

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
February 4, 2025
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Ms. Maria Santos (Vice Chair), Ms. Diana Lebeaux (Secretary), Ms. Susan Mackinnon and Mr. John Moses.

Also present: Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent) and Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent) and Ms. Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business & Finance).

Call to Order

Mr. King called the meeting to order at 6:00

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Opening Statement

“This meeting is being live-streamed by Chelmsford Telemedia and posted to the CPS website for interested community members to access and watch. In-person public participation will be taking place tonight in accordance with the Chelmsford School Committee Public Participation Policy. Anyone speaking tonight during the public input portion of this meeting has notified the superintendent's office of their desire to speak and has been provided with these guidelines. Upon request written comments received no later than 12:00 p.m. on the day of this meeting will also be read and made part of the record of the meeting during the second public comment session.”

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of January 21, 2025

Ms. Santos moved to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of January 21, 2025. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with one abstention.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Patrick shared that the Boys' Swim Team recently won a tournament and have a fundraiser taking place this Thursday. Wrestler Lucas Farrell faced Austin Hill last Wednesday. The coach was happy to see a good turnout! “The Thursdays” and “The Crescendos” competed at “New England Voices” in which “The Crescendos” placed second and will move on to the semi-finals! Qualifying practices for the Merrimack Valley Chess Tournament will be held on February 14th. The tournament will take place at Lowell High School on March 22nd.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that the International Teaching Fellows are here in the district. Three of them are visiting CHS and McCarthy Middle School. They will attend our next regular meeting for a “meet and greet” and to share their experiences.

Ms. Lebeaux added that the McCarthy Drama Club offered a wonderful production of *Willie Wonka Junior* this past weekend!

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. FY2025 School Facility Work Order Summary: 2nd Quarter (October – December 2024)

Christine Clancy, DPW Director, joined the meeting to share the recent quarterly summary. Her attached slides clearly articulate work orders by location and by trade. The first quarter (which included summer work) showed an 83% completion rate. For the 2nd quarter there were fewer work orders with a 93% completion rate! Most work orders are for CHS with Central Office having the fewest. Reported roof leaks are tricky to diagnose where the problem may require a patch or plumbing work.

The new software for work orders is called “Asset Essentials”. Training was completed last month, which includes about 70 school and town personnel. This is week three of the new program. The new software reduces paperwork because the work orders can be sent as phone alerts and photos can be uploaded and shared. Also, the analytics can be shared to Dr. Lang and The Town. This entire presentation may be viewed on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube.

2. Superintendent’s Recommended FY2026 Budget

Ms. Johnson-Collins distributed the FY2026 Budget binders to all attendees. Dr. Lang stated that the recommended budget will be available on the district’s website by tomorrow morning. The format for this budget is the same as it has been for the past several years. The first ten pages contain the narrative and Dr. Lang spoke of this and shared slides during this presentation. Page ten has the summary level totals for the entire budget. At the next meeting on Tuesday, February 25th a public budget hearing will be held, and the budget will be reviewed page by page for questions and Committee approval. Appendices support the budget requests. The budget for the schools for FY2026 is \$75,650,000 and is a 2.4% increase over last year. The FY2025 budget is in “solid shape”. Several contracts expire on June 30, 2025, and negotiations have already begun. When surplus funds appear in March of 2025, recommendations will be made for one-time expenditures. Dr. Lang’s presentation includes slides showing where Chelmsford stands relative to ten comparable districts in The State as well as the state average. Generally, Chelmsford is in the middle of the pack. This includes expenditures per pupil; student/teacher ratio; average teacher salary (Chelmsford offers really good entry point salaries for teachers); and net school spending (which ties directly to Chapter 70 funds received by The State) for an “adequate education”. In 2023 Chelmsford spent 33.6% more for an adequate education which is slightly higher than the state average. Dr. Lang articulated the FY2026 “fixed” funding increases and presented a slide with details. This amount totaled \$3,518,089. Additional costs for next year will include step and lane change raises; new contract increases; tuition increases for out-of-district placements; utility costs and transportation increases. Dr. Lang proposes adding one teacher for the Language Based Program (eighth grade) at McCarthy and an additional Supervisor of Students at McCarthy as well. The additional staff costs are covered by a retirement and a copy position being reduced and an open lunch/recess aide position. Dr. Lang spoke about his FY2026 budget assumptions and shared a slide with details. To fully appreciate his entire budget presentation tonight, please view it on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube. Dr. Lang asks that School Committee members look over the entire budget and send comments and questions to him. The Budget Hearing will be held at the regular committee meeting on February 25, 2025.

3. Approval of Field Trip & Travel Requests

Ms. Santos moved to approve the field trip by Chelmsford High School qualifying DECA students to the Mass. State Career Development Conference for February 27 through March 1, 2025, in Boston, Mass. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos moved to approve the field trip for Chelmsford High School students who are interested and enrolled in the Spanish Cultural Exchange Program for April 17 through April 27, 2026 in Almeria, Spain. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Reports

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared that the Center School PTO meeting took place on January 22nd. They are doing well but, as always, could use more volunteers. They are sponsoring “The Taste of Chelmsford” now and have started planning end of school year activities for fourth graders. Their budget looks good. They are looking for graduates (who attended Center School) from the CHS Class of 2025 to apply for the school’s \$1,000 scholarship.

Ms. Lebeaux attended South Row’s PTO meeting last night. They have been holding successful community events including: “Crafternoon”; a move night; and a family engagement night where they discussed district policy on devises. Also, they won a Boxtop Sweepstakes worth \$20,000 for the school!

The Chair announced the Building Committee for the new school is moving along. Dr. Lang added that the signed “Feasibility Agreement” arrived today from the MSBA! The OPM position is being advertised starting tomorrow. A site walk for candidates will be held next week. The selected firm will be selected by April and will go to the MSBA for approval in May. From the end of May through summer work will be done to choose a designer.

Action/New Items

Ms. Lebeaux wants reassurance that the “clear and supportive guidelines” in the school and family handbooks to support our “trans identifying” student population are adhered to. She would like to see The Committee closely monitor any needs that arise in “the coming months for that and other vulnerable populations in our community”.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment: 7:04 p.m.

Ms. Santos motioned to adjourn. Ms. Mackinnon seconded. Motion carries 5-0

***Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio,
Recording Secretary***