



NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts

MINUTES – August 10, 2026

Virtual via Zoom

PRESENT

Chairperson	Mike LaBossiere	Pepperell
	Kym Craven	Townsend ~ Arrived @ 9:03 a.m.
	Qenan Francois	Townsend
	Jackie White	Pepperell ~ Absent

ALSO PRESENT

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Gary Burboa-Reese	Assistant Superintendent
Kevin Cormier	Business Manager
Jeremy Hamond	Director of Operations
Robin Eibye	Recording Secretary

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

- Michael LaBossiere called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and announced that it was being recorded. It was noted that Jackie White was unable to attend.

Roll Call Attendance:			
Kym Craven	Yes		Yes
Qenan Francois	Yes	Kevin Cormier	Yes
Jackie White	-	Robin Eibye	Yes
Mike LaBossiere	Yes	Jeremy Hamond	Yes
Brad Morgan	Yes	Gary Burboa-Reese	Yes

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

The Subcommittee reviewed the April 23, 2026 Finance Subcommittee meeting minutes.

- Motion made by Qenan Francois to approve the April 23, 2026 Finance Subcommittee minutes as presented.

Seconded by Michael LaBossiere

Roll Call Vote:

1. Qenan Francois – Yes
2. Michael LaBossiere – Yes

Outcome: The motion unanimously passed, 2-0

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Robin Eibye reported that no public comments had been received.

OLD BUSINESS

1. FY26 Budget

Kevin Cormier provided a status update on the FY26 budget closeout, reporting that estimated unexpended expense funds to be added to Excess and Deficiency (E&D) are approximately \$1.9 million — higher than the Subcommittee's \$1.6 million target but lower than the prior year and an earlier projection of approximately \$2.2 million. He noted that the variance from target is due in part to the closeout of open purchase orders and year-long accounts, such as facilities, that reverted into the unexpended balance at year end. Members noted progress toward the Subcommittee's goal of reducing unexpended funds, and administration indicated it will continue to monitor and plan expenditures throughout the year to avoid significant late-year spending decisions.

In response to a question from Qenan Francois regarding snow and ice and utility costs, Kevin Cormier reported that snow and ice removal costs were high due to a new contractor with higher fees and heavy seasonal usage, and that the district is exploring retrofitting and potentially purchasing an additional truck to expand in-house snow removal capacity. He noted that utility costs were generally acceptable due to locked-in rates, though usage was higher than desired due to winter conditions, and that the district is completing indoor LED lighting conversions at several buildings using grant funding, with an expected payback period of approximately two years and ongoing savings thereafter.

In response to a question from Kym Craven regarding missed opportunities and future support, Kevin Cormier identified buildings and grounds staffing capacity as a key constraint on executing multi-week capital or maintenance projects at year end, noting that projects suited to outside vendors were prioritized due to internal staffing limitations. Administration indicated it plans to use the results of the ADA plan and related grant funding to help prioritize future capital projects and address high-priority accessibility needs.

2. FY27 Budget

Superintendent Brad Morgan reported that the District does not expect health insurance costs to remain flat in the upcoming year, and that the district's five collective bargaining agreements are projected to have a combined budget impact of approximately \$1 million. He noted that the State budget cycle continues to lag behind the district's budget calendar, creating challenges in finalizing school budgets with the member towns.

Kevin Cormier reported that the District appears to have received additional regional transportation reimbursement, which will flow through the regional transportation fund to support FY28 by covering current-year transportation expenses. He noted that a proposed amendment for approximately \$112–\$118 in additional per-pupil aid was under consideration but not yet approved. Superintendent Morgan indicated that a decision on the additional per-pupil funding was expected by the end of the month, and the Subcommittee agreed to revisit funding levels once final figures are known.

Superintendent Morgan reported that the District is generally well-positioned for staffing but is experiencing increasing difficulty hiring paraprofessionals, custodial and maintenance staff, and administrative support staff, and remains comparatively better positioned for teaching positions. He stated that the District aims to remain competitive with compensation during upcoming contract negotiations to retain current staff and attract new hires.

Superintendent Morgan reported that the District is not at its target "optimum" average class size of 21–22 students, particularly given the district's special education needs, with current averages in the mid-20s and grades 7–8 remaining the most challenging. He explained that grades 7–8 operate on a team model with four content-area teachers per team, and that significantly reducing class size at this level would likely require adding a full additional team per building — approximately eight positions district-wide — with an estimated budget impact of close to \$1 million. Grades K–6 class sizes were described as generally more acceptable.

Superintendent Morgan noted that changing the grade 7–8 team model could theoretically reduce class sizes with fewer staff additions but would be a structurally significant change and place the District in the statewide minority; this option is not currently being pursued. At the high school level, class size is partially managed through course leveling and teachers instructing multiple grade levels, and a recently hired dual-certified English/Social Studies teacher is expected to help reduce 9th and 10th grade class sizes in those subjects.

Both middle schools were given flexibility to address grade 7–8 class size concerns for the upcoming year within existing budget constraints, working with their seventh and eighth grade teams to adjust schedules and structures. Use of additional paraprofessional support was noted as limited by the need to cover multiple classrooms and content areas and by a limited pool of paraprofessionals able to work at the middle and high school levels.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Revolving Funds

Kym Craven requested a more detailed view of the District's revolving funds, including clearer linkage between summary tables and underlying account sheets, and a better explanation of balance growth over several years. She noted that projected revolving fund balances in the original budget message were approximately \$6.7 million, while more recent figures showed approximately \$7.8 million, excluding school activity funds, and that columns and sheets in the current workbook were not dynamically linked, making balances and flows difficult to track.

Kevin Cormier explained that FY26 balances in the working spreadsheet were manually entered from the district's accounting system and not linked to detail tabs, that the sheet had recently been re-ordered by fund number resulting in a mismatch with a prior version Ms. Craven had been using, and that the workbook was created primarily as an internal reference tool rather than a final public-facing document. He noted that several individual revolving fund sheets are not current and that he intends to redesign them.

Kym Craven suggested grouping student-centric revolving funds (e.g., marching band, athletics) separately from building/operations-oriented funds (e.g., turf, parking, food service), and drew attention to the growth in balances reflected in certain summary lines from approximately \$3.7 million in FY22 to approximately \$7.8 million in FY26, and their relationship to insurance costs and upcoming collective bargaining obligations.

Superintendent Morgan stated that the District is considering school choice funds as a possible source to help support upcoming contract negotiations rather than relying solely on the operating budget. He noted that circuit breaker (Special Education reimbursement) funds must be approached cautiously, as placements and costs can shift quickly and the District's philosophy favors keeping students in the least restrictive environment and returning students in-district where possible. He stated that, absent a more favorable state funding formula, maintaining prudent reserves in key revolving accounts serves as a buffer given multiple collective bargaining agreements approaching in FY28. Kym Craven emphasized the importance of using revolving funds where appropriate to help mitigate pressure on municipal assessments as state relief becomes available.

Dr. Gary Burboa-Reese and Superintendent Morgan addressed questions regarding the before- and after-school care program, reporting that the program has generated a significant positive revolving fund balance. The District chose not to increase fees this year and is using program revenue to cover transaction fees charged to families, add staffing to support students with medical and special education needs, and is considering charging a portion of custodial costs to the fund to reflect actual usage. Administration noted that revenues must be used within the allowable

purposes of the revolving account and that some funds, such as extended day, cannot be used directly to reduce municipal assessments.

superintendent Morgan noted that staff members have expressed interest in reduced or subsidized before/after school care for their own children, which could improve the District's competitiveness as an employer and allow teachers to remain on campus longer for extra help or school activities. Superintendent Morgan stated that while some districts run before/after school programs internally and others contract with external providers, North Middlesex previously used a private provider but now runs the program internally.

NEXT MEETING

The Subcommittee discussed holding another Finance Subcommittee meeting in early September 2026, likely after Labor Day and tentatively around September 14, to review final FY26 closeout figures, provide an update on FY27 budget status including any confirmed additional state per-pupil aid, and revisit revolving funds planning. Michael LaBossiere indicated he would use a Doodle poll to determine a date and time that works for the majority of members.

ADJOURNMENT

➤ At 9:54 a.m., motion made by Qenan Francois to adjourn.

Seconded by Kym Craven

Roll Call Vote:

1. Qenan Francois – Yes
2. Michael LaBossiere – Yes
3. Kym Craven – Yes

Outcome: The motion unanimously passed, 3-0

Documents Reviewed / Referred to:

- 2026-08-10-Finance Agenda
- 2026-04-23-Finance DRAFT Minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: September 14, 2026
