

I. **CALL OF MEETING
TO ORDER AND FLAG
SALUTE**

A regular meeting of the School Committee was held in the Library at 201 Gliniewicz Way.

Present: Mr. Chris Coyle, Chair; Ms. Danielle Grafton, Vice-Chair; Ms. Heidi Hernandez, Secretary; Ms. Julie Groom and Ms. Wendy Happel, Members. Also in attendance were Mr. Peter Schafer, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Felicia Moschella, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance; and Ms. Theresa Minnehan, Executive Secretary.

Mr. Coyle stated that the FY24 public budget hearing will begin no earlier than 7:15 p.m.

II. **HEARING OF VISITORS**

Nicole Emery of 16 Pond Street asked to speak regarding the book, *This Book is Gay*, and shared her concern with a shared library at the middle/high school and asked that the previously mentioned book be removed from the library and offer the e-book to high school students.

III. **READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Coyle stated that the meeting of December 20, 2022, was a virtual meeting where collective and non-collective bargaining agreements were discussed and voted.

A. December 20, 2022.

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Julie Groom) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes of December 20, 2022, as presented.

IV. **APPEAL HEARING ON THE BOOK, "THIS BOOK IS GAY" AS DESCRIBED BY POLICY
KEC – CHALLENGED EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**

Patricia Baldner of East Street spoke about her reasons for the appeal on the decision that Superintendent Schafer made to leave the book, *This Book is Gay*, on the high school side of the library. Ms. Baldner stated that there is a petition with 107 names on it and she will email it to Mr. Schafer and Mr. Coyle. School Committee members addressed and answered questions on the makeup of the book committee and Mr. Coyle stated that this is an appeal hearing and the School Committee members are here to vote on whether to reverse Mr. Schafer's decision or not. Ms. Grafton stated that all teachers and administrators have the best interests of students at heart and that she cannot stand for the statement that

they are trying to sexualize our children. Ms. Happel asked how we can vote on a book that some haven't read and Mr. Coyle stated that the vote this evening is on the appeal not on the removal of the book. Ms. Groom stated that she is not challenging the book and respects all opinions. Ms. Hernandez stated that she does not agree with overriding the decision of a committee who met, read the book and came to a decision. Mr. Tony DeBono of 98 Temple Street also spoke on the book and disagrees that the book be related to pornography. Mr. Schafer stated that a parent from the high school council was involved in the decision on the book. Ms. Grafton stated that this Committee represents all viewpoints in the town and would like to move for a motion on the appeal. Ms. Happel asked to speak and stated that the book's access to middle school students is a concern for her and how can we guarantee that middle school students not have access to the book. Mr. Schafer stated that we cannot guarantee this and that the shared section will be very carefully curated.

Ms. Grafton made a motion to recess and at 7:32 p.m. the School Committee recessed the meeting. Mr. Coyle called the meeting back into session after a five-minute recess. Mr. Coyle asked for a motion to support the Superintendent's decision to keep the book, *This Book is Gay* on the high school side of the library. The Committee is voting in favor or against Ms. Baldner's appeal, he stated. All in favor of Ms. Baldner's appeal say "yes." All opposed to reverse Mr. Schafer's decision say "no."

VOTED:	on motion of Chris Coyle (Wendy Happel) the members of the School Committee voted to support Ms. Baldner's appeal of Mr. Schafer's decision to remove the book, <i>This Books is Gay</i> , from the high school side of the library.
No:	Mr. Coyle Ms. Grafton Ms. Groom Ms. Hernandez
Yes:	Ms. Happel

Mr. Coyle stated that the appeal fails on a vote of 4 to 1 and Mr. Schafer's decision remains in effect.

V. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Consideration of a Half Day of School for Students on the Last Day of School for the 2022-2023 School Year.

Mr. Schafer stated that at the end of last year there was discussion on having a half day of school for students on the last day of school in order to help staff organize, wrap up and store materials without students present.

VOTED:	on motion of Chris Coyle (Heidi Hernandez) the members of the School Committee
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unanimously voted that the last day of school for the 2022-2023 school year will be a half day for students.

The School Committee members entered into the FY-24 preliminary public budget hearing at 7:42 p.m.

B. Presentation and Public Hearing on the FY-2024 Preliminary Budget Proposal

Mr. Schafer stated that this is a preliminary budget in January and as things change people will be notified as we head towards Town Meeting. Meetings took place with different groups in buildings including faculty, staff, PTO and School Council, our Town Finance Committee liaison, Paul Hagerty, and the leadership at the Town. He highlighted the budget book and will not do a line by line review and will continue to answer questions on anything in the budget book. He thanked Dr. Moschella, Assistant Superintendent, for her work on the budget. He reviewed the need to maintain reasonable class sizes for all students in grades PreK-12, the growing needs of students with disabilities, increases in the EL population and mental and behavioral challenges. He stated that the Student Opportunity Act funds will help the EL department and meet many of these other needs. He also addressed instructional resources like hardware, software and books and the commitment to instructional resources and certain built-in increases for fixed costs. Mr. Schafer then turned the PowerPoint presentation over to Dr. Moschella to review the proposed preliminary FY-2024 budget figure of \$30,121,270 which reflects an increase of 8.55% over the FY-2023 budget. She reviewed the staffing needs and stated that they are not in any priority order. She also reviewed other staffing needs that we would like to have as a District but are not a priority in this year's budget proposal. Dr. Moschella then reviewed the increase sheet by major category, salary account, programs with other districts, other school services such as transportation and technology/instructional materials for laptops and instructional materials.

School Committee members asked questions around the need for additional school adjustment counselors, funding positions through ESSER funds and being re-allocated to other supports, transportation and special education costs as well as laptops. Dr. Moschella stated that between now and April Town Meeting we will have a clearer picture of what the funding will look like and if adjustments need to be made there will be discussion with the business and finance subcommittee and then the whole School Committee.

Mr. Coyle thanked Ms. Grafton and Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Hagerty, Finance Committee School Liaison, for their time on the budget in preparation for this evening's meeting.

At 8:05 p.m. Mr. Coyle declared the FY-24 preliminary budget hearing closed and the Committee entered back into regular session.

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Heidi Hernandez) the members of the School

Committee unanimously voted to submit for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant a proposed FY-2024 budget figure of \$30,121,270 as the amount requested for the School Department's operating budget.

VOTED: on motion of Heidi Hernandez (Danielle Grafton) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to submit for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant a proposed figure of \$16,016.⁰⁰ as the amount requested for student transportation services to Abington students attending out-of-district vocational schools as non-resident students for the 2023-2024 school year. The School Committee or their designees shall be authorized to expend from this fund, or act on anything relative thereto.

VOTED: on motion of Julie Groom (Heidi Hernandez) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to submit for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant an article to continue a revolving account in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2. Said account to be funded by the fines levied against Abington businesses which violate state or local tobacco control laws, by-laws and regulations, to be expended by the Abington School Department, to fund the substance abuse prevention program, not to exceed \$8,000.⁰⁰ for the ensuing fiscal year; or take any other action relative thereto.

VI. **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

A. FY-24 Capital Plan.

Dr. Moschella reviewed the FY-24 School Department's Capital Plan and mentioned that the items that are italicized are currently part of the Town's Capital Plan. She reviewed the Plan by school beginning with the Woodsdale School and its roof replacement, refurbishing the walk in freezer and cooler as well as replacing furniture. The Beaver Brook School's need for an assessment of the entire HVAC system for possible replacement, resurfacing of paved areas, updating the playground equipment, replacing cafeteria furniture and resurfacing the gym floor, including the lines and logo. She continued with the Frolio building needs, replacing the main electrical switch subpanels, the fire escape replacement and the exterior ADA compliant ramp.

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Wendy Happel) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the FY-24 Capital Plan as presented and submit to Town Hall.

B. Woodsdale School Assigned Lunch Numbers.

Dr. Moschella stated that next week the Woodsdale School students will be assigned lunch numbers and will need to input a four digit code for breakfast and lunch. This could result in long lines and some delays. She stated that by the end of the month they will roll this out at Grade 2.

VII. **NEW BUSINESS AND ESTABLISHING OF NEXT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DATE**

Tuesday, January 24, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting

VIII. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

- Abington High School Fall 2022 Season Recap
- Personnel Administration - Informational
 1. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation from Timothy Hill, a computer science teacher within the Abington Public Schools, for the purpose of retirement effective at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.
 2. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation from Theresa Minnehan, Executive Assistant for the Abington Superintendent of Schools, for the purpose of retirement effective on March 2, 2023.

3. On the recommendation of Julie Thompson, Principal of the Beaver Brook Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Martine Augusma as a long-term substitute paraprofessional effective on November 15, 2022.
4. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Alexandra Carreiro as a science teacher effective on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.
5. On the recommendation of James Robbins, Director of Student Services, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Stephanie Corcione as a .5 long-term substitute school adjustment counselor effective on Monday, November 28, 2022 and continuing for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.
6. The Superintendent has appointed Danielle Gaylor as the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools effective on February 1, 2023.
7. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Matthew Gibbons as a paraprofessional effective on Wednesday, November 23, 2022.
8. On the recommendation of James Robbins, Director of Student Services, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Jillian Gonzalez as a long-term substitute school psychologist effective on Monday, November 28, 2022 and continuing for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.
9. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of the following advisors for the 2022-2023 school year:
 - Diana Gossard Choreographer
 - Patricia London Literary Arts
10. On the recommendations of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, and Peter Serino, Athletic Director, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of the following volunteer coaches for the winter season:
 - Jack Houghton Ice Hockey
 - Christopher Madden Boys Basketball
 - Nick Malafrente Ice Hockey
 - Christopher Marquardt Boys' Basketball
 - Shane Murray Ice Hockey
 - Susan Peck Winter Cheerleading
 - Christopher Tighe Boys' Basketball

11. The Superintendent has granted Ms. Michelle Beatrice, a special education teacher within the Abington Public Schools, a parental leave of absence in accordance with Options B and A as stipulated in Article XXIV of the Unit A Agreement. This leave of absence will begin on or about April 23, 2023 and will continue to on or about September 28, 2023.

- Dates to Remember

1. Sat., January 7 – Abington Education Foundation, Trivia Night @ Abington K of C, Hancock Street, Abington, MA @ 7:00 pm
2. Sun., January 8 AHS Leadership Class Veterans’ Pancake Breakfast @ The American Legion, 1027 Washington Street from 8 am to 10 am
3. Wed., January 11 – Abington Education Foundation Meeting @ Town Hall @ 7 pm
4. Mon., January 16 – Martin Luther King Day – All School Offices and Buildings Closed
5. Tues., January 24 – School Committee Meeting @ Middle/High School Library at 7 pm
6. Fri., January 27 – Inservice/Early Release Day for Students

Mr. Coyle and Mr. Schafer acknowledged Theresa Minnehan, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and the Abington School Committee, on her retirement.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION
@ 8:24 p.m.

VOTED: the School Committee, by roll call vote, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to ongoing litigation; specifically, an MCAD complaint, Adrienne Whalen versus the Town of Abington, unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting and enter into executive session at 8:24 p.m.

Yes:

Mr. Coyle
Ms. Grafton
Ms. Groom
Ms. Happel
Ms. Hernandez

Heidi Hernandez, Secretary