

DEERFIELD SCHOOL BOARD  
DEERFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOL –LIBRARY - 66 NORTH ROAD  
DEERFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023 ~ 6:00 PM

Members/Participants: Kendra Cohen; Chair, Ellen O'Donnell, Danielle Palmer, Zach Langlois (6:10 pm)  
Supt. Patty Sherman, Principal Kristen Withee, Recording Secretary Trish Lafond

1. Call to Order – Ms. Cohen, Chair  
Chair Cohen called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance  
Chair Cohen led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Hearing for Trust Funds  
Chair Cohen read the public notice from the newspaper.

A motion was made by Kendra Cohen, seconded by Ellen O'Donnell, to withdraw \$851,186.56 from the School Facility Repair and Improvement Trust Fund.

3-0

MOTION CARRIED

A motion was made by Kendra Cohen, seconded by Ellen O'Donnell, to withdraw \$173,791.37 from the School Facility Paving Trust Fund.

3-0

MOTION CARRIED

4. Public Comments

Kevin Verville thanked the three board members who voted for school choice. He brought up policy JCA which applies to one school district such as DCS. There needs to be a new policy for the high schools now that there are three. A previous speaker indicated the board was owed apologies for it being said they were not listening. He said what they were doing was vague and he wanted the board to know what the community wanted. He is glad they voted on the agreements when he recommended they don't.

Leah McHugh reminded the board that in order to take money from the Special Education Trust Fund there needs to be a public hearing and it be voted on. The board was aware of this as they had done it tonight. She feels it would be beneficial to merge class levels and sizes together. Grades 4 and 5 would be a good place to start.

Nancy Shute read a statement. She is concerned about the cuts that will need to be made at DCS to cover high school choice. One line item is causing an increase of \$800,000.00 and it will be DCS that suffers the cuts.

5. Agenda Review- Ms Cohen, Chair

Chair Cohen needs to add 2 items under Immediate Business.

Solar Lease-add as "d"

High School Transfer-add as "e"

Supt. Sherman will share updates on audits.

6. Immediate Business

A. FY 24 Update

-\$315,219.00 as of today.

B. FY 25 Warrant Articles

The high school tuition line has been updated in the 24-25 budget to include changes in high school enrollment and students interested in transferring. Buses were updated to 3 high school buses in the default budget and 2 in the operating.

I. Operating Budget

II. Collective bargaining agreement with the Deerfield Paraeducator Association.

III. Special Meeting if Article II fails.

IV. Place \$150,000.00 in the Special Education Trust Fund from fund balance.

V. Place \$150,000.00 in the Special Education Trust Fund from taxation.

VI. Authorizes the board to enter a PowerPurchase agreement for solar lease.

VII. Submitting three agreements to the DOE so they are schools of record.

VIII. Does the community want to go back to School District Meeting.

IX. Concerns retainage allowed by law. Board decides each year.

X. Capital Reserve Fund for unanticipated (unbudgeted) high school tuition costs.

C. Budget Presentation

Chair Cohen presented a slide show created solely by herself explaining what budget lines are made of. This presentation is available on the website.

D. Solar Lease

Chair Cohen received a proposed lease agreement for the school district owned property on Stage Rd. She knew nothing about this lease coming.

Zach Langlois was at the Select board meeting and doesn't know if the town intends to sign a letter of intent to agree with the lease.

Ellen O'Donnell thinks it's a great opportunity but the board needs to discuss it first.

Zach Langlois said the board should ask the Select board not to sign a letter of intent until it can be researched. The town does not own the Stage Rd. property, the school district does.

Chair Cohen would want to have a public hearing to see what the community wants to do. She will send a letter to Select board to ask them not to send a letter of intent that

includes the Stage Rd. property until the School board fully investigates and has questions answered.

E. High School Transfers

Supt. Sherman has had families whose students are home-schooled, in charter schools or private schools reach out about going to high school. She was going to send a letter stating July 1, 2024 is the date to request a change. She has requests for change this year but those students would have to attend Concord High School if they transfer this year. A policy for transfers needs to be written for the future.

Ellen O'Donnell and Danielle Palmer will reach out to other schools with choice about their policies for transfers.

Ellen requested a discussion about class sizes put on the next agenda. Kendra wanted to wait until after budget and warrant articles. Ellen doesn't want to wait too long.

She would like it done before contracts go out to teachers.

January 17, 2024 was set as a date for preliminary discussion to have Ellen's questions answered.

7. Public Comments

Kevin Verville understands why Ellen is asking about SB2 when it was voted on last year. He loved Chair Cohen's presentation of the budget. A speaker earlier tonight said the high school is one line item. That is disingenuous because that one line has all the lines in the DCS budget but for someone else's budget. School choice has brought Deerfield students back to public education.

Nancy Shute said she listened to the Select board's reason for the increase in taxes. The school board has the opportunity to get information out to residents about why taxes are going to increase again next December.

Leah McHugh stated we lost a kindergarten teacher last year and made it work with increased class size. Hopes it's discussed sooner rather than later.

8. Non-Public Session- NH RSA 91-A:3, II, - *if needed*

None

9. Adjournment

**A motion was made by Zach Langlois, seconded by Ellen O'Donnell, to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 pm.**

**ALL IN FAVOR  
MOTION CARRIED**

Approved