



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Wednesday, July 29, 2026
LMS Room D#132
7:00 – Hybrid

School Committee

Laura Brzozoski, Chair
Anthony Sculimbrene, Vice Chair
Mandy Gilman, Secretary
Jean Russell, Member (online)
Emily Young, Member - Absent

Superintendent

Dr. Jodi Fortuna

Recording Secretary

Gina Gonsalves

Guests:

Christopher McNamara-Business Administrator, Casey McDonnell – Head Football Coach, Billy Tyler – Lunenburg Historical Society

In accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, please be advised that this meeting is being recorded and broadcast live over the Lunenburg Public Access channel, on Facebook Live on the Public Access Facebook page.

(<http://www.facebook.com/Lunenburg-Public-Access-Cable-157427270975305/>) and will be uploaded to the Lunenburg Access YouTube after the meeting.

The agenda lists all the topics which may be discussed at the meeting and those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Votes may be taken as a result of these discussions. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by Open Meeting Law

- 1. Call to Order at 7:00 by Chair Brzozoski**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair Brzozoski**
- 3. Public Comment for prior Issues**

Anthony Sculimbrene addressed the Committee regarding the future of Turkey Hill Elementary School. Speaking as Vice Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee, he reported that the recently approved Master Plan identifies Turkey Hill Elementary School and Town administrative facilities as the community's top two priorities. He urged the Committee to address the school's accessibility and other facility needs and emphasized the importance of meeting the January 2027 application deadline to avoid further delay. Based on his professional experience as a civil engineer, he stated that the building has "great bones" and encouraged the Committee to pursue the state process to determine whether renovation or replacement is appropriate.

- 4. Executive Session** – to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective Bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.

Mr. Sculimbrene moved to take Executive Session out of order and enter into Executive Session, Ms. Gilman seconded the motion, all approved by roll call vote – Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE.

The Committee returned to Open Session following Executive Session.

5. Chair's Report

Chair Brzozoski reported that, following the previous School Committee meeting, Ms. Gilman, acting as a private citizen and not on behalf of the School Committee, submitted a petition to the Town Clerk calling for a Special Town Meeting. The petition triggered the legal process requiring the Select Board to hold a Special Town Meeting within 45 days. The additional meeting, separate from the November Special Town Meeting, is scheduled for September 3, 2026. The Committee will discuss the meeting and any related action it may wish to take later on the agenda. She then provided a detailed presentation on the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Cherry Sheet estimates and the additional state funding available for FY27. She explained that the Town develops its budget early in the year using the Governor's initial local aid proposal, which generally contains more conservative estimates than the amounts ultimately approved through the state budget process. The final state budget resulted in increases in several education-related funding categories above the amounts used when the Town budget was developed. She reviewed Chapter 70, explaining that it establishes a foundation budget and considers both a municipality's ability to contribute toward education and the needs of its students. Lunenburg, like many communities, funds its schools above the state-required minimum because the foundation budget does not reflect the actual cost of educating students. She also reviewed charter tuition reimbursement, Smart Growth School Cost Reimbursement, and School Choice tuition, noting that charter and Smart Growth reimbursements can fluctuate significantly from year to year and should not necessarily be viewed as recurring revenue. School Choice revenue has generally declined over the past 15 years, although it increased for FY27.

The final FY27 state budget provides an additional \$135,915 in Chapter 70 funding, \$116,413 in charter tuition reimbursement, and approximately \$160,000 in Smart Growth School Cost Reimbursement. The overall increase in Cherry Sheet receipts was \$491,988. She explained that increases in state aid are not automatically available to the School Department and must be appropriated by Town Meeting before they can be allocated to a Town department. She also reviewed the assessment side of the Cherry Sheet, including the amounts charged to the Town for students attending charter schools and other districts through School Choice. Charter school tuition is based on the cost of educating a student in the sending community, while state charter tuition reimbursement is intended to offset a portion of that financial impact. For FY27, School Choice sending tuition decreased while charter school tuition increased, resulting in an additional \$15,326 in education-related state assessments. After subtracting those increased assessments from the additional Cherry Sheet receipts, the Town will receive a net increase of \$476,662 in state aid. She expressed concern that charter and School Choice sending costs could increase in the future if families seek educational opportunities outside the District, noting both the financial impact on the Town and the broader effect on the community when students leave Lunenburg schools. She emphasized the importance of providing educational opportunities that encourage families to remain in the District. In closing, she thanked the parents, students, community members, and School Committee members who attended state hearings, contacted legislators, signed letters, and otherwise advocated for increased education funding, noting that those continued advocacy efforts contributed to the additional state funding received for FY27.

6. Student Representative's Report

No report was provided.

7. Review and Approve Minutes

a. Regular Session

There were no minutes presented for review.

8. Review and Approve Line Items, Transfers, Warrants & Donations

- a. Line Item Transfers
- b. Warrants: 7/6 to 7/20/26 \$100,507.91
- c. Donations

Line Item Transfers

Business Manager Christopher McNamara presented a series of year-end line-item transfers needed to cover overages within the FY26 budget. It was explained for the public that this is a normal year-end process for school districts, similar to adjusting a household budget when expenses in one category are higher than anticipated while another category has funds remaining. The transfers move available funds between individual accounts while keeping expenditures within the overall School Department budget.

The following line-item transfers were reviewed:

- \$7,535 from Maintenance of Buildings to Maintenance of Grounds Contracted Services to cover an overage in contracted grounds services.
- \$114.58 from Maintenance Salaries to Maintenance Overtime Salaries to cover an overtime overage.
- \$13,950.61 from Middle School and High School Custodian salary accounts to Elementary School and Primary School Custodian salary accounts to cover salary overages at those schools.
- \$2,809.04 from Athletic Transportation to Special Detail Athletic Events to cover an overage in athletic event security expenses. In response to a question, Mr. McNamara confirmed that these expenses include police details and custodial coverage associated with athletic events.
- \$11,000 from Heating Charges, where funds remained available, to Regular Transportation to cover an overage. Mr. McNamara explained that regular transportation had been budgeted too low for FY26 and confirmed that the transportation amount has been adjusted in the FY27 budget.
- \$16,170.37 from Middle School Guidance Counselors to High School Guidance Counselors and the High School Guidance Secretary accounts to cover salary overages. It was noted that a portion of the additional expense resulted from the high school scheduling issues during the previous summer, which required additional staff compensation during FY26.
- \$2,460 from High School Long-Term Substitutes to High School Regular Substitutes to cover an overage in regular substitute costs.
- \$9,663.95 from Middle School Administrative Secretary to the High School Principal/Assistant Principal account to cover salary overages. Mr. McNamara explained that the affected salary line items had been budgeted too low for FY26 and confirmed that the amounts have been corrected in the FY27 budget.
- \$81,075.96 from the High School Special Education Resource Room Teacher account to Hospital Tutoring and the ACE, Primary School, Elementary School, Middle School and High School Special Education Paraprofessional accounts to cover overages in those areas. In response to a question regarding the available funds in the Resource Room Teacher account, it was explained that the funds were associated with a leave of absence.
- \$3,584.80 from Dues/Meetings to Superintendent General Supplies to cover an overage in general supplies. It was noted that funds remained in the Dues/Meetings account because the full amount budgeted for meetings and events had not been used during the year.

The Committee then discussed the overall status of the FY26 budget. Mr. McNamara reported that, based on his review to date, expense accounts were approximately 100.2% expended, while salary accounts were still being reconciled. He anticipated that some salary funds would remain and expected final salary expenditures to be close to, but below, 100% of the budget. The Committee also discussed the prior budget reconciliation and the approximately \$600,000 that had been returned, which was

estimated during the discussion to represent approximately 2.5% of the budget. When asked how the current year-end position was expected to compare, Mr. McNamara stated that he was confident the remaining amount would be well below that figure. He noted that additional year-end transfers may still be forthcoming as the final accounts are reconciled.

Mr. Sculimbrene moved to accept the line item transfers as presented, Ms. Gilman seconded the motion, all approved by roll call vote – Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE.

Warrants

Warrants for the period of July 6 through July 20, 2026, totaled \$100,507.91.

Donations

The Committee reviewed six grants awarded by the Lunenburg Education Accelerator Foundation (LEAF) during its first year of grant funding. LEAF raised more than \$10,000 to support programs and resources for Lunenburg Public Schools and awarded grants totaling \$10,716.

The six funded projects include the ACE Outpost; Digital Wireless Sound System with Headsets and Hall Mics; Erector Sets for Grades 3–5 STEM; Creating Confident Young Researchers; Revolution in Lunenburg; and Scholastic News and STEM/Science Magazine Subscriptions.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to LEAF for its fundraising efforts and support of the District. The six grants were presented for approval as a package.

Mr. Sculimbrene moved to accept the LEAF grants as presented, the motion was seconded, all approved by roll call vote – Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE.

Laura Burgeon, President of the Lunenburg Musicators, presented two donations in support of the District's music programs. A \$300 donation was provided for the Color Guard to assist with additional uniforms and related needs, including tunics, gloves, flags and/or shoes. She reported that participation in the band and Color Guard has grown to approximately 38 students, more than tripling over the past three years, and noted continued growth in the younger grades.

A second donation of \$1,213 was presented to fund the Middle School Jazz Band stipend and allow the program to continue. Ms. Burgeon discussed the students' enthusiasm and recruitment efforts and expressed appreciation to Ms. McGregor and Mr. Sheldon for continuing to encourage student participation in concert band, jazz band and marching band. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the donations and the continued support of the District's music programs.

Ms. Gilman moved to accept the donations with gratitude, Mr. Sculimbrene seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote.

9. Superintendent Report

Dr. Fortuna reported on summer preparations and recent hiring. Appointments include Harley Baker, Middle High School Social Work Adjustment Counselor; Caitlin Agnullo, Turkey Hill Elementary School Assistant Principal, replacing Dr. Cormier following her retirement; Jessica Cormier-Drozdz, High School Chemistry Teacher, replacing Dr. Friedman; Robert Pakazon, .5 Athletic Director, replacing Ms. Burns; Nick Banks, Computer Technician, replacing Walter Troka; Kara Herokowitz, School Committee Zoom Host and Event Manager; Edeline Viola, High School Assistant Principal, replacing Ms. Toussaint, who

transferred to the Middle School; Gina Gonsalves, School Committee Recording Secretary, replacing Ms. Fuller; Sandra Ritchie, Guidance Secretary, replacing Sandra Sheehy, who transferred to Special Education; Deanna Byrne, Primary School Paraprofessional; Kenzie Minone, Social Work Adjustment Counselor; and Denixa Mendez, Primary School Custodian.

Dr. Fortuna reported that the FY26 earmark for the District's 10-passenger vans has been finalized and the vans have been ordered. The administrative team will develop procedures for using the vehicles among the District's smaller programs. The District also secured \$175,000 in FY27 earmark funding for system infrastructure upgrades and will develop a spending plan with the Technology and Buildings and Grounds Departments. The issue involving previously unpaid scholarship funds has been resolved following work by Central Office and Town officials. The scholarship checks have been processed, with the final check expected to be provided on Monday. The Committee thanked staff for resolving the matter before students begin college.

Dr. Fortuna also met with new Recreation Director Krista DeVoe to discuss increased collaboration between the School and Recreation Departments, including opportunities for Recreation programming to address potential programming gaps and expand opportunities for students and adult residents.

Updated federal grant allocations include \$28,443 in Title II funding, \$15,109 in Title IV funding and \$193,820 in Title I funding. The Title I allocation was substantially higher than the approximately \$96,000 anticipated and resulted from changes in federal funding calculations rather than an increase in the District's low-income student population. Title II will support evidence-based mathematics professional development and implementation of high-quality instructional materials; Title IV will support safe and healthy students, trauma-informed practices and school climate; and Title I will support instructional coaching, educator leadership, evidence-based literacy instruction and improved outcomes for students at risk of not meeting state academic standards.

Dr. Fortuna reported on her attendance at the annual Massachusetts Superintendent Conference, where she met with experts regarding the Massachusetts School Building Authority process as the District evaluates its facility needs and prepares to submit a Statement of Interest this winter. She also met with the founder of Ignite Tutoring regarding innovative approaches to student support.

The Committee discussed the appointment of Robert Pakazon as the new .5 Athletic Director, effective August 1. Dr. Fortuna noted his business and financial background and expects those skills to assist in developing stronger systems and structures within the athletic program. The Committee noted that work began during the previous year to better organize and clarify athletic financial information and that additional work remains.

10. New Business

Action

- a. Donation-Football Helmets & Transportation (5 min)
- b. Donation-Color Guard Uniforms (3 min)
- c. Donation-LEAF Grants (3 min)
- d. Fireworks-Lunenburg 300th Anniversary (3 min)
- e. FY27 Budget-Additional State Aid
- f. Custodial MOU

Donation – Football Helmets & Transportation

The Committee discussed proposed donations from the football boosters for additional football helmets and transportation to away games. Dr. Fortuna explained that the boosters had offered to purchase additional helmets

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for student athletes; however, because helmets are required safety equipment necessary for participation in football, the District determined that it should be responsible for that expense. The District will therefore purchase the additional helmets, and the boosters' proposed helmet donation was withdrawn. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the boosters for their willingness to provide the equipment. A representative of the Friends of Lunenburg High Football Booster Program then discussed the proposed donation of transportation for the football team and cheerleaders following the removal of athletic transportation funding from the FY27 budget. The boosters originally anticipated funding one bus; however, after including the cheerleading team, two buses will be necessary for transportation to away games. The boosters have sufficient funds to cover the anticipated cost of approximately \$3,100 and intend to provide one-way transportation to away games for both the football team and cheerleaders. The representative explained that the total transportation funding will be provided through three separate donations rather than one lump-sum donation, allowing the booster organization to maintain sufficient funds in its treasury at the beginning of the season. The Committee thanked the boosters for their support and discussed the coordination that occurred between the organization and the District to establish a donation schedule that complies with District requirements. The boosters also expressed appreciation for the cooperation of the District, School Committee and administration in developing a solution that will allow away-game transportation to continue.

Ms. Gilman moved to accept the donation for transportation, Mr. Sculimbrene seconded the motion, all approved by roll call vote – Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE.

Following the vote, the Committee commended the football team, coaching staff and boosters for their efforts to work collaboratively with the District to develop a solution to the transportation issue. It was noted that the process could serve as a model for other booster organizations, particularly when proposed support involves more complex funding or logistical arrangements. The Committee also noted that the proposed transportation arrangement had been reviewed with District legal counsel, who confirmed that the arrangement was permissible.

Donation – Color Guard Uniforms

This item was addressed earlier under Item 8(c), Donations.

Donation – LEAF Grants

This item was addressed earlier under Item 8(c), Donations.

Fireworks – Lunenburg 300th Anniversary

The Committee reviewed a proposal related to the Town of Lunenburg's 300th Anniversary celebration. It was explained that the Town will celebrate its 300th anniversary in 2028 and, consistent with prior anniversary celebrations, the 300th Anniversary Committee is planning a "First Knight" celebration on December 31, 2027, to formally begin the anniversary year. The evening is expected to include activities in the Town center, including possible activities involving the Senior Center and Teen Center, followed by a short fireworks display of approximately six to eight minutes. The proposal calls for the fireworks to be launched from the grass football practice field near the high school rather than the turf field. The location was selected because it is fenced, can be secured from public access and would allow the fireworks to be visible from much of the Town center area. The Committee reviewed information regarding the professional fireworks company, insurance requirements and site considerations. It was noted that the company, formerly known as Atlas Fireworks had reviewed potential locations and determined that other sites, including the area behind Turkey Hill Elementary School, presented concerns regarding potential property damage. The Committee discussed possible impacts to the practice field, including vehicle access, snow conditions and the potential for damage to school property. It was noted that the event will occur during the winter when the ground is expected to be frozen and potentially snow-covered, reducing the likelihood of damage to the grass. The fireworks will be conducted by a professional company, and the Committee noted that concerns regarding fire or property damage were substantially reduced compared with summertime or unauthorized fireworks displays. Parking and access logistics will continue to be coordinated as planning progresses. The Committee expressed support for the event as a community celebration marking the beginning of Lunenburg's 300th anniversary year.

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the proposal to hold the 300th Anniversary fireworks display on the football practice field on December 31, 2027, Mr. Sculimbrene seconded the motion, all approved by roll call vote – Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE.

FY27 Budget – Additional State Aid

Ms. Gilman requested that the Committee reconsider the warrant article approved at its previous meeting, increasing the FY27 School Department operating budget request from \$350,000 to \$418,056 and submitting the revised article for the September 3, 2026 Special Town Meeting. She noted that the final FY27 state budget provides Lunenburg with \$418,056 more in education-specific receipts than had been included in the Governor's original proposal. The Committee also discussed the Town's approximately \$476,000 overall net increase in state aid. Ms. Gilman noted that the School Department had reduced its FY27 budget by more than \$800,000 and maintained that the additional education funding should be directed to the schools. She clarified that her citizen petition was filed as a private citizen to trigger a Special Town Meeting and did not specify an appropriation amount.

Dr. Fortuna identified restoration of a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) position as an additional priority that could be funded by increasing the request to \$418,056. The position had been left vacant through attrition to help balance the FY27 budget, despite increasing numbers of students requiring specialized services. She explained that recent state restrictions on the use of cool-down rooms have increased the need for individualized sensory and regulation plans, which occupational therapy staff are trained to develop and support in classrooms. Members noted that the new requirements were not accompanied by additional state funding. Dr. Fortuna explained that adequate specialized staffing helps the District serve students within its schools and potentially avoid more restrictive and costly out-of-district placements. Members emphasized that the COTA position had remained vacant because of financial constraints, not because the position was unnecessary. The Committee discussed the relationship between Ms. Gilman's citizen petition and a School Committee-sponsored warrant article. The September 3 warrant remained open until August 7, allowing the Committee to amend its previously approved article and submit the revised amount without collecting signatures. Ms. Gilman stated that if the Committee sponsored the article, she did not intend to separately seek an appropriation through her citizen petition.

Members also discussed whether the additional state aid should be considered recurring revenue, noting that overall education-related Cherry Sheet receipts have historically trended upward while individual categories, including charter and Smart Growth reimbursements, can fluctuate. Dr. Fortuna acknowledged the challenges of using potentially variable revenue for recurring personnel costs.

The Committee discussed directing the additional funding primarily toward intervention and support positions rather than immediately restoring classroom teachers. Dr. Fortuna noted the difficulty of hiring teachers after a September Town Meeting, the effectiveness of targeted intervention, and the limited class-size reduction that could be achieved with the available funding. Members emphasized that classroom teachers remain necessary, but the District has been forced to prioritize its most immediate needs because of financial constraints. Although members acknowledged that individual warrant articles are not an ideal method of developing a school budget, they characterized the circumstances as extraordinary and supported seeking the additional education-specific state funding.

Ms. Gilman moved to amend the previously approved warrant article to request \$418,056 for the FY27 School Department operating budget and to submit the amended article for the September 3, 2026 Special Town Meeting. Mr. Sculimbrene seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion was restated as: *To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate an additional sum of \$418,056 and no cents for the FY27 operating budget for the School Department, or take any other action relative thereto.* Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Gilman then discussed a separate proposal by Governor Healey to provide an additional \$100 million in statewide education funding derived from Fair Share Amendment revenues. The proposed funding would be distributed on a per-pupil basis and, under the proposed legislative language, would go directly to school districts rather than requiring a Town Meeting appropriation. The proposal remained subject to legislative approval. Ms. Gilman prepared a letter urging state legislative leaders to support and promptly approve House 5586, including the Governor's proposed per-pupil funding and language directing the funds to school districts for local expenditure decisions. The Committee discussed wording in the draft letter and agreed to characterize the District's financial condition as a "crisis." Members emphasized that the proposed additional funding had not yet been approved and should not be represented publicly as funding the District had already received. It was estimated during the discussion that the proposal could provide Lunenburg with approximately \$170,000–\$175,000 in additional funding. Dr. Fortuna had developed potential uses for the funding if it becomes available; however, members stressed that even that amount would not restore all of the positions and programs lost through previous budget reductions.

Mr. Sculimbrene moved to approve Ms. Gilman's letter to the Legislature regarding the proposed \$100 million allocation of Fair Share Amendment funding for schools. Ms. Gilman seconded the motion. Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE. Motion passed unanimously.

Custodial MOU

Dr. Fortuna reviewed the recently negotiated agreement with the custodial bargaining unit, AFSCME Council 93. She expressed appreciation for the collaborative manner in which both sides approached negotiations. School Committee representatives on the negotiating team were Ms. Brzozoski and Ms. Gilman. The union negotiating team included Rich Krafke, Jimmy Gentilia and Tim McKenna. The agreement provides salary increases of 3.5% in FY27, 2.5% in FY28 and 2.5% in FY29. Two additional salary steps were also added to assist with employee retention and recognize longevity in these essential positions.

Additional contractual changes include revisions to Article 5 regarding dues deduction language to more closely correspond with AFSCME membership-card language; replacement of references to "working days" with "business days" in the grievance and arbitration provisions; and replacement of the American Arbitration Association with the Labor Relations Connection for arbitration, formalizing a provision that had previously been addressed through a side letter. Language in Article 7 was also revised to clarify that alleged contractual violations may proceed through the grievance and arbitration process.

Changes to Article 10 address the use of temporary employees. Individuals outside of the bargaining unit may not perform bargaining-unit work on a permanent or indefinite basis. Temporary workers may be used to assist with work inside or outside District buildings but may not work for more than six consecutive months or be used to diminish bargaining-unit rights or benefits. The District must notify the union of the temporary worker's start date, work location and anticipated length of service.

Article 22 was revised to include a new longevity payment of \$500 for employees with 5–9 years of service. Existing longevity benefits were changed from percentages to fixed-dollar amounts to make budgeting more predictable: \$1,000 for 10–14 years; \$1,250 for 15–19 years; and \$1,750 for 20 or more years of service. The clothing allowance was increased to \$455.

Dr. Fortuna reported that AFSCME Council 93 had ratified the agreement and that School Committee approval was required to complete the process. Committee members complimented both negotiating teams for being prepared, professional and collaborative and noted the custodians' commitment to the District, its facilities and students.

Ms. Gilman moved to accept the negotiated changes and approve the custodial agreement with AFSCME Council 93. Mr. Sculimbrene seconded the motion. Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Old Business

Action

- a. FY26 Budget – Update on Year end

The Committee briefly discussed the FY26 year-end budget update and agreed to table the item until additional information is available.

Ms. Gilman moved to table the FY26 Budget – Update on Year End. Mr. Sculimbrene seconded the motion. Ms. Brzozoski – AYE; Mr. Sculimbrene – AYE; Ms. Russell – AYE; Ms. Gilman – AYE. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Public Comment for issues Discussed during 07.29.2026 meeting

Laura Burgeon, Mulpus Road, thanked Ms. Gilman and others involved in advocating for additional school funding. She stated that when state funding is designated for education, she believes it should be directed to the schools responsible for educating the Town's students. She also noted that the proposed additional per-pupil funding from the Governor would come from Fair Share Amendment revenues, which are constitutionally dedicated to education and transportation. Ms. Burgeon discussed the cumulative effects of several years of school budget reductions and stated that students are already experiencing larger classes and fewer educational opportunities. As an example, she reported that her high-school student was unable to fit a physical education course into her junior-year schedule and would need to complete additional physical education requirements during senior year. She encouraged members of the public to contact state legislators in support of additional education funding, noting that constituent communications can have an impact on legislative decisions.

Anna Lockwood, participating remotely, thanked Dr. Fortuna for publicly reviewing the custodial agreement and noted the value of providing residents with detailed information on public employee agreements. She reported reviewing approximately ten years of Cherry Sheet data and stated that she found no year in which the Town received less net state funding than the preceding year. She therefore disagreed with characterizing the additional education funding as non-recurring and supported directing the additional \$418,056 to the School Department. Ms. Lockwood also thanked those involved in the citizen petition, noting that the process resulted in a Special Town Meeting after the Committee's earlier request had not resulted in one being called. She emphasized that the September 3 meeting is a legally authorized Special Town Meeting and encouraged Town boards to facilitate the warrant process.

Kara, participating remotely, asked for clarification regarding the newly appointed .5 Athletic Director position and whether the individual would also serve as a part-time Assistant Principal. Dr. Fortuna explained that the roles have been separated. The District will have a half-time Athletic Director, and, if the additional funding is appropriated at Town Meeting, it plans to restore a second full-time Assistant Principal. Dr. Fortuna explained that combining Athletic Director and Assistant Principal responsibilities requires a particularly broad skill set and that separating the positions will allow each role to be staffed more effectively.

13. Reports from Sub-Committee

Ms. Brzozoski reported on a joint meeting of the Select Board and Municipal Building Design Committee, which included a presentation on Green Communities programs, grant opportunities and the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Additional information regarding school facilities will be presented to the School Committee at a future meeting.

The joint meeting also included discussion of the former Turkey Hill Primary School building. Although no formal vote was taken, an informal poll indicated general support, with one member opposed, for demolition of the building, for which no clear municipal reuse has been identified. The building has deteriorated considerably, including water damage and significant roof deterioration. At an upcoming meeting, the Municipal Building Design Committee will evaluate the Town's priority facility needs, available municipal buildings and potential future uses. Ms. Brzozoski emphasized that the Committee was not recommending construction of a new Town Hall and that major building investments should be considered in light of the Town's current school funding challenges.

Mr. Sculimbrene reported that the Athletic Advisory Committee is being restarted to help coordinate booster-club fundraising and ensure compliance with District policies and applicable requirements. The Committee will assist booster organizations in navigating District processes and coordinating support for athletic programs. He and Ms. Gilman anticipate serving on the Committee with other representatives and volunteers. The recent football booster transportation effort was cited as an example of successful collaboration.

14. Topics for Future Discussion

The Committee identified the Massachusetts School Building Authority process as a priority topic for future meetings, particularly in connection with the long-term needs of Turkey Hill Elementary School. Members requested an overview or presentation explaining the MSBA process for both the Committee and the public.

It was emphasized that renovation or replacement of Turkey Hill would be a lengthy process potentially requiring many years from initial application through completion. The Committee agreed that, because of the length and complexity of the process, the District should begin familiarizing itself with MSBA requirements and move forward with the initial steps.

The Committee also discussed whether an August meeting may be necessary to approve additional FY26 year-end line-item transfers. If a sufficient number of transfers require action before September, an additional meeting may be scheduled. Otherwise, the next School Committee meeting is anticipated for the day before September 3, 2026, Special Town Meeting. A meeting with the Finance Committee is also expected prior to Town Meeting.

15. Adjournment Mr. Sculimbrene made the motion to adjourn at 9:11 P.M., Ms. Gilman seconded the motion and all approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Gonsalves