



# Georgetown School Committee School Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 29, 2024

## Meeting Minutes

51 North Street  
Georgetown, MA 01833  
(978) 352-5777

**Approved 3-14-2024**

**Michael Hinchliffe, Chairman**  
**Cheryl Lachendro, Vice Chair**  
**Lauren King, Clerk**  
**John Cancellara**  
**Stacy McMaster**

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**Attendance:**

Cheryl Lachendro

Dr. Margaret Ferrick

Stacy McMaster

Mike Cassidy

Michael Hinchliffe

Lauren King

Absent: John Cancellara

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**1. Call to Order:**

Michael Hinchliffe called the School Committee Meeting to order at 7:40PM

**2. Consent Agenda**

**Motion to approve School Committee Meeting Minutes of 2-8-2024, Governance Meeting Minutes of 1-29-2024 & 2-5-2024, Budget & Finance Meeting Minutes of 2-22-2024 and Negotiations Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 1-23-2024, 1-31-2024 and 2-16-2024.**

**No objections, motion carried.**

**3. Report from the Student Representative - N/A**

**4. Report of the Superintendent**

a. Spotlight on Excellence - N/A

b. Report of Progress -N/A

c. Information for the School Committee - N/A

**5. Financial Report - Mike Cassidy**

a. Quarterly budget report - N/A

i. Local Budget - N/A

- ii. Revolving Accounts - N/A
- iii. Grants - N/A
- b. Line Item Transfers - N/A

**6. Subcommittee/Liaison Committee Reports**

- a. Negotiations

**7. New Business -**

- a. Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting

**8. Unfinished Business**

**a. Budget Discussion**

Michael Hinchliffe explained that this meeting is to deliberate the budget, not to vote on it. He then asked Mike Cassidy to clarify some info:

**Special Education Director of Student Services Salary: (Line Item 9)**

Mike Cassidy explained that this salary amount is also for the Special Education Coordinators for Penn Brook & GMHS along with the Director of Student Services.

**Line 7, Salary Adjustments:**

Mike Cassidy explained that this money is set aside for contract negotiations. There will be a significant transfer of funds once the budget is settled. Michael Hinchliffe explained that there is an October 1 deadline to transfer that amount into individual accounts.

Lauren King asked about the Director of Student Services account. Mike Cassidy explained that this replenishes this account back to where it was. This position is covered now by an interim part-time person.

**Sub Pay Line #16 & #18:**

Mike These line items are based on actual expenditures. This line has always been underfunded. Mike Cassidy spoke about long term sub positions and the cost associated with it.

**Maintenance Line Item #141: Increased by 36%.**

Michael Hinchliffe and Mike Cassidy discussed transfers and adjustments. Mike Cassidy stated that there will be budget transfers at the March 14, 2024 meeting.

Mike Cassidy discussed the movement of textbook money into district accounts.

Michael Hinchliffe asked Mike Cassidy to explain that 2 paraprofessionals are coming back into the budget and removing them from the revolving accounts.

Mike Cassidy explained some shifts in the schools with custodial work. He explained that there were adjustments to the retirement accounts. Mike Cassidy explained that there are some adjustments in salaries due to some staff retirements which would allow some savings for the district.

Stacy McMaster, School Committee Member, provided her thoughts.

Stacy mentioned that she has spent time with Dr. Ferrick and has already asked many questions. She likes that this was a zero based budget and really likes the small learning environment at the middle high school. That being said - there are some tweaks she recommends. Stacy feels that keeping special education at level services - she feels there needs to be something added. She feels special education needs more. She is also very concerned about the math intervention position being cut. Stacy said that from her own experience, she would like to learn more about the thought and vision of this. She spoke about class sizes and said that she is not sure she loves that idea and that it is hard to add back once it's gone. She likes the structure of the budget but thinks that they need to discuss some tweaks. She agrees that disrupting status quo is OK, but would like to fine tune the budget.

Cheryl Lachendro, School Committee Member stated that she has read through the budget. Cheryl said this budget is different than any budget she has ever been part of. She said that she hears what everyone has to say, but also needs to look at the district as a whole, and not only that of what affects her child. Cheryl agrees that seeing more of the vision, would help her and others understand the budget. Cheryl asked that we delve deeper into it. She always assumes best intentions. She asked that we all look at the big picture. Cheryl explained that the town has pushed back for years. She spoke about enrollment numbers dropping. Cheryl expressed that the School Committee has always supported keeping teachers but they need to look at the numbers.

Stacy McMaster spoke again and said that the town should see the declining enrollment numbers. Cheryl Lachendro explained that the numbers change from year to year. She said that when Penn Brook was built it was expected to have 5 classes per grade.

Michael Hinchliffe spoke and said that historically at the 8th/9th grade level some students choose to go to a private or vocational students. He said pre-covid there were 33 students at WVT and now we have 61. Michael spoke about WVT working with colleges and that they offer dual enrollment. Michael said that WVT is a strong competition for Georgetown. Some students that go to WVT go to college. All are not going into the

trades. Michael said that this an opportunity for Georgetown. Michael spoke about higher class sizes and explained that these are not higher than we had in the past. He spoke about how the district is dealing with behaviors. Michael spoke about how to address the concerns of behavior. Michael asked what tools are needed for teachers to deescalate students.

Cheryl Lachendro wanted to clarify that the Kindergarten classes will all have a paraprofessional in the classes. Dr. Ferrick answered YES.

Michael Hinchliffe spoke about what he hears from the town citizens. “The district is not what it was in the past”. He spoke about classes not being full. If students are not signing up for certain classes, is it beneficial to keep these classes if they are not full? He explained that the School Committee is responsible for the budget. He discussed offering online courses if possible for some electives. He spoke about the MCAS scores and expressed his concern. He agrees that something is not working. Michael stated that if we continue to do the same thing, we are going to get the same result. He discussed COVID, but explained that other districts have improved since, but Georgetown has not. He explained that his concern is that if this budget does not get approved he fears the School Committee will be having the same conversation in 5 years. He discussed briefly if the district were to become a regional district.

Cheryl Lachendro explained that if a district becomes regional, the town does not have control of their own destiny. She explained that this is not in the towns best interest. The district HAS NOT had any discussions regarding regionalization.

Lauren King discussed the items she does not agree with. She does not agree with having an HR Director or a 22% increase for the Business Director. She spoke about the budget being a 6% increase but still losing teachers. Lauren is not in favor of many aspects of this budget. She loves the idea of offering Mandarin, even if only a few students sign up.

Michael Hinchliffe explained that the 6.32% increase is dependent on the override. He explained that there is not a draft 2.5% increase budget document. Michael Hinchliffe explained that every year the School Committee asks for money and the answer is always NO. He is hoping the town will approve the additional \$600K.

Lauren King stated that it is important put the money in certain places. She spoke again about adding an HR director. She wants to allocate the funds for those who are in front of the kids instead.

Michael Hinchliffe stated that the need for an HR Director is because Tracy Parker took on the role of the HR Director and is not an HR Specialist. This position creates frameworks, rules, etc and eventually this role may go away once the frameworks have been created.

Michael Hinchliffe spoke briefly about WIN block.

Stacy McMaster discussed her role as parent vs. a School Committee Member. She spoke about WIN block. She agrees with a lot of the philosophical but wants to have further discussion. She is stuck on the math intervention cuts and keeping special education at a level services budget. She feels that math intervention will spill over into special education.

Cheryl Lachendro said that the entire School Committee supports and respects all of the teachers. Her son has had amazing experiences at Penn Brook. As a School Committee member she has to remove herself from other roles. Cheryl has been a teacher, and she is a parent. Everyone she has spoken to has said that the district needs change. She believes the teachers are great. She wants the teachers to know they are supported.

Michael Hinchliffe spoke about how much his children adore their teachers but he also said something is not working. He said he wants to see better MCAS scores. He wants better for his kids, and for all children in the district.

Lauren King agrees that there needs to be more money in the budget. She said her hiccup is that she feels the district is trading administrators for teachers.

Dr. Ferrick suggested that the School Committee collaborate. The next step is for the School Committee to vote on the budget. Dr. Ferrick explained that the School Committee votes on 3-14-2024, then the budget is presented to the FINCOM, then there is a meeting regarding the override. In theory, even if this budget stands, on May 6th this budget (with override) will be presented to the town. If at that time the town votes for an override, a week later that gets approved (or not). If this is not approved, the district starts over creating a new proposed budget.

Dr. Ferrick spoke about how hard the teachers work. She spoke about there being only 43 minutes per class at GMHS. She wants to provide the tools the teachers need to meet their goals. She said that if/when this budget goes through, there will be significantly less people cut than 11. She said that if anyone believes she does not value teachers, custodians, etc., than she is being misread.

Stacy McMaster asked about the process for questions. Michael Hinchliffe said to contact Mike Cassidy & Dr. Ferrick but include him as well since he is on Budget & Finance. Stacy McMaster mentioned following the laws about the communications between members of the School Committee.

Michael Hinchliffe stated that they will have a Budget & Finance Meeting before the next School Committee meeting.

**9. Public Comment: NONE**

*Pursuant to Georgetown School Committee policy BEDH, public comment is limited to 3 minutes per speaker, not to exceed 15 minutes in total, and the subject matter is limited to issues within school committee authority. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Georgetown School Committee.*

**10. Executive Session - N/A**

**11. Motion to adjourn at 8:50PM. Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. Stacy McMaster seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted By,

Tracy Parker  
School Committee Secretary

