

# NASHOBA Regional School Committee



*Together, we inspire  
and challenge all  
learners to realize their  
unique potential and  
become active  
contributors to their  
community*

## Budget and Warrant Subcommittee

Michael Horesh, Chair  
Maureen Mazzone, Secretary  
Brett Collins, Member  
Scott Powell, Member

### Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 13th, 2023

7:00 pm

Meeting Remote via Zoom Technology

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88044136216>

**Attendance:** Mike Horesh, Scott Powell, Brett Collins, District Personnel including Ross Mulkerin, A member of the public. Maureen Mazzone joined at 7:15 while we were reviewing the operations report.

- I. Call to Order 7:01pm
- II. Approval of Minutes
  - A. [January 26th, 2023](#) Scott Powell made a motion to approve the minutes of [January 26th, 2023](#). Mike Horesh seconded. IN FAVOR Mr. Horesh, Mr. Powell. **VOTED AND PASSED (2-0-1)**
- III. Unfinished Business
  - A. Update on E&D certification Ross Mulkerin provided an update. The certification was submitted to the Department of Local Services (DLS) in October. NRSD resubmitted the certification application and got additional feedback. They asked for changes related to our sources of revenue and a Chart School allowance. Mr. Mulkerin expects to resubmit again this week.

Amy Vessels – Bolton Representative  
Amy Cohen - Bolton Representative  
Shandor Simon – Lancaster Representative  
Karen Devine – Stow Representative  
Maureen Mazzone – Stow Representative  
Scott Powell -- Stow Representative

Mike Horesh – Bolton Representative (Vice Chairperson)  
Sharon Poch– Lancaster Representative  
Brett Collins – Lancaster Representative  
Leah Vivirito-Stow Representative (Chairperson)  
Joseph Gleason - Lancaster Representative (Secretary)

Kirk Downing, Superintendent  
Laura Friend, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Visit [www.nrsd.net](http://www.nrsd.net) for representative contact information.

- B. Update on Regional OPEB Management Mr. Mulkerin advised the committee that he has received 24 responses to a survey he circulated through the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS). The survey attempts to gather information on how other districts are handling their OPEB liabilities. He expects to share results with the committee in April.

#### IV. New Business

- A. January Monthly Operations Report Ross Mulkerin presented the December Operations Report.

1. There are no significant new developments
2. We are seeing some savings due to a staff reduction, achieved through attrition, that reduced enrollment permitted.
3. We do not expect much more change for the rest of the budget cycle.

- B. Warrants Recommendation

The Budget and Warrant subcommittee agreed that we would propose a change to the warrant approval process and present that proposed change at the March 1, 2023 School Committee meeting. We will hold a pop up meeting to discuss the proposal and what we will present to the School Committee. Pop up meeting is scheduled for Thursday February 23, 2023 at 7pm. We are proposing that a minimum of 1 member from each town (not assigned, just any one person from each town) be required to sign off on the warrants allowing the warrant process to move forward every two weeks.

Maureen Mazzone again requested that the School Committee be educated on the warrant creation process and the procurement process that flows into the warrant process so that warrant signers could have assurance that the warrants were in fact accurate and complete prior to signing (upon receipt of warrant support documents and excel files). It was decided that Ross Mulkerin would present the warrant process (including systems used and reports) at the B&W March 13, 2023 meeting and we could incorporate documentation presented in the School Committee Handbook for future members to be able to reference.

- C. Review of Policy DD

As part of the review of MASC policy KCD it was identified that grants need to be approved by the School Committees. Ross Mulkerin has further reviewed MASC policy DD which KCD builds off of and has asked B&W if all grants need to be reviewed and approved prior to expenditure, because there are different types of grants and the district does not want to miss an opportunity to accept a grant. Ross Mulkerin is going to propose a change to this policy based on grant type and we will discuss it at a future meeting.

- D. Post-Budget Workshop (Timeline + Inquiries)

Amy Vessels – Bolton Representative  
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Shandor Simon – Lancaster Representative  
Karen Devine – Stow Representative  
Maureen Mazzone – Stow Representative  
Scott Powell -- Stow Representative

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Ross provided an update on the budget that will also be presented at the SC meeting on 2/15/2023. Based on verbal updates about the rates for Health and Dental FY24 there has been a decrease in the proposed budget increase from FY23 to FY24, that increase now being 4.45% (instead of the original proposed increase of 5.31% from 1/18/2023). Still pending big drivers which include contract negotiations (TBD when negotiations complete) and Chapter 70 (expected no later than 3/1/2023 when the Governor issues the state budget).

- Questions:
  - **Equity Audit:** Maureen Mazzone inquired if the Equity Audit was a final figure in the budget or an estimate. Ross Mulkerin explained that there would be an update provided in the Superintendent's report at the SC meeting on 2/15/2023 on the Equity Audit process and that the \$50k in the proposed FY24 budget is an estimate based on discussions with other districts which have performed equity audits. The bid process is still in process.
  - **Buses:** Maureen Mazzone asked if we were able to get any more information on the bussing reimbursement if NRSD were to consider charging for buses. Ross Mulkerin said he has to ask one more question, but he does not believe NRSD will be eligible for the reimbursement if we charge for buses. Bussing is currently a reimbursable expenditure for our district and that reimbursement rate varies year to year.
  - **Literacy and Math Specialists:** Maureen Mazzone inquired about the need for more literacy and math specialists in the elementary schools as MCAS data is showing that literacy specifically needs improvement coming out of the pandemic years. Maureen was directed to ask this question of Learning and Teaching.
  - **Special Education:** Mike Horesh asked about Special Education figures in the budget and how much they could move prior to budget approval. No update on this since our B&W Meeting on 1/26/2023. Additionally, Ross Mulkerin, explained that by April 1st the district will know its out of district SPED placement cost for FY24 because any incoming students after 4/1/2023 requiring out of placement education are required to be covered by their previous district.

**V. Items for Next Agenda (March 13, 2023 - Monday)**

- Warrants Flow Chart
- Update on E&D
- February Monthly Operations Report
- FY21 Audit Report Summary

Amy Vessels – Bolton Representative  
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Maureen Mazzone – Stow Representative  
Scott Powell -- Stow Representative

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- Budget Questions / Budget Updates

- VI. Adjourn Brett Collins made a motion to adjourn at 8:39pm. Scott Powell seconded. IN FAVOR Mr. Horesh, Mr. Powell, Mr. Collins, and Mrs. Mazzone. **VOTED AND PASSED (4-0-0)**

*The items listed which may be discussed at the meeting are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.*

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