

UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

July 13, 2023

Uxbridge High School Library

School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair	X	
Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice-Chair	X	
Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk	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 6:00PM.

POSTED UXB TOWN CLERK
2023 AUG 8 AM 10:42

• Public Comment (6:01-6:04)

Cassandra Greeno asked if there were going to be updates to the district's capital projects. She also shared she was concerned about the organization of the district's ESY program.

• Superintendent Update (6:04-6:36)

Dr. Baldassarre shared the following:

- For FY24 the district will be entering into the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth. This has a focus on social, emotional, and behavioral growth and it will provide professional development for district employees.
- He discussed the Therapeutic Crisis Prevention program. This training will help provide staff with opportunities to become trauma sensitive classrooms. His hope is to have three staff members attend training this August. These staff members will then be able to train other district employees.
- He is working to develop a new job description for the BCBA position.
- The field lights will begin installation the week of July 17th.
- The district had \$3.685 million in claims submitted for circuit breaker. The net claim amount on this is \$2.56 million.

Uxbridge School Committee Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2023

- f. He shared the RFPs he had received thus far from legal firms hoping to represent the district in the upcoming year. After discussion, the committee decided that they would like the administration to bring two to three candidates to the committee and explain why they were chosen. The committee will then select their preferred representation from those recommendations.

• **Grant acceptance (6:36-6:39)**

Dr. Dwyer said the district had received a grant to expand their ongoing pilot of Investigating History. The grant provides professional development and stipends to teachers for doing the extra work needed with the pilot. Investigating History is a history curriculum.

Ms. Liscinsky made a motion that we accept the grant of \$22,000 for the history implementation grant. Mr. Maharay seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

• **Appointment of Pupil Services Director (6:40-7:03)**

Dr. Baldassarre introduced his recommendation for Director of Pupil Services, Jennifer Toth. He said that Dr. Dwyer had overseen the process for the Pupil Services search and brought forth Ms. Toth as her recommendation. He stated that Ms. Toth has submitted an entry plan. The committee and Ms. Toth discussed various questions about her philosophy and history prior to their vote.

Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to appoint Jennifer Toth as the Pupil Services Director. Mr. Maharay moved the motion. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

• **Assessment of District Needs (7:03-7:47)**

• **Evaluation & Goals (7:03-7:47)**

Dr. Baldassarre and the committee discussed information he had provided them prior to the meeting. He said that he realized in November that there was a real need in the social and emotional realm for the district. He said that the document he had given the committee contained three goals that highlighted the areas he wanted to work on in the upcoming year.

Mr. Maharay said that in regard to the school committee agendas moving forward, he would like the committee to see a presentation from one of the district's schools each month.

Dr. Baldassarre offered to draft an RFP for a strategic plan to bring to the committee for their approval.

Mr. Maharay made a motion to accept the superintendent's living goals as prescribed in his district improvement plan. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

- **Budget (7:47-9:23)**

- **Vote to Authorize Balancing of Fiscal Year 23**

Mr. Aicardi stated that the current expected FY23 deficit is \$293,516. He provided the committee with multiple documents including one that showed a breakdown of the district's revolving account balances.

Mr. Aicardi gave a brief synopsis to the committee on the school choice EOY balance and the use of school choice in recent years. Mr. Aicardi shared concerns that the projected balance in the school choice account going into FY24 will be approximately \$160K. This amount takes into account the \$750K that is budgeted for use in FY24. He warned this will have a significant impact on the funding for FY25 since the district is currently applying \$750K of school choice within the FY24 proposal. He also warned that a balance that low impacts the ability for the district to manage unforeseen budgetary challenges such as it is currently seeing with a proposed FY23 deficit.

Mr. Maharay asked the administration for their recommendation as to what school choice revenue should be used for. Dr. Baldassarre stated that his recommendation would be to use everything in school choice that was above a certain percentage in the operating budget each year

Mr. Aicardi gave a synopsis of how circuit breaker funding is calculated to the committee. He said that the 14% increase in OOD tuition rates for FY24 impacted the district's FY24 budget by \$300K. He said that he was optimistic that the state would ultimately give some financial relief via a supplemental budget based on this large increase and that schools will be able to apply for this funding. He said he will be requesting permission from the committee to use an additional \$140K in circuit breaker to help balance the FY23 budget.

He said that because there was feedback from the school committee and town that the FY24 budget be in the 3 to 4% range, the district used a higher percentage of circuit breaker revenue than it typically had to help balance the proposed FY24 into that range. He stated that in FY23 the budget used \$1M from circuit breaker but, in FY24, the budget will be using \$2.3M from circuit breaker.

Mr. Aicardi stated that he did not make the decision to recommend using more circuit breaker to help balance FY23 lightly but the diminishing revenue in the school choice account was a strong factor in his choice. If Uxbridge receives additional funding via a supplemental budget in the second half of the year, he will recommend the school committee use that supplemental funding instead of the total amount of circuit breaker it had previously budgeted. He did reiterate that there are lots of moving pieces happening right now. He said that the district had recently submitted their circuit breaker request to the state and it is higher than what they had originally thought when they developed the FY24 budget. The district will find out in October how much they will be reimbursed.

Dr. Baldassarre shared that the state house had just released a proposed \$700M appropriation that would help address the 14% out of district FY24 tuition increases. He said the current language in the bill disqualifies districts that still have ESSER3 funding to spend and therefore Uxbridge would be disqualified. He said he will be contacting the town's state representatives in hopes that the proposal can be modified so that districts with ESSER3 balances can still be considered for that additional funding.

Mr. Aicardi gave a summary of some possible challenges he sees as he looks toward the FY25 budget. They included the following:

- a. PreK revolving account will not have enough funding to cover all PreK staff and therefore the general fund will need to supplement some staffing.
- b. ESSER 3 will be over. The FY24 budget has \$630K of ESSER funding within it.
- c. School Choice revolving account will be very low and will not be able to maintain the same amount of use as in the FY24 budget.
- d. Circuit breaker is currently a wild card that will need to be monitored.
- e. The athletic and transportation revolving accounts will be expired unless there is a change of heart by the school committee to charge athletic/transportation fees.

Mr. Aicardi said it would be helpful for the administration if the school committee could give specific budget directions to administration in November so they can develop their FY25 proposal around that direction.

After the presentation, Mr. Maharay said he believed the district should reach out to the town manager to see about putting a placeholder in the fall town meeting warrant that would seek additional funding for the district for FY24. He felt that that request should be focused on the unexpected FY24 PreK needs that had been highlighted previously. Dr. Baldassarre said he was concerned that if the district received additional funding and then, through good financial practices, did not need that total amount and they ended up with a surplus, that the town might lose faith in the district's budgetary requests. Mr. Aicardi said he believed the district could still

work within its current resources to help address the PreK issues and currently estimates he needs to find another \$100-120K to balance FY24. He reminded everyone that the fiscal year is just beginning and many things can happen and it is important to let some time pass to get a better handle on any potential situation.

Mr. Maharay made a motion that the Uxbridge public school committee authorize the Director of Finance and Operations to utilize an amount not be exceeded of \$1,200,000 from circuit breaker funds and \$925,000 from school choice funds to balance the FY23 Uxbridge public school budget as part of the FY23 fiscal year close proceedings. Mr. Casper seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

• **New Business (9:23-9:25)**

The school committee agreed to a regular meeting schedule where they will meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

• **Old Business (9:25)**

No old business.

• **Approve Minutes (9:26-9:28)**

Ms. Liscinsky made a motion that "we" approve the executive session minutes of June 6th, June 13th, June 22nd, and June 27th. Mr. Casper seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Ms. Liscinsky made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 27th, 2023. Mr. Maharay seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

• **Adjournment (9:28)**

Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. The committee voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

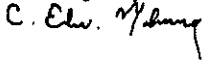
The meeting adjourned at 9:28PM.

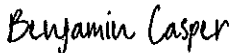
Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Stark
Uxbridge School Committee Recording Secretary

School Committee Members:

DocuSigned by:

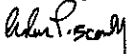
A670866F1E164E8...
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair

DocuSigned by:

A9388D748AA7447
Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk

DocuSigned by:

B23493E9030E47E...
Mr. Ben Casper, Member


DocuSigned by:

FF4F90586B224A5...
Mr. Michael Dion, Member

DocuSigned by:

6FB17E1C73754F7...
Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice-Chair

DocuSigned by:

6F70B14707B5434...
Mr. David Shinnick, Member

DocuSigned by:

B3A10CD10DDA4E6...
Mr. Aaron Lenart, Member