

Record of the Marblehead School Committee  
Thursday July 6, 2023  
Lucretia and Joseph Brown School  
Main Office Conference Room  
5:00pm

<https://marbleheadschoools-org.zoom.us/j/92683125154?pwd=YlhVOzdGMjFWV1FuZT12ZEVOVHJDdz09>

Members Present: Sarah Fox, Brian Ota, Jennifer Schaeffner and Alison Taylor  
Virtually Attended Meagan Taylor

Also: Superintendent John J. Buckey  
Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Michelle Cresta

I. Initial Business

a. Call to Order

Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.

Ms. Fox spoke about the public comment that took place during the previous meeting. She mentioned how a parent reached out to share concerns related to the importance of keeping the names of families and students who file complaints confidential so there would be no fear of retaliation.

b. Public Comment

- Co-Presidents Jonathan Heller and Sally Shevory attended the meeting in person to read a prepared statement pertaining to their disappointment with the failed override vote. They spoke in favor of working to pass a budget that supports the future of the community to “enhance the quality of public education in Marblehead.”

II. Consent Action and Agenda Items

- a. Schedule of Bills-Schedules were unavailable and will be voted at the next scheduled meeting.

III. School Committee Communication and Discussion Items

a. Subcommittee and Liaison Appointment Discussion

Ms. Fox postponed this discussion item until Ms. Meagan Taylor was expected to join the meeting later.

b. FY24 Budget Discussions

A conversation about prepayments for out of district special education tuition costs took place. It was explained that the process has been in place since FY20. A chart of expenditure history from FY19 through FY23 was shared. Assistant Superintendent Cresta recommended a prepayment amount of \$500k for FY23.

Ms. Schaeffner inquired about a dollar amount of an anticipated surplus to which Ms. Cresta confirmed an estimated surplus of about \$500K.

A discussion and vote on adjusted user fees for the 2023-2024 school year also took place. A chart of the suggested fee adjustments was shared. It was mentioned that the increase would be reflective of \$12 more per athlete with an increase in the family maximum. The adjustments would bring in additional revenue of about \$26,000 to fund freshman sports coaching positions and transportation related costs for freshmen athletics.

Ms. Fox asked for a motion to approve the amended user fee rates for the 2023-2024 school year as proposed. It was moved by Ms. Alison Taylor and seconded by Ms. Schaeffer. The motion passes 4-0 all in favor as Ms. Meagan Taylor had not yet joined the meeting remote.

Ms. Fox recognized that Ms. Meagan Taylor joined the meeting at 5:40pm.

A conversation about the reduced services staffing budget priority list took place. Further discussion about all the possible uses of the surplus funds took place. Discussion about using one-time funding to fund recurring staffing costs occurred. Ms. Fox recommended having a comprehensive audit of the special education department completed.

Ms. Fox asked for a motion to allocate funding for a type of audit. It was moved by Ms. Schaeffner and seconded by Ms. Alison Taylor. Superintendent Buckey recommended speaking with the Director of Student Services prior to making any decisions to move forward with an audit.

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

Ms. Meagan Taylor-No noting she would like Dr. Donnelley's input prior to voting

Ms. Schaeffner, Ms. Alison Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Fox-all yes

Ms. Schaeffner mentioned working with administration to look at a zero-based budgeting for staffing specifically. She also recommended bringing in an outside consultant to complete the process. It was recommended that the discussion be continued at a meeting in August. Ms. Fox also requested an update on out of district tuition at that time.

After the budget discussion Ms. Fox returned to the subcommittees and liaisons assignments. Principal Ota recommended holding quarterly forums with parents and teachers to focus their annual goals similar to the way the Falmouth school committee does.

The following members were appointed to each subcommittee and Superintendent Advisory Council:

Budget-Sarah Fox and Jennifer Schaeffner

Collective Bargaining-Sarah Fox and Jennifer Schaeffner

Curriculum-Brian Ota and Jennifer Schaeffner

Facilities-Sarah Fox and Alison Taylor

Policy- Alison Taylor and Jennifer Schaeffner

Selectmen MOU-Chairs as needed

Safety Advisory-Brian Ota

Health/Wellness Advisory-Alison Taylor

METCO Liaison-Meagan Taylor

SEPCAC Liaison-Meagan Taylor

A conversation about a communications subcommittee took place and Ms. Schaeffner and Ms. Alison Taylor voiced their interest in spearheading the process by beginning with community surveys.

c. Public Records Request Discussion

Ms. Fox brought up an investigative report for an athletic program which came up due to a public records request. She wondered if information in the report could be used to review policies in an effort to avoid similar complaint related situations going forward. Ms. Fox explained that the recommendation of legal counsel was to enter an Executive Session to further review the report to better understand when complaints were raised, the actions that were taken and when and why the investigation was initiated.

Ms. Fox recommended holding a meeting either at the beginning or end of the retreat or earlier than the retreat to schedule an Executive Session meeting.

Superintendent Buckey asked for clarification regarding if the Executive Session would pertain to the records request or the investigation. Ms. Fox confirmed that it would focus on the process of the investigation. After Superintendent Buckey inquired, she confirmed after speaking with council that the meeting would be under exemption 1.

After planning for a date, it was decided that a meeting will be tentatively scheduled for July 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm pending the availability of counsel.

d. School Committee Summer Retreat Discussion-request of topics

The retreat was decided to be held on Monday August the 7<sup>th</sup> from 8-12 pending MASC and legal counsel availability. Ms. Fox inquired if members had requests pertaining to professional development training. Ms. Taylor requested that school committee and Superintendent goals be reviewed and outlined by the time the school year starts.

IV. Closing Business

a. New Business

None

b. Correspondence

Ms. Fox mentioned correspondence regarding an abutter of the Brown School and fence damage from the construction project. A conversation about other complaints and how best to address them with the Building Project took place.

c. Adjournment

Ms. Fox adjourned the meeting at 7:14pm.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Lisa Dimier, Secretary*

*Marblehead School Committee*

*Approved October 5, 2023*

*Materials Included:*

*Public Comment Statement-MEA*

*Schedule of Bills*

*Subcommittee and Liaisons Template*

*Reduced Service Budget Priority List*

*Memo-Prepaid Tuition*

*Memo-Users Fees Adjusted for 2023-2024sy*

*Sample School Committee Communication Goals-Falmouth*