

**Mansfield School Committee Meeting
Minutes for Tuesday, January 31, 2023
In Person & Virtual Meeting using GoToWebinar**

An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held in person and virtually on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. The open meeting session was called to order by Chair Kiera O’Neil at 6:31 p.m.

Members Present:

Kiera O’Neil, Chair
Lynn Cavicchi, Vice Chair
Jenn Walsh
Vivian Webster

Administration Present:

Michael Connolly, Assistant Superintendent (Teaching / Learning)
Ed Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent (Finance/ Operations)

Members Absent:

Lauren Scher

All attendees in person / Roll Call votes not required.

Public Speak: None

Communications: None

Administrative Reports:

Assistant Superintendent Edward Donoghue updated the School Committee on the FY24 Budget. As a quick recap, the district presented the high-level budget to the committee for approval in December. On January 10th, principals and department heads presented the detailed budget. On January 11th the Town Budget Subcommittee met to discuss the status of the FY24 Budget. It was announced at this meeting that there is a \$5.29 million dollar budget gap. The town discussed options for reducing the budget. On January 17th our own Budget Subcommittee met on possible reductions. The targeted reductions amount to \$800,000 which is comprised of the utilization of additional grant money, the use of additional Pay-N-Ride revolving funds, a newly announced retirement, cuts due to attrition (staff leaving at the end of the year that will not be replaced) and the use of the school choice revolving fund to fund an MHS teacher.

The proposed increase over last year will now be 4.37% rather than 5.8% bringing the new budget amount to \$58,290,994.

Ed noted that we do not expect to hear about state funding in the near future since we have a new governor who needs time to go through budget information. The deadline for announcing these funds to schools is March.

Lynn Cavicchi added that at the January 11th meeting, Town Manager Kevin Dumas reviewed various strategies available for reducing the budget but did not provide a clear understanding of details. Hopefully we will have a better sense at the next meeting. Lynn’s hope for next week’s meeting is to get an understanding of the budget, gaps, strategies to help close the budget, and assumptions on revenue projections. She does not expect to leave the meeting with a consensus budget.

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Kiera O'Neil reminded everyone that we are making cuts from level services. We are not cutting back on wishful additions. No additions were part of the original budget proposal. We can't cut further until we get better clarity.

Approval of Warrant:

Motion to approve the warrant memo dated 01-11-23 by Jenn Walsh / Lauren Scher

Motion Carries 4 - 0

	Salary & Wages 2023-12 12-9-22	Goods & Services 23023S 12-13-22	Salary & Wages 2023-13 12-23-22	Goods & Services 230026S 12-27-22
General Fund	2,032,430.46	479,516.12	1,707,870.95	618,376.61
Medicare	2,465.60	-	2,465.60	-
Capital	-	7,469.22	-	5,115.00
Revolving	62,213.98	2,737.87	72,789.29	7,064.31
Food Service	26,909.79	37,679.50	28,880.81	33,156.69
Gifts	-	4,939.97	-	208.45
Student Activity	-	-	453.22	2,023.71
Grants	84,695.17	881.83	59,427.24	45,708.46
Prior Year	-	4,557.52	-	13,478.08
	\$ 2,208,715.00	\$ 537,782.03	\$ 1,871,887.11	\$ 725,131.31

Approval of Minutes:

Date	1st	2nd	Discuss Y/N	Vote	Roll Call (n/a)/comments
Open Meeting 01-10-23	Jenn Walsh	Lynn Cavicchi	None	4 - 0	n/a
Exec Session 01-31-23	Jenn Walsh	Lynn Cavicchi	None	4 - 0	n/a

Gifts:

Assistant Superintendent Michael Connolly acknowledged The Mansfield Police Department who donated sweatshirts to our Unified Basketball Team. Detective Ken Wright was in the audience and also commented on the arrival today of 100 t-shirts for the unified bocce and track teams. Lynn Cavicchi noted how amazingly well Unified Sports has grown.

Old Business:

Budget: Updates made in administrative report

Health & Wellness: none available

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New Business:

Consideration of 2022-23 Calendar Change at MHS:

Principal Russ Booth outlined a request to add 4 reverse half days to this year's high school calendar so that the school can administer MCAS for the 10th grade students. The dates are March 28 and 29 for ELA and May 16 and 17 for Math. Grade 9, 11 and 12 students (anyone not taking MCAS) will arrive at 10:30 AM. Lunch will be served for all students. Transportation will be available to all students. The district will communicate with parents and students via the webpage, social media, google classroom, newsletters and the electronic sign board.

Vivian Walsh asked what the schedule looks like for tomorrow's MCAS retakes? Principal Booth noted that this is a much smaller group and it is easy to section an area of the high school off so that these students will have quiet test taking time and access to their own restrooms.

Motion to approve reverse half days at the high school on March 28 and 29; May 16 and 17 by Jenn Walsh / Lynn Cavicchi

Motion Carries 4-0

Consideration of 2023-2024 Program of Studies:

Assistant Superintendent Michael Connolly introduced Principal Booth and Guidance Director Tina Karidoyanes to present the recommended changes to next year's courses. Director Karidoyanes opened by stating that the goal is to provide equitable and increased access to courses. By adjusting some of the prerequisites required, more students will be able to register for the courses that they want to take. The high school will pilot this change in 2023-24 and then make more significant changes the following year. Tina then walked through the changes by department.

Some key points:

- Performing arts fees are pulled from the program of studies so as not to deter registration.
- There were no changes to visual arts programs since there was an overhaul last year.
- Minor changes to the business department but MHS is looking ahead to make changes in 2024-25
- English course descriptions were modified and new books increasing diversity added to reading lists.
- In the health and wellness department, courses will be realigned to create an Intro to Fitness class as a requirement for all grade 10 students. Prerequisites and descriptions of other classes have been modified. These changes were inspired by professional development courses with other nearby school districts.
- Criteria for math courses have been clarified with changes to minimum grade requirements allowing greater access for students.
- Academic Skills workshop descriptors have changed
- Criteria for science courses have been modified for greater access.
- Course adds: Introduction to Fitness
- Course deletions: Google Applications (due to intense training in Google during COVID, there is no need for this course) and Advanced Strength & Conditioning. All students will be eligible for Strength and Conditioning.

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Questions/answers:

Vivian Webster expressed her gratitude for the teamwork involved in making these changes. She especially liked the additions to the reading lists. She asked about AP courses and their availability to transfer and school choice students. Tina noted that we adhere to the what courses the student has taken in their previous district and provide opportunities accordingly. In some cases, we may not offer a specific course or the course is offered in a higher grade than in the prior district. In those cases, we ask the student to wait a year.

Jenn Walsh asked why the fees were removed from performing arts. She recalls requesting that this language be added a few years ago. Principal Booth noted that anything that can create barriers should not be part of a program of studies. Lynn Cavicchi noted that he must make sure there is a plan in place after schedules are built to discuss fees/costs with parents. She noted for example the struggle for some families to find out on the first day of school that they need to buy a \$100 calculator. Tina agreed and reiterated that all families will be notified of expenses prior to the first day of school and will be provided financial assistance as needed. As far as calculators, the district has been working toward purchasing enough to allow students to borrow for the duration of a class.

Lynn Cavicchi likes the improved access. She asked why only the science department requires chair approval for courses. Tina noted that over the years various prerequisites were required for course registration. The Chair's role is to make sure prerequisites are met and when reviewing the schedule make sure that a student is not overloading themselves with too many AP science classes. Tina does anticipate removing this level of approval in the future. Mike Connolly noted that it is a fine line. We want to provide greater access but we also want to ensure student success. Lynn asked if there were any courses dropped in September due to lack of enrollment. Tina did not have the data in front of her but noted a few: Music & Film, one of the Advanced Arts classes, and Engineering. Tina will send the complete list to the committee. Lynn asked if there were any classes where demand exceeded availability. For AP Psychology (always a popular class) there were 89 applicants for 60 slots. Department Chair Bill Hocking worked out solutions so that all students could participate. How are enrollments in online programs? Tina noted that there has been a drop since COVID; perhaps remote burnout?

Kiera asked about our dual enrollment program. There are 4 students enrolled in addition to students at Southeast Regional. Several districts have come to us to view our model.

Motion to approve the 2023-24 MHS Program of Studies by Jenn Walsh / Lynn Cavicchi
Motion Carries 4-0

Consideration of change to Town of Mansfield Special Education Stabilization Fund:

Vice Chair Lynn Cavicchi noted that this is still a pending policy. Previously the School Committee had approved a version of this policy. Changes were suggested upon review by the Finance Committee, the Town Budget Subcommittee and the Select Board. Based on those recommendation the School Budget Subcommittee made several edits. Tonight, we are looking to approve the revised draft. Lynn posed the question as to how to move forward. It was determined to approve

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the changes to the policy draft but not to accept the policy tonight. We will ask for this policy to be added to the Tri-Board meeting on February 8, 2023. Diane Nugent will request the agenda item and send the policy to Sarah Walsh and Kevin Dumas for their review.

Motion to approve the changes to the Special Education Stabilization Fund policy draft by Jenn Walsh / Lynn Cavicchi

Motion Carries 4-0

School Committee Business:

Upcoming agenda items and meeting dates were reviewed. February 7 and 14 meeting dates will be cancelled. February 8 is the Tri-Board meeting followed by a school budget sub the next day. Next full committee meeting dates are February 28, March 14 and March 28.

Agenda items include fees, mid-year assessment, educational space study, equity strategic plan, and the student opportunities act progress report.

Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting: None

Documents Referenced:

Program of Studies

Policy

Motion to adjourn: At 7:40 p.m., Kiera O'Neil asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn by Jenn Walsh / Lynn Cavicchi

Motion Carries 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Nugent, Administrative Assistant to
Superintendent & School Committee