

**Uxbridge School Committee Meeting
February 27, 2024
Uxbridge High School Library and Remote Participation**

School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair	X	
Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice-Chair	X	
Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk (remote)	X	
Mr. Ben Casper	X	
Mr. David Shinnick	X	
Mr. Aaron Lenart	X	
Mr. Michael Dion	X	

● **Call to order**

Mr. Desruisseaux called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Motion: *Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to move executive session next. Mr. Dion moved the motion. Mr. Shinnick seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. Mr. Maharay did not vote. The motion passed.*

● **Executive Session**

o Move to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation (Mandile v. Uxbridge School Committee and Mike Baldassarre), No business to follow

Motion: *Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to move into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, Mandile v. Uxbridge School Committee and Mike Baldassarre, and then we will continue the meeting after that point. By roll call vote: Arlene: YES; Aaron: YES; Mike: YES; Ben: YES; Dave: YES; Barry: YES. The Committee voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

● **Public Comment**

No public comment

● Preliminary Budget Review 2.0

Dr. Baldassarre provided an update to the proposed FY25 budget. He shared that after the joint meeting between the school committee and finance committee, the district was told the town's capacity to increase the school's budget for FY25 was approximately \$2.5M. After hearing this, he and his administrative team and department heads went to work on reducing their original proposal by the @\$2M that would need to be reduced to align with the town's capacity. He said while deliberating, the district was concerned about losing the progress they have made but he believes they can work with the number given by the town.

To help offset the reductions, Dr. Baldassarre has suggested two solutions:

1. He will ask the Committee to support a warrant article for the spring town meeting that will request \$258K in one-time funding to help fund regular and athletic transportation in FY25.
2. The district will ask the capital planning committee to fund a portion of the technology expenses that had been included in the original FY25 proposal (@\$200k).

He said that by moving these expenses into funding requests outside of the operating budget, the district would be able to preserve some services that would have otherwise had to have been reduced.

Dr. Baldassarre said the district spoke with Mr. Sette about the impact of health care on available revenue if the number of full-time positions were reduced as part of the budget reduction. Mr. Sette factored in this impact and gave the schools an updated budget increase number of **\$2.64M**. **The new proposed budget number will be \$27,651,059.**

Dr. Baldassarre said the administration has achieved the goal of creating a new FY25 proposal that aligns with the number agreed upon with the town manager. He said he could not share that evening how the amount would affect the staffing pattern until they had had time to look at seniority lists and talk to the union president to verify. He also needs to give Ms. Sheridan time to do the true accounting calculations associated with the staffing shifts because they want the number to be as exact as possible.

He shared that there will be some reductions in programs and tools of learning and that professional development will take a "heavy hit." He said the administrators did the best they could to preserve class size.

Dr. Baldassarre will be building a prioritized restoration list on how the district would bring back any reduced services and positions if it receives additional funding opportunities after the school committee votes on its recommended budget number.

During the upcoming five business days, he and his team will prepare the budget documents for the public budget hearing, but out of respect for district staff, he said he did not want to have a public conversation on any specific personnel shifts in the new proposal because he needed time to work with the affected personnel. He asked the Committee to withhold any questions on FTEs or personnel until he has worked with the union president on those matters.

Discussion:

Mr. Shinnick asked if the district would consider asking for more than the town's recommended amount if the district felt there was value in more funding. Mr. Desruisseaux said he felt there was not an appetite in the town for an override and mentioned that the last time an override was presented, it failed.

Mr. Desruisseaux said the capital planning committee will keep their hearings for capital requests open for the schools to present their new request. The meeting will be the following Wednesday.

Mr. Maharay said it was disturbing to him that there are programs in place but that they will now have to have reductions, particularly in staff. He sees transportation and revolving funds as the two issues driving the budget decisions and said that was "sad to see."

Mr. Maharay asked Ms. Sheridan to speak on the proposed warrant article because the Committee would have to address it at their next meeting. She said it would give the district a one-year opportunity to examine transportation services in the district to look for potential savings and whether it might want to reinstate bus fees.

Ms. Liscinsky asked about the current status of the discussion of starting a special education stabilization fund. Ms. Sheridan said the town wants to hold off on that conversation until fall.

Mr. Casper asked what would happen if the warrant article failed at the town meeting. Dr. Baldassarre said if it does not pass the district will need to make more reductions. He said that if they believed it could fail, he would have to put potentially affected staff on notice soon. Mr. Shinnick asked that if the article fails, whether the district could then impose bus fees for the upcoming year. Ms. Sheridan said it could, but she believes bus fees would not be able to cover the full amount.

Ms. Liscinsky asked if there are any cuts in the new budget proposal that are not from attrition and, if so, what side of the budget the potential unemployment falls on. Dr. Baldassarre said he hoped that unemployment would not have that much of an impact because staff impacted by reductions would have March-September to find employment. Ms. Liscinsky asked when Dr. Baldassarre would have to notify the affected staff and he said late spring but that as soon as the

conversation on the budget happens the following week it would be respectful to notify the affected staff as soon as possible.

Mr. Dion said he felt it would be beneficial to develop a plan for the future that shares how the district would build back after this budget and how that plan works with the town's projections. Mr. Maharay agreed and said the town and schools should meet and discuss this.

Mr. Desruisseaux said the budget hearing will be on March 5 at the UHS library. They will close the hearing and then go to capital planning the following day. Ms. Liscinsky asked if the capital planning meeting is a joint meeting with the school committee. Mr. Desruisseaux said that that was not typical, but he would post for one either way.

● Superintendent Update

Dr. Baldassarre shared the following:

- a. Taft has full E911 compliance
- b. All the room numbers at Taft have been renumbered to follow the safety plan
- c. The fire alarm panel at the high school has been repaired (\$13K)
- d. The therapeutic classroom is physically complete and the teaching position to lead it will still be included in the FY25 budget
- e. The facilities subcommittee will need to schedule a meeting to discuss recommendations to the full Committee
- f. The new cafeteria director has started working in the district

● Grant Acceptance

Dr. Baldassarre requested the Committee accept fund code 613-332 in the amount of \$14,375 and fund code 435 in the amount of \$29,250.

Motion: *Mr. Casper made a motion to accept the grants as written. Mr. Dion seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Dave: AYE; Ben: AYE; Arlene: YES; Aaron: YES; Mike: YES, Barry: YES; ED: YES. Mr. Maharay voted remotely. The Committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

● Minutes

Motion: *Mr. Maharay made a motion to approve the minutes for February 6th. Mr. Casper seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Dave: YES; Ben: YES; Arlene: YES; Aaron: YES; Mike: YES, Barry: YES; ED: YES. Mr. Maharay voted remotely. The Committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

● Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Liscinsky moved the motion. Mr. Dion seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Dave: YES; Ben: YES; Arlene: YES; Aaron: YES; Mike: YES; Barry: YES; ED: YES. Mr. Maharay voted remotely. The Committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. ***The motion passed.***

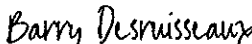
The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

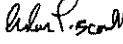
Debbie Stark

Uxbridge School Committee Recording Secretary

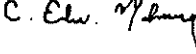
School Committee Members:

DocuSigned by:

A670885F1E154E8...

Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair

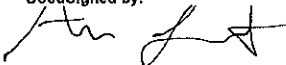
DocuSigned by:

6EB17E1C73754E7

Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice-Chair

DocuSigned by:

A9388D748AA7447...

Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk

Mr. David Shinnick, Member

DocuSigned by:

B3A15CD10DDA4E8...

Mr. Ben Casper, Member

Mr. Aaron Lenart, Member

DocuSigned by:

Michael Dion

EE4F00586B324A5...

Mr. Michael Dion, Member