

**Lenox Public Schools  
School Committee  
Via Remote Access  
April 5, 2021 @ 6:30pm**

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81253607773?pwd=UzdNU2FjTXlodTIDR3dFekhYTm5ZZz09>

Passcode: 717655 Webinar ID: 812 5360 7773

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Vaughan, Frances Sorrentino, Molly Elliot, David Rimmmler, Anne Marie O'Brien

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Christine Mauro, Robert Munch

**ALSO PRESENT:** William Cameron, Melissa Falkowski

- I. CALL TO ORDER. RV, Chair; 6:30 pm.** RV asked School Committee members to introduce themselves, and those present did so.

**II. HEARING OF VISITORS**

- Public comment. Mary Cherry, representing the LEA Exec Board re: article in The Eagle, particularly, the disparaging comments by member(s) of the Finance Committee, and concerns about salary reduction for new hires. Oren Cass, it was nice to see students back in school today. Feel we have been behind the 8 ball in this process, and we should look ahead to September and begin planning for a return to normal. What is goal/expectation of what school will look like at that time?

**III. CORRESPONDENCE**

**IV. BOARD REPORT**

- School Committee Meeting Minutes – March 22, 2021

**MOTION by ME and seconded by DR to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2021 School Committee meeting.**

**FS: aye**

**ME: aye**

**AO: aye**

**DR: aye**

**RV: aye**

**Approved 5-0.**

**V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- LMMHS building remediation update. New scope of work from EcoGenesis that aligns completion with the tasks MA Dept of Labor indicates need to be addressed. Disappointed for the building to be closed to in person instruction through April break. Will be opening to fulltime in person instruction during the week of April 26. Have received several inquiries regarding the retention of students in remote learning. No longer possible to flex between in person and remote learning. Must commit to one or the other when full day in person mode commences. It's not likely remote instruction will be an option for the next school year. Now meeting twice weekly with the contractors completing

this work. These meetings will include members of the School Committee as well going forward.

- Reopening of school update. WC: Re: reopening of school at Morris—info from Principal Kelley was that arrival took a bit longer than expected, but overall everything went well.
- Pooled testing update. Has gone smoothly to date. Three weeks of tests so far at Morris, with the number of tests conducted increasing each week. On Thursday last week athletes participating in Fall2 sports and a few staff at the middle and high school were tested.
- PreK and K enrollment update. Registration has already taken place for both PreK and K. K screening taking place today April 5 and tomorrow April 6. Anticipate two classes of 12 students each. Kindergarten screening will be April 7 and 8. Screening 20 residents, along with 9 Choice sibling applicants. Will admit 9 additional Choice K students through the random lottery drawing to be held later in April.
- Special Education Stabilization Fund. Fund is currently fully funded, no need for additional money at this time.
- Brenda Kelley gave a report of the success of the first day of return to full day in person learning. A community build for the outdoor classrooms took place over the weekend (Friday & Saturday), and they are just about ready for use. RV and BK both thanked all of those involved with the creation of these spaces.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.** RV: Would like to address comments made by Mary Cherry. Always very proud of the work our educators are doing and the results they are getting. Do not know why comments were made during the Finance Committee meeting regarding quality of schools declining. Have access to numbers, as the public does, the numbers for all of the schools in the county. Lenox schools are still at the top of the schools in the county. Note there was no MCAS testing last year. Continue to be proud of entire faculty and staff and student body. To MC, and all those in the schools I say: It's been a difficult year and you've risen to the occasion.

- VIII. PUBLIC HEARING OF SCHOOL DEPARTMENT FY22 BUDGET.** RV: We met with Town Manager and Chair of Select Board, and later with the Finance Committee, and made the commitment to get to the 3% number as requested. Ask MF to present the budget revisions at this time. MF: Originally presented a budget of \$14,444,549, which was a 4.7% increase over FY 2021. After the meetings were held, the goal was to achieve an increase of not more than 3% of the FY2021 Operating Budget of \$13,785,162, so that the FY2022 Operating Budget would not exceed \$14,198,717. MF highlighted areas that are reduced from the budget that was presented in March. ME: Thankful for this new revised budget, and appreciate all of the work and the effort that went in to this process. Feel good about presenting this budget to the town.
- RV: We are still able to hire best candidates, even with reduction of the budget for new hires. A goal in the Strategic Plan is to be the employer of choice, for schools in the county, and we continue to believe that is important. DR: In general, for future budgeting, we should give clear direction to administration at the onset of the budget process to avoid adjustments at the eleventh hour. Specifically--how did we reduce

text book expenditures by 50%/\$25K. MF: Funding for textbooks now coming from a grant; will amend the ESSER grant to include the cost of the textbooks.

[FY22 Budget Summary](#)

[FY22 Budget Crosswalk](#)

**MOTION by ME and seconded by DR to ask the Town:**

**PART 1:**

**To approve a gross operating budget in the amount of \$12,924,104 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending on June 30, 2022;**

**PART 2:**

**To approve the application of \$1,985,387 in revenue toward the reduction of the FY 2021 gross budget from the following sources: (1) School Choice receipts of \$1,710,000; (2) Non-choice tuition receipts of \$60,000; (3) Theatre receipts of \$15,000; (4) Pre-school receipts of \$30,000; (5) Special Education Circuit Breaker receipts of \$11,195; (6) Athletic Receipts of \$5,000; (7) Building Use Receipts of \$12,000; (8) Professional Development receipts of \$6,000; and (9) CvRF Federal Grant Offset of \$136,192**

**PART 3:**

**To see if the Town of Lenox will vote to raise and appropriate the net sum of \$10,938,717 for the school department's FY 2022 operating budget.**

**FS: nay**

**ME: aye**

**AO: aye**

**DR: aye**

**RV: aye**

**Approved 4-1.**

RV: Will be presenting the Strategic Plan to School Committee at the April 26 meeting, and asking members to vote to approve the Plan. Thank you to the Strategic Planning Committee, Robert Fuster, Erika Baluk Shepardson, Oren Cass, and Kim Davis parents; Tom Romeo, Veronica Fenton, Gigi Yablonsky, and David Fisher community members; Ben Weaver, Peter Starenko, faculty; Neal Maxymillian Chair of the Select Board, and Molly Elliot, Christine Mauro and myself members of the School Committee. A presentation to the public via Zoom will be on April 29.

DR: Would like to comment on the discussion which has taken place regarding the detrimental effect this last year has had on learning for our students. Suggest we identify students who will need extra help at the beginning of the new school year in the fall, now so that we don't lose time at the beginning of the year doing so. RV: Agree, should have a mechanism for our principals and teachers to identify those students.

## **IX. SUBCOMMITTEES**

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Teaching and Learning
- School Culture and Community Relations
- Governance and Leadership
- SBEF

**MOTION by DR and seconded by FS to adjourn the meeting.**

**FS: aye**

**ME: aye**

**AO: aye**

**DR: aye**

**RV: aye**

**Approved 5-0.**

**Meeting adjourned 7:28 pm.**

**X. DOCUMENTS IN PACKET**

- School Committee Meeting Minutes -- March 22, 2021
- Motion to approve budget

Submitted by *Amy Noble Novitsky*.