



Joint Meeting of Randolph Town Council & Randolph School Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, March 2, 2025, at 6:14 p.m.

This is a hybrid meeting. The Public is invited to attend this meeting in person or remotely, by telephone or computer access.

Call to Order: Council President Ryan Egan called the meeting to order.

Roll Call – Council Members Present: Christos Alexopoulos (In-Person), Richard Brewer (In-Person), James F. Burgess Jr., (In-Person), Natacha Clerger (In-Person), Ryan Egan (In-Person), Jesse Gordon (In-Person), Katrina Huff-Larmond (In-Person), Kevin O’Connell (In-Person), Brandon Thompson (Via Zoom).

School Committee Members Present: Kirby Christian, Lisa Millwood, Natalie Oliveras. Ida Gordon arrived after roll call at 6:16 pm.

Presentation:

1. School Department Presentation and Budget Review of FY26 and FY27: This presentation was led by School Finance Director Michael Mason and Superintendent Thea Stovell.
 - a. This presentation started with discussion on the Barr Foundation and SEL Kennels Grant.
 - b. School Finance Director Mason spoke on the budget drivers which are out of district tuition, special education cost, maintenance, active negotiations, and transportation.
 - c. Enrollment numbers overall have increased, especially in the preschool.
 - d. Multilanguage Learners have increased from 2024 to 2025.
 - e. The current budget for Special Education is showing signs of stress.
 - f. Transportation is also showing signs of stress. The School Finance Director shared the McKinney Vento data (homeless students within the district) as part of the presentation which has increased about 16%. The town may have to bus these students to and from school depending on their placements.
 - g. School Finance Director Mason stated that he believes this will be a balanced budget. However, he stated that the school administration will have recommendations for the FY27 budget.
 - h. President Egan thanked the Superintendent, School Finance Director and School Committee for being present and opened up the joint meeting for the School Committee to comment.
 - i. Superintendent Stovell spoke on how the staff is working together to ensure students are not being unnecessarily labeled. Councilor Huff-Larmond asked if the homeless students number has increased significantly over the past year. Superintendent Stovel stated that there has been an increase.
 - j. Councilor Huff-Larmond asked about students who are in the district who should not be. Superintendent Stovel stated that this is still happening but there is a new system in place that is helping to combat this issue.

- k. Councilor Huff-Larmond then asked about the collective bargaining in terms of unknown costs. School Finance Director Mason states this is due to being in active negotiations with these unions.
- l. Councilor Clerger asked if there are many students moving in after the October 1st enrollment numbers as well as if we have lost students due to the current situation with immigration. Superintendent Stovell stated that they have lost some students due to immigration. Superintendent Stovell then went on to say that yes students come and go after the October 1st enrollment.
- m. Superintendent Stovell stated that the MCAS scores were not as good as they should have been due to students and parents no longer taking the test seriously since it is no longer required for graduation. Superintendent Stovell stated that the district needs this test to be completed to the students best abilities.
- n. Councilor O'Connell asked about the hours of the preschool. Superintendent Stovell stated that some are part time and some are full time depending on if the student has an IEP.
- o. Councilor O'Connell asked if we are able to claim for both Multilingual Learners and Special Education, School Finance Director Mason stated that is correct.
- p. Councilor Alexopoulos asked about the increases for negotiations for paraprofessionals which showed a 4.5 % increase. Councilor Alexopoulos mentions on the towns side they are no higher than 3% and mostly 2% percent increases. Councilor Alexopoulos is asking the School Committee to keep this in mind and be as fiscally responsible when negotiating the contracts. Chair Millwood stated that the paraprofessionals have not had an increase in quite some time and we needed to retain our good paraprofessionals.
- q. Councilor Thompson asked about the transportation fleet and the amount of vehicles that are driving those high maintenance costs. School Finance Director Mason stated that some vehicles are as old as 14 years old. Mason also states that he is seeing high towing costs for these vehicles as well due to maintenance issues. Councilor Thompson asked if these vehicles have been completely depreciated, to which the answer was yes. School Finance Director Mason believes that the cost of transportation would be much higher if we did not have our own fleet.
- r. Councilor Thompson then asked if the maintenance for the fleet is reported under the maintenance line or the transportation line, the answer was transportation.
- s. Vice President Brewer suggested that we create a maintenance schedule for all these vehicles to stay up to date on maintenance and prevent down time on the vehicles.
- t. President Egan asked what the cycle is for the contracts. Then asked about the kids who enter the system in Pre-K who need language services, if there is a literacy program in Pre-K. Superintendent Stovell stated that there is a literacy program and the younger students learn very well.
- u. President Egan asked about the increases in subcategories yet the enrollment numbers do not show the same spike. Asking about the estimated 250 spike in multilingual learners from 2025.
- v. President Egan would like to see a better understanding of comparing the previous years including circuit breaker funding.
- w. Chair Millwood will send an email to the councilors and invite them to the schools budget hearing.
- x. Councilor Burgess asked if the fleet vehicles are allowed to be used for personal errands. However, Superintendent Stovell says if they are in between pickups then they can sit and have a coffee so you could see the van sitting in a parking lot. Also stating these buses are moving all day for pick up and drop offs.

- y. Councilor Burgess asked about building maintenance and groundskeeping which create the first impression. Councilor Burgess suggests that the complete needs of the school be submitted even if they do not believe they would get funded this year, it helps with the total picture.
- z. Councilor O'Connell asked about the GPS that is used in the fleet vehicles and if it will send maintenance reminders. School Finance Director Mason says the GPS software does not do maintenance notifications but he believes that the transportation department keeps records of that.
- aa. Councilor Huff-Larmond asked if we are looking for resources from the state. Chair Millwood stated that the superintendent has her hand in all pilot programs available. Superintendent Stovell stated that the literacy program is being piloted with the state is the program Randolph currently uses. Superintendent Stovell expresses the need to learn phonics and develop strong reading skills.

Adjournment:

Motion: Motion to adjourn the joint meeting by President Egan and seconded by Councilor Clerger.

Roll Call Vote: 12-1-0 (Yays: Alexopoulos, Brewer, Burgess, Clerger, J. Gordon, Huff-Larmond, O'Connell Thmpson; Millwood, Christian, I.Gordon, Oliveras; Nays: Egan)

The joint meeting adjourned.

Randolph Town Council and Randolph School Committee joint meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM

Tentative Upcoming Joint Meeting Dates

May 11

August 10

December 7