG)