

**MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**January 26, 2023 - 7:00 pm**  
**Medfield High School Lowell Mason Auditorium**

**PRESENT:** Anna Mae O’Shea Brooke - Chair  
Timothy Knight - Vice Chair  
Jessica Reilly - Recording Secretary  
Michelle Kirkby - Financial Secretary  
Leo Brehm - Member at Large

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools  
Michael LaFrancesca - Director of Finance and Operations  
Andrea Moores - Secretary  
Lily Keefe - Student Representative

The Chair opened the FY24 Public Hearing at 7:00 pm with a Roll Call:

- Timothy Knight - present
- Jessica Reilly - present
- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Leo Brehm - present
- Anna Mae O’Shea Brooke - present

**Public Hearing – FY 2024 School Budget - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden presented the FY24 School Budget to the School Committee and the FY23 Budget Presentation covered the following topics:

- Important Background Information
- Important Budget Terms
- Medfield Public Schools Mission Statement
- FY24 Budget Process To Date
- FY24 Budget Assumptions
- FY24 Budget Drivers
  - Instructional/Personnel Costs
  - Utilities
  - Transportation
  - Special Education
  - Professional Development
  - Technology
- FY24 Funding Sources
  - Chapter 70 Aid
  - Local Contributions
  - Grants/Tuitions Fees
- FY24 Analysis
- Going Forward
- Proposed Dale Street Capital Expenses

The School Committee shared the following feedback on the FY24 School Budget Presentation.

Ms. Reilly asked Dr. Marsden to clarify the reduction of \$82,197 in student services. Dr. Marsden that this is the recommended budget as of today and expects adjustments to be made as changes occur within the

special education budget as it happens each year. Ms. Reilly noted that out of district tuition will be increased by 14% which will impact the district budget. Dr. Marsden explained that Massachusetts Superintendents are working with Governor Healey to hopefully have a one time allotment in her budget to offset the impact of the 14% increase.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked Dr. Marsden to clarify the main drivers used to reduce the budget increase from 5.65% to 4.98%. Dr. Marsden explained that Special Education was the main driver along with other reductions including staffing and moving some technology items to capital. The initial budget presented did not have expenses level funded and now most of the expenses are level funded. He also explained that once student course enrollment is completed at the high school more information will be available on staffing and enrollment at the high school. Retirements are reflected in this budget.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked what steps would be needed in order to explore the idea of instituting bus fees. Dr. Marsden explained the first step would include running a few scenarios based on elementary student proximity to the schools to fully understand the cost and revenue. Once that is established an informational public forum would be held for parents/guardians.

Ms. Reilly asked if bus fees would sustain the late bus program. Dr. Marsden explained that in FY26 (grant funded in FY25) bus fees will need to be required in order to continue the late bus program. This program could be a part of the bus fees or added to the bus contract and be absorbed by the operating budget.

Ms. Kirkby asked for clarification on the additional preschool classroom. Dr. Marsden explained that a four, full day preschool program will be located on the first floor of the Wheelock School. This classroom will hold fifteen students, seven special education students and eight general education students.

Mr. Knight asked if there was an estimated revenue amount for instituting the bus fees. Dr. Marsden explained that it would become clearer after the process of mapping out where students reside in order to determine the fees.

Mr. Knight was in support of Instructional Coaches and asked if these positions could be piloted. Dr. Marsden explained that it could be done but there would be a cost associated to do so and something would need to be reallocated in budget.

Ms. Kirkby asked if a DEI Director could be shared with either the ACCEPT or TEC Collaborative and if so would that expense come out of the collaborative budget. Dr. Marsden explained that the cost would either be allocated to the District's operating budget or if the collaborative has funds available over what their budget those funds are given back to the District and could be rolled toward a position. A new Director has been hired for the TEC Collaborative and would potentially be open to exploring a shared DEI Director model.

**Ms. O'Shea Brooke opened the Public Hearing to public comment:**

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked how many people were attending the meeting via Zoom. She asked if there would be an additional cost to the District from the Massachusetts of School Committee Association (MASC) policy project since the District has already paid for this project and the manual is not complete. Dr. Marsden explained that there is no additional cost. Ms. Reilly stated that a flat fee was paid over a three year period and there is no additional cost. Ms. Potts noted that the contract has an end date that has passed. Mr. Knight explained that due to the pandemic the Committee's focus was shifted as a result and MASC was also impacted by the pandemic. A process to complete the manual has been laid out by MASC Representative Jim Hardy, which is more obtainable and no additional costs will be incurred by the District for the completion of the project.

Ms. Potts questioned the costs associated with the addition of a preschool classroom. She stated that during the Dale Street project suggestions had been made by the Community to move grades to other

buildings and the response given was that buildings weren't suited for certain grades. She wanted to know why Wheelock can support a preschool classroom and if renovations need to be made where that is reflected in the budget. She suggested the District look closely at the waitlist before proceeding with a new preschool program. Dr. Marsden explained that Wheelock was once a neighborhood school and a classroom designed for a Kindergarten class will be used and no facility upgrades are needed. The main cost for the program will be staffing. The District is looking at those projections in order to determine the tuition. Dr. Marsden also explained that Memorial Principal Melissa Bilsborough has done the required parent outreach to support adding this program.

Ms. Potts asked for clarification on the \$4000 increase to the Dale Street Foreign Language budget. Mr. La Francesca stated that the budget increase is to support a change of the mandarin curriculum.

Christian Donner, 92 Green Street, joined the meeting remotely and asked for clarification on the increase of 3.5 teaching positions to be funded by the ESSER III Grant. Dr. Marsden explained that those positions were previously funded by the ESSER III Grant and now being funded by the operating budget.

### **The Chair closed the public comment portion for the FY24 School Budget Public Hearing.**

A motion was made by Ms. Reilly, seconded by Mr. Knight to close the FY24 School Budget Public Hearing.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

A motion was made by Ms. Reilly, seconded by Mr. Brehm to accept the Superintendent's proposed FY24 School Budget as the Medfield School Committee School Budget for FY24.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The Chair called the regular session to order at 8:15 pm and took a Roll Call:

- Timothy Knight - present
- Jessica Reilly - present
- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Leo Brehm - present
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - present

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none at this time.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

A motion was made by Ms. Kirkby, seconded by Mr. Brehm to approve the Regular Session minutes from 1/12/2023.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**Policy Subcommittee Minutes from 11/29/2022** - Ms. O'Shea Brooke informed the Committee that the Policy Subcommittee minutes will be approved at the next Policy Subcommittee meeting and brought back to a regular meeting as an informational item.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**School Committee Finance/Budget Liaison - Potential Vote - presented by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke**

Ms. O'Shea Brooke put forth Ms. Kirby to serve as the Financial Liaison for the FY24 School Budget to work with Dr. Marsden and the Warrant Committee.

A motion was made by Ms. Reilly, seconded by Mr. Brehm to appoint Ms. Michelle Kirkby at the School Committee Financial Liaison to the Warrant Committee for the School Committee for the FY24 School Budget.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

### **2023- 2024 School Year Calendar - 1<sup>st</sup> Draft - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden shared the first draft of the 2023-2024 District Calendar with the Committee. He informed the Committee that conference days have been added for the middle and high school in October and March. A committee at the high school and the middle school has been formed to develop the structure, logistics, and implementation of the conferences.

Ms. Kirkby asked who develops the first draft of the calendar and why aren't the high school and middle conference days not scheduled for the same days. Dr. Marsden explained that the Leadership Team works on the calendar and the conference days are split so families with students at each school can participate in conferences at both schools. She also made the suggestion to color code the middle and high school conferences on the calendar an alternate color to differentiate them from the elementary school conference days.

The addition of the conference days for high school and middle school was well received by all members of the Committee. Ms. O'Shea Brooke expressed her gratitude to the teachers in the District for agreeing to offer this opportunity for parents and guardians.

### **PreK-12 English Language Arts (ELA) Evaluation - presented by Ms. Christine Power & Ms. Mary Bruhl**

Ms. Power and Ms. Bruhl were in attendance and provided an overview of the PreK-12 ELA evaluation currently in process to the Committee. Dyslexia guidance, new instructional approaches during COVID, new literacy screeners in the district, and the science of reading determined the need for this evaluation. The District partnered with Dr. Catherine Ullman Shade who has a PhD in Child Development and MED in Language and Literacy. Dr. Shade has 20 years of experience working with learners ages 3-22 as a teacher, curriculum designer, instructional coach, academic evaluator, professional development provider, and hospital/school liaison and consults with school districts around the state surrounding best practices of literacy instruction.

The evaluation consists of the following components:

- Instructional Leader Meetings to learn about instructional practices and school culture
- Focus Groups with a representative group of educators in each grade range/instructional role
- Classroom Observations
- Surveys
- Parent Meetings - Parent Forum and parent follow up with key findings and next steps
- Evaluation Timeline

### **K-12 Curriculum Update - presented by Ms. Christine Power**

Ms. Power provided an update on the following curriculum initiatives happening throughout the District:

- Math Pilot
- Curriculum Bias Review
- NEASC Curriculum Mapping
- Data Dashboard
- Grading and Assessment Alignment

- Data Teaming
- Advance Placement Review
- Collaborative Fellows Grant
- AI Tools/ChatGPT

**Westborough Public Schools Admittance to the ACCEPT Collaborative - Vote - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

The Westborough Public Schools is requesting admittance to the ACCEPT Collaborative. Dr. Marsden asked the Committee to approve their membership to ACCEPT.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Reilly to approve the Westborough Public Schools admittance to the ACCEPT Collaborative.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**Reschedule February 9<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting - Vote - presented by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke**

Ms. O'Shea Brooke explained that there was a scheduling conflict for the members of the School Committee and would like to reschedule the February 9 meeting to February 13.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirby to to reschedule the Thursday, February 9 meeting to Monday, February 13.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**Other items since posting on January 24, 2023**

There were none at this time.

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that he received an email to schedule the first meeting of the new School Building Committee.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Community Engagement and Communication - Update - presented by Ms. Michelle Kirkby and Mr. Timothy Knight**

Mr. Knight and Mr. Brehm gave a brief update on the virtual informal School Committee conversation that was held on January 18, 2023. The main topics of discussion were the Appeal of Superintendent's decision on the library books, policies, and faculty use of social media. There were about 6-8 people on the Zoom and the Committee felt it was worthwhile to continue. The Committee discussed the possibility of having a faculty member attend in the future. The Committee will schedule additional dates.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke reported that she attended the Dale PTO meeting, and shared her positive experience with the Committee.

**Medfield School Committee Policy - Vote - Draft Proposed BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings/Draft Proposed BEDH - E - Guidelines for Public Comment - presented by Mr. Timothy Knight**

Mr. Knight presented the proposed policies for the Committee. He informed the Committee that a revision was made to policy BEDH-E- Guidelines for Public Comment. The revision added the words Superintendent of Schools to the language in the policy where it states the Chair is to be notified in writing at least two weeks prior to the date of a meeting in order to be placed on the agenda for the meeting. The Committee had a discussion on this revision and decided to remove the Superintendent of Schools from the language.

Ms. Reilly shared her concerns with the Committee regarding policy BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings to allow individuals to request from the floor to open up public comments prior to a vote. She shared her concern that this language in the policy removes the Chair's judgment when to open public comment during a meeting. Ms. Reilly stated that she would be more comfortable with the policy if it read the Chair is strongly encouraged but not mandated to take public comment from the floor.

The Committee engaged in a lengthy discussion about Ms. Reilly's concerns. Ms. O'Shea Brooke stated that she was in support of the changes. She felt that it is important to listen to additional comments prior to a vote and felt that in her experience the Committee has not been derailed by listening to public comment prior to a vote. Mr. Timothy Knight reiterated the drivers that led to the revision of Policy BEDH.

Ms. Reilly requested that the Committee consider releasing public input emails received by the Committee to the public. The Chair stated that the Committee is not ready to delve into this at this time and guidance from the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's would be beneficial on this matter.

The Chair suggested revising the language to Policy BEDH and to postpone the vote until the next meeting. Ms. Reilly recommended bringing the policy to a vote if the four members of the Committee felt differently then she did.

#### **The Chair opened the meeting to public input on policy BEDH**

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, was in agreement with the idea to add a consent agenda to future meeting agendas. She stated that if a School Committee doesn't follow its own policies there are no repercussions for the Committee unless the policy is based on a law. Ms. Potts was in support of the new changes made to the policy.

A motion was made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Brehm to approve Policy BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings as written.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **The Chair opened the meeting to public input policy BEDH-E:**

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked the Committee if Policy BEDH- E still allows the Superintendent of Schools to dictate what's on the School Committee Agenda and where and how it appears. She specifically referenced the language in the policy that states together they will determine whether or not to place an item on the agenda and if the item is to be taken up they will also determine when to place an item on the agenda and all parameters to be required of the presenter. Ms. Potts shared her belief that this particular statement is the role of the School Committee Chair and that is also what the MASC policy specifically states. She stated her belief that a School Committee Chair should have full discretion whether an agenda item is on or not on an agenda and the decision should not be made by a Superintendent.

Mr. Knight stated that the Committee is using the MASC policy as well as adhering to its own policies. The Committee was in agreement that the Chair and Superintendent work collaboratively on meeting agendas.

A motion was made by Mr. Leo Brehm, seconded by to approve Policy BEDH - E Guidelines for Public Comment as amended with striking the word Superintendent.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Strategic Plan - Timeline/Recap - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that Phase 1, collection of documents and review, is scheduled to begin in April of 2023. Phase 2, meetings and focus groups, and Phase 3, writing of the plan, will be complete by the end of June 2023.

### **Donations - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden asked the Committee to approve the following donations:

- \$15,000 from the Medfield Foundation to the District Gift Account (Interface Membership)
- \$2682.32 from Grynn and Barrett to the Blake Middle School Gift Account

A motion was made by Ms. Kirkby, seconded by Mr. Brehm to approve the donations as presented by Dr. Marsden.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### **TEC FY2022 Annual Report**

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee the FY24 TEC Annual Report was included in their meeting materials for review.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Results (February 13, 2023)


### **Next Meeting – Monday, February 13, 2023**

A motion was made by Ms. Reilly, seconded by Ms. Kirby to adjourn the meeting.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 pm.

### **EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS**

- 1/26/2023 Meeting Narrative
- FY24 Budget School Committee Presentation 1/26/2023
- DRAFT 1/12/2023 School Committee Meeting Minutes
- DRAFT 2023-2024 District Calendar 1/26/2023
- PreK-12 English Language Arts Evaluation
- Westborough Public Schools request for ACCEPT Membership
- DRAFT BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings 1/26/2023
- DRAFT BEDH-E - Guidelines for Public Comment 1/26/2023
- Teaching and Learning Alliance Presentation to the School Committee 11/17/22
- Donations 1/26/2023
- School Committee Meeting Video:  School Committee Meeting (01-26-2023)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Andrea Moores  
Secretary

**Minutes Approved by School Committee: February 13, 2023**