

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET REVIEW MEETING
HELD DODD MIDDLE SCHOOL ON JANUARY 21, 2025 AT 7:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair; Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Adam Grippio, Secretary; Anne Marie Cullinan; Timothy White

Board Members Absent: Mark Ecke; Anthony Perugini

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Robin-Anne Carey, Director, Pupil Personnel Services; Kelly Grippio, Principal, Dodd Middle School; Diana Burns, Principal, Chapman Elementary School; Kimberly Dessert, Principal, Darcey School; Scott Jeffrey, Principal, Highland Elementary School; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.

A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.

B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Ms. Rosenberg led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Dr. Solan called for a Moment of Silence for a high school student who passed away over the weekend from a terminal illness. Ms. Rosenberg passed the meeting to Dr. Harrigan who introduced Mr. Masciana.

2. AUDIENCE

None

**3. PUBLIC BUDGET REVIEW AND DISCUSSIN REGARDING
SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDED BUDGET.**

Mr. Masciana said tonight he hopes to cover Instructional Expense, including presentations on Special Education Services and Curriculum and Instruction, Support Services, and Maintenance and Operations.

		2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	(From BGT)	% dec
130	STAFF TRAINING	\$ 234,712	\$ 211,700	\$ 211,700	\$ 216,200	\$ 4,500	2.13%
323	PUPIL SERVICES	\$ 763,361	\$ 840,198	\$ 840,198	\$ 867,269	\$ 27,071	3.22%
560	TUITION OUTPLACEMENTS	\$ 2,494,367	\$ 2,627,214	\$ 2,627,214	\$ 2,842,750	\$ 215,536	8.20%
611	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLY	\$ 557,901	\$ 609,577	\$ 609,577	\$ 609,577	\$ -	0.00%
641	TEXTBOOKS/SOFTWARE	\$ 345,329	\$ 399,809	\$ 399,809	\$ 414,860	\$ 15,051	3.76%
642	LIBRARY/PERIODICALS	\$ 34,235	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 55,040	\$ 5,040	10.08%
643	CURRICULUM MATERIALS	\$ 1,952	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 31,500	\$ 1,500	5.00%
644	LIBRARY/MEDIA SUPPLIES	\$ 29,732	\$ 36,929	\$ 36,929	\$ 37,514	\$ 585	1.58%
645	TESTING SUPPLIES	\$ 25,104	\$ 75,790	\$ 75,790	\$ 80,345	\$ 4,555	6.01%
689	ADULT EDUCATION SUPPLIES	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
730	REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT	\$ 88,620	\$ 118,750	\$ 118,750	\$ 150,000	\$ 31,250	26.32%
731	NEW EQUIPMENT	\$ 67,528	\$ 118,750	\$ 118,750	\$ 150,000	\$ 31,250	26.32%
	INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENSE	\$ 4,642,861	\$ 5,118,717	\$ 5,118,717	\$ 5,455,055	\$ 336,338	6.57%

Mr. Masciana began his presentation with Instructional Expense. Instructional Expense accounts for 5.7% of the overall Budget. The requested budget is \$5,455,055, an increase of 6.57%. 64% of the Instructional Expense line is for Special Education Outplaced Tuition. He noted we have very few students out placed as compared to other districts of similar size. 11% of the request is for instructional supply, 8% is for Textbooks and then new and replacement is 6%.

Special Education

Mr. Masciana reviewed that this year, the total special education cost is \$22.3 million and they are requesting \$23.3 million for next year. The special education cost as a percentage of our budget is approximately 24%. About 16.1% of our students next year are projected to receive special education services.

Mr. Masciana introduced Pupil Personnel Director, Robin Anne Carey who gave a presentation on Special Education (on file). She reviewed the current programs and enhancements made over the last two years. Some challenges they face are a staffing shortage of not only paraeducators but also certified staff, due to the intensity of dysregulated students, and the increase of students with IEPs. Ms. Carey reviewed requests for this year, including a .5 FTE Counselor at Doolittle who has been supported through the ARPA grant which expires in 2026, and 2 Speech and Language Pathologists. She said although not in the budget request, their department would benefit from a Community Life Transportation Vehicle.

Curriculum

Mr. Masciana introduced Assistant Superintendent Silano who gave a presentation on Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Silano explained the different functions of Curriculum including Curriculum Development, Curriculum Implementation, Professional Development, Curriculum Resources, and Assessment (copy of presentation on file.) Ms. Silano also reviewed funding received from grants, and professional development. She reviewed the current curriculum staff and the request for a Grade 9-12 Science and Math Coordinator.

There was a great deal of discussion regarding the requested new position. Ms. Silano said it is the hope that this position would bring the same success to students in grades 9-12 as Mr. Hanlon has brought to grades K-8 position. She explained duties would include teacher evaluation, coaching, curriculum coordination, professional development, textbook selection, curriculum revision, curriculum implementation, data team meetings, keeping up to date with the latest research and best practices, collaborating on the curriculum middle to high, multilingual learners.

Mr. Masciana concluded his presentation on Instructional Expense noting it has remained consistent over the last few years.

Support Services, 8.5% of the Overall Budget.

		EXPENDED	BUDGET	PROJECTED	RECOMMENDED	CHANGE	% inc/ % dec
		2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	(From BGT)	
330	OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$ 980,230	\$ 900,124	\$ 900,124	\$ 930,850	\$ 30,726	3.41%
440	RENTALS/LEASES	\$ 252,423	\$ 317,050	\$ 317,050	\$ 319,950	\$ 2,900	0.91%
510	PUPIL TRANSPORTATION	\$ 3,762,108	\$ 4,056,719	\$ 4,056,719	\$ 4,388,369	\$ 331,650	8.18%
520	PROPERTY INSURANCE	\$ 119,729	\$ 133,310	\$ 133,310	\$ 139,980	\$ 6,670	5.00%
521	LIABILITY INSURANCE	\$ 132,104	\$ 148,615	\$ 148,615	\$ 156,053	\$ 7,438	5.00%
522	TRANSPORTATION INSURANCE	\$ 50,396	\$ 56,694	\$ 56,694	\$ 59,532	\$ 2,838	5.01%
530	TELEPHONE/INTERNET SERVICES	\$ 133,089	\$ 173,000	\$ 173,000	\$ 173,000	\$ -	0.00%
531	COMMUNICATIONS	\$ 19,970	\$ 42,587	\$ 42,587	\$ 42,587	\$ -	0.00%
580	TRAVEL/CONFERENCE	\$ 82,982	\$ 62,074	\$ 62,074	\$ 63,174	\$ 1,100	1.77%
590	OTHER SERVICES	\$ 265,165	\$ 306,910	\$ 306,910	\$ 342,660	\$ 35,750	11.65%
610	OFFICE SUPPLY	\$ 142,337	\$ 85,500	\$ 85,500	\$ 101,955	\$ 16,455	19.25%
627	TRANSPORTATION SUPPLY	\$ 317,401	\$ 402,711	\$ 402,711	\$ 379,238	\$ -23,473	-5.83%
690	OTHER SUPPLY	\$ 6,139	\$ 9,750	\$ 9,750	\$ 9,750	\$ -	0.00%
732	CAPITAL EQUIPMENT	\$ 1,047,923	\$ 949,596	\$ 949,596	\$ 968,779	\$ 19,183	2.02%
810	DUES/FEES	\$ 76,287	\$ 62,902	\$ 62,902	\$ 81,794	\$ 18,892	30.03%
	SUPPORT SERVICES	\$ 7,388,283	\$ 7,707,542	\$ 7,707,542	\$ 8,157,671	\$ 450,129	5.84%

The largest accounts in Support Services are Transportation, Fuel, Insurance (59%), Other Professional Services (11%), and the Energy Performance Contract (11%). The largest portion of the increase is for Pupil Transportation, \$331,000. This is because there is a contractual increase of 4% with Dattco. We added an additional route this year and will add another route next year. Each route costs approximately \$80,000.

Maintenance and Operations

		EXPENDED	BUDGET	PROJECTED	RECOMMENDED	CHANGE	% inc/ % dec
		2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	(From BGT)	
410	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$ 1,098,946	\$ 1,320,441	\$ 1,320,441	\$ 1,290,082	\$ -30,359	-2.30%
420	MAINTENANCE/REPAIR EQUIPMENT	\$ 109,272	\$ 148,700	\$ 148,700	\$ 161,365	\$ 12,665	8.52%
430	MAINTENANCE/REPAIR BUILDINGS	\$ 2,390,066	\$ 2,300,041	\$ 2,300,041	\$ 2,785,800	\$ 485,759	21.12%
613	MAINTENANCE SUPPLY	\$ 341,570	\$ 314,225	\$ 314,225	\$ 390,500	\$ 76,275	24.27%
620	HEAT/ENERGY	\$ 363,581	\$ 579,910	\$ 579,910	\$ 576,290	\$ -3,620	-0.62%
	MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS	\$ 4,303,435	\$ 4,663,317	\$ 4,663,317	\$ 5,204,037	\$ 540,720	11.60%

Mr. Masciana noted that our buildings are not only used for our schools but also in constant use for community activities. In 2026, we will be retiring Darcey, Chapman and Norton Schools and there will be a new Norton and new North End School. Maintenance and Operations is 5.4% of the budget request. The largest line items are Utilities and Heating (36%), Maintenance and Repair (36%), and Cleaning Services (17%). He said the cleaning contract we signed was before the minimum wage increase so we have increased our budget by about 10% just for cleaning services. He said in February; he will be bringing to the Board a request for a contract extension for an additional year with the current contractor.

Mr. Masciana briefly spoke about the Capital Budget. At the end of the month, the Planning Committee will begin discussions.

Conclusion:

Dr. Solan said he appreciates the time that our people have put into this. He said our community is growing. Our education is an investment that needs to be protected. He said there are many factors yet to be determined such as the grand list growth, the state budget, and enrollment. What they are asking the Board to consider in January may look different in April. He said it is his responsibility as Superintendent to present a budget that is developmentally appropriate, meets the needs of our student and is balanced across the district while also allowing for the advancement of our district goal of improving our instruction focused on complex thinking and social emotional learning. He noted the request for the 9-12 Science and Math Curriculum coordinator represents 0.2% of our overall budget but we think the return on investment there would be dramatically more than that.

He encouraged Board members and the community to email him with any questions.

4. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. White, and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 3/4/2025.