



Georgetown School Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 8, 2024

Meeting Minutes

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

[Approved 2-29-2024](#)

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

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Attendance:

Cheryl Lachendro
John Cancellara
Stacy McMaster
Michael Hinchliffe
Lauren King

Dr. Margaret Ferrick

Hannah Stevens

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1. Call to Order: Michael Hinchliffe called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve School Committee Meeting Minutes of 1-25-2024 and Negotiations

Subcommittee Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 1-16-202 and School Committee

Executive Session Meeting Minutes of 1-22-2024

No objections. Motion carried.

3. Report from the Student Representative - Hannah Stevens

Hannah Stevens spoke about the second semester starting and the boys and girls basketball games and mentioned that Black History Month is going on now in the library.

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

c. FY25 Initial Budget Presentation

Margo Ferrick explained the start of the budget process. She spoke about how she prepared for the budget. She spoke about how hard it is to make reductions in staff. Margo Ferrick explained that staffing & professional development are the focus of this budget. She spoke about the collaboration with her leadership team and about the resources in the district. She spoke about the presentation of the budget documents. She believes that this presentation will help the public understand the budget better.

Margo Ferrick then presented a slide show which can be found in its entirety here:

<https://sites.google.com/georgetown.k12.ma.us/georgetownpublicschools/departments/budget-and-finance>

This presentation outlined the process. She spoke about the meeting with the leadership team and a potential override. These meetings included discussions about curriculum, scheduling and staffing ratios. This new budget includes strategic initiatives and high quality instruction.

The new budget has a focus on underfunded budget lines in the past. This budget is focused on new literacy, math & science curriculum, chromebooks, new servers & firewalls, and a new student support system (ASPEN). This new system has modules available for an extra cost for nursing and special education as well. This budget includes InForce911 (for emergencies) and the Open Architects Dashboard.

Margo Ferrick discussed the Chromebook Survey results. This information can be found in the presentation. She spoke about GoGuardian which is a Chromebook monitoring and teacher facilitator application that helps students learn safely, stay focused, and get engaged.

Margo Ferrick spoke about the new school models which increase time on learning. She stated that kids learn best in small learning environments. Shifts are being made to accommodate these models. A sense of belonging is a focus with these new models.

Margo Ferrick explained that the Perley PreK will now follow DESE guidelines and Penn Brook will be Early Elementary K-2 with its own special staff and the Upper model will have the same with academic support from the middle school staff. Some grades will have 22 students vs. 17. Some classes will have 23, some 21. There will be

paraprofessionals managing the student support center. Paraprofessionals will be managing prevention & student support. There will be two Assistant Principals, one for each model (K-2) (3-6). Kindergarten, Grade 1 & Grade 4 will lose a teacher with this model..

Margo Ferrick explained that the Middle School will have a change in schedule. This change will increase time on learning. Class sizes will not change for the middle school. (5 classes - approx 22 students per class). This new model will give the middle school their own identity. This will allow educators to become grade level experts in their content area. The High School average class size currently is 14. This new model will help students build better skills. There will be a reduction in the staff at the middle high school.

Margo Ferrick explained that this is the budget we need to support the students. This budget aligns with her entry plan.

Mike Cassidy joined the School Committee members. He presented a slide show on the budget & expenditures. (These slides are part of the budget presentation.) Budget information can be found here on the Georgetown Public Schools website. Please use this link to access information.

<https://sites.google.com/georgetown.k12.ma.us/georgetownpublicschools/departments/budget-and-finance>

Mike Cassidy spoke about Chapter 70 (state funding). There has not been a significant increase over the past years and is estimated to go up by \$35K this year. Mike spoke about grant revenues. These are also state grants that are very limited. He spoke about 4 additional competitive grants that were awarded to Georgetown. These are typically a one time grant that will not be available again next year.. This money needs to be spent by September 2024. These will not be recurring grants. Mike Cassidy spoke briefly about revolving accounts. Some of these accounts are self sustaining. These revolving account funds can not be shifted to support students.

Mike Cassidy spoke about the 3 budgets (priority, level service and a 3%) Tonight will focus on the estimated priority budget in the amount of \$19,655,473. This budget includes staff reductions.

Mike Cassidy explained “level service”. This includes staff salary & contractual obligations and estimated ODA (special education out of district) costs. The Level Service budget allows for no change from year to year (no new curriculum, equipment, etc). Georgetown has had a level service budget for years.

Mike Cassidy showed the budget summary slide & a comparison. 80% of the budget is salary & wages. Margo Ferrick explained that some curriculum costs are consumable.

Mike Cassidy discussed step increases and salary adjustments included in the budget along with projected out of district costs. This budget includes these new positions.

- BCBA
- Special Ed Team Chair
- 4 new paraprofessionals at Penn Brook
- Assistant principal at GMHS

Current position updates

- Technology Technician
- 2 paraprofessionals at Perley
- Assistant Principal at Penn Brook
- School Nurse or RN - Penn Brook/Perley

Mike Cassidy showed budget increases for substitutes, PD, athletics, high quality instruction, maintenance & district technology. There was a discussion regarding long term subs. This budget reflects actual historical expenses. This budget is transparent and shows what the district needs. It was explained that putting the money in the right budget lines decrease the need for transfers. Mike Cassidy stated that he is hopeful the lack of subs may improve for next year due to staff reductions across the state. He spoke about a recruitment strategy.

Mike Cassidy spoke about the athletics budget. He recommends that a season of stipends are absorbed by the budget. This will not decrease family costs.

Mike Cassidy spoke about technical support & a cyber security audit. He spoke about custodial equipment and the middle high school kiln.

Mike Cassidy spoke about the next process of the budget. He spoke about meeting with the bargaining units and the public hearing on 2/29. He also mentioned that the transportation number will be added to the budget once the bid closes.

Mike Cassidy did not have information to provide on the override.

Michael Hinchliffe stated that there will be more School Committee discussion after the public hearing on 2/29. The School Committee is having a special School Committee meeting at 6:30PM on 2/29. Both the hearing and the special meeting are open to the public.

Lauren King spoke about the 6 teachers at Penn Brook and 4 at the middle high school that will be cut. She mentioned that she thought the superintendent had already added more administrators to the district. Margo Ferrick explained that there was movement, but not all new positions. Margo Ferrick explained that the only addition was an Assistant Principal at Penn Brook. She spoke about the technology positions. Margo Ferrick

explained the technology changes. Lauren expressed her concern for the teacher cuts, and new administrators and new curriculum. Margo discussed getting the students and the teachers what they need is priority. She spoke about extra services for students and what is sustainable. Margo Ferrick explained that this budget did not start with cuts. Lauren King asked about the culture in the schools. Margo Ferrick explained that the Union Representatives have been made aware.

Margo Ferrick explained that chromebooks would be provided to all students. Potentially if the budget passed, IPADS would not be used next year. She explained that she has met with the Technology Committee and received guidance from them.

6. Subcommittee/Liaison Committee Reports

Negotiations

Michael Hinchliffe spoke briefly about the meetings and stated the next meeting is: and there will be an Executive Session after the next regular School Committee meeting to discuss proposals.

Governance

Stacy McMaster spoke about the 2 Governance meetings. These meetings focused on Section B of the policy manual.

7. New Business -

Motion: to approve the Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health and Wellness through Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (SEL & Mental Health Grant) in the amount of \$139,000.

Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.

Margo Ferrick discussed that she wrote this grant a few months ago. Penn Brook has been doing a pilot on this program. She spoke about Tier 1 and Tier 2 therapy in the schools. This cost would be absorbed through parent's insurance. The district received an extra 50K because they agreed to do a pilot. This money needs to be spent by June 30, 2024.

School Committee Policy Section B - First Read*

School Committee Public Comment Policy Samples*

Michael Hinchliffe mentioned that these policies are for the School Committee to read. The next meeting these policies will be voted on.

There were no objections to considering this the first read.

8. Unfinished Business - N/A

9. Public Comment: - N/A

10. Executive Session - N/A

11. Motion to adjourn at 7:50PM. Cheryl Lachendro moved the motion. John Cancellara seconded the motion. Vote taken. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Tracy Parker
School Committee Secretary