

Newburyport School Committee
Finance Sub-Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 21, 2026
8:30 AM
Central Office Conference Room

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:37 AM.

Present: Andy Boger, Juliet Walker, John Ricci

Guests: Sean Gallagher, Ethan Manning, Lauren Eramo

2. Approval of Minutes

- [April 16, 2026](#)

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

3. Budget Transfers

There were no transfers.

4. FY27 School Budget

The Committee discussed the status of the FY27 school budget and the remaining budget timeline. The School Committee-approved FY27 City appropriation is \$40,968,666. The Mayor's submitted FY27 school appropriation is \$40,844,765, leaving a remaining difference of \$123,901.

Members reviewed the upcoming City Council budget process, including the City Council school budget workshop scheduled for June 11 and the City Council public hearing and final budget vote scheduled for June 17.

Discussion included updated budget context since the School Committee vote, including additional net state aid reflected in the Senate budget and lower-than-anticipated bids for the school roof projects. Members noted that these developments support the position that the remaining \$123,901 gap should be addressed through the City budget process, rather than through additional school-side reductions or further use of one-time district balances.

The use of School Choice funds in the FY27 budget was also reviewed. The FY27 budget already relies on \$2,000,000 in School Choice funds, with estimated FY27 receipts of \$1,401,039 and a projected FY27 ending balance of \$290,745. Members discussed that using an additional \$123,901 from the School

Choice balance would close the FY27 gap on paper, but would further reduce the projected ending balance and create additional pressure heading into FY28.

The possibility of adding additional School Choice seats was discussed. Members noted that the initial approval of 25 School Choice seats represented a reasonable compromise and expressed hesitation about adding more seats at this point unless absolutely necessary.

Members also discussed potential enrollment uncertainty related to River Valley Charter School. Newburyport currently sends 87 students to River Valley Charter School. Recent leadership and governance issues at River Valley could affect NPS enrollment if some families elect to return to Newburyport Public Schools.

Overall, members discussed that the School Committee-approved FY27 budget remains the district's approved budget and should continue to be supported through the City budget process. Given the additional revenue context available to the City, members expressed their hope that the Mayor and City Council will be able to close the remaining \$123,901 gap without requiring the district to further reduce the budget, add additional School Choice seats, or draw down additional reserves.

The administration's recommendation to move forward with proposed athletic fee changes was also reviewed, given the level of Athletic Revolving Fund balance being used to support the FY27 budget. The proposed changes include increasing Tier 2 and Tier 3 athletic fees by \$25, establishing a \$75 middle school athletic fee, and moving golf from Tier 2 to Tier 1. The estimated additional revenue is approximately \$33,569 per year.

Ms. Walker noted that some districts, such as Arlington and Bedford, have eliminated athletic fees, but those changes have generally been paired with additional revenue, such as override funding. Members also discussed other models, including communities such as Lynnfield that have received outside support for athletics, as well as districts with outside fundraising organizations that help support athletic programs. The discussion also noted that not charging for middle school athletics over the past few years has been a useful pilot, but has also resulted in some students registering without fully participating, creating costs for uniforms, equipment, and transportation. The Superintendent will bring the proposed athletic fee changes to the full School Committee at its next regular meeting on June 10.

5. Other Business

The Superintendent discussed a proposal to add a varsity girls golf team. The district currently offers boys varsity golf in the fall. The proposed girls varsity golf team would compete in the spring and is expected to have approximately 12 participants. The estimated cost of the program is approximately \$10,000, which

would be partially offset by the proposed athletic fee increase. Members were supportive of the proposal. The Superintendent will bring the proposed new athletic offering to the full School Committee at its next regular meeting on June 10.

The Committee noted that the PTO met the previous evening to discuss funding for the proposed outdoor learning space at the Bresnahan Elementary School, which was approved.

The Committee discussed the FY27 CTE Capital Annex Grant Pilot Program application, which was submitted on April 28, 2026. The application requests \$3,101,500 to support CTE program development at Newburyport High School, including Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing program areas. Members discussed that, if awarded, the grant would be a significant opportunity for the district. The discussion also noted the strategic relationships the district has developed with individuals and organizations involved in CTE, which may help position Newburyport well as it continues to pursue expanded career technical education opportunities.

The Committee also discussed overnight field trips, including trips offered through certain outside tour operators. The discussion included items to consider when reviewing future trips, such as trip cost, group size, rooming arrangements, incentives for organizers, whether students are grouped with other schools, the quality of meals and hotels, and whether the tour operator's practices are consistent with district expectations. The Superintendent will follow up with Principal Wulf to discuss these programs and consider what the district can do differently when reviewing and approving future overnight trips.

6. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 8:30 AM, Central Office.

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

Adjourned at 9:56 AM.