

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES
OF
THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE JOINT MEETING

OF
APRIL 9, 2026

SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AND

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”

RECORDED BY:
KAREN LAWLOR, PUBLIC RECORDER

2026.04.09

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METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

APRIL 9, 2026

A Joint Meeting of the Methuen School Committee and Methuen City Council Finance Subcommittees will be held on Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 5:00 PM at the Searles Building, in the Great Hall, 41 Pleasant Street, Methuen, MA.

Roll Call (City Council)

John Drew (P)
Yanilda Santos (P)
Jana Zanni Pesce (P)

Roll Call (School Committee)

Mary Beth Donovan Grassi
Laurie Keegan

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Lisa A. Golobski Twomey, Ed.D. Acting Superintendent of Schools
Ian Gosselin, Asst. Superintendent of Finance and Facilities
Gina Bozek, Asst. Superintendent

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION: Councilor Drew made a motion to accept the agenda
Councilor Santos seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in Favor

MOTION: Member Keegan made a motion to accept the agenda.
Member Donovan Grassi seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in Favor

Public Participation - None

General discussion of work done to date by School Committee Budget Subcommittee

Discussion: Member Donovan Grassi thanked the Council for the meeting and said it was a historic moment getting both sides together to discuss the budget.

Acting Superintendent Lisa Golobski Twomey discussed areas of need and in some cases, areas that can be decreased. She is preparing for a level servicing budget, which on its own has

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quite a bit of increases. Salaries, technology and software, out of district tuition and transportation have all increased.

Mr. Gosselin asked to start with level funding and present that, then add another column of what is needed and may want. Councilor Zanni Pesce wanted to know if we had an idea of the increase for level services and how much outside tuition and transportation is going up. Last year Circuit Breaker from the state helped us out. We have not seen anything from the state yet. He explained how the Circuit Breaker works. Mr. Gosselin told the Councilors that it's not a deficit that we are starting out with, it's less money reimbursement from the state.

Councilor Drew would like to meet like this again. It's a great opportunity to work together with City Council and School Committee members.

Councilor Santos talked about having our own fleet of buses. It would also create jobs for the city. It would be a savings in the long run. Mr. Gosselin mentioned that it has been talked about. We don't have the funds for the large number of buses we would need. Also, we don't have a department or staff to run it. They had a discussion of coming up with a long term plan to try and get funding or a grant to have our own transportation. Mr. Gosselin will look into it again and talk it over with the consultant they used last year.

Both sides would like to see programs started to help keep special education students in the district. Ms. Bozek has been looking into it. There is a large start up cost, but it would pay off down the road. This is a process that will need to work with the parents to bring their child back to the district. The parent has to agree to it. Councilor Drew would like to know the up front cost and to forecast out to see what we would be saving.

They all agree that we need to look at different ideas and try to save in the long run. The Acting Superintendent and Ms. Bozek are looking into different grants , most grants for special education goes to staff. There are grants for CTE programs.

The group talked about the CTE program at the High School. Acting Superintendent Golobski Twomey went over the Chapter 74 programs we have. The program pays for itself, the state pays \$5800 per student. She would like to add additional programs. Enrollment is down in the district as well as in the state. The vocational enrollment helps offset the funding.

Timeline and Budget Objectives

Council Zanni Pesce wanted to know if there was an estimated date that the proposed budget will be presented to the School Committee. The Committee has a rough date of April 16, 2026 to present the budget.

The objective is to start where we can and not go for everything this year. Start with level servicing and then an "a la cart" menu to add. It will be a very difficult budget year. Once they get some numbers from the city, that will be the starting point, and go from there.

Member Donovan Grassi wanted to know where we stand on the proposal of the surplus buildings (Currier and Pleasant Valley Schools). The City Council has passed the proposal on the first read, now waiting to do the second read. Once the buildings are declared surplus, the Council believes that dollars from those sales would be put back into fixing capital improvements at the schools.

Member Donovan Grassi would like people to contact our local Delegations in Boston and get them on board to support the district. She suggested getting a letter drafted to send them.

Set date for next meeting

Both Committees will present a few dates to come up with and pick one for the next joint meeting.

Adjourn**Roll Call**

All in Favor to adjourn the meeting.

Adjourned at 5:45 PM