

**Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting**  
**Monday March 13, 2023**  
**9:00am**

<https://marbleheadschoools-org.zoom.us/j/98611586972?pwd=NORuU2dtcHFuVDdJOFh5Rk5hUGRtQT09>

**Members Present:** Sarah Fox, Sarah Gold, Thomas Mathers, Alison Taylor and Meagan Taylor

**Also Present :** John J. Buckey, Superintendent  
Nan Murphy, Assistant Superintendent  
Michelle Cresta, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

**I. Initial Business**

- a. Call to Order  
Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 9:00am
- b. Public Comment  
None

**II. FY24 Budget Planning and Discussion**

It was explained that the budget focused meeting was scheduled for the school committee to provide a more finalized direction for presenting a budget at the budget hearing scheduled for Tuesday March 21<sup>st</sup>. The three budgets that have been put together include:

- The budget termed the austerity budget which will only include an increase of \$800,000 from FY23
- The budget termed the level services budget which will support an increase of about 5% from FY23
- The original budget ask presented at the budget workshop held on January 30<sup>th</sup> which will include a budget increase of over 9% from FY23

After discussion, it was confirmed that any of the budgets being presented would need to be posted at least 48 hours in advance of the budget workshop. It was also mentioned that the “austerity budget” would need to be posted either way along with whichever other budget(s) the school committee decides to present.

A discussion about whether out of district special education related costs, utilities associated costs and funding for the new math program would be included in the level services budget took place. Additional discussion about the difficulty of presenting a budget without confirmation of the Town’s position also occurred. Further discussion pertaining to asking for an override without the support of the Town took place and a majority of committee members agreed that without Town support, an override has a limited chance of passing. It was mentioned that the Town is planning for a one-year budgeting fix for FY24. They will then plan to address the major structural issues when planning for FY25.

Ms. Fox spoke in favor of presenting all three budgets at the hearing and asked for a motion to have Dr. Buckey and his team present the difference between three budget options and for the school committee to follow up on their vote thereafter. The motion was not moved and Ms. Fox asked if anyone would like to make an alternate motion.

Mr. Mathers made a motion to present a budget based on Town guidance and article 31 with the Town for a level service override in the amount of about a 1.8 million-dollar increase in general fund appropriations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Meagan Taylor for discussion.

Prior to discussion, Ms. Cresta clarified that the 1.8 million-dollars referenced in the motion is incorrect. It was explained that the 1.8-million-dollar number is just the number for the payroll contractual obligations, utilities, and special education increase. The number for the level service budget will be representative of a 2.2-million-dollar budget which accounts for a 5.06% increase.

Ms. Fox recommended amending the motion to present a level service as well as the austerity balanced budget. Mr. Mathers agreed and amended the motion to reflect presenting the austerity budget reflecting an increase of \$800,000 and the level services budget with an increase of 2.2 million-dollars.

Ms. Fox mentioned that the committee is currently agreeing on the budget(s) which will be presented and not on a dollar amount as voting the dollar amount entails a budget vote which cannot occur without numbers from the Town.

Ms. Alison Taylor shared her frustration with not having a Town number this far along in the budget planning. Ms. Fox revisited her feelings on presenting all three budgets and Ms. Gold spoke in favor of the level services budget as it is a budget that meets the Town halfway.

A roll call vote was taken and the amended motion passes 4-1.

Ms. Alison Taylor, Ms. Meagan Taylor, Ms. Gold, and Mr. Mathers-all yes.  
Ms. Fox-no

Ms. Fox requested that the list of reductions discussed at the last budget subcommittee meeting be posted to the website.

Ms. Taylor mentioned that she is unfortunately unable to attend the hearing on Tuesday or the meeting scheduled for the vote on Thursday and inquired if the meeting for the vote could be moved. Options on Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> and Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> were mentioned. After a brief discussion, Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> at 6pm was recommended for the budget vote which seemed to work well for all and will be coordinated offline.

### III. Closing Business

#### a. New Business

Ms. Fox shared that she has requested to attend the weekly meeting with education association for budget related purposes due to the potential for staffing reductions. She mentioned that she felt it was important for morale. After a committee discussion, committee members were not in support of committee attendance at MEA meetings.

After each committee members voiced their opinions of how they were not in full support of joining the meetings, Ms. Fox questioned if she has the support of the members in her role as Chair. Committee members confirmed their support of Ms. Fox in her role as Chairperson. Ms. Gold also noted the difficulty of debating important topics and votes which impact students along with the emotional aspects of voting a budget.

Ms. Taylor reminded the committee that Dr. Buckley's job is to handle District morale and for the committee to support him in that role. She also spoke in favor of the healthy debate that took place during the meeting.

Ms. Fox asked for the public comment she skipped over earlier on the agenda. There was no public comment.

#### b. Adjournment

Ms. Fox adjourned the meeting at 10:07am

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa Dimier, Secretary  
Marblehead School Committee*

*Approved March 16, 2023*