

WALTHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Waltham, Massachusetts
SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

JUNE 10, 2026

SPECIAL MEETING

The Special Meeting of the Waltham School Committee convened at 6:34pm. Present were Mr. Zanghi, Mrs. AlJammal, Ms. DeJoannis, Ms. Wong-Bigelow, and Mayor McCarthy. Mr. Tarallo and Mrs. Coleman were not in attendance. Mayor McCarthy presided.

Mr. Tarallo arrived at 6:34pm.

RECESS

The Chair called a recess at 6:35pm.

RECONVENE

At 6:47pm, the School Committee reconvened with all members, including Mrs. Coleman, present.

The Mayor confirmed the meeting was being televised and recorded by WCAC. No one else in attendance indicated they were recording the meeting.

**FY'27 SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT
BUDGET**

Dr. Mendonsa shared a statement about the school department's priorities when preparing the budget request. She confirmed her focus has always been on meeting the needs of the students in the district and acknowledged that over the years, the needs of children have drastically changed. Teachers and staff now face enormous responsibilities, partly due to more stringent requirements imposed by DESE. The superintendent indicated the need for prior practices to change in order to support our very diverse district and confirmed she is committed to collaborating and communicating with the community to do what is best for the district.

The superintendent then shared a comparison between the School Committee's approved budget request of \$136,874,648. and the Mayor's recommended amount of \$129,101,849 and the differences between the two within each of the cost centers.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to hear from off-committee members. All in favor.

Following a question from Ms. DeJoannis, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Chad Mazza confirmed the district is contractually obligated to pay increases in the areas of transportation, software and utilities for the upcoming school year.

Mr. Tarallo confirmed that the Mayor's proposed budget accounts for an increase in the personnel account but the other accounts were level-funded so no additional funding was provided for in her recommended budget. He advised that the state allows for the School Committee to request the City Council consider its full \$136,874,648. request when determining the FY 2027 city budget.

Mr. Tarallo made a motion, which was seconded by Ms. Wong-Bigelow, to forward the School's Department's request for a FY 2027 Operating Budget in the amount of \$136,874,648 to the City Council for consideration. Before a vote was taken, a lengthy discussion between all members, Mayor McCarthy and Dr. Mendonsa ensued.

The Mayor explained that following a review of the documents requested from the school department, she can request an appropriation from the City Council to provide funding for the school department's other accounts (Operating Expenses, Equipment & Unusals and Special Items).

Multiple members expressed concern with the possibility of the full amount already approved by the School Committee not necessarily being needed. The conversation shifted to the June 15th state deadline to inform teachers if they will not be able to return for the upcoming year and Human Resources Administrator Kate Peretz clarified the process.

Based on a request from Mr. Tarallo, the Mayor explained the whole budget process from the school department's request, through the Mayor's role and then the City Council's responsibility. Information about upcoming School Committee and City Council meetings in relation to the June 30, 2026 deadline was shared. Ms. Wong-Bigelow urged the members to vote to send the approved full amount to the City Council. Following this, the final vote was taken.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Ms. Wong-Bigelow, to forward the School Department's request for a FY 2027 Operating Budget in the amount of \$136,874,648. to the Waltham City Council for consideration. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to adjourn the Special Meeting at 8:19pm.

Marisa Mendonsa
Clerk