

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Tuesday, March 5, 2019
Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, MA 01507, at 6 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Mary N. Antocci, Vice Chair
Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Cathleen Carmignani
Catherine M. Kabala
Elaine M. Rabbitt
Stephanie A. Reed at 6:07 p.m.
Jamie L. Terry

Celeidgh O'Brien, Student Representative

Also in attendance were Kristine E. Nash, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; district administrators: Karen A. Ares, William F. Chaplin, Jennifer A. Desto, Barbara A. Marderosian, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Diane Seibold, Christopher E. Starczewski; Kevin Foley, Mary Solomita, Glenn Koocher, MASC; Stefan Sage; media representatives Rich Earle, audio-visual coordinator, Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Budget Presentation Session, Wednesday, February 6, 2019

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the Budget Session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019, was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019, was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of Budget Presentation Session, Thursday, February 7, 2019

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by E. Rabbitt to approve the minutes of the Budget Session of Thursday, February 7, 2019, was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 13, 2019

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by C. Kabala, to approve the minutes of the school committee meeting of Wednesday, February 13, 2019, was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, February 13, 2019

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, February 13, 2019, was approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of Warrants

Subcommittee Warrants #94 and #95 were distributed among the members for signatures without further comment or questions.

Warrant #	Amount
#94	\$174,036.15
#95	\$75.00
Total	\$174,111.15

V. Citizens' Forum

No one spoke at this time.

VI. Communication

Mrs. Terry said she was asked by the director of the Charlton Health Department if Dudley-Charlton would consider installing vaping sensors in Shepherd Hill bathrooms. Mrs. Terry said Bay Path uses the sensor to prohibit vaping. The sensor sets off a ring to the office. She said this is one more tool for schools to use to combat the incidents of vaping.

Mrs. Aucoin said the district will look into this device.

Mrs. Antocci presented information about the district's ability to access the Georgia Tech *Robotarium*. On a recent college visit with her daughter, Mrs. Antocci learned about this \$2.5 million facility at the campus. Middle school and high school students can write code and upload it to the university to gain access to the site to watch the robots in action, and to test and research how they work. This opportunity is free.

VII. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Nash had no report this evening.

VIII. Student Representative Report – Ceilidh O'Brien

Miss O'Brien reported on many upcoming activities at Shepherd Hill Regional High School and other schools in the district beginning with a learning showcase of student work and an opportunity to meet the teachers on March 28. Dudley Middle School will host a showing of *Screenagers* on April 22. The film highlights how students are faring in the digital age.

Shepherd Hill students drew honorable mention in recent Scholastic Art competitions.

All Shepherd Hill winter sports team athletes qualified for academic awards.

IX. New Business

A. Director of Finance and Operations Report (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Mathieu has no report this evening.

B. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report (*Vote May be Required*)

Mrs. Rabbitt said the subcommittee met Feb. 25 to discuss the possibility of securing a capital plan study. One of the vendors who presented a proposal to Dr. Nash and Mr. Mathieu is willing to do a presentation to the school committee. Mrs. Rabbitt said the quoted price for a comprehensive study of the district's facilities is surprisingly affordable and can be funded by the e-rate reimbursements. The subcommittee recommends the full committee consider this proposal.

Other topics include the ongoing FY 20 budget and the proposal to join a health insurance joint purchasing group.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked the committee to consider investigating the comprehensive study, which will look at more than facilities, but offer future projections about grade flow and building usage over time. The study would determine how the space can best be used demographically, by predicting trends.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by M. Antocci to invite one of the vendors to discuss a comprehensive study, and this was approved by unanimous vote.

She noted Mr. Mathieu would need to create an RFQ based on this expenditure. The full committee will need to vote to go forward.

C. Vote Preliminary FY 2020 Budget (*Vote Required*)

Dr. Nash presented a compilation of all the information presented by administrators throughout this budget process. She said inroads have been made in meeting the goal of the district's Strategic Plan, which is to provide the challenges of the seven key competencies of a Shepherd Hill Regional High School graduate: technological literacy, critical thinking and problem solving, empathy, resilience, initiative and self-direction, communication and collaboration.

In addition, the FY20 budget continues to set as priorities of curriculum and instruction - adequate class size, adequate funding to implement district initiatives and programs such as project based learning, and social-emotional learning.

The operations and management side of the budget strives to meet contractual obligations, manage health insurance obligations, maintain the safety and security of students and staff (a second nurse at Shepherd Hill), while improving efficiencies at Central Office (software, MARS study), and district facilities.

Dr. Nash outlined the three key impacts of the \$3 million override approved by voters in the Spring of 2018, which will be felt in fiscal years 2019 and 2020: 1. level services, technology integration and school adjustment counselors. Dr. Nash said our challenge is to sustain that. 2. Move forward in sustaining; 3. start to spend \$1 million on infrastructure upgrades in technology. Dr. Nash said the override was not intended as a permanent fix to the district's finances. She said a 3-4 % increase in assessments is necessary to maintain what we have. But that is not a reality. Dr. Nash said given the state's funding mechanism, the district needs \$1.2 and 1.5 to maintain services. She said the district is \$600,000 short of this mark.

Mr. Mathieu said this provides a good introduction to state aid. The district will see a \$73,380 increase in Chapter 70 monies, and a \$38,307 increase in regional transportation for a total of \$111,687 increase. Mr. Mathieu said while this is a good revenue increase, it is far short of the needed \$1.2 million.

The district has the option of relying on the taxpayers, or funding from other sources: \$1 million from Excess and Deficiency; \$890,000 from School Choice; \$110,684 from the transportation revolving account; \$69,533 from capital reserves/donations (fields project); and \$200,000 from Medicaid.

Other offsets are from fees, grants, tuitions, e-rate reimbursement, and the cafeteria revolving account.

The operating budget has increased while the capital budget is reduced by the removal of the costs of the middle schools construction, and renovations/additions to elementary schools. The district's total expenses have decreases, thereby reducing assessments.

At the outset of the budget process, Dr. Nash spoke about the FY 20 budget assumptions. She said when you build a budget you make assumptions about unknowns. Any changes of the unknowns to the positive equals more funds to use. These include E& D, School Choice, Circuit Breaker, salary increases, MARS report results, and more.

Unknowns include increases for all personnel, unemployment costs, new special education tuitions and/or services, group insurance change, and a possible retirement incentive.

Dr. Nash offered a brief overview of the district's special education program. There are 647 in district students; 8 sub separate programs, and 33 students in out of district programs. These will change in the future. The committee has discussed adding a sub separate program at Dudley Elementary School and Dudley Middle School.

Throughout the budgeting process, Dr. Nash and Special Education Director Lorinda Allen have reviewed instructional assistant staffing. There are presently 72.1 assistants in the three categories of general grade level, substantially separate programs, and student assigned.

The major expense categories in special education are tuitions, transportation, and contracted services. Revenues include circuit breaker, and the IDEA federal grant.

Enrollment data shows a total decrease in enrollment of -134 from the 2017-2018 school year. Grades 2-4 saw a total decrease of 54 students (-21 in grade 3). Grade 8 decreased by 28. Dr. Nash said this has an impact in capital planning when you look long range.

At the high school, there are 28 fewer students in grade 12.

Class size projections are good, even enviable, with Mason Road School Kindergarten at 23 students next year.

Dr. Nash said the aims of the FY 20 budget are to meet compliance issues and special education IEPs, address safety and health issues (personnel), address scheduling and strategic plan (foreign language at middle schools). Not all goals have been met at this point.

Budgeted positions include an ELL teacher, 2.0 sped instructional assistants, a full time nurse at Shepherd Hill. Positions covered in the special education reorganization include a behavioral analyst, a high school instructional assistant job coach, and a high school special education teacher.

What has not been budgeted has been ranked in terms of priority: Charlton Elementary School Kindergarten assistant, 2.0 foreign language teachers at middle schools, library instructional assistants, guidance counselor, health/PE teacher at Dudley Middle School, 1.0 athletic Director at Shepherd Hill, 1.0 FTE custodian at Shepherd Hill.

Reorganized positions: Special education Team chairs to become Administrative Team Coordinators, general special education instructional assistants, transferring a kindergarten teacher from Mason Road School to Charlton Elementary School; Dudley Middle School ACES facilitator to a computer teacher; Charlton Elementary School, Heritage School, Mason Road School, Dudley Elementary School will share two elementary library positions that will be paid for by moving the funding of elementary lunch monitor positions to the cafeteria revolving account.

Dr. Nash said the FY 20 budget only adds two new staff to address safety or compliance; there is no new personnel to meet any goals identified in the strategic plan or to advance district curriculum or program initiatives.

Mr. Mathieu presented two recommendations:

#1 -pass the additional expense to the towns via assessments. This means the assessments for the operating portion of our budget have increased to the towns by a total of \$149,380, or an additional \$115,384 to Charlton, and \$33,996 to Dudley.

#2 – The district absorbs the additional expense. The expense budget is lowered by \$52,000 for two new special education instructional assistants paid for from circuit breaker. The district's use of E &D has been increased by the remaining \$97,380, leaving approximately \$300,000 before FY 19 closeout.

The end result is an increase to Charlton's assessment y \$37,004 more than the target, and the assessment for Dudley would be \$37,004 less than the target.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to follow Recommendation #2 was defeated by a vote of 2-5. Voting in favor of recommendation 2 were Mrs. Aucoin, and Mrs. Kabala. Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Carmignani, Mrs. Rabbitt, Mrs. Reed, and Mrs. Terry were opposed.

Mrs. Kabala said the school committee made a promise to the town that we would not increase assessments, and is in favor of reallocating the \$150,000.

Mrs. Terry said she preferred recommendation #1, as she said it is the school committee's job is to present this budget to the communities. She said this is not an exorbitant amount of money, and funds services to families. She said the committee has done everything to live within the confines of the budget for many years.

Mrs. Rabbitt agreed with Mrs. Terry, noting it is the responsible action is to go with Recommendation #1. She said she has tremendous concern sitting in budget and finance subcommittee meetings and having conversation about the excess and deficiency funds. Recommendation #2 leaves very little money in that account to handle emergencies. She cited the generator issue last year and the inability to move forward on roof repairs.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the committee is obligated to provide a number in advance for the towns to plan for. Mrs. Rabbitt said as our number become more solid, there could be recommendations of per pupil expenditure movement, there could be changes in revenues and state aid and the district could reduce the assessments to the towns. Mrs. Rabbitt said the Joint Finance Planning meeting is scheduled for March 20, and would provide the opportunity to inform the town. Mrs. Rabbitt reminded the committee that the override took 18 months of meetings and planning before it was passed, and the committee never told the towns that this was a permanent solution.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the committee has always relied on E&D and School Choice. She suggested following Recommendation #1 and having a conversation with towns. She said the committee can always go to Recommendation #2. There are assumptions about what towns can and cannot afford at this time.

Mr. Mathieu said the maximum amount that can be put in E&D is \$2.5 million. The district typically has \$1.5 million

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by J. Terry to move forward with Recommendation #1, and approve the preliminary FY 2020 budget as \$50,058,069, with assessments to Charlton of \$13,568,337, and to Dudley of \$8,851,840, was approved by a vote of 5-2. Voting in favor were Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Carmignani, Mrs. Rabbitt, Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Terry. Opposed were Mrs. Aucoin and Mrs. Kabala.

Mrs. Aucoin said the grand total of assessments is \$22,420,177.

D. Consideration to Appoint Superintendent of Schools (*Vote Required*)

Interviews were held Feb. 11 and February 26 with four finalists; Dr. Michael Whaley, Dr. Julia Carlson, Mr. Steven Lamarche, and Ms. Jennifer Haggerty. Mrs. Aucoin said the committee will hear all the information about from members who went on site visits to the finalists' districts, then Mrs. Antocci will share information from the reference checks before the floor is open for discussion.

Mr. Starczewski, Mrs. Terry and Mrs. Rabbitt shared observations from site visits.

Mrs. Rabbitt attended all four and noted the finalists' similar strengths, and unique skill sets

Mrs. Rabbitt said Dr. Whaley, Principal of Burrillville High School in Rhode Island, excelled in his ability to go into unstable environment and build unity among the administrative team. His colleagues describe him as always challenging always growing.

Dr. Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of the Fall River School District, was noted for the impact she has had in curriculum and instruction. Dr. Carlson identified the lack of cohesion in the Fall River curriculum, and worked to align the maps. She is a proponent of professional learning communities.

Ms. Haggerty earned good feedback from her colleagues in Erving, where she is Superintendent of Union 28. Ms. Haggerty is described as a team builder and collaborator.

Mr. Lamarche, Superintendent of Bourne Public Schools is described as having impressive budgeting skills, and is known by his administrative team as engaging, intense, and challenging.

Mrs. Antocci conducted reference checks among school psychologists, school committee members, community members and administrators. Dr. Whaley is known for bringing together diverse views. Ms. Haggerty is an organized, motivated, great leader. Dr. Carlton is described as an inspirational leader with an extensive background in special education. Mr. Lamarche leads by example. He is organized, an action taker, who works with state legislators, and is experienced in budgets.

Mrs. Aucoin opened the floor for discussion.

Mrs. Kabala thanked the members for their informative reports. She said her choice is Steven Lamarche as he is a sitting superintendent who lives in Massachusetts, and wants to be in Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. Mrs. Kabala said this is important. A big plus of his candidacy is his experience in capital projects.

Mrs. Reed said this is a very difficult decision. She said none of the candidates checked off every box, and her choice came down to Mr. Lamarche and Dr. Carlson. Mrs. Reed said while Dr. Carlson is not experienced as a superintendent, she does come with teaching and learning experience. Mrs. Reed said the district needs to keep moving forward, and Dr. Carlson is the one to lead.

Miss O'Brien said Dr. Carlson's energy and attitude reminded her and her fellow students of former Superintendent Gregg Desto.

Mrs. Antocci agreed with Mrs. Reed that her decision was between Mr. Lamarche and Dr. Carlson. She said this is a very difficult time in the district, and Mr. Lamarche's knowledge and experience in budgeting is critical. For this reason, Mr. Lamarche rose to the top for her.

Mrs. Aucoin said the district was fortunate to have received applications from solid candidates. She also is torn between two, Dr. Carlson, and Mr. Lamarche, and said either candidate would make fine superintendents. Mrs. Aucoin said with his experience as a sitting superintendent, Mr. Lamarche could hit the ground running. Mrs. Aucoin cited his strong special education background, and said Mr. Lamarche's willingness to relocate is a sign of his commitment to the position.

Mrs. Terry said she was prepared to put forth Julia Carlson as her choice, as she has many of the qualities she feels are important for the district. She agreed with Mrs. Antocci that Mr. Lamarche rounds out many of the things the district needs.

Mrs. Carmignani agreed with Mrs. Terry, and said she from the first interview, Mr. Lamarche wowed her, as he looked at the district's data, and offered suggestions. She said, however, that Dr. Carlson did the same. Mrs. Carmignani said she is also making the choice for her constituents, and feels the district needs a proven leader. Her vote was for Mr. Lamarche.

Mrs. Rabbitt said she is not conflicted, she is tortured. From paper, to first round interviews, to the site visit and final interview, all four have been strong candidates. She cited Mrs. Haggerty's budget experience, her state advocacy. Mrs. Rabbitt said in terms of procedures, Mr. Lamarche is the strongest. Dr. Whaley's trajectory from outlier ended strong as a finalist. Dr. Whaley addressed a difficult issue at his high school, and raised graduation rates. Mrs. Rabbitt said Dr. Carlson is innovative and creative, and could help the district move forward.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to appoint Steven Lamarche as the superintendent of schools, effective July 1, 2019, was approved by a vote of 5-2. Voting in favor were Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Aucoin, Mrs. Carmignani, Mrs. Kabala, Mrs. Terry. Opposed were Mrs. Rabbitt and Mrs. Reed.

Mrs. Aucoin entertained a motion to revote to get a unanimous vote on the appointment.

A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by M. Antocci to appoint Steven Lamarche as the superintendent of schools effective July 1, 2019, yielded the same results, 5 in favor, 2 opposed. Voting in favor were Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Aucoin, Mrs. Carmignani, Mrs. Kabala, Mrs. Terry. Opposed were Mrs. Rabbitt and Mrs. Reed.

Mrs. Rabbitt said she finds herself in a position similar to the appointment of Gregg Desto in 2014. She was one of two dissenting votes against his appointment. Mrs. Rabbitt said she needs her vote to be recorded this way as she felt this was a strong decision. As she pledged to Mr. Desto, Mrs. Rabbitt said she will be here to advocate for what is in the best interest of the district.

Mrs. Reed reiterated that her decision was between Mr. Lamarche and Dr. Carlson, and both have high and low points. She said she voted for the best candidate.

X. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings:

- Wednesday, March 13, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 27, 2019, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee:

- Tuesday, March 12, and Tuesday, March 26, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Policy Review Subcommittee:

- Wednesday, March 6, 2019, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 9 a.m.

XI. Future Agenda Items – Policy Review Subcommittee, FY 20 Budget, Shepherd Hill Program of Studies School Choice, Auditors Report, Capital, vaping alarm system, MARS report, home instruction, use of facilities,

XII. Executive Session: 3. “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if any open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares,”

Mrs. Aucoin entertained a motion to enter executive session to and to return to open session to adjourn, was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 8:39 p.m.

The committee returned to open session at 10:21 p.m.

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 10:21 p.m.

Items used for this meeting included:

<i>Revised agenda from 2/27/29 as Agenda for 3/5/19</i>	Minutes of the Budget Presentation Session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019 Minutes of Budget Presentation Session of Thursday, February 7, 2019 Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 13, 2019 Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019 Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, February 13, 2019	
<i>Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of January 29, 2019</i>	<i>FY 20 Budget Presentation</i>	<i>FY 20 Budget Message</i>

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary