

**UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**March 1, 2023**  
**UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY/ZOOM**

School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Mr. Pat Tuer, Chair (joined at 7:40 via Zoom)	X	
Mrs. Chris Pezzullo, Vice Chair	X	
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Member	X	
Mrs. Tiffany Bashaw, Member	X	
Mr. Jon Rota, Member	X	
Dr. Bernard Audette, Member	X	
Dr. Lisa Mobley, Member	X	

REC'D UXB TOWN CLERK  
2023 OCT 3 AM 10:58

**1. Call to Order (6:31)**

Mrs. Pezzullo called the meeting to order at 6:31PM.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Public Comment (6:31-6:34)**

Peter Demers shared that he was confused with the budget process and was hoping to get some overall clarification during the meeting as to whether the budget proposal was built on needs or wants. He was also hoping to understand the status of the \$1M proposed budget increase that had been briefly discussed at the last school committee meeting.

**4. Recognition (6:34-6:42)**

**-Kerrie Russell, Emily Ryan, Colleen Churchill, and Kayla Donoghue**

Taft Principal, Jenn Bellville, recognized the work of Taft's entire PreK team and shared the extraordinary work they have accomplished this year.

**5. Superintendent Update (6:42-7:02)**

Dr. Baldassarre shared that the previous night he had hosted a Zoom town hall with families in the district. There were 35 attendees. The purpose was to help determine how the district is connecting with parents, guardians, and caregivers as the administration prepares a plan for increasing family/school partnerships. He then summarized some of the topics that had been discussed and said that at the end of this school year the district will have a comprehensive plan for family engagement.

He shared that Uxbridge will be hosting its first mental health summit to bring people or groups that deal with mental health issues outside of the schools together with district leadership to

understand better what each group does, and see how they can work together to create and develop new pathways for kids to be successful outside of the learning environment via behavioral health within the community.

Dr. Mobley asked what the teacher/parent ratio was at the town hall. Dr. Baldassarre stated that he felt it was about  $\frac{2}{3}$  parents to  $\frac{1}{3}$  staff.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked if it was possible to tie in the conversation from the town hall with the results of the NESDEC survey that the school committee put out a few months ago asking families what they were looking for in the district.

## **6. Assistant Superintendent Update (A) (7:02-7:47)**

### **a. Middle of the Year Data Presentation (7:02-7:43)**

Dr. Dwyer led a presentation to update the Committee on the district's academic successes and concerns at this point in the school year. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

### **b. Grant Update (A) (7:43-7:47)**

Dr. Baldassarre shared the following:

1. The food services manager has submitted a grant for a reach-in freezer and cooler at Taft.
2. There was a MASSCUE grant that was submitted by Amanda Gallerani to support hydroponic instruction at Taft.

Mrs. Pezzullo mentioned that she heard at one of the recent Capital planning board meetings that the schools would be returning money that had been appropriated at town meeting for certain cafeteria capital equipment and was seeking some clarification about what had happened. Mr. Aicardi stated that the schools had decided that they would be spending money from the food services account for those items and sending the town-appropriated funding back to the town.

*Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to accept the grants. Mrs. Pezzullo seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Mr. Desruisseaux: Aye, Mrs. Pezzullo: Yes, Dr. Audette: Yes, Mr. Rota: Yes, Mrs. Bashaw: Yes, Dr. Mobley: Yes, Mr. Tuer: Yes. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 7-0. The motion passed.*

## **7. FY24 Budget Discussion and Vote (A) (7:47-8:38)**

Mr. Tuer addressed some potential concerns from the previous school committee meeting about whether the Committee could deliberate the proposed FY24 budget after the public hearing on it had already closed. He said he had researched this issue and wanted to make the Committee aware that they could still deliberate the budget at this meeting.

Mr. Tuer said that there were currently two potential budgets for consideration. There was the original proposal from administration and a second one that was drawn up to address some concerns that the original budget relied too heavily on alternate funding. The second proposed budget was developed with the intention of keeping a full year's worth of circuit breaker in reserves.

Mr. Aicardi then confirmed that the second proposal shows one that reverted back to the district's traditional use of circuit breaker. He stated that doing this dropped the amount of proposed circuit breaker usage in the second budget proposal by approximately \$896K. He stated that the top overall number of the two proposals was still the same number. There was simply a shift lowering the use of circuit breaker and therefore the general fund request increased by the same amount as the circuit breaker amount was reduced in the second version. The only change was the lowering of circuit breaker.

Mr. Aicardi confirmed that optimally districts would want to retain a full year's worth of circuit breaker in reserves.

Dr. Mobley asked how much would be left in circuit breaker if the district moved forward with the first proposal. He stated he believed it would be around \$550K.

Dr. Baldassarre shared that the proposed budget represents a number that's very close to the bare minimum that a district is required to spend. He shared that the 3.5% budget (the original one) that they produced reflects an amount that is only 101 1% above net school spending and he wanted to commend his administrators for crafting a budget that was so lean and that they were prepared to operate the district very close to what the minimum contribution is supposed to be.

Town manager Sette spoke and repeated his question from the previous meeting asking if the schools are still keeping money in their reserve account (school choice) with these proposed budgets. He asked why the town would spend appropriated money from the taxpayer versus spending all the money the district is getting from the state (the school choice money) first. He also stated that net school spending only includes expenses directly related to teaching and learning and reminded the committee that the town has invested money in capital projects related to the schools that is not reflected in the net school spending calculations.

Mr. Aicardi stated that currently the projected FY23 end of year balance for school choice was approximately \$700k.

Mr. Tuer remarked that over the last several years the Committee had been working to spend down the balance in the school choice account and that he did not know what the right number is in regards to using school choice, but he was open to hearing suggestions since the town manager had stated that he believed the schools should use the entire amount in that account. Dr. Mobley said she respected the town's position but she was not personally comfortable spending school choice all down. She said the district should evaluate the balance in that account on a regular basis. Mr. Rota stated that he felt it was fiscally responsible to have some money available for the schools in case there was an unforeseen major expense that money could help take some of the pressure off of the town.

Mr. Tuer asked each of the Committee members to share their individual thoughts on the budget options.

*Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to approve the Uxbridge Public School budget, FY24, in the amount of \$24,634,704. Mr. Rota seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Mr. Desruisseaux: Yes, Mrs. Pezzullo: Abstain, Dr. Audette: Yes, Mr. Rota: Yes, Mrs. Bashaw: Yes, Dr. Mobley: Yes, Mr. Tuer: Yes. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 6-0-1. **The motion passed.***

## **8. SEPAC Update and SEPAC Liaison (A) (8:38-8:42)**

Mrs. Pezzullo updated the Committee on some upcoming events that will be happening through SEPAC and some of the initiatives they are currently leading.

Mrs. Pezzullo stepped down as the SEPAC liaison. Dr. Mobley volunteered to serve in that capacity.

*Mrs. Pezzullo made a motion to appoint Lisa to the SEPAC liaison position. Mr. Rota seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Mr. Desruisseaux: Yes, Mrs. Pezzullo: Yes, Dr. Audette: Yes, Mr. Rota: Yes, Mrs. Bashaw: Yes, Dr. Mobley: Yes, Mr. Tuer: Yes. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 7-0. **The motion passed.***

## **9. 2023-2024 School Calendar Second Reading (A) (8:42-8:55)**

Dr. Mobley noted that the presented calendar did not have dates for senior exams or the last full day for seniors. She stated that this information was needed for the district's coordinated program review and that she did not think they should approve the calendar until that information was noted in the calendar.

Mrs. Pezzullo stated that the Unit A contract says that the school committee needs to vote on the upcoming school year's school calendar by March 1.

No action was taken.

Dr. Baldassarre said he would reach out to the union to let them know that the Committee did not vote.

## **10. BICO Collaborative (A) (8:55-8:56)**

Dr. Baldassarre presented the Committee with an updated agreement with BICO. He stated that the main change to the old agreement (2017) was the addition of Seekonk into the collaborative.

*Mr. Tuer asked for a motion to approve the BICO collaborative agreement as presented. Mr. Desruisseaux moved the motion. Mrs. Pezzullo seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Mr. Desruisseaux: Yes, Mrs. Pezzullo: Yes, Dr. Audette: not present, Mr. Rota: Yes, Mrs. Bashaw: Yes, Dr. Mobley: Yes, Mr. Tuer: Yes. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 6-0. **The motion passed.***

## 11. Old Business (8:56)

No old business

## 12. New Business (8:57-9:01)

Mr. Desruisseaux asked if the Committee could start placing time frames back on upcoming agendas.

Mrs. Pezzullo thanked Deidre Thompson, the school committee recording secretary, who has stepped down from the position. She shared that the position was posted on School Spring and the school website for anyone who would like to apply.

Mrs. Pezzullo asked for a copy of the submitted bus bid.

## 13. Executive Session (9:01)

**To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto**

*Mr. Tuer asked for a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto, with no new business to follow. Dr. Audette made the motion. Mrs. Bashaw seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Mr. Desruisseaux: Yes, Mrs. Pezzullo: Yes, Dr. Audette: Yes, Mr. Rota: Yes, Mrs. Bashaw: Yes, Dr. Mobley: not present, Mr. Tuer: Yes. The Committee voted in favor of the motion 6-0. **The motion passed.***

The regular meeting adjourned at 9:01PM.

## 14. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Stark

Uxbridge School Committee Recording Secretary

School Committee Members:

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Mr. Pat Tuer, Chair

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Mrs. Christine Pezzullo, Vice Chair

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Dr. Bernard Audette, Member

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Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Member

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Mrs. Tiffany Bashaw, Member

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Mr. Jon Rota, Member

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Dr. Lisa Mobley, Member