

DOVER WARRANT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the January 17, 2024 Meeting

Members in Attendance: Jerry Chen, Melissa Herman, Marty Howard, Cam Hudson, Sara Cadena Kinney, Janet McCormick, Steve Migausky, Peter Smith, Woody Weiss

Others in Attendance: Robyn Hunter, Board of Selectmen; Dawn Fattore, Schools Business Administrator; Liz Grossman, Dover School Committee; Beth McCoy, Chickering School Principal

Location: on-line, via Zoom

Mr. Hudson called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Chickering School Budget – Mss. Fattore, Grossman, and McCoy

The FY2025 budget request is \$11,425,463; an increase of \$646,822 (+6.00%) over the FY2024 request of 10,778,641. Ms. Fattore stressed that the in-district and out-of-district portions of the operating budget are best viewed separately. The former is generally stable, driven mostly by personnel costs. The latter is volatile, as the number and specific needs of students changes not only year-to-year, but within the year due to move-ins and adjustments to individual programming.

The in-district part of the FY2025 budget is \$8,615,463; an increase of 4.80%. 87% of that amount goes to salaries, which are increasing as per contract. One long-tenured employee is expected to retire, resulting in a savings of about \$60,000. Although enrollment continues to decline, the number of class sections will not change this year. It is the district's policy to not add and remove sections each year until a long-term change is warranted; this facilitates staff retention. Two new math curricula are being piloted this year and the one judged best will be fully implemented starting next year. To ease the transition, the part-time math coach positions shared between Chickering and Pine Hill will be replaced with a full-time position at each school, resulting in a 0.5 FTE increase.

The out-of-district part of the FY2025 budget is \$2,810,000; an increase of 9.87%, and is assuming 21 students in cooperative, private, and residential placements. Transportation is a significant portion of OOD costs and is increasing 19.46% over the FY2024 budget, but fortunately is now eligible for State reimbursement under the Circuit Breaker program. It was noted that Dover continues to budget without taking the anticipated Circuit Breaker into account, as the reimbursement percentage is never certain. Dover is currently running a deficit of nearly \$1,000,000 in OOD costs due to unforeseen shifts of students out-of-district, and this will likely consume this year's Circuit Breaker reimbursements, normally returned to the Town.

Minuteman School

Ford Spalding was unable to attend and present. Maggie Charon will take over this role as Mr. Spalding is moving away.

Warrant Articles

A citizen's petition for a sidewalk on Cross St. will again be on the Warrant.

Parks & Rec will have capital requests for both playground replacement and a pickleball court.

There will be a request for funds for design and approval of a lease for the rail trail.

Other Business

Mr. Smith moved that the minutes of January 10 be approved, seconded by Dr. Weiss. The motion carried 9-0-0.

Doverma.gov email addresses should finally be working correctly. Members with new addresses are asked to send a message to Mr. Hudson so he can switch his mailing list accordingly.

Mr. Hudson recommends using the Google Drive desktop app rather than the web interface to our shared files; contact him if you have problems setting this up.

Ms. Cadena Kinney has the full Chickering budget package and can send it to any who want all the details.

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn, seconded by unanimous proclamation. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary