

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Meeting of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee
Monday, January 9, 2023, 9:30 AM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Jeanne Costello was the only School Committee member in attendance, therefore, there was no official call to order. The meeting began at 9:32 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes (12/19/22)

Approval of the 12/19/22 minutes will be included in the next Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting on Monday 1/23/23.

3. FY24 Budget Discussion

Director of Finance and Operations, Richard Mathieu presented the latest update of the FY24 Budget.

Entering FY24, the Dudley Charlton Regional School District is looking to the override in Dudley to help sustain a minimal budget increase of 3% annually. However, with the current price increases across the District (*Special Education and Big Yellow Bus transportation, out of district tuition loans, contractual obligations and personnel requests, employee benefits – Worcester Regional Retirement and health insurance, utilities, and an IT Replacement Plan including a 4 year lease for 500 computers and operating system updates*), where we sit today, we are looking at an 8.5%-9% budgetary increase, which translates to a \$2 million plus assessment to both communities. There is concern that both Dudley and Charlton cannot support an increase that significant, although the cost increases are unavoidable. Initial conversations with both Dudley and Charlton, as well as School Committee, will include the full budget request.

Superintendent Lamarche spoke with School Committee Chair, Cathleen Carmignani, and would like to invite the Board of Selectmen from Dudley and Charlton to the Wednesday, January 25, 2023 DCRSD School Committee meeting for an All Boards/Committee meeting *Called to Order* by DCRSD School Committee Chair Carmignani. In addition, representation from the Finance, Appropriation and Advisory Committee, Finance Committee and other town financial leaders are welcomed. The Town of Dudley and the Dudley-Charlton RSD commissioned the Abrahams Group to provide a fiscal framework for a municipal and DCRSD override. The Abrahams Group presented to the Dudley Board of Selectmen and the intent is to have the Abrahams Group present their findings at the January 25, 2023 Joint Meeting.

Jeanne Costello asked to clarify the additional \$380K expenses for new personnel. A very small component of that is replacing personnel, one new position in Special Education, an additional administrative position, a part time position in the District office, two teaching positions for the

middle schools or librarian and a part time IT position. All these personnel positions are a need within the District and help ensure we are in compliance with Federal regulations.

Superintendent Lamarche spoke to the impact to DCSR if the override does not go through and it would be a roughly \$2.7 million reduction from what we currently have budgeted as a District. A similar exercise was done in 2020 when the District was faced with a 10-20% reduction in the budget and many of the items identified from May 2020 have already been reduced, leaving additional cuts in 2023 to be focused on programs and personnel.

Jeanne Costello questioned the roles of the liaisons to the Board of Selectmen for Charlton (C. Panczyk) and Dudley (K. Szela) and would like to address with Chair Carmignani on the current status of those roles.

Director of Finance and Operations, Richard Mathieu stated that we should be on track to hold our Public Hearing at the second School Committee meeting in March with state numbers.

4. Future Agenda Items

The next Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for January 23rd at 1:00 PM and will focus on continued conversations regarding the FY24 budget and approval of the 12/19/22 and 1/9/23 minutes.

5. Adjourn

With no official call to adjourn the meeting, the meeting did come to an end at 10:16 AM.