



## Natick Finance Committee

Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 3 of the Town of Natick By-Laws, I attest that the attached copy is the approved copy of the minutes for the following Meeting:

**Town of Natick Finance Committee**

**Meeting Date: January 16, 2020**

The minutes were approved through the following action:

Motion:	Approval
Made by:	Mr. Hayes
Seconded by:	Ms. Van Amsterdam
Vote:	14 – 0 – 0
Date:	February 25, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Evans

Clerk

Natick Finance Committee

***TOWN OF NATICK***

## Meeting Notice

POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 30A,  
Sections 18-25

**Natick Finance Committee****MEETING AGENDA**

Posted: Tuesday, January 13, 2020 at 1:30 PM EST

**PLACE OF MEETING**

School Committee Meeting Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr,  
Town Hall, 13 East Central St. Natick,  
MA 02760

**DAY, DATE AND TIME**

January 16, 2020 at 7:00 PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick Hayes, Chairperson  
Linda Wollschlager, Vice-Chairperson  
Bruce Evans, Clerk  
Bill Grome, Member  
Daniel Sullivan, Member  
Jerry Pierce, Member  
Kristine Van Amsterdam, Member  
Tony Lista, Member  
Jeff DeLuca, Member  
Philip Rooney, Member  
Mike Linehan, Member  
Jim A. Scurlock, Member  
Guimel DeCarvalho, Member  
David Coffey, Member (arrived 7:10 PM)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dirk Coburn, Member

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**AGENDA:**

1. Call to Order
  - a. Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence
  - b. Advisement of Pegasus Live Broadcast and Recording for On-Demand Viewing
  - c. Review of Meeting Agenda and Ordering of Items
2. Announcements
3. Public Comments
  - a. [Committee policy & procedures available via this link and also at the meeting location](#)
4. Meeting Minutes
  - a. [Review & Approve Meeting Minutes for September 24, September 26, October 1 and October 3, 2019](#)
5. Town Administrator's FY2021 Budget - Public Hearing (Corrected typo for to FY2021)
  - a. [School Department/Superintendent's Budget Overview Presentation](#)
  - b. [Q&A from Committee](#)
  - c. [Public Comments on FY2021 Budget Overview \(consistent with Committee's public comments guidelines\)](#)
  - d. [Committee Discussion on Budget Overview](#)
6. New Business
7. Committee and Sub-Committee Scheduling
  - a. [Sub-Committee Assignments & Practices](#)
  - b. [Scheduling Sub-Committee Meetings](#)
8. Committee Discussion (for items not on the agenda)
9. Adjourn

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman, Patrick Hayes. Meeting minutes review will be moved to the end with remaining items heard in order as listed on agenda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/CITIZENS CONCERNS:**

Ms. Malone, Town Administrator invited residents to attend a Community Budget Forum on FY2021 and multi-year budget planning to be held Wednesday, January 22 at the community center. This forum will be televised on Pegasus.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

Mr. Linehan moved to open the Town Administrator's FY2021 Budget Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Evans Voted 13 – 0 – 0.

**School Department/Superintendent's Budget Overview Presentation**

Presenters:

Dr. Anna Nolin, Superintendent, NPS

Dr. Peter Gray, Assistant Superintendent of Finance

Dr. Nolin: NPS implemented a fund raising policy to document the efforts made on behalf of the school system available on website where you can see all active fundraising. A merit policy is now in place so you can create a straight line from the contract to the compensation amount. Ms. Nolin presented the Natick Public Schools FY21 budget ([School Department/Superintendent's Budget Overview Presentation](#)).

- Drafted a fundraising policy to document all fundraising efforts made on behalf of the school system, with a website that you can visit to see all active fundraising
- Implemented a food purchase policy dictating how that would be used or purchased within the school system.
- Implemented a merit policy to delineate how administrators and non-represented employees were compensated so that you can create a straight line from the contract to the compensation act to our policy.
- Purchased the Transparency Center from ClearGov, which is on the natickps.gov website (<http://www.natickps.org/about/transparency>) so that you can see the DOE data for NPS and compare it to other districts.
- We assessed our use of MUNIS for purchasing and documentation and the transparency of our purchasing process. We want to improve our purchasing process so one can see real-time data for purchases and that isn't possible. We brought in MUNIS experts to tell us how we can maximize the tool that we you have and this is in process.
- We seek to modernize the Purchase Req. process from paper-based to computerized workflow-based such that when anyone looks for MUNIS information, they can see where NPS is terms of our spend-down from various accounts, i.e., snapshots of where NPS is on its various budgets. Achieving this goal requires coordination between the Town Finance department and NPS.
- NPS contracted with an outside consultant for a space-and-enrollment study. And you'll see the first portion of that in this budget presentation. One of the questions from the Finance Committee last year was that you were dissatisfied with the former enrollment projection formula. So we started from scratch get an outside look at these projections. We will present those to you tonight.
- The space study is still underway with the facilities assessment now with the Facilities Management Director on board.
- NPS adopted the Meritorious budget format a nationally vetted format for presenting school budgets from the Association of School Business Officers ([ASBO](#)). Over a three-year process, we hope to vie for the Meritorious Budget award. In doing so, ASBO gives us feedback on our budget each year and what should be included and this year is the first draft using this format.
- Once again, there is a database of questions & answers that the Finance Committee & Education Subcommittee have asked over the last four years that is a searchable database with keywords to facilitate finding information. All of NPS contracts are listed there (bus, food service, principal contracts or non-represented employee contracts).

FY21 has its challenges:

- Level of Chapter 70 funding – how much will it increase. There has been some change at the state level around the Student Opportunities Act (SOA), which may/may not help NPS since it is targeted at more economically challenged districts to address funding inequities. In the fall, Sen. Spilka indicated that, over the six year period, there could be additional funding for NPS phased-in each year. Everyone in the state will benefit from a new section of this funding that will reimburse us for special education, transportation (which is new) and could be significant for our district. The problem is we don't know what that amount of money is yet and NPS must apply for those funds through a new special process that strings attached to it around addressing issues of student achievement gaps and equity. The good news is NPS has a strategic plan that squarely addresses those gaps.
- Change in how Medicaid billing is executed. Mr. Luff, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services has addressed this transition when he was in a similar role in the state of Maine and feels confident that we're going to be able to bill efficiently and effectively for these services. But we have had some news that our special education schools that we subcontract out to

- may not be choosing to do the Medicaid billing so this could be a volatile piece within the budget since we've had robust reimbursements in the past and we're not yet sure what that's going to look like this year, but we will update you as we know.
- Similarly, the "Every Student Succeeds Act" that replaced the "No Child Left Behind Act" provides some freedoms for schools and states, but also some restrictions. One of these restrictions is in Title 1 (funding to schools & school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families) funding formulas. We received a January 9 memo indicating, in the worst case, our Title 1 funding could be cut up to \$182,000. However, I'm not concerned yet because when I looked back at the projections that they forecasted over the last two years, they didn't look dissimilar. One of the reasons for the cut is the rise in wealth of Natick as a community so this may decrease Title 1 funding.
  - Opening the new KMS in FY21 presents challenges in addition to opportunities. We will need to phase in personnel over time and we will have additional utilities expenses because we're running both the new and old buildings during part of the upcoming school year.

### Union Contracts

We have negotiated several of our union contracts already.

- Title 1 is negotiated yearly or within the school year that it serves. So we wait for our Title 1 to be specified in June and then we start negotiating with our teachers based on those available funds.
- Three-year contract for administrative assistants.
- Three-year contract for Unit B Administrators
- Three-year Unit A contract (teachers, nurses, counselors, psychologist and specialist contract
- Paraprofessionals and food service contracts are pending. As a reminder, the Food Service contract is not a part of the general fund and is funded the Food Service revolving account.

### Fees and Fundraising

Dr. Gray said that the only fee that they've changed this point has been the elementary school lunch fee which will occur at the next School Committee meeting. We went through a DESE food service audit where they look across the district and determine whether we have parity in our school lunch program. The elementary school lunch fee was \$2.50 cents for lunch & had not been raised for over six years, so the fee will increase to \$ 3.00 to create parity across the district. As Dr. Nolin mentioned, we're working to get a handle on fundraising in the district. The PTO has done good work to identify the internal and external fundraising sources so we have a clear understanding of the money raised on behalf of NPS by various groups and individuals throughout the school year.

### Complexity

Dr. Nolin said there are new challenges that have arisen in the last ten years related to managing complexity in our classrooms. Dr. Nolin reviewed the challenge of meeting students' hierarchy of needs (see NPS presentation – Maslow Hierarchy of Needs) In the last five years, NPS has been required to create and take on more responsibility of addressing needs such as safety and physiological needs are now squarely placed on the school system and this creates more complexity in classrooms and schools. In addition, the landscape for which we are preparing students has also become more complex, from teleconferencing education to preparing students to use drone technology as engineers. These were careers that we could not conceive of many years ago and we're preparing students for a very complex, not automated type of world.

## English Language Learners

The Natick community itself is becoming a more diverse community and NPS recently moved from a low-incidence to a high-incidence English language learner (ELL) population, with well over 100 ELL students. Further, DOE changed how they categorize high needs populations in the last several years. We included both sections here so you can see how it was categorized through 2010 and how it is now categorized. Previously separate categories - first language not English, English language learner, low income students with disabilities, free lunch students, reduced lunch and high needs are collapsed into a category called "High Needs". I share this as a primer for your use of ClearGov because you will be unable to make clear historical comparisons. There are 56 languages spoken by our students and their families and we address through Educational Services at this time. To put more general information around classroom complexity, we did a longer presentation doing profiles of our current preschool and high school classes and this preschool class it is indicative of complexities to come. Thirty percent of the preschool students have a first language other than English; 25% were born prior to 26 weeks of gestation (medical technology has advanced to make students live longer and through formerly difficult births). This means our students often come to us with more complex needs due to earlier births and more support needed for typical development like speech, language, occupational therapy and physical therapy. We're also serving more students now with severe hearing loss and blindness. We have more students with ADHD, anxiety and depression diagnoses, as young as kindergarten and that's exploded in the last five years. We've had a large increase in the depression, anxiety and related issues, particularly for middle school girls, despite the programming that we have put in place that which has begun to address some of these issues at the high school level. We had a huge spike in the last two years for middle school girls and of course our service providers and we are all hand-on to determine the cause and address that. Psychiatric emergency services have increased on average from three visits to the HS per year to two per week at Natick HS to assist with students facing mental health issues. Ten years ago, when I was principal at Wilson, I had one experience in 10 years. We've saved 300 hours of suspension for students - it may be news to some that you can no longer expel students from school unless they are a danger to themselves or others. We're working on this through diversion programs and education programs but that comes in man hour cost. In the HS this past year, we saved 300 hours of student suspension time by offering diversion programs for substance abuse, violence and bullying behavior. We have increased volume of students who are non-verbal who require assistive technology and need trained staff to guide them on how to use it. This might include hearing technology, text-to-speech technology, and augmentative communication devices.

## Advanced Medical Care and closure of youth facilities

Advanced medical care has done amazing things for our young people but it was also coupled with the closure of many youth facilities. We do not outsource our students who used to be sent to youth facilities for violent behavior or mental health issues – they're not institutionalized as they once were. That's not to say that a student may not eventually come through a school system and go for a special education outplacement, but those numbers are much less than they have been in the past. And it is a point of pride for us to be able to serve all students in their neighborhood schools. We want students to be integrated into society and integrated into schools. But that doesn't come without complexity that we must address. The good news is students are successful here and they matriculate despite those advanced needs.

## Homelessness

I've come before this committee speaking about the number of homeless children enrolled in schools and this is the current progression for us over the last few years. If you remember, there was a time period where students were staying in hotels, and then you'll see Mr. Luff has noted the year that the hotels housing homeless families were closed, and then things have started to steadily creep up. Homeless

students have a right to transportation, a right to stay put in the school of origin and receive transportation or to/from that location. Or they can come and enroll with a place where they now have been transferred to.

### Medical Challenges

This year, at one elementary school in the K-4 grade levels, five of our students are in active cancer treatment or remission. And that's one school, which is great news. But obviously our nurses are on deck to assist those students. We also create specialized health care plans, as well as work plans for those students who are in and out of school frequently. We have leaderboards in all of the schools to track our most volatile diabetic needs. So those students wear monitors and students are monitored by nurses. To give you an example, we have eight Type 1 diabetes patients at Natick HS this year whose diabetes is so volatile they must be monitored on this leaderboard compared with only one in 2015. This requires two to four check-ins a day depending on how many times a student must eat and they must be monitored while they medicate. To give you an example of what's on the nurse's plate, PE classes and sports create other needs so it extends their day if they assist with sports. Our Access students (sub-separate program) are definitely more medically involved with issues from platelet disorders, monitoring shots for ongoing medication, and toileting needs two to four times a day. Sometimes nurses can do this and sometimes teachers and paraprofessionals do this. We've found that triage for mental health issues is often linked to gastrointestinal issues and that is the #1 complaint when students come to see the nurse. We have traveling nurses who must be with students on buses and through their phones. In terms of daily medications, this has exploded in the last five years. At Natick HS, there are now 10 students who receive Ritalin twice a day because a parent cannot do it at home or work for a variety of reasons working management of the student, etc. So, so there's just a lot on the plate. I did link in this presentation at the bottom there, the full complexity, presentation and analysis for you to see all the data behind the number of visits for psychiatric services special education plans, so you can deep dive into that.

### ROI

Despite those challenges, more students are taking advanced classes, taking the SAT and going to college than ever before in NPS. Since 2007, we've seen a 67 point rise in SAT reading scores and a 58 point rise SAT math scores. For those who know statistics, an increased number of students taking the SAT doesn't necessarily yield positive results so we're tracking it. Note that NPS only gets SAT score results and your comparison with other districts, not disaggregated data on the test results making it more difficult for us to determine what we are missing should test scores decline and areas we could add focus to increase scores. NPS has had a 6.78% rise in in post-HS education and we're very excited that that trend continues (we'd like it to be 100%).

### ROI – English Language Arts K-8

Over the last three years, the town has supported us in our re-do of the elementary literacy curriculum both through a capital purchase of materials and ongoing professional development. In addition, we have done some Response to Intervention (RTI) programming at the middle school that yielded significant results. Looking at this slide, the increasing green and decreasing red on the new, more rigorous state assessment shows that we're seeing strong positive results based on this investment. As students move up through the HS, we hope this translates into higher levels of achievement on tests like the SAT.

### Ranking among other schools

NPS is regularly in the Top 50 districts in the state and provides a high level of academic, social, emotional, and athletic experience for students. Natick is a much sought-after town to live in, but it



creates challenges.

#### Per Pupil Expenditure

NPS per pupil cost continue to be lower than the state average as compared with districts that Department of Education's DART technology defines as the cohort they think Natick looks most like this year. This changes slightly every year by a district or two. We also put in districts that are geographically near Natick for comparison purposes. For example, even though we're aren't demographically the same as, say Framingham, we're always compared with each other. However, this chart also lets you look Framingham or Wellesley (although Wellesley's now in our DART cohort in terms of achievement) to compare with our neighbors.

#### Dr. Gray now presenting

As part of the presentation from the ASBO meritorious budget process (and we've done this historically), when we look at ROI, we will see how we compare to the peer districts across the state. We went to the Department of Revenue (DOR) and looked at the average single family home value which DOR uses try to provide some comparisons from district to district. In 2019, Natick native is towards the bottom of our comparable districts. We are 11th of the 17th districts based on the average tax bill for a single family residence.

The next slide shows that, from 2011 to 2019, the value of a single family home has risen 40% or \$176,603. To provide some context, a previous business manager looked at a number of factors, including in/out migration, real estate sales, residential construction, and other similar factors to develop enrollment projections that neither NESDEC nor the Mass. School Building Authority (MSBA) projections take into account. This information was not updated for several years until my arrival and this is the red line in the presentation that is very close to the NESDEC projection. And we tried to figure out the rationale thinking behind it, we could never quite unravel it and thought it best to start fresh. We've commissioned a firm that has done a basic space and enrollment study projection but is very conservative because it doesn't take into account all the factors I described. The standard NESDEC projections parallel to what the firm we hired has determined. We then commissioned an enrollment study for the MSBA to advocate for the new Kennedy Middle School and they provided their enrollment projections. In FY21, all three projections are well below our current enrollment of 5524 students. If you take the highest projection by MSBA of 5303 students, we're still 221 fewer students than are enrolled today. We met with the consultants to begin to understand how to determine more accurate enrollment projections given that although we've seen tremendous growth in the past few years, we need to understand whether it will continue and at what rate, flatten, or even decline over the next four years (through 2025)

Dr. Nolin said that she has been working on a move-in/move-out heat-map project with the Natick GIS department and noted that it's difficult to project exactly what's happening as there is actual pattern that I can detect or what drives neighborhood move-ins & outs in a given summer. That information was provided to the consultant yet he refused to look at it so this projection excludes birth rates, in/out migration, real estate sales and new construction, so this is the most conservative projection we can have. Our enrollment is already above those projections. That's why we chose to show the MSBA enrollment projection on this graph – their projection suggested that we should build a 1000 student middle school. MSBA did include an analysis of in/out migration, new construction, etc. Although the MSBA study was done in 2016, this gives us the low bar and the high bar projections and actual enrollment is somewhere in between there. The report from the outside consultant we hired is that the High School bubble will affect us through 2026 and we will have space and enrollment challenges that persist through our secondary school.

Dr. Gray noted the consultant indicated that Natick was among a small number of communities Mass. facing rising enrollment and cited that as the reason he didn't want to utilize some of the factors Dr. Nolin



spoke of earlier.

### Budget

- We met with our principals/administrators and did a deep dive this year. Through those discussions, really brought in some historical data and talk to our principals and administrators about what their real needs were.
- We looked at one time only needs that were embedded in a budget that may have been carried forward from the previous year. As a result, NPS could reduce overall expenditure spending by \$379,792, a 2.6% decrease which limited spending requests to prior year spending or demonstrated increases.
- This year we have most of our unions under contract so current personnel salaries are adjusted to align with negotiated contractual obligations (COLA, steps, lanes).
- We're still in discussions with a few unions (food services, paraprofessionals, administrative assistants) to address inequities related to MEPA
- We requested priorities for requested FY21 positions and we broke them down in positions needed for the legal compliance, complexity, those aligned with our strategic plan and enrollment, audit recommendation, and the opening of the new KMS.

Dr. Nolin said that audit recommendations result from a formal audit from the DOE, For example, our Special Ed or ELL services just came off an audit and we're now in the second year of deferring an ELL position that we now must deploy. It can also be our own internal audit or a curriculum audit.

### *Dr. Gray continues*

- KMS opening in January 2021 requires \$250,000 additional funding for utilities since both the old and the new schools will be overlapping in FY21.
- Funded elementary technology/teacher laptop refresh that was deferred from FY20.
- Analyzed revolving accounts and added \$500,000 from our Circuit Breaker accounts (Special Ed & added \$100,000 to school bus fees (this is last year's fee increase applied again & this can be changed by Town Meeting).
- Budget Summary – Overall request is \$72,842,760, with compensation of \$58,810,689 (8.4% increase) and expenses of \$14,032,071 (2.6% decrease).

Dr. Nolin continues

The next few slides show the FY21 personnel request.

Additional Positions FY21 - New Kennedy Middle School						
School	Position	FTE (new)	FTE (Transfer)	FY21 Salary	Rationale	Details
KENNEDY	BCBA	1.00		\$63,010	KMS	.75 BCBA/29% (39 students) of Adam Kohrman's caseload is KMS, he is only here 1 day a cycle/several staff are struggling with incoming 5th grade behaviors (ones with formalized behavior plans already) and move in's over the summer
KENNEDY	SPED Teachers	0.00	2.0		KMS	2.0 special education teachers/1- 7th grade: current 6th grade team added a special educator due to numbers from 5th-they will rise to 7th next year/2- Communication Program teacher to support the addition of 3 more 5th graders next year and two new recommendations this year, next year and potential return of ODD student (will be a 7grader next year)
KENNEDY	PARA	2.00		\$50,846	KMS	additional support for 5th grade and 7th
KENNEDY	Psychologist	0.50		\$44,617	KMS	.5 school psychologist to support a therapeutic program school wide increase to 1.0*
KENNEDY	Vice Principal		1.0		KMS	New Kennedy (Judy Coleman retirement)
KENNEDY	Gr 7 Math/Science teacher	1.0		\$63,010	KMS	Additional Students
KENNEDY	Gr 7 L&L/Social Studies	1.0		\$63,010	KMS	Additional Students
KENNEDY	Spanish Teacher	0.50		\$31,505	KMS	Additional Enrollment/New School
KENNEDY	French Teacher	0.50		\$31,505	KMS	Additional Enrollment/New School
KENNEDY	Music Teacher	1.0		\$63,010	KMS	Additional Enrollment/New School
KENNEDY	ELL Teacher	1.00		\$63,010	KMS	Compliance with audit expectations
	<b>Kennedy Middle School</b>	<b>8.50</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>\$473,523</b>		

The first slide contains the personnel required to open the new KMS Kennedy facility (5.5 FTEs).

- We were able to re-deploy three positions within the school district to move to KMS through creative scheduling adjustments and one retirement so that we needed 5.5 FTEs only.
- Two of the SPED teachers that are deployed to KMS are indicative of why we have the circuit breaker process and circuit breaker reserve process. We had two relatively older students who had not been schooled before and came to Natick to live with their grandparents in Natick so while their chronological age may be middle school, they had capacity more like a pre-school student. We have to address those budget gaps and then accelerate those learning gaps with teachers that are devoted to them. We need to out-place these students, but had to assess them first before you can put a student in an outplacement. We will be able to deploy those two teachers because we, fortunately, had some reserve and we can now move these two positions to Kennedy.
- HS math teacher to address enrollment issues and class sizes in computer science and math.
- Decreasing the teaching load for the current Band teacher so that he can start the orchestra program that is required in our audit and parent expectations.

The additional personnel requests which we will do a deeper dive in our discussions with the Education Subcommittee include:

School	Position	FTE (new)	FTE (Transfer)	FY21 Salary	Rationale Details	
HIGH SCHOOL	Math Teacher	0.40		\$25,204	AUD	class size increase due to offering classes in computer science
HIGH SCHOOL	Performing Arts Chair	0.20		\$12,602	AUD	
BROWN	Full Year Admin Assistant	0.2		\$6,608	CP	1.0 School year, add 2 months
DISTRICT	Social Worker	0.40		\$25,204	CP	
HIGH SCHOOL	ELL Dept. Head Stipend	1.00		\$9,265	CP	
LILJA	Behavior Tech	1.0		\$26,196	CP	Additional Support to sub-separate classroom to implement discrete training
WILSON	.2 admin assistant	0.20		\$6,608	CP	More support needed for the summer for PO requests, new enrollments, and needs to get ready for the school year position to 1.0
CENTRAL OFFICE	Data / Parent Engagement Assistant	1.00		\$50,486	CP	
CENTRAL OFFICE	Assistant HR Director/PowerSchool Assistant Administrator	1.00		\$102,000	CP	
BEN-HEM	Program Paras	1.0		\$25,682	LGL	Program support Paraprofessionals to support inclusion efforts of students in our substantially separate programs
DISTRICT	Assistive Tech/Augmentative ASST	0.5		\$26,620	LGL	
DISTRICT	Librarian	2.50		\$157,525	SP/E	
HIGH SCHOOL	Auditorium Manager / Technical Theater Teacher	1.0		\$63,010	SP/E	Auditorium Manager would manage space, book and manage outside rentals, and maintain technical theatre equipment (bulbs, gels, lights, inspections, repairs) as well as possibly dining hall and gym. We also need an auditorium manager to manage the Distance Learning Center at NHS. The Auditorium Manager would teach two sections of Technical Theater (0.4 Technical Theater).
HIGH SCHOOL	Profile of a Graduate Administrator/Capstone/Civics Project	0.40		\$25,204	SP/E	

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	Math Specialist	3.0	2.0	\$189,030	SP/E	
BROWN/LILJA	Vice Principal	0.50		\$52,575.50	SP/E	
	Subtotals	14.3	\$803,819.50			

Rationale Key:

LGL = Legal / Compliance

CP = Complexity

SP/E = Strategic Plan / Enrollment

AUD = Audit Recommendation

KMS = new Kennedy Middle School

- The Brown Vice Principal and Admin. Assistant provide ELL program support for the district and do most of those enrollment work with the families of those students. This requires a higher level of service and intensity since the families need full year support to keep those family connected to the school system, so this request is to make the Administrative Assistant a full-time position year-round that adds \$6,000. and helps keep those families connected more deeply within the school system. The current Brown Vice Principal is part time Vice Principal and part time ELL Director for the system and the need is so great for her service that we need to make her full-time ELL Director and hire a full-time Vice Principal (more on that later).
- Behavior techs, program paraprofessionals, and assistive / augmentative tech assistant are needed to address the complexity issues that I spoke of earlier.
- The assistive tech and augmentative assistant is required because one individual alone cannot handle the number of assistive tech and augmentative assistant needs occurring in the special education population so we're requesting a part-time assistant for that role.
- 2.5 FTE elementary school librarians. For the fifth year in a row, we're trying to add librarians at the elementary school level. Currently we cannot count the time in the library when students go to visit and check out books as "time on learning" under DESE statutes because the certified teacher is not teaching that class. We have tried for many years to have certified librarian teachers. Within this age of media literacy and research needs, we would like our students to have the benefit of a certified teacher in those areas.
- 0.5 FTE is for the Brown Elementary School Principal to a full-time position as discussed earlier.
- 1.0 FTE for Auditorium Manager / Technical Theater Teacher. NPS is building a third state-of-the-art auditorium and a performance studio within the new KMS. In addition to the studio that Pegasus will be assisting us with at KMS. These are sizable capital investments that require a manager with technical expertise to address needs, manage equipment, and train individuals who use this space. This person would be an on-site person to ensure that the equipment is appropriately handled. In addition, in our final Performing Arts audit well over 200 students asked for technical theater instruction as a formal part of their high school education which we do not provide (only informal back-stage training and the like) Thus, this position is not only a capital investment management strategy but also an educational one. Equipment has gone missing and has been damaged by renters of the facility because there isn't someone to supervise the usage of the HS facility. This type of technical work can't be outsourced to a custodian.

This is the total request budget knowing we will re-deploy five existing positions

Positions excluded from budget, but requested

School	Position	FTE	FY21 Salary	Rationale Detail
High School	Early Childhood Education Teacher	1.0	\$63,010	SP/E
District	Math Early Intervention (MEIPS)	5.0	\$128,410	SP/E
District	Middle School Dept. Heads	4.0	\$37,060	SP/E
District	Director, Computer Science	1.0	\$95,000	SP/E
District	Alumni Development Assistant	1.0	\$63,010	SP/E
District	7-12 Director of World Language	1.0	\$63,010	SP/E
	Total	13.0	\$449,500	

Rationale Key:

SP/E = Strategic Plan / Enrollment

These positions were not put into the FY21 budget but are identified as needs.

- NPS has an early childhood education program where students who can get certified to be a preschool teacher after they graduate from HS and have so much interest in this course that we need to add a second teacher.
- We talked about the RTI positions for literacy (KEIPS, FEIPS) for kindergarten and first grade students to help them increase their literacy skills to do well in the elementary schools. We do not have the comparable resource for mathematics that would enable us to deploy these tutors within the school system to assist students and help them make the progress that they're expected to make.
- We have 50% of the Middle School department heads – (4 vs. 8) with an English Dept. head and one assistant curriculum leader at one middle school and a Math Dept. head and curriculum leader at the other middle. We'd like to have a department head for every subject area at each middle school. Right now, coordinating professional development has to happen through the Office of Teaching & Learning which is not as effective as the real time deployment of professional development within each school building. Mr. Downing does this now and I did it when I was the Assistant Superintendent. However, in other districts of our size and the expectations for academic excellence, there are four additional people who do this work so we'd like to see this.
- We do not have a director of computer science and this is a field where the Mass. Superintendents Association has put a lot of focus on making sure that we as superintendents have the background and capacity to grow this capability in our districts. We have computer science pathways listed in our handbooks, but we don't have someone whose job it is squarely to be Director of Computer Science within the schools.
- Alumni Development Assistant position is desirable in order to fundraise through our alumni, and to get those kinds of supports for students and for possible programs within the school system. It's

an untapped resource but it does require someone to be devoted to pursue getting those alumni development funds.

- We have a world language director who is for the high school and then a facilitator at the middle school. We would like to change this into one 7-12 Director for Language.

*Dr. Gray continues*

### Revolving Funds

These next two slides kind of provide a brief synopsis of the revolving fund accounts and their balances.

Type of revolving funds

- NPS has thirty-four revolving accounts and thirty donation and grant accounts that are explained in specific detail at the back of the budget book. DESE only allow us to have revolving accounts and they determine how many revolving accounts NPS may have and what they're used for.
- We have eight accounts that have balances greater than \$100,000. Three of those (food services, after-school activities programming (ASAP), and summer school) are business accounts where we maintain a three month operating reserve if we can.
- Twenty-two accounts have balances less than \$20,000.

### Revolving Fund Balances

Here are our projected year-end balances to FY20, how we anticipate using those balances going into FY21, and our circuit breaker balances.

- Based on what we know today, we plan to go from a \$2.2 million circuit-breaker offset to a \$2.7 million offset that will leave us with just under a \$900,000 reserve.
- Even though we have closed school choice to new outside students, the balance continues to decrease to provide for those students already in the district, even though we offset expenses and salaries against them.
- In the past, foreign student tuition has been higher and we use that account to handle salaries to address the needs of these students.
- Laptop Fees – In FY20, we used some money from the revolving fund to reduce the impact of new laptops purchased so that revolving account balance is reduced going into FY21.

	Projected Balances FY20	Projected Balances FY21
<b>Circuit Breaker</b>		
Opening Balance	\$1,386,446	\$1,386,446
Revenues	\$2,200,000	\$2,200,000
Salaries	\$0	\$0
Operating Expense	-\$2,200,000	-\$2,700,000
Balance	\$1,386,446	<b>\$886,446</b>
<b>School Choice</b>		
Opening Balance	\$522,055	\$438,215
Revenues	\$271,370	\$170,000
Salaries	-\$103,125	-\$266,145
Operating Expense	-\$252,085	\$0
Balance	\$438,215	<b>\$342,070</b>
<b>Foreign Student Tuition</b>		
Opening Balance	\$138,074	\$142,746
Revenues	\$130,000	\$100,000
Salaries	-\$124,728	-\$128,470
Operating Expense	-\$600	-\$1,000
Balance	\$142,746	<b>\$113,276</b>
<b>Laptop Fees</b>		
Opening Balance	\$264,298	\$148,298
Revenues	\$238,000	\$200,000
Salaries		
Operating Expense	-\$354,000	-\$225,000
Balance	\$148,298	<b>\$123,298</b>

#### Questions from the Committee:

Mr. Scurlock noted that we had an approximately \$830,000 gap last year that was closed through usage of one-time funds and asked whether the starting point for the FY21 appropriation is last year's Town Meeting appropriation number of \$67,810, 346 and the additions from that number up to the preliminary budget of \$68,643,043. It's not clear from the presentations and what is in the Town Administrator's budget which figure is the starting point for calculating this year's budget.

Dr. Nolin said that there was disagreement among the School Committee about the capacity of being unable to provide the services funded by those monies. NPS rigorously examined all pieces of the budget. Last year, we were able to defer five positions until FY2. Last year, we were projecting an increase from the previous year. This is a three year projection, thinking the increase would be 6.8 % and the School Committee affirmed a 6.1 % budget increase. We understand the need for collaborative efforts to make additional cuts, however are bringing forward what it actually costs to run the school system this year. Last year, an agreement to address the delta to provide the services we said we would provide was made and we will all need to decide whether to provide the same level of service or not.



Mr. Scurlock asked if NPS can provide teacher salary data that shows additions and subtractions (retirements) Dr. Gray said NPS could provide this information, Dr. Nolin advised that the retirement information is in your budget book under “projected retirements”.

Mr. Sullivan said information on the 2019-2020 school year is the first year in recent history where there is a decline in total enrollment Y-O-Y Referencing page 56 of the budget book, student enrollment, as of October 1, 2019 is 5,524 students whereas it was 5,540 students in October 1, 2018, a net decline of sixteen students overall, but fifty-nine students at the elementary school level, and pre-school students went up four students. Did the enrollment studies predict a leveling or a decline in enrollment? Dr. Nolin noted that they see fluctuations throughout the year with elementary students. None of the prior reports predicted either the rise in prior years or the decline this year. The most recent report indicates stable enrollment. Dr. Nolin stated that the conference call she was on today regarding Title 1 funding scenarios (Title 1 is a federal program that provides financial assistance to schools educating students from low income families) provides an additional complication. One of the indicators as to how Title 1 funding is allocated at the federal level is the rate of student return at certain grade levels from private placements and privately funded institutions. In the last two years that this data is based on, we have consistently brought students back at the middle school level from private placements at elementary school levels and we are penalized for that for the Title 1 funding. We’ll come back to the Finance Committee when we have the full report.

Mr. Sullivan referenced slide 22 of the presentation where there is a discrepancy between the Board of Education enrollment projections and the enrollment studies. The Board of Education’s data includes preschool through K-12 and the enrollment studies include K-12 only. Is it possible to use the same data set? Dr. Nolin said removal of the pre-school students was done at the request of the Finance Committee so we directed the enrollment people to do that. . Mr. Sullivan suggested we make a note of the difference between the two sets of data for clarification.

Mr. Sullivan referenced slide 32, titled “What does the Town Administrator’s budget mean?” The Town Administrator’s budgets shows a 5% increase over the FY20 appropriation or \$71, 624, 647, What would be the net addition/decline to the entire system of teachers? Dr. Nolin said it would depend on what NPS had to cut. The amount of \$414,000 would be eight teachers if teachers were where we had to cut. We will reach that point through a collaborative discussion with the Town Administrator. We’ve presented you the board’s first draft budget from the School Committee and we’ll move this forward based on community input, our strategic plan, audits and compliance. This is a collaborative process on what we want to do and based on what are the values and expectation.

Mr. Sullivan asked for confirmation that in the 5% budget, you plan to hire 8.5 positions at Kennedy Middle School and may need to eliminate as many as 8 positions on the other end for a net gain with the Town Administrator’s budget of 0.5 of an FTE (Full Time Equivalent) within the system. Dr. Nolin confirmed this.

Mr. Sullivan referenced slide 23, FY21 Summary, in order to pay our employees for next year would essentially consume 98% of the 5% Y-O-Y increase that the Town Administrator has allocated. Of that, it looks like \$3.3 million is contractually obligated – can you confirm? Dr. Gray answered that two union contracts are not completed, however we put in what we anticipate these contracts will be and Natick public schools are contractually obligated for that amount. Two of the three unions are paid out of the general fund and one (food services) is paid out of its revolving fund.

Mr. Sullivan asked if it is conceivable more than 100% of the 5% increase allocated by the Town Administrator will go to just meeting the salary increases in the contracts we negotiated. Dr. Nolin noted that last year, she advised the Finance Committee that it was 5.1% to meet those expectations Y-O-Y.

Mr. Sullivan said the vast amount of school system employees are receiving between 1% to 2% salary increases with the total population receiving 6.1% in contractual obligated monies. Where does that delta come from? Dr. Nolin explained as teachers come into the system they are mandated on a five year cycle to refresh their licenses at their own personal expense. The percentage depends on who is in what lane and do not know if you accounted for that. Through negotiations, we did an overlay of our comparator districts and tried to move steps and lanes into a competitive place regarding those DART districts – not to be at the top of the heap, but to remain competitive with other districts (districts around us have negotiated 12% over three years). Unlike past decades we have not lost our forty to fifty year-old teachers to Proposition 2.5 so we have an older teaching staff than in previous generations in the Natick schools (keeping our teachers means they are farther up on the steps than they have been before). Mr. Sullivan said the sub-committee would drill down more on this topic.

Mr. Rooney asked for an explanation for the change in the preliminary budget posted in December 16 NovusAgenda that included a request for 17 new FTEs and later in the month requesting 5.2 positions to bring the new overall FTEs to 22.2. Dr. Nolin said without looking at the agendas you are referring to our committee made decisions in concert with us to put things on the docket that was not put forward in our initial budget. We have a strategic plan and a list of items we have been trying to accomplish for the school system as well as a running list of needs some which become emergent at different times in the year. There was a discussion of what Dr. Gray and I thought was the target zone and the school committee asked us to add positions that had been taken off the budget block year after year.

Mr. Rooney asked how confident they were in the current preliminary budget. Dr. Nolin said they feel confident about the pieces brought forward to you.

Mr. Rooney asked for an update from last year's budget dialogue between the school and the Town Administrator related to scale of an audit of specific accounts. Dr. Nolin said they met with the Audit Committee where the issue of the potential tuition reimbursement for those eight individuals was identified and there was no solution to it since it is beyond the time period where you can re-file with the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) for those individuals. This was addressed through a public meeting. We are audited just as the town is each year for all accounts, in addition we undergo a Title 1 audit, a special education audit, Titles 2A, 2, 3 all of which come with outside auditors. There was a coordinated program review for special education, circuit breaker, and ELL. We go through regular audits which include the budgets of those particular programs. On our slide presentation these are referred to as DOE audits.

Mr. Evans referenced the gap between the requested funding from the Natick public schools and the Town Administrator's budget that was roughly \$1.2 million. Last year you added in the \$829,000, less the \$100,000 for the school bus fee that's rolling over to this year. Is a \$1.9 million shortfall the gap we have to close this year? Dr. Gray said it is the difference between what the Town Administrator has proposed vs. what NPS needs as a budget. We approach the budget holistically which means we start the budget from scratch, see what the needs are and brought it forward as opposed to walking it back from the prior year's budget. Walking back the budget to the town appropriation would indicate we had a plan in place in order to cut \$829,000 from the budget which we did not do. While I understand that one-time use of revolving funds and investment income last year was done, Mr. Evans noted that he appreciated how NPS took a look at its needs and added and subtracted based on those needs. Dr. Gray also noted that, for example, they're using \$500,000 more in circuit breaker this year, based on this year's needs and they have done a lot of work to cut costs on the expense side. Dr. Nolin added that that redeploying five

teachers was another example of trying to manage the growth of the budget.

Ms. Van Amsterdam asked if the policy requiring the creation of new classrooms with new staff once any class exceeded 25 students is still in place and still in practice. Dr. Nolin said there is no dictate for caseloads or class sizes, however when the number of elementary school students reach beyond 23 we add additional resources such as a KEIPs, FEIPs or Paraprofessional. There are discussions in the teachers' contract about when a teacher's overall caseload reaches a certain amount accommodations are made and supports are put in place.

Ms. Van Amsterdam asked as part of that ongoing discussion on caseloads and class sizes, particularly at the elementary level that you get a more accurate enrollment number? In the event there is a decline in this pupil population over this multi-year period do you anticipate discussions with the School Committee about reassignment, reallocation or potentially removing some of the younger teachers who have come into the system? Dr. Nolin said they have those discussions each year. When we look at kindergarten enrollment we have this discussion with our elementary staff and get out front if we think those situations are going to happen. Dr. Nolin said through the Financial Planning Committee, that she advocated for a system that other districts have in place where they develop formulas for addressing things like enrollment increases and declines and that those types of things have formulas within a school system where X # of move-ins means this for the town and Y# for the schools. Algorithms aren't the complete answer but this would really help us as a collaborative team. These models have proven successful over decades. Ms. Van Amsterdam noted that she looks forward to hearing more about this collaboration. Ms. Van Amsterdam referenced the complexity of the Natick school population and the services required to meet these student's needs and requested a comparative analysis between the peer cohorts and neighboring communities as opposed to just the state. Is the Natick student with complex needs a part of a norm or the student population trending is more complex or is it so unique to us? Dr. Nolin said there are parts of both. There are some things that are unique to us, others are national trends and some are regional and metro west trends.

Ms. Van Amsterdam expressed concern for the forecasted deficits for the out years starting next year. Was the information that led to the multi-year budget presented to the School Committee and school administration during collective bargaining negotiations prior to the voting of the budget contracts? Dr. Nolin said the budget was not presented to the School Committee prior to the bargaining or voting process. The Town Administrator published her projections and there have been many versions and reiterations since last March. We have Financial Planning meetings to delve into pieces of information, however have not had in-depth discussions.

Ms. Van Amsterdam asked if the School Committee was aware of the materials how was that information considered particularly in finalization of the collective bargaining agreements. Dr. Nolin said they bargain in good faith with our teachers unions to address their emergent needs. We came in with cost of living increases similar to those of the municipal government side of the town. We are a much bigger organization and the numbers are going to be that much bigger. In some instances, we are below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in the region for teachers' salaries. As a School Committee and Superintendent is to keep the system as excellent as it is and grow other places of excellence cannot underpay teachers in such a way as to make a living in order to reside here.

Ms. Van Amsterdam asked clarification of the use of revolving fund monies and whether these monies are one time funds or are they collected every school year while a program that is tied to these funds is in existence.

Dr. Gray explained that the back of the budget book lists all the revolving accounts that are authorized by DESE and what they can / cannot be used for. When we came before the Finance Committee last year, we

were asked to look at revolving accounts that accumulated a significant amount of money that we hadn't earmarked towards a specific expense. Most of the revolving funds we identified last year. Generally, these revolving accounts can only be used for the activities they were set up for; for example the damaged textbook revolving fund can be used for replacement textbooks. The majority of our revolving accounts have little or no activity depending on what they are; only the larger ones have monies that come in and out. For instance, in the case of bus fees, we have accumulated additional funds over the years so we felt that we could make one-time use of them last year to close the budget gap.

Ms. Van Amsterdam said programs that extend beyond core requirements mandated by the state such as the ASAP (before/after school program) is funded by the revolving funds. Peer communities such as Needham have contracted out for comparable programs. Looking ahead to multi-year budgeting has the school administration and School Committee discussed contracting out for those types of service offerings instead of as part of shared services? Dr. Nolin explained ASAP is not part of shared services and all their benefits are contained within that revolving account. NPS looked at outsourcing those programs but found that doesn't provide much of a cost savings. We have also looked at core competencies and core services for outsourcing to perform an analysis of substitutes and paraprofessionals and they could not better our rates or hiring. Dr. Nolin said she would be happy to provide those reports.

Mr. Deluca asked if the District Social Worker (0.4 FTE) is a new position or an expansion of a current one. Dr. Nolin replied it is an expansion of a current position.

Mr. Deluca asked for the descriptions of the two new central office positions and what is currently being done to fill those roles? Dr. Nolin explained we have one (HR) Human Resource Director and one assistant who serve the entire school system (800 employees. Ms. Davis, the HR Director has been here almost thirty years now. We don't know what her plans are, but we have no succession plan in place to fill her Director role were that to become vacant. The HR director is in survival mode most of the time with meetings and deadlines for state reporting or just getting NPS through hiring scenarios. There is a robust need for other things to happen within the HR cycle (training, induction, mentoring, on-boarding, and off-boarding) and we aspire to a better process with more reliability and are unable to do it with one person. The Parent Engagement Center is something that is needed for parents to receive translation services, register centrally, and to connect with all available services in the Natick Public Schools and town, as well as verify residency in a centralized location. Some of the enrollment and decline issues we are seeing are because we are finding people who claim to live in town and who are enrolled and they shouldn't be enrolled and we're asking them to leave because they're taking service, time and energy. It's a full time job to verify identification and that data which we could do if we had a different work flow. In addition, we have taken the Family Services Grant under Accept located at the Cole Center that provides services from birth to age 8 students. We would like to combine those individuals with this part-time assistant so that we can have a Welcoming Center at Town Hall so we can accomplish all those registration and welcome services, ELL screening and assign students to the right location within the district. Right now, people go to enroll in a school near their home and are dismayed that they may have to go to another school to get services. It creates bad situations where parents reject services that children need but NPS still has to deliver these services so it creates problems because a teacher cannot be split among seven schools. In addition, we're moving from Harris Info Systems iPass to a new student information system (PowerSchool) that is a complex transition for the data office to move to the over to the new product and ensure that it is integrated with all the different products that we use. We have grown so much in our use of digital technology and databases we are at a place where we need this position. There is a possibility of folding in another person to make the data person themselves a full time position with the current data position we have, however we are not prepared to do that yet because that individual does not have the PowerSchool training.

Mr. Deluca asked for an elaboration on the curriculum audit. Dr. Nolin explained these are internal audits; we have a 6 year audit cycle so every subject area comes up for review.

Mr. Deluca said since the library is listed as a recommendation and not a DOE audit which process audit would it go through. Dr. Nolin said DOE does not audit time-on learning. Right now, we barely meet the “time-on learning goals. We would like that to be counted as instructional minutes and it is hard not to give students the media literacy and research at that age.

Mr. Deluca asked the cost was for the most recent enrollment model. Dr. Gray said they went out for bid and received no responses because many firms are only interested in doing soup-to-nuts enrollment-MSBA type studies. The third bid for both the space and enrollment study was \$49,000.

Ms. DeCarvalho asked what specific languages are the highest needs. Dr. Nolin said two of the languages are Russian and Farsi; however it is different than previous years so will have to get back to you on the other two languages.

Ms. DeCarvalho said students who require (ELS) English language services mean their parents need translation services. Would there be cost savings if there was collaboration where the translator is coming from the town or school so you can split people between those two different types of budgets? Dr. Nolin explained that is why they need to have the deep dive planning that would bring forward the kind of collaborative discussion to the community that would empower the community around these issues. That will bring us what the One Natick actually means.

Ms. DeCarvalho asked what mental health services are being provided in the school now. Dr. Nolin explained it is comprised of many different things bearing on what addresses students’ needs. There is a strategic plan focused on social emotional learning to address those needs within the system that have grown exponentially in the region due to many challenges such as student and family stress. Parents are attending fewer meetings and engagement is looking different so they are delegating more to the school system, so it means we have to address that complexity and that is what is driving the additions there.

Ms. DeCarvalho asked what the philosophy is whether you are providing those services in-house as opposed to referring families to external providers where they may be able to access insurance. Dr. Nolin explained guidance counselors do not provide long term individual therapy for students in the public school setting. School psychologists provide those services on IEPs (Individualized Educational Plans). We contract with the Interface through Williams James College to be that referral service for any family in Natick who has a need. Sixty-six families have contracted through Interface to get services this year. NPS’ view is to try to address mental health services internally where possible, but get the student the services they need when they need them.

Ms. DeCarvalho asked what types of behaviors are considered psychiatric emergency services. Dr. Nolin said it is threat to self or others.

Ms. DeCarvalho asked for clarification of other school districts facing higher enrollment trends. Dr. Gray said there are fifteen districts in the C commonwealth that have increasing enrollments but the majority of districts have a consistent decrease in enrollments showing trends towards private schools or moving out of state. Dr. Nolin said during monthly meetings with other superintendents in our cohort, she has gleaned information that Hopkinton and Arlington are growing and will grow beyond us.

Mr. Pierce asked where homeless students are being transported from. Dr. Nolin replied shelters both from the Boston area and local. Mr. Pierce asked based on the medical complexity and psychiatric increases do you take into consideration the family’s obligation and insurance plan coverage. Dr. Nolin



said they do bill Medicaid and depending on the services will be reimbursed and are awaiting these results based on the new formula.

Mr. Coffey asked if we could address why we do not make the budget fit the funds available. Dr. Nolin agreed, however the disagreement is with the amount of available dollars. Dr. Nolin said in order for all departments to get staff additions and their budget needs met is the reason for the collaboration process that would bring forward the strategic priorities of an inter-agency committee – town and school. It is difficult to take a step back without knowing the reason for the cuts and what else those monies will be used for and together with the town we will work in tandem to address this problem. Dr. Nolin said it is imperative to drive that process as leaders and we are moving in that direction and that was Ms. Malone's or TA's mission and intent with her budget letter message.

Mr. Linehan asked how special education schools bills for privately placed students in the Natick school system if they are not billing Medicaid directly. Will taxpayers be paying the bill if Medicaid is not billed? Dr. Nolin explained this is a new issue for us due to the new Medicaid billing. More in-depth information will be available when we come to the special education sub-committee work. We are not billing Medicaid due to liability and complexities. Some Superintendents have stopped applying for Medicaid funds because they are so restrictive in what can / cannot be done. We're continuing to apply for Medicaid. Mr. Luff has experience with this from his work in another state.

Mr. Linehan asked for more detail on the paragraph on page 63 of the book, circuit breaker regarding reimbursement of out-of-district transportation costs required by individualized education plans for students with disabilities. Dr. Gray explained for out-of-district student placements the cost is borne by the town. Part of the Governor's budget that was approved was funding to pay for transportation that is not covered prior to this budget. The Governor proposed, as part of the Reform Act, that districts be reimbursed for extraordinary transportation costs going forward where the Commonwealth reimburses districts for some parts of transportation costs for special education students and this will be phased in over the next four years.

### **Questions/Comments from the Public:**

**Frank Foss, Town Moderator** said based on the financial data presented to all of us from December and the discrepancy in funds, how does the Superintendent plan to fill in the deficit of \$1.2 million when the town will be facing an override? Dr. Nolin said this is a preliminary budget where financial planning and our collaborative conversations is where we hammer that out. We are putting out the needs of the system as we see them today. Mr. Foss said the budget was put together without any regard to revenue that is going to be made available or revenue that is available and has been discussed in the Financial Planning Committee. The public has only seen the Town Administrator's budget.

Dr. Nolin said they do consider all the projections and it is still our mandate for the needs as we see them. That would be disingenuous as our role and expectations for our committee and our role. The public knows what we put before them and that is these meetings and public discussions.

Mr. Foss said the Town Administrator's budget expends all the levy capacity we have and the NPS is still short \$1.2 million. The only place where you are going to get monies is from reserves, some adjustments to the revenues, and or take it from the stabilization or other available funds. It's too late for this fiscal year to call for an override vote. If an override vote is requested, we need to inform people there is a need for it. Has the Superintendent and School Committee discussed this for future out-years that we will invariably have. Dr. Nolin said it is early January and NPS still have yet to hear about healthcare and all the other pieces that are all moving parts. We put the budget out as soon as they are in draft form and that

is where we are right now.

**Ms. Julie McDonough, Chair, Natick School Committee**, said the discussion of the override begins with the Financial Planning Committee and they are beginning to talk about what the timeline would be for a potential override. This is an example of a collaborative effort which would not be happening just between the Superintendent and School Committee.

Mr. Foss said that insurance and other items are things that they make adjustments as you develop the budget. Everyone knew about this shortage last spring and we have done absolutely nothing was done about it. You can't tell me that the Superintendent, School Committee, and Town Administrator didn't know about this. If that's the case, then we need new leaders. In my opinion, this is not good planning and are emblematic of what we need to improve upon. The Finance Committee needs to be the advocates to go to not only the Board of Selectmen but also the School Committee. The School Committee has provided a budget that addresses the needs of the students, but with increased budget pressure in coming years, citizen's willingness to support a potential override, so I urge you to make sure that we're all getting on the same page on this budget.

#### **Committee Discussion:**

Mr. Hayes asked members to send questions that they have on this budget to Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan requested that members should submit questions that they would like the Education & Learning subcommittee to ask to him.

Ms. DeCarvalho said it would be helpful if there was synergy between town services and the school. For example, there was a line item last week for \$100K for an HRIS – is this something that NPS and town administration can both utilize. Or, what synergies are there between the libraries and the school libraries. Let's identify areas in the school budget now that can be matched with the town to help reduce the \$1.2 million gap.

Mr. Sullivan said that there was commentary when the Town Administrator presented and the Education & Learning subcommittee will do a deep-dive into these topic areas. There are a couple of data points that are critical Mr. Sullivan said the Town Administrator's budget outlined the amount of money that can be raised under 2.5% tax levy and new growth this year and allocated those monies out into general government and schools. The split on 2.5% increase in tax levy plus new growth is 87% to the schools and 13% to the municipal side. We acknowledge we have a revenue problem -however, the request we received from School administration asks for \$1.36 of every dollar for growth we can generate in new growth and Prop 2.5% tax levy limits. This inherently creates a problem so it is important we figure out how to bridge this divide and how do we come up with the result that is just for everyone. We want to come back with the data so all members get the answers they want so you can make an informed decision on this budget. The next E&L subcommittee meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 30. Dr. Nolin noted that she is working with the subcommittee to schedule meetings following deep-dives on the topics with the School Committee.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the E&L subcommittee is committed to coming back to the Finance Committee in thirty to thirty-five days from today with our review process wrapped up.

Ms. Van Amsterdam said we will let you know how to access the Finance Committee database to get all the detailed information discussed as well and anything we receive and will get subcommittee minutes out quickly.

Ms. Wollschlager noted that Dr. Nolin noted that part of the way this budget shortfall could be closed



would be not to hire any of the new positions, valued at \$414,293, roughly equal to eight teachers). We are adding new positions on the town side so I would like to hear their input on what that the \$414,293 would involve on the town side should cuts need to be made to balance the budget..

**Meeting Minutes:**

Mr. Evans brought forth meeting minutes for approval.

*Ms. Wollschlager moved favorable action, as amended on Meeting Minutes September 26, 2019, seconded by Ms. Van Amsterdam, **voted 12 – 0 - 1.***

*Ms. Wollschlager moved favorable action, as amended on Meeting Minutes October 1, 2019, seconded by Ms. Van Amsterdam, **voted 13 – 0 - 0.***

*Ms. Wollschlager moved favorable action on Meeting Minutes October 3, 2019, seconded by Ms. Van Amsterdam, **voted 10 – 0 - 2.***

Mr. Evans will provide meeting minutes for September 24, 2019, January 9, 2020 and January 16, 2020 at the next full meeting.

Mr. Linehan moved to close the Town Administrator's FY2021 Budget Public Hearing, seconded by Ms. Wollschlager **Voted 13 – 0 – 0.**

Old Business:

None

**ADJOURN**

*Mr. Pierce moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Evans, voted 13 – 0 – 0. Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.*