



EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, December 10, 2024 – 5:30 pm
Edgartown School Library and Via Zoom**

AGENDA

Please note: Some business will consist of a discussion and possible vote to take action.

- I. Approval of Minutes from November 13, 2024**
- II. PTA Report, Brooke Leahy, PTA President**
- III. Principal's Report**
 - A. Good News; Deborah DeBettencourt, Assistant Principal
 - B. FY26 School Budget Presentation
- IV. Public Comment**
- V. Schedule Next Meeting(s)**
- VI. Adjournment**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mvyyps.zoom.us/j/85239232718?pwd=2H4BNerFOeGZPwbaIAk12eaZe57Fyv.1>

Meeting ID: 852 3923 2718

Passcode: 612939

Phone dial-in:

1-646-558-8656 US

Edgartown School Committee Minutes
5:30pm Tuesday, December 10, 2024
Edgartown School library and via zoom

ESC Members Present:

Chair Kelly Scott
Member Kristin Brown
Member Sara Murphy

Staff:

John Stevens-Principal
Deb Debettencourt - Assistant Principal
Dr Richard Smith-Superintendent
Mark Friedman-Business Administrator
Hope MacCleod-Student Support
Nedine Cunningham-Social Studies Teacher/Edgartown Finance Committee

Others:

James Haggerty-Edgartown Town Manager
John O'Hara Edgartown Finance Committee
Julia Tarka -Edgartown Finance Committee
Paul Pertile -Edgartown Finance Committee
Kelly McCracken -Edgartown Finance Committee
Les Baynes -Edgartown Finance Committee

The Edgartown School Committee (ESC) was called to order 5:33pm.
(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

I. Approval of Minutes

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS SCOTT AND SECONDED BY MS MURPHY AND MS BROWN THE EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 13 EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING. 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

II. PTA Report, Brooke Leahy, PTA President
Presented by John Stevens

Last meeting November 19 at Slough Cove barn, Thank you to Amy Miles and Sara Murphy for arranging.

Hope MacCleod, Director of Student Services attended and shared info regarding parent and community education, specifically Think Kids Collaborative Problem Solving.

Next PTA meeting is Tuesday 8:20 am in the staff dining room. Meetings are open to all, not just PTA members.

III. **Principal's Report**

A. Good News; Deborah DeBettencourt, Assistant Principal

Basketball season has begun. Girls played tonight, but they did not win. Boys game is next Wednesday.

Minnesingers here today from the HS and performed for the whole school.

Spring musical returns - Under direction of Sara Williams Lucas Nascimento students will perform Matilda Junior. This is the first time since Covid.

Red stocking bazaar-is on Wednesday. students can shop for donated items at very reasonable prices. Money raised goes to red stocking.

B. FY26 School Budget Public Hearing Presented by John Stevens-Principal

First slide october 1 enrollment census 2014-2024

Population over time 353

Slide 2: 21% of total student population is special education.- Number has not varied much over time.

Slide 3: ELL students currently 81 students serviced by 4 ELL teachers.

Citizen question -regarding funding (inaudible)

Mark Friedman: All schools getting minimum increase in state Chapter 70 monies. Monies go to the town and indirectly support the school's budget.

General supplement determined by extensive calculation done by the state that includes the number of sped and ELL students. Part of a very large formula.

Slide 4: Percentage free and reduced lunch trending upward -53% of families eligible. Families used to apply, but now it is automatic based on services received such as MassHealth.

Slide 5: K-8 Projected enrollment based on birth rates, house sales, and many other factors. Edgartown is in a downward trend, but this has never been accurate.

Slide 6: Over a period of 10 years, K-8 class size- 16/class average.

Citizen statement (inaudible)

Slide 7: Edg Statistics/ School choice- These are enrollment figures of students we send to other schools or students that are homeschooled. School choice is \$5000/student. We pay for those we send, and receive money for those we take. We have 19 students in our bridge program.

Citizen question inaudible:

John Stevens: We have always lost more students than we receive for school choice.

Chair Scott: This year's numbers may be skewed due to the opening of the Tisbury School.

Mark Friedman: Tisbury gained almost 40 students and Edgartown and Oak Bluffs both down by 27 students.

Richie: That does have an impact on the school budgets. Island wide we have seen a change in our population.

Citizen question regarding 1:1 assistants (inaudible)

Hope MacCleod: If an Edgartown student is moved to a bridge or compass program after the budget has been set, the 1:1 assistant will be paid for by Edgartown until it can be added to the shared services budget.

Citizen: Is there some kind of town to town reciprocal program?

Hope: No, (inaudible) The school sending the student will pay for that ESP until it can be added to the shared services budget.

Citizen: (inaudible)

Mark Friedman: structure shared services is its own budget. It has no contingency like school choice.

Chair Scott: Is Edgartown carrying more than other towns.

Hope: it comes out in the wash. Snapshots over time even out. That is why we do it by a formula. Our numbers are increasing, so we are talking about how that will look for our students.

Other districts use "Tuition" per students vs population based formula that we use.

James Hagerty: Inaudible

Kristin B inaudible

What is the Liability of town if a 1:1 staff member is injured while we are still financially responsible- potential budget impact.

Citizen (inaudible)

Member Murphy— An alternative would be to house all programs in our own building, but we don't have space to house all the programs in our building.

Hope MacLeod- All of these things are being discussed at the cabinet level, because our numbers are increasing. The way we try to avoid it is to be staffed appropriately.

Debbie: inaudible

Mark Friedman: shared services budget ... cant' share funds from Edgartown budget across schools.

Slide 8: Top step teachers.....67% of teaching staff are at top step. Chances are they have advanced degree, a lot of experience. Reflection of the expertise of the staff.

Slide 9: Total Expenditures per pupil (FY 25)
Contractual obligations and expenses used in the calculation.

Mark Friedman: Edg school growing at fast rate. Budget divided by number of students.

Dr. Smith: Edg pop reduced by 53 students.

Slide 10: Contractual Obligations vs Expenses
85% of budget is contractual obligations
14% Operational expenses of the building

Slide 11: Budget Increases Over Time

Chapter 70 money goes directly to the town.

Grant fund budget request 12.5 Million (next year)

Budget increased 10.68% last year to this year.

Our share of shared services increased 7.46%.

Mark Friedman: Student numbers can swing each year.

Salaries and contractual obligations...Just Edgartown school, does not include shared services, Increase of 9.11%

James Hagerty: inaudible

Cost increases -\$718,000

Decreasing from 2 translators to 1.

Custodian: increase staff by 1 position. Correcting the mistake within the Excel program from last year.

Increases to salaries

Increase to Island grown initiative

Increase to written translation

Increase in tech, mostly for cyber security.

New reading program that is researched based. Current program is 15 years old.

Residential placement is over \$300,000 / year. Putting part of that in the budget for next year. Will be asking the town for a warrant article to cover part of that cost.

Mark Friedman : came to our attention after last year's budget .We have an unexpected budget item. Project expense is more than \$120,000 . We plan to apply to the state for circuit breaker extraordinary relief. Hear back about what they will award us by April or May. We do expect to get relieve we are estimating dollar amount. Amount not covered \$120,000 we will ask town for that. We have projected the continued placement and what state will give us from a normal circuit breaker process.

Warrant article we will be asking town for.

Les Fin Com: We will be asking to support an individual family. (inaudible)

It can become uncomfortable for the family. This happened 15 years ago and we decided we could not put another family through that at a town meeting. It should just be in the budget and not a warrant to avoid making the family uncomfortable.

Citizen : This has to be done at a special town meeting. We do not have a choice to put it in the budget. For next year we do have a choice. The warrant article is for money that needs to be raised for this year. There is no way around that.

Citizen: Policy we wouldn't do that (warrant articles) anymore.

Mark Friedman: We have one other request that can possibly be a solution. The state recommends a Sped Stabilization fund for the school. We will ask the towns to set up a stabilization fund.

Chair Scott: Is there a way we can frame it so we are not highlighting a family.

James Hagerty: There are a couple of options. Free cash 120,000 or write it as an addition to the school expense budget.

Final way is a year end transfer.

Risks associated with transparency or a parlay vote.

Les: We can take that under consideration.

Kristin will monies hurt our application process with the state.

Kristin : Is there any scenario where the state said no?

Mark Friedman: I have not seen it.

Chair Scott: Do keep keep the line item as "residential placement"

Mark Friedman: I would not recommend it. The town does not see the line items, they just see the overall budget.

Dr. Smith: Shared services programs were built for a certain number. Post pandemic, numbers and need going up. Looking into the cost effectiveness of our programs. We live on an island so we do not have access to day programs. We are looking at what we can do with existing programs across the commonwealth.

James Hagerty: Special town meeting

January / February meeting to address the language and means

Friedman: We are presenting this tonight not just as a normal budget presentation to the town, but we are also incorporating for our purposes a public hearing / so we welcome any questions or comments.

Multiple parties speaking (inaudible)

Murphy: We want to make sure we have enough money for next year. It is a tight budget next year. Do we feel comfortable enough?

John is confident the budget will allow the school to run effectively. Working with James on a capital plan to accommodate needs of the building such as the roof, fire detection system, doors, technology.

Mark Friedmand: To your question, is this enough: All budgets coming in within this range. Percentage increases depend on the individual needs of the schools.

Les Fin com: (inaudible)

John response : staff, new reading program, curriculum: thinks budget is at a good level.

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS SCOTT AND SECONDED BY MS MURPHY AND MS BROWN THE EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE FY 26 BUDGET EXCLUDING THE WARRANT, DEFERRING UNTIL JANUARY. 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

Mark Friedman: Sped stabilization funds:
Two votes we recommend you take tonight.

First motion we recommend that (see handout)
Non monetary request. This is just to create the mechanism. There is a cap of how much money can be in it. Cap is 2% which is about 130,000. Can fluctuate year to year. Not enough to cover the entire cost of the entire year.
This is a way to still have oversight and the school committee can vote to spend.
This is a strategy to get extraordinary relief.
Balance can not exceed 2% of total budget.

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS SCOTT AND SECONDED BY MS MURPHY AND MS BROWN THE EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND . 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS SCOTT AND SECONDED BY MS MURPHY AND MS BROWN THE EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO SUBMIT THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND . 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

John Stevens: the remaining warrant article we need to craft, consider, and vote on is the one regarding the residential placement.

Chair Scott: we would like to address the concerns and James' recommendations.

Update principal search

Beginning to craft an advertisement

Working with the New England School Development Council.

They have a large footprint for advertising. Every standing administrator will get this advertisement.

\$3,300 cost to conduct a search.

Hoping to get 12-18 applicants

Putting together a committee. Looking for town leadership to be on the committee.

Important that members are consistently in attendance

Ad will be out in the middle of next week.

Committee will be 15 or 16 people.

Committee will decide who to invite in the first round.

2-3 finalists come to the Edgartown School.

Community members and parents will be invited.

Student groups to escort candidates.

Full staff meeting where persons will engage for an hour or so

Two candidates/ we will visit their school.

Recommendations from the committee.

Hoping to announce a candidate in april.

Next meeting Wednesday, January 8 5:30pm

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS SCOTT AND SECONDED BY MS MURPHY AND MS BROWN THE EDGARTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 7:33 PM. 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.