



Seymour Board of Education BUDGET WORKING SESSION MINUTES

September 8, 2025
Bungay Elementary School
6:00 pm

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 9/12/25
TIME: 3:25pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Board Members Present: Kristen Bruno, Board Vice Chair (acting Chair)
Lori Nespoli
Kristen Harmeling
Jim Garofolo
Ed Strumello

Others Present: Dr. Susan Compton
Salvatore Bucci
Shannon Levey

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance - Ms. Bruno called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance at 6:08 PM

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairperson is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairperson's Comments portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and no longer than 3 minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All the public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

- Public Comment called three times, no comment

III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Proposed Line Item Seymour Board of Education Allocation for FY 2025-2026

Mr. Bucci directed the Board to page 3 of the budget document, noting the progression from January's 7.9% increase to a reduction in March due to health insurance adjustments, resulting in a net budget decrease of almost \$1.2 million.

He explained that prior to referendum, three proposed teaching positions were not added to the budget. Additional savings came from certified staff changes, including the elimination of the French program and position, a science teacher retirement, and hiring teachers at lower steps. These changes resulted in \$335,000 in savings, which was critical in reconciling budget cuts. Minor adjustments totaled approximately \$13,000.

Employee Benefits: The district transitioned to the Partnership Plan, eliminating HSAs, adjusting carrier rates, and reducing buyouts. However, additional health benefit enrollments increased costs by \$275,000. After all adjustments, benefits reflected an 11.6% increase. Mr. Bucci noted the Partnership Plan is more stable than the previous plan, with brokers estimating annual increases of roughly 10%. Longevity payments were prepaid from the prior year. The district also received \$177,000 in state funding (42% reimbursement compared to 53% the previous year), a reduction from what had been budgeted at 48%. The State also cut funding for Adult Education.

Facilities and Utilities: Electricity usage has remained stable, with rates locked until November. Mr. Bucci is in discussion with downtown officials regarding future agreements, aiming for a 10–12 cent rate range. Distribution charges increased \$100,000, but last year's budget had accounted for this. Preventative maintenance contracts (HVAC, controls, etc.) were increased to ensure reliable operations and reduce long-term costs. Bulk custodial supply purchasing continues, allowing for a \$10,000 reduction.

Instructional Supplies and Programs:

- \$93,000 payment for the district's six-year reading program has been completed and removed from the budget.
- Other educational items were adjusted, with reductions applied across schools. Principals and secretaries may run requisition reports, which require both principal and business office approval.
- Dr. Compton emphasized that reductions were possible only because of declining enrollment and retirements, particularly at the high school. Insurance savings also contributed. These allowed restoration of a music teacher at SMS and a first-year teacher at CLS.
- Special Education costs remain significant at approximately \$10 million. Adjustments were made in outplacement and transportation routes, resulting in slight savings.

Board Discussion:

- Ms. Bruno noted increased technology costs (non-educational) to enhance district security and inquired about Special Education funding, which Mr. Bucci clarified it is rising.
- Ms. Harmeling asked about instructional supply reductions, including the \$36,050 listed under line item 641 and the \$50,000 savings from families providing supplies. She expressed concern about requests for families to purchase items such as headphones. Dr. Compton assured the Board that donated supplies (from Liberty Bank, Seymour Methodist Church, etc.) are available for students in need and distributed confidentially.
- Mr. Garofolo questioned the process for determining family need. Dr. Compton noted assistance is available to all who request it.
- Technology subscriptions (Microsoft, Adobe, etc.) were discussed. Some costs are shared with the Town; most contracts are annual, though copier leases are on five-year agreements.
- Adult Education costs are based on submitted budgets; enrollment data for Seymour residents will be gathered.
- Mr. Strumello stressed the importance of clearly communicating cuts and their impacts to the community and Board of Finance.
- Ms. Bruno and Dr. Compton agreed on the need to highlight reductions and noted budget planning begins October 1.
- Ms. Harmeling reminded the Board of the prior motion allocating \$180,000 for excess costs, stated the need for bulleted document explaining that and emphasized caution when making exceptions to contractual provisions.

MOTION: (Jim Garofolo / Ed Strumello) to accept the proposed line item Seymour Board of Education Allocation for FY 2025-2026 as presented.

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Ms. Harmeling

PASSES: 4-1-0

IV. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS & SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

A. Board of Education Comments

1. Chairman's Comments
2. Board Member Comments

B. Superintendent Report

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM

Prepared by: Shannon Levey, Board Clerk