

**Portland Board of Education
Budget Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, January 14, 2025 @ 7:00 pm
Portland High School Media Center**

Board Members Present:

Laurel Steinhauser
Stacey Benham
Angela Hammond
Dave Murphy
Kim Nagy-Maruschock
Meg Scata
Sarah Spear

Board Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools
Stephanie Fragola, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs
Sara McLaughlin, Director of Pupil Services
Kathryn Lawson, Principal PHS
Chuck Hershon, Principal PMS
Michael Searson, Principal BIS
Tracey Graf, Principal GS
Ryan Walstrom, Principal VV via zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Laurel Steinhauser, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Agenda

M. Scata moved to approve the agenda, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Replacement of Board of Education Member

Due to Tim Lavoy's resignation on January 3, 2025, Stacey Benham was recommended by the Republican Town Committee to complete his term through November 2025.

M. Scata moved to recommend to the Board of Education to approve Stacey Benham as the replacement Board of Education member, seconded by D. Murphy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

5. Public Comments

Cindy Laverty, Karen Dr. – stated she has served as the health teacher for Portland for 17 years. She advocated to the Board for the reinstatement of her position to full time.

John Laverty, Karen Dr. – speaking as a fellow tax payer, voter, and parent. Advocates for reinstating the health teacher position to full time.

Cooper Rettich, Penfield Hill Rd. – spoke in support of reinstating the health teacher position to full

time.

Stepheno Arroyo, Roberts St. – spoke in support of reinstating the health teacher position to full time.

Noah Decker, Victoria Rd. – spoke in support of reinstating the health teacher position to full time.

Eunice Ngunjiri, student – spoke in support of reinstating the health teacher position to full time.

Beth Anderson, West Cotton Hill Rd. – spoke in support of reinstating the health teacher position to full time.

Elizabeth Morand, Assistant Town Clerk swore in Stacey Benham.

Stacey Benham joined the meeting

6. New Business (Discussion/Possible Action)

A. 2025-2026 Superintendent of Schools Proposed Budget Presentation – Dr. Britton, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Britton reviewed his proposed budget for 2025-2026. The request is \$25,976,985.00, representing a 4.98 increase over the 2024-25 adopted budget.

He noted that this budget request includes both an additional math interventionist at Gildersleeve and an additional elementary teacher.

S. McLaughlin gave an update on the special education enrollment for next year.

The discussion also covered the non-certified salary percentage, which was higher than expected. This increase includes van drivers, contracts, and paraprofessionals who have moved out of the IDEA grant.

Coaching salaries, insurance placeholder increase, ESS substitute wage adjustment, and legal services line items discussed.

B. Shea reviewed the facility budget, including a discussion on natural gas and oil usage.

S. McLaughlin reviewed the transportation drivers for SY 25-26 and discussed the cost implications of purchasing an additional van. Additionally, a 0.5 secretary position would need to be added at the high school to bring the position to full-time (1.0). This position would be shared with Student Services to assist with purchase order responsibilities in light of the increased transportation responsibilities. The additional cost for this position would be \$22,000. The implementation of a third van would result in savings of approximately \$25,000 in the first year, with subsequent annual savings of approximately \$77,000. Please note that these savings do not include the \$22,000 for the additional secretary position.

D. Murphy inquired about the costs involved in bringing the entire special education transportation program in-house. S. McLaughlin confirmed that she would be committed to exploring this option.

Into Reading program consumables reviewed.

The technology budget was reviewed, and it was outlined that every rising 5th grader and every rising 9th grader would receive a new Chromebook. The recycled Chromebooks will be repurposed for use in 3rd and 4th grade. S. Spear requested an evaluation of the cost-benefit between leasing and buying, and Dr. Britton confirmed that he would review this option and report back to the Board. It was noted that PowerSchool is included in the District budget, rather than the CIT department budget. K. Nagy-Maruschock requested a review of the priority listing provided by Eric, with the goal of identifying potential savings in the lower-priority areas and eliminating those programs.

M. Scata discussed professional development opportunities for Board members.

Each school budget summary was reviewed, with discussions focusing on special education caseloads and the potential addition of a library media specialist at the middle school. M. Scata proposed adding a 0.5 support paraprofessional position to assist both media centers. She also expressed her support for reinstating the health teacher position to full-time. K. Nagy-Maruschock echoed her support for bringing the health teacher position back to full-time. It was noted that the cost to bring the health teacher position to full-time would be an additional \$15,000.

Budget discussion will continue on Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 7 pm.

7. Audience of Citizens - none

8. Discussion and Possible Vote – Approve 2025-2026 Superintendent of Schools Proposed Budget

No Action

9. Adjournment

M. Scata moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 pm, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tricia Dean
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk