

Special Meeting of the Fall River School Committee

Tuesday, May 26, 2015
Immediately following the Public Hearing

Morton Middle School
1135 North Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720

Agenda

- Roll Call
- Salute to the Flag
- Committee of the Whole
- Discussion and Vote to Approve:
 - FY16 Budget
 - Durfee High School’s Program of Studies
 - Expenditure of \$120,000 for the Chapter 74 Environmental Engineering program start-up costs
 - Assignment of FY15 Supplemental Appropriation in the amount of \$1,198,579

Minutes

Transcriber’s note: At 6:46 PM, at the conclusion of the Public Hearing, Mayor Sutter called for a brief recess before convening the Special Meeting.

At 7:06 PM Mayor Sutter read the Open Meeting Law.

A Salute to the Flag followed.

Mayor Sutter then asked for a roll call for attendance which showed all members were present.

Mayor Sutter noted there was no citizen input and proceeded to discussion item one.

1. FY16 Budget

MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mr. Maynard: That the Fall River School Committee adopt for Fiscal Year 2016 an operating budget of \$118,840,194 which represents 100% of net school spending for FY16.

No discussion

A roll call showed:

Mr. Andrade: Yes	Mr. Maynard: Yes
Mr. Costa: Yes	Mrs. Panchley: Yes
Mr. Hart: Yes	Mayor Sutter: Yes
Mr. Martins: Yes	

All were in favor	None were opposed	Motion Passed
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MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mr. Andrade: The FY16 total transportation costs to transport students of the Fall River Public Schools is estimated at \$8,250,000. Mr. Costa asked the Committee to go on record to adopt a spending plan for transportation that is \$5,650,000 which represents a reduction of \$2.6M. He asked the Committee to support that because the conversations that he has had personally with the City was that they were going to make a commitment in the fall, when the City’s free cash is certified, to transfer into the transportation line of the school department the \$2.6M. In doing so, they will not only make the Fall River Public Schools whole for net school spending based on the previous motion but would also account for the total dollar amount needed to transport students in FY16.

No discussion

A roll call showed:

Mr. Andrade: Yes	Mr. Maynard: Yes
Mr. Costa: Yes	Mrs. Panchley: Yes
Mr. Hart: Yes	Mayor Sutter: Yes
Mr. Martins: Yes	

All were in favor

None were opposed

Motion Passed

2. Durfee High School’s Program of Studies

Superintendent Mayo-Brown explained that members had received the proposed draft of B.M.C. Durfee High School’s Program of Studies for the 2015-2016 school year that evening. She was not requesting any action on the Program of Studies but Dr. Roy was available to provide a very brief overview to alert the Committee to any changes as they reviewed the document. They would be looking for action on the Program of Studies at the June 8 Regular School Committee meeting.

Dr. Roy explained that they were really no new courses being offered except for Environmental Technology which is the CVTE program. That is really the only big change that they will see in terms of course offerings for kids. There is a change in the credit adjustment based on the schedule so they will see courses that are one credit as normal which means five days a week and there are other courses now, because the periods are longer with the proposed changes to the schedule, which are .5 credits. Other than that the content is pretty much staying the same; they just had to modify the coursework to fit into the new schedule.

Mayor Sutter asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Martins said after just receiving the document that evening he was flipping through it and wondered if it was reflective of the period changes that are being proposed for Durfee.

Dr. Roy said yes.

Mr. Martins said he was looking at career and technical education and he saw quarter credit courses for some of the courses.

Dr. Roy explained that there are courses that are full year courses and there are some that are .25 if it is an elective but they will see additional credits in the junior and senior year of the CVTE programming. She said if he was looking at a specific course she could address that.

Mr. Martins asked if there were changes to the amount of credits that were given to courses such as cosmetology and early childhood education.

Dr. Roy responded credits, yes. She explained that the way it exists right now, typically if they have a class every day, Monday through Friday, one period a day; that is considered one credit. Now the periods are going to be much longer so going forward if they have that same class every single day it is still one credit but the time on learning has been increased so there is some adjustment in the context.

Mr. Martins asked if she considered this to be a good thing.

Dr. Roy said the time on learning will be a great thing for kids.

Mr. Martins said time on learning, absolutely so; but when he looks at some of the material that is combined there is an 11% reduction in faculty teaching going on. He felt that was an issue for another day. His concern is students graduating college and career ready and if they are taking away time- especially in something like cosmetology where there is a licensing issue - he wondered how they expected kids to become employable.

Dr. Roy said that they are not taking away time, they are actually increasing time for almost all the programs. In terms of cosmetology, she knows the staff has had multiple discussions on that and what they may lose perhaps in the sophomore year they tend to make up in the junior and senior years because of the longer periods as well as other experiences. She thinks that the Durfee staff is fairly confident that this schedule is really built for the students to maximize their potential for learning and readiness.

Mr. Martins said he hoped all kids will go on to college noting that the ten outstanding students were in the newspaper that day and congratulated them on going to their colleges but wondered about all the other kids. He wondered where they would go and what they would be doing. He said it hurts him when a student graduates from high school and does not have the skills to get a job. He hoped that these programs that were designed to provide work are not watered down as far as time is concerned where the kids get nothing out of it.

Dr. Roy said that is not the case and they share the same goal. They will actually maximize time on learning in this new schedule.

Mr. Martins asked Madame Superintendent if this was going to be considered at the June meeting.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that was correct.

Mr. Martins said that was rather unfortunate because he would not be able to attend the June meeting.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that they would be pleased to meet with Mr. Martins prior to then to hear any suggestions or concerns he might have over the Program of Studies.

Mr. Martins said that that would be greatly appreciated and yielded.

3. Expenditure of \$120,000 for the Chapter 74 Environmental Engineering program start-up costs

Superintendent Mayo-Brown invited Mr. Robert Gadbois along with Dr. Michelle Sylvaria through the Chair to the podium. She noted that they had made a very detailed presentation to the finance subcommittee regarding the start up costs for the Chapter 74 Environmental Engineering and

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Technology pathway that they submitted their application for to the Department of Education in April and hope to start this fall. In order to start this fall they need to retrofit the space and order some materials. Mr. Gadbois has taken the lead in putting that together and is working with Mr. Coogan and others to make sure that they are ready to go.

Mr. Gadbois asked if there were any questions.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked Mr. Gadbois to briefly describe for the Committee of the whole and categorize the costs needed to start up and how many students would be served in the program.

Mr. Gadbois explained that there would be a three-phase remediation schedule involved for the lab in question. There is a significant amount of cleaning that is taking place right now and there will need to be some construction that will begin in June after students exit including the construction of some dividing walls, storage space, installation of some electrical materials including computer stations, wall outlets, ventilation hoods, etc. There is going to be the installation of several cabinets to store program materials as well as some plumbing needs as well as a requirement to install a deluge shower. There is also approximately \$55,000 in instructional materials and supplies and a need for a computer lab associated with the new program with a cost of \$25,000 for that lab.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said for reference Committee members had before them a paper clipped packet detailing the timeline as well as the various costs and components for the program start up.

Mr. Maynard asked where the money would be coming from.

Mr. Gadbois said that some of the money would be coming out of the remaining Perkins funds that have not been allocated so far. There is approximately \$20,000 in available funds that they can apply towards this expenditure.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown added that the School Committee had unassigned approximately \$1.2 million and that is part of what they are discussing later that evening. These program costs come to approximately \$120,000 and would come out of that \$1.2 million.

Mr. Maynard asked why they needed a shower.

Mr. Gadbois said that there was a requirement that all environmental labs have a deluge shower in case there was any exposure to chemicals, etc.

Mr. Martins said he supports the environmental lab and felt that a deluge shower was definitely necessary. However, they have had this discussion before and every time there is an opportunity he will bring it up that there are other potential programs at Durfee. He noted that right now they do not have a teacher for this new program and have to hire one.

Mr. Gadbois agreed.

Mr. Martins said that there are programs at Durfee that they can combine in some fashion to have additional Chapter 74 programs. The additional state aid coming to Fall River would be about \$3,600 per student. It would take some time and effort because they have to have the curriculum but they already have curriculum on a separate basis that just needs to be combined. They already have the equipment and teachers. He noted that the foundation budget is predicated on a lot of things and

explained noting that Chapter 70 is specific. They could get more Chapter 70 money without having to increase their net school spending.

Mrs. Panchley thanked Mr. Gadbois and Dr. Sylvaria for bringing this forward. She was looking forward to seeing the application go through and the results. The Committee of the whole did agree to put forth one application this year and they gave them a number of options that they had looked at and explained how they narrowed it down to this program and she thought that was very well thought out. They talked about looking forward to the same process next year and collaborating to expand the CVTE programs but she is really happy where they are at right now and appreciates that they are moving forward with it.

Mr. Andrade wondered as Mr. Costa had at the subcommittee meeting if any of the equipment could be salvaged later on such as the cabinets if they do have a new school in a few years.

Mr. Gadbois said absolutely he would think anything but the permanently installed items could be used.

4. Assignment of FY15 Supplemental Appropriation in the amount of \$1,198,579

Superintendent Mayo-Brown introduced this item by reminding the public that they do not typically have \$1.2 million unassigned but they do at this point because of the Mayor's commitment to 100% of net school spending. A supplemental appropriation was made to the School Committee. Of that supplemental appropriation, the finance subcommittee discussed the \$1.2 million that was currently unassigned and discussed how it could be best allocated to meet the needs of students. Through the Chair she asked that Mr. Thomas Coogan come up to the podium. She reminded School Committee members that they have a packet before them titled *Proposal for Spending Plan* which was based on the conversation that they had with the finance subcommittee. Part of that spending plan includes the \$120,000 startup cost for the Chapter 74 program they just discussed and Mr. Coogan will walk them through the remainder of the plan which details technology investments in most of the schools as well as some projects through facilities and operations.

Mr. Coogan said that they had spoken before the finance subcommittee and put forth some ideas and options that might account for the additional funds that they get to expend this year. There was a discussion about an initial investment which included the \$120,000 that involved the CVTE program that Mr. Gadbois just presented. They also suggested in the interest of beginning a life cycle program to replace one of the transportation vans that the district uses. The price of that vehicle that comes in off the state contract is \$27,500. This is a transport van for passengers and they use that to transport students to some of the outlying areas where they do not run a regular route. The \$27,500 is the price to acquire requires a van off the state contract. As they have done in the past when they purchase vehicles, they use the state contract price as a placeholder and then they put it out to bid to see if they can do better than that. The van does need to be outfitted with the school bus transporter required items.

Mr. Coogan continued that they recently had a loss at the Letourneau Elementary School due to a power surge. At this point they have a \$20,000 placeholder to repair the items which are in the process of being repaired because they need to get them back online. As they finalize those bills they will have a better handle on that but they did put in the \$20,000 request to account for the investment in making the repairs necessary to restore those items that were damaged as a result of the power surge. The subtotal for those three items - the CVTE program, the van, and Letourneau School - come to approximately \$167,500.

Mr. Coogan continued that after a lot of work and effort there was a plan put together with several different levels of investment for technology. This plan affects 10 of the 17 schools and involves lifecycle replacement for some aging equipment. If any of that equipment can be put back into service in another form, they would do that. They repurpose things until they can't get any more use out of them. The technology investment affects the Letourneau, Fonseca, Viveiros, Kuss, Greene, Durfee, Talbot, Spencer Borden, Silvia, and Lord. That is based on the age of the equipment. The total comes to \$793,925 and also includes some additional whiteboards. The plan is designed to bring equity into some of those schools that may be lagging a little further behind in their acquisition of technology for students and instruction.

Finally, in January of this year they submitted a list of capital projects that totaled just over \$1 million. Some items were done previously and since then he was asked to come up with a short list of repairs that could be done relatively quickly to end the fiscal year and those totaled just over \$200,000. He submitted in their packet a list of those selected items from the larger list of projects that they had submitted.

Mr. Coogan said if they notice that number still comes in just slightly under the amount that they have left to expend. There is also a proposal to invest the additional funds in some additional supplies through the central distribution; classroom supplies or other instructional materials that they could use for the coming year.

Mr. Coogan asked if they had any questions.

Mrs. Panchley thanked them for bringing the proposal forward. There was a lot on the table at the last finance subcommittee meeting and it was a little hard in their position to prioritize what was really needed. They did ask them to go back right before the long weekend and work with Mr. Mikolazyk to come back with a proposal where they could really get the best bang for their buck in technology and the deferred maintenance. She appreciates the time that they and anyone else who helped put into it.

Mr. Martins said he was trying to identify which projects were on the capital project list. He wondered if those were the ones marked in red.

Mr. Coogan went to get his list and said that earlier in the year the Committee designated approximately \$185,000 to take care of some high priority repairs and at that point those items that were noted in red were on the original list. On this list there is no cost associated with those items because most of them are being addressed already or in the process of being repaired currently. Those were flagged as needed repairs and the money has already been allocated for those.

Mr. Martins said he was glad that effort was being made to repair some of the buildings. He noticed that they have a technology investment of almost \$794,000 which is certainly needed and he can understand that. They also have to keep the buildings up and repair because unlike computers where the price is going down, maintenance costs go up. He is happy that they can make these repairs and there is still a lot more to go. He thinks the budget in coming years needs to reflect that because at some point in time it gets to a point that the cost for repairs are astronomical.

Mr. Martins referenced the transportation van for \$27,500 and questioned the mileage on the van.

Mr. Coogan said the two vans are going on six years old and one has just over 120,000 miles and the other has over 140,000 miles.

Mr. Martins asked if there was body rot on the vans.

Mr. Coogan said that vans that they used to transport students are in very good shape body wise; they keep them that way.

Mr. Martins asked if they passed inspection.

Mr. Coogan said they do pass inspection and it is a mileage issue for the transport of students.

Mr. Martins said 125,000 miles if they change the oil frequently can last for some time and wondered if they really needed to replace one of the transportation vehicles. He thought the \$27,500 could be used for more building repair. He felt that five years was a short period of time to have a vehicle. He said he would support it but really thought they needed to look at if the \$27,500 for a van could be better used for a repair that Mr. Coogan considered important on his list.

Mr. Maynard asked if Mr. Coogan could tell him a little bit more about the Letourneau loss.

Mr. Coogan said as they discussed at the Facilities and Operations subcommittee meeting what happened was the facility suffered a power surge which they haven't quite gotten to the bottom of yet. They know that there is a system within the building which accesses both the power back up and also acts like a giant surge protector for the building. That system was damaged and they are not sure if it was damaged in the initial hit or if it was damaged and then once the system was disabled by the damage a second hit damaged the other components. They had damage to the door entry systems, the wireless access systems, some damage to the phone system that they were able to repair, and some other related systems in the building which all suffered a hit. Some of those bills they have not gotten a final number on but once they have a number and a total on the losses of the building, as it was suggested that the subcommittee meeting, they are going to take a look at the matter with National Grid and see if there is any possible redress from them.

Mr. Maynard asked if there was a generator that should have kicked in.

Mr. Coogan said that they have a generator that kicks in and supplies certain parts of the building but the generator does not keep the power surge out. The power surge is what did the damage.

Mr. Maynard thought they should send National Grid a letter to see if they will cover the cost because he feels it is their fault and not the district's.

Mr. Coogan said they will certainly look into that.

Mr. Maynard thought the increase in supplies was a good idea as well. He had not received any calls over the past couple of years about supplies unlike when he first got on the Committee and received many calls. He is glad that has been straightened out and agrees with the purchase.

Mr. Costa thanked Mr. Coogan and Mr. Mikolazyk for putting together the proposal. He also took the opportunity to thank Mr. Mikolazyk and his staff explaining that going back a number of years when he first came on the Committee one of the things they were certainly lacking in their schools was technology and access to technology for their students. Through a lot of hard work by Mr. Mikolazyk, Mr. Farias, and others he thought Fall River certainly has made a huge commitment towards the type of technology they now have available for students and the investment presented that evening will go

a long way to making the schools equitable. He is proud to support things that he thinks is going to make an impact and certainly technology is one of them.

He continued regarding the capital projects stating that he knows over the last several years Mr. Coogan and his department have tried their best to work within a very small contractual services line item to do maintenance on the buildings which is very costly. He has been on the Committee long enough to know that they focus on the resources that go into the classroom with some shortsightedness on how they can maintain the buildings for their students so he wanted to thank Mr. Coogan for working to identify some of those areas with his department. As Mr. Martins mentioned, they can begin to look to address those issues. It's times like this that he thinks good sound financial planning is in order and hopefully that has been happening because they saw what happens when they have buildings that go off-line. The city struggles to sell those buildings. To the extent that they continue to work within a very small contractual service line item and in opportunities like this to bring forward pressing items, he urged them to do that because he thought they are equally as important in terms of what goes on in the investment in the classroom.

Mr. Hart congratulated Mr. Coogan and Mr. Mikolazyk noting that the items are definitely needed and he is happy to vote for it. He wished it was something that they could do every year in this way. He questioned the cost per student and how they came up with those numbers. He wondered if it was equitable and if they were doing everything they could across the board for all the schools. He knows they are working very hard to but the numbers were a little alarming to him.

Mr. Coogan said he is not privileged to have seen Mr. Hart's calculations but he can comment on a couple of things: School budget which includes a lot of different things also includes a portion of utilities and so the utilities will also affect the numbers one way or another. In addition, when they take a larger number of students and divide a cost center by the number of students they will get a lower number. It may seem as though they are spending less on those children in the bigger schools but what they are doing is taking the cost of operating that facility and breaking it out over a larger number of people so it is going to drop the cost somewhat. That was just a quick observation on Mr. Hart's comments. In terms of the investment that goes back in that is also a function of the size of the facility, the number of units that have been replaced prior to this expenditure, etc. In some cases they may have things that were renewed more frequently so they are not replacing those items yet. They mentioned that the technology plan affects ten schools. Of the remaining schools that are not receiving the investment, three or four of those schools just last year were brought up to what they consider to be an ideal situation but obviously that is it moving target as well. Those investments would not be reflected in this budget.

Mr. Hart said he wanted to bring up one other point. The operating budget from 2011 to today is a difference of an \$18 million increase in five years. He asked Madame Superintendent if that was mostly due to the health care. He wondered what brought the cost up that much over the five years.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that that was the net school spending set by the state.

Mr. Hart said they have received \$18 million extra from the state in five years which increased the operating budget from \$83 million to what it is today.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said somewhat because the state funds about 80 cents on the dollar for education but the state also determines precisely what each town and city in Massachusetts needs to contribute to education; the net school spending is the minimum amount that a town or city must spend on education. That cost increases year after year and that is what he is seeing. The cost of

educating students is increasing as set by the state and then the state is contributing state aid which for Fall River - and it differs for every community – is about 80 cents on the dollar.

Mr. Hart said that he hoped that was sustainable and would continue.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they hoped so too.

Mr. Hart said it is a lot of money and he is very thankful that they get that but it is a big increase.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said it is but the state makes the determination on how much state aid they get versus the local contribution based on the city's ability to pay for education. They are at 80/20 right now, give or take a couple of percentage points. They hope it continues as well because clearly the city needs that kind of funding and they appreciate all the advocacy for it.

Mr. Martins noted there was no motion on the floor and made the following motion:

MOTION: Mr. Martins – Mr. Andrade: That the transportation van replacement be removed from the administrative proposal and that it be inserted into some building repair for the equivalent amount of money of \$27,500; whatever the administration feels is most in need.

Discussion

Mr. Hart asked if it was the \$27,500 expenditure and Superintendent Mayo-Brown said it was.

Mr. Costa asked Mr. Coogan if it was a transport van for students and Mr. Coogan said that was correct.

Mr. Costa asked if it was the students in the Copicut area and similar areas.

Mr. Coogan said yes and that that route is one that always stands out to him as one of the main routes that they service.

Mr. Costa said they typically cannot find a contracted vendor to make the trip...

Mr. Coogan finished that it is also a limited number of students who are scattered far apart.

Mr. Costa asked if the vans required a substantial amount of maintenance. He said he did not mind supporting his colleague's motion but was just looking for a little more information before making a decision. He doesn't want to shift the funding and then find out the school department spends large amounts of money to repair the vans to transport the students. He doesn't want to not act on this and then the van goes offline because of issues. He asked if Mr. Coogan had any idea how much money had been invested in those vehicles.

Mr. Coogan said the first several years is mainly factory scheduled maintenance, hoses, belts, oil changes, regular routine maintenance but as they go on in age they are going to run into more costly repairs. Typically wear-out items include breaks, tires, transmissions, starters, etc. They are at an age of 150,000 miles where they may be looking at the more expensive repairs. They have seen the costs go up as the vehicles have aged. If a vehicle goes down they can usually put another vehicle into service but when they have a transport vehicle go down they have to have a 7D certified school bus outfitted vehicle. For that reason if that van goes down they then have to contract with a vendor on short notice and pay a per diem rate until that vehicle is back in. It is a hardship and those vehicles

have to be on call 180 days a year. They go out and do a morning route for the first wave of schools then they go out and do a second wave of drop offs for students who start at the second set of start times. They do courier mail, supplies and other things throughout the district and at the end of the day the roles are reversed and they do the two waves of pick-ups/drop offs of students. Those vehicles are on the road pretty much 8 to 9 hours a day every day. That is the reason for wanting to get into a lifecycle replacement program versus waiting until it is broken and making a decision to put money into it or go ahead and put it towards a new vehicle.

Mr. Costa said he is glad he said that because he thinks it is a little different than when a personal vehicle goes down as far as hardship particularly in this case where it is a 7D certified vehicle used for transportation of students.

Mr. Coogan said the vehicles are also used to shuttle students back and forth to work study programs as well as short events that might happen within the district.

Mr. Costa said the fact that it is a transport vehicle and he has explained the uses he is more comfortable not supporting the motion and going along with the original proposal.

Mr. Martins said Mr. Coogan had answered Mr. Costa's question earlier when he asked him about the maintenance of the current vehicle and he replied routine maintenance. Brakes have to be replaced but if the engine is running ... the only thing that he found that he said was that it has some rust spots.

Mr. Coogan thought Mr. Martins had suggested the rust spots. On the vans that transport students they do not allow them to get in that shape. There have been a few areas that they have treated but they don't let the transport vehicles get into unsightly condition.

Mr. Martins clarified the mileage again.

Mr. Coogan said it will be 150,000 by the end of the school year.

Mr. Maynard asked how they were going to pay for the van and wondered if it was coming out of the cafeteria funds.

Mr. Coogan said it was the transport van that would come out of the additional funds from the appropriation.

A roll call showed:

Mr. Andrade: No	Mr. Maynard: No
Mr. Costa: No	Mrs. Panchley: No
Mr. Hart: No	Mayor Sutter: Yes
Mr. Martins: Yes	

2 were in favor

5 were opposed

Motion FAILED

MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mrs. Panchley: To approve the spending plan as outlined by the administration and referred to the School Committee in the amount of \$1,198,579.

Discussion

Mayor Sutter asked Mr. Coogan about all of the equipment that is being replaced which is close to 700 computers.

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Mr. Coogan said they are not all replacements and in some cases they are additional investments; it is not a one for one swap but that is all additional new computers going into schools.

Mayor Sutter asked what they do with the old computers.

Mr. Coogan explained that in some cases they can repurpose the computers and shift it to an area where it is running less intensive programs. They try to get another few years of use out of them and if not they are redesignated through the city guidelines and those computers are made available to other city departments. If there is no residual value at that point they are put out for auction or disposal by the city.

A roll call showed:

Mr. Andrade: Yes	Mr. Maynard: Yes
Mr. Costa: Yes	Mrs. Panchley: Yes
Mr. Hart: Yes	Mayor Sutter: Yes
Mr. Martins: Yes	

All were in favor	None were opposed	Motion Passed
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Mr. Coogan recognized Mr. McCloskey and the rest of the facilities crew who worked hard to identify the repairs as part of their normal program and also put together the list to fit cost and timeline constraints.

MOTION: Mr. Martins – Mr. Costa: To adjourn.		
<u>No discussion</u>		
All were in favor	None were opposed	Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Interim Administrative Assistant for School Committee Services.