

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Concord-Carlisle School Committee
Concord School Committee
Ripley Conf. Room 4 & Zoom
December 7, 2023

Present: Tracey Marano, Chair, CCSC; CSC
Sharon Whitt, Vice Chair, CCSC (via Zoom)
Alexa Anderson, Chair, CSC; CCSC
Carrie Rankin, Vice Chair, CSC; CCSC
Courtland Booth, CSC; CCSC
Cynthia Rainey, CSC, CCSC

Absent: Carrie Patel, CCSC
Ayesha Lawton, CPS METCO Rep
Domingos DaRosa, CCRSD METCO Rep

Present from Administration: Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent of Schools, CPS & CCRSD
Robert Conry, Asst. Supt of Finance & Operations, CPS & CCRSD

I. CALL TO ORDER CSC

Ms. Anderson called the CSC meeting to order at 9:01 AM and opened the Public Hearing on the FY25 CPS Budget.

II. PUBLIC HEARING FY25 CPS BUDGET

Ms. Anderson acknowledged Karlen Reed and asked if Ms. Reed would like to have Mr. Conry give the budget presentation again, noting that Ms. Reed was in attendance at the SC meeting on Tuesday night at which Mr. Conry presented the budget in full.

Public Comment:

1. Karlen Reed, 83 Whits End, Concord MA. Ms. Reed stated that she was a member of the Finance Committee, but was speaking on her own behalf. She asked what the difference was between FINCOM's guidelines and the CPS guideline and what the SC thought about it. Dr. Hunter stated that it was just under \$90,000. Ms. Anderson stated that there were cuts in the budget this year that the Superintendent felt comfortable with, while maintaining programs and services to the students. Ms. Anderson noted that area SC Chairs have said they are having issues maintaining level service budgets, stating that the CPS FY25 budget demonstrates a lot of fiscal restraint and attention.

Ms. Rainey noted her concern should the COLAs be significantly higher than budgeted, asking how the district would accommodate this. Ms. Anderson stated that MASC representative, Dorothy Presser, spoke about specific challenges with presenting 5-year projections and the typical practice of having a range and focusing negotiations on years 2 and 3. Ms. Rainey asked what would happen if this was not successful and Dr. Hunter stated that she would prefer to answer this question in Executive Session.

Mr. Booth requested that the titles be checked on the budget document and pages be numbered.

Mr. Conry reviewed the list of FY24 grant awards for each of the CPS grants, noting that the grants were essentially the same as in prior years.

Mr. Conry reviewed the responses to the SC's budget questions. He reviewed the preschool budget and funding sources, noting that there was no additional funding from the state for needs related to the shelter. Dr. Hunter shared tuition rates from area preschools, noting that the CIPS rate falls in the middle of the group.

Ms. Anderson closed the CPS Budget Hearing at 9:30 AM.

III. CALL TO ORDER CCSC

Ms. Marano called the CCSC meeting to order at 9:30 AM. Roll call attendance was taken: Anderson, aye; Booth, aye; Marano, aye; Rainey, aye; Rankin, aye; Whitt, aye.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING FY25 CCRSD BUDGET

Ms. Marano opened the FY25 CCRSD Budget Hearing at 9:31 AM.

Public Comment:

1. Karlen Reed, 83 Whits End, Concord MA. Ms. Reed stated that she was a member of the Finance Committee, but was speaking on her own behalf. Ms. Reed asked what the delta between the FINCOM guideline and CCRSD guidelines was and how \$300,000 was allocated to E&D.

Dr. Hunter stated that the delta was \$205,000 without debt. Mr. Conry stated that the E&D was the equivalent to free cash that can be used to offset the operating budget or other purposes. He stated that \$300,000 was level with what was done last year to create some budget stability.

Ms. Marano closed the CCRSD Budget Hearing at 9:36 AM.

V. BUDGET WORKSHOP

CCRSD Budget – Mr. Conry responded to SC budget questions. Mr. Booth asked if there was any additional information about consulting roles with regards to the budget and understanding alternative pricing with regards to bus leases should the fleet be electrified. Dr. Hunter stated that they look at where consultants are needed every time the budgets are built and budget for consultant roles when they are appropriate in supporting the district. Mr. Conry shared the bus lease schedule, noting that the normal length of bus life is 8-10 years and the current replacement plan was 2 buses per year. Ms. Marano noted that the SC did extensive work on electrification over the past summer, noting that they applied for a grant but didn't get it. She noted the significant cost difference between diesel and electric without grant funds, also noting the question of capacity at Knox Trail. Mr. Conry stated that they will not lose sight of the electric bus possibilities and Dr. Hunter noted that it feels like a community discussion to fund the buses and infrastructure. Ms. Rainey suggested speaking with the DPW Director to see if the town could help with snow removal of the school lots and Dr. Hunter stated that she has reached out several times and the DPW is understaffed and stretched as it is.

Regarding hardware, Mr. Conry stated that the budget was a little over \$400,000 for all student and staff devices. He noted that they are not leases, but purchases, and that the cost includes some service contracts. He stated that one copier was recently replaced at CCHS. Regarding tuitioned in students, Mr. Conry stated that two students were tuitioned into the special education programs, at \$45,000 each. Regarding revenue projections, Mr. Conry stated that the state would be releasing them in January. Regarding athletics, Mr. Conry shared a five-year history of athletic expenses, noting that the bump in 2023 was due to rental costs increasing, more athletic coaches, and teams. Ms. Rainey noted the delta between what the budget was supporting and what the fees were supporting, suggesting the district find some offsets. Ms. Marano stated that, in addition to the \$300 athletic fee, parents are also asked for donations, noting that the SC has to strike a balance to keep kids involved in sports.

Regarding the new administrative structure at CCHS, Ms. Anderson asked if the district has seen tangible success and if the student response has been good. Dr. Hunter stated that it has been incredibly positive, noting that the administrators have the bandwidth now to support teachers on teaching and learning, not just in an evaluative way and to ensure students are getting services and support. She state that the co-principals are able to do big picture work now.

VI. ADJOURNMENT - CCSC

Ms. Marano adjourned the CCSC meeting at 10:31 AM.

CPS Budget – Mr. Conry reviewed the answers to the SC CPS budget questions. Regarding leases for devices, he stated that they are leasing devices for CPS, noting that this year was the last year of the leases. He stated that they would be addressing some staff backlog to refresh their devices at both the elementary and middle schools. Mr. Booth asked that

the document on electric buses be shared out again and Dr. Hunter stated that there was a possible plan to start planning sustainable capital projects into the town manager's budget, noting that she believes this was a town discussion. Ms. Rainey asked if there were any inflation reduction credits from the middle school infrastructure and Dr. Hunter stated that she was unsure, but would find out. Ms. Rankin asked what the line item budget included in the SC line and Mr. Conry stated that they were SC dues or advertising for bids. She then asked about summer school and Dr. Hunter stated that special education and general education would have a different model for summer school, noting that special education's goals were to prevent regression. She noted that, regarding general education students, the district would be looking at benchmark data to see what could be done over the summer. She stated that general education would be an individual tutoring based model and all remote.

CPS Capital – Ms. Rainey suggested thinking about moving to the town model of tiers for capital projects and applying tier 1 projects to the budget. Mr. Conry noted that the town feels that anything under \$25,000 should be in the operating budget. Mr. Conry stated that putting Tier 1 projects into the budget would be the entire capital budget. The SC agreed to continue the capital discussion at the next SC meeting on December 19, 2023.

Mr. Booth noted that the FTEs didn't come through on the CPS line item budget.

VII. ADJOURNMENT - CSC

Ms. Anderson adjourned the CSC meeting at 11:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin E. Higgins

Approved: 1.9.24

Abbreviations:

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| AMP | Association of Music Parents |
| CCHS | Concord-Carlisle High School |
| CCRSD | Concord-Carlisle Regional School District |
| CCSC | Concord-Carlisle Regional District School Committee |
| CCTA | Concord-Carlisle Teachers' Association |
| CEF | Concord Education Fund |
| CMS | Concord Middle School |
| CMSBC | Concord Middle School Building Committee |
| CPC | Community Preservation Committee |
| CPS | Concord Public Schools |
| CSC | Concord School Committee |
| CTA | Concord Teachers Association |
| DEIB | Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging |
| FINCOM | Finance Committee |
| PD | Professional Development |
| RF | Radio Frequency |
| SC | School Committee |
| SEPAC | Special Education Parent Advisory Council |