

**Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting**  
**Marblehead High School Auditorium**  
**2 Humphrey St.**  
**Tuesday March 21, 2023**  
**7:00pm**

[https://marbleheadschoo-  
org.zoom.us/j/97548851270?pwd=UEx3NUxkRTdJVmNBQWI3N0hYaE9nQT09](https://marbleheadschoo-<br/>org.zoom.us/j/97548851270?pwd=UEx3NUxkRTdJVmNBQWI3N0hYaE9nQT09)

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

**Members Absent:** Meaghan 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 7:00pm

II. Statement from the Chair

Ms. Fox opened the meeting thanking the leadership team and Superintendents for their work putting together the FY24 budget. She explained that Superintendent Buckey will share a presentation with questions and comments from the community and committee to follow.

III. Budget Public Hearing of Proposed Budget Options for FY24

Superintendent Buckey opened his presentation focusing on how the District is flourishing and continues to flourish during challenging times. A slide celebrating Marblehead Education data was shared.

Superintendent Buckey mentioned the goal for the FY24 budget and outlined the steps taken to create the budget. Expenses versus revenues was explained and it was noted that expenses were outpacing revenues town-wide. Chapter 70 funding, student enrollment and staffing levels were further explained. A slide was displayed to compare the budget figures for the level service and reduced services budgets presented. The level services budget in the amount of \$45, 971,790 supports a budget increase of 4.52% and the Reduced service budget in the amount of \$44, 782,273 supports a budget increase of 1.82%.

Superintendent Buckey explained the following:

Level Services Budget

- Will require a proposition 2 ½ override with the Town
- Will fund all contractual payroll obligations
- 3 of 7 eliminated positions will be repurposed for an HR Generalist, School Counselor and STEAM Teacher
- Will fund freshman sports and not fund requests in the aspirational budget

Reduced Service Budget

- Will not require a proposition 2 ½

- Will eliminate 33 positions and reduce/reallocate 4 additional positions
- Will increase funding for unemployment costs
- Will fund a portion of utility costs and rely on \$92k from building rental revolving fund

The impact of a reduced services budget per each building and department was outlined and further information pertaining to the use of American Rescue Program Act ARPA funds and rolling stock was presented.

#### Public Comment

Marblehead education association co-presidents, Sally Shevory and Jonathan Heller read a prepared statement in support of needing to stand together to fund a budget that supports the needs of the students. They spoke in favor of a budget that attracts and retains staff based on competitive salaries and an exemplary education. It was requested that the prepared statement be included in the record of finalized minutes.

Student Grace Wolverton spoke against eliminating the librarian position at the Veterans Middle School noting the position as “essential” and how removing it would take away from students.

Dan Albert spoke in favor of eliminating central administration positions prior to laying off teachers. He also suggested consolidating administrative positions with neighboring schools.

Becky Suciu inquired about the percent of the ARPA funds the Town receives and the percent allocated to the schools.

It was mentioned that the schools represent 50% of the Town budget but not 50% of the ARPA funds are allocated to the schools.

Ms. Fox estimated that 7.8% of ARPA funds are currently received by the schools and if the request for FY24 ARPA funding requests are approved, that number will be closer to 14%.

Catherine Martin spoke in favor of the level service budget whereas that budget is already short in meeting the needs of students. She noted her support of the education representatives joint statement. She also spoke in favor of a Strategic Plan that spans multiple years to help support an override request.

Kim Day inquired about the next steps regarding voting one budget after the two were presented.

After an inquiry regarding the special education staff numbers, Ms. Cresta explained that more accurate reporting figures assisted with determining staff placement. She further explained that staff were reassigned based on need and that allocations were correct.

Ms. Fox explained the process for voting the budget sharing that the school committee would vote the budget the following week and the budget would need to pass at Town meeting. Ms. Fox encouraged community participation mentioning that voting takes place in person.

David Wedel inquired about the deliberation process at Town meeting.

Staff member Samantha Rosato spoke against eliminating positions such as the Veterans School librarian mentioning that each position is important and valued. She also spoke in favor of

increasing salaries for paraprofessional contracts noting that they are paid under minimum wage.

Superintendent Buckey spoke of longer-term planning with Town that would include a curriculum review cycle for example so need could be identified early so taxpayers have a better understanding of the planning ahead.

Committee member, Ms. Gold thanked the leadership team for moving the District forward to identify costs and needs.

Cindy Schieffer highlighted the collaboration going on between the schools and spoke in favor of growing in the same direction.

Becky Suci inquired about the impact to staffing during the current school year and spoke in favor of rallying the Town to vote for a level service budget.

Superintendent Buckey explained that nonrenewal letters needed to be sent by April 15<sup>th</sup> but that notice could not be provided until after the election.

Catherine Martin spoke in favor of a more long-range Strategic Plan and questioned where that planning was during the planning for the previous budgeting year.

Ms. Gold pointed out that last year's budget ask was reflective of the Strategic Plan the subcommittee developed, the committee that Ms. Martin's husband was a member of. She also noted that other Districts had similar plans.

Superintendent Buckey explained that a new Strategic Plan would not be created. He spoke in favor of working to further develop the existing plan to more specifically identify a longer-term road map.

Committee member Mathers spoke in favor of the collaboration taking place given the current budgeting situation.

Chairman Fox spoke in favor of Article 31 and funding a fiscally responsible budget. She reminded the community that the committee would vote the budget the following Monday at 6pm before the Fincom meeting. She also encouraged community members to reach out so no misinformation was being presented.

#### IV. Closing Business

##### a. Adjournment

Ms. Fox adjourned the meeting at 8:11pm.

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

*Approved April 6, 2023*