



Meeting Notice

Board/Committee Name: Orange Elementary School Committee

Day/Date: April 14, 2025

Time of Meeting: 6:00PM

Location: Fisher Hill Elementary School

Media Center

59 Dexter St.

Orange, MA 01364

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: meet.google.com/vnt-ahoj-ibu

Or dial: +1 862-283-1310 PIN: 771 834 416#

MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Mallory Ellis called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.
Other members present: Crystal Clarke, Frank Hains and Josefa Scherer.
Minutes taken by Christine Rodriguez.
2. Pledge of Allegiance - Mallory led the pledge of allegiance.
3. Public Comment - Pat Larson, Chair of the Orange Town Energy Committee, spoke about the Earth Day event on 4/22: Celebrate the Sun. It is a community event at Fisher Hill regarding solar panels and will feature different activities.
4. Approval of Minutes - ***On a motion made by Frank Hains and seconded by Crystal Clarke, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2025.***
5. Report of the OETA - David Mastrionni reported they are looking forward to April vacation and two rounds of MCAS when they come back. There have been some amazing field trips the past few weeks and those will continue to the end of the year. The current budget keeps staffing levels the same and they appreciate that. Dr. Liz reported that the Para evaluation tool has been finished and will be voted on at the next meeting.
6. Principal Report - Dr. Lewis reported that MCAS is off to a great start, teacher positions have been posted and are in the process of interviewing one fourth grade teacher candidate. Staff practiced in a reunification process with the police department and part two of that is taking place at the May faculty meeting (Dr. Lewis handed out a reunification placement sheet). The reading curriculum committee is selecting the final reading program and the leadership team has been working on revising student report cards to be more reader friendly.
7. Policy of the Month - AC - Mallory reviewed policy AC - NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION. The policy is reflective of current law and State Regulations.

8. Glimpse into the Classroom - None.

9. Matters for Action or Vote

a. FY26 School Choice - Mallory explained that this is an annual vote by the School Committee that allows Fisher Hill to open seats for students who are not enrolled in the district. For each School Choice seat filled, Orange receives approximately \$5,000 per student. Conversely, if an Orange student chooses to attend another school under the School Choice program, the district loses \$5,000; if they attend a virtual school, the loss increases to \$9,742. A public meeting was held last month where the School Committee and the public discussed School Choice.

On a motion made by Frank Hains and seconded by Josefa Scherer, the committee voted unanimously to promote an equitable educational environment for all students, and encourage the continued focus on enhancing the quality of education within our existing school, providing only those who are residents of Orange or children of staff from Fisher Hill or Mahar Regional to attend Fisher Hill. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.

b. FY26 Budget - Michele explained that they worked to adjust the budget to reduce it further, without eliminating staff positions that we currently have. This was done by moving some staff onto grant dollars we are confident will receive (rural aid and 240 Grant FY26). The Town is aware at a minimum they need to meet Net School Spending (NSS). The current proposed budget is about \$425,000 above NSS. She explained that this brings up 2 issues; 1. Next year there is no guarantee we will have the grants for FY27 to cover these positions and 2. We still do not have final numbers from the state and the Federal government changes are trickling down. If dollars are removed by the opening of school or in the early fall there would need to be a reduction of staff to cover the proposed loss of revenue.

On a motion made by Josefa Scherer and seconded by Crystal Clarke, the committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed budget of \$8,767,664 for FY26. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.

Josefa asked about the supply lines and Michele said we are spending down those lines and getting supplies for next year. Michele stated that this budget has been submitted to the town and there has been no feedback yet.

c. CAPS Collaborative Agreement - Dr. Liz explained that CAPS has been approached by Wachusett Regional to become a member of the Collaborative. The CAPS board approved Wachusett Regional to become a member. The collaborative agreement had to be revised. The agreement went to DESE, then for legal review and compliance with state regulations. Each of the CAPS member towns need to vote on the revised agreement which now includes Wachusett Regional.

On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Josefa Scherer, the committee voted unanimously to approve the CAPS Collaborative agreement which includes Wachusett Regional, and further authorize the Chair of the Orange School Committee to sign the agreement on behalf of the Orange School committee. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.

d. Policies

i. First Read - the following policies were presented for first read:

IKF - Graduation Requirements

IMG - Animals in Schools

JIC-Student Discipline

EFC - Universal Free School Meals

EHAA - District Strategy Relating to Technology
 EHB - Data Records and Retention
 GBEE - Personal Use of Technology
 IJND - Access to Digital Resources
 IJNDB - Use of Technology in Instruction
 IJNDC - Acceptable Use of Digital Resources
 JICJ - Student Use of Digital Resources
 KDC - Community Use of Digital Resources
 KDCB - District Website and Social Media

ii. Vote/2nd read - ***On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Josefa Scherer, the committee voted unanimously to approve the following policies upon the recommendation of MASC and the Policy and Communications Sub-committee; IGA/GD-Curriculum Development, Adaptation and Instruction, BEDH-Public Comment at School Committee Meetings, CHA/CHC- Development and Dissemination of Procedures, IHBA-Student Services Program, IHBF - Homebound Instruction. Roll call taken by Chrissy Rodriguez.***

10. Sub Committee / Liaison Updates
 Reorganization of Subcommittees

- Chair - ***Crystal Clarke nominated Mallory Ellis as Chair of the OES School Committee, Josefa Scherer seconded. Mallory accepted the nomination. Voted unanimously.***
- Vice Chair - ***Mallory nominated Josefa Scherer as Vice Chair of the OES School Committee, Crystal Clarke seconded. Josefa accepted the nomination. Voted unanimously.***
- Secretary – ***Crystal Clarke nominated herself. Josefa Scherer seconded. Voted unanimously.***
- ***On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Frank Hains, the committee voted unanimously to approve the slate of appointments listed below:***
Leadership, Accountability & Measurement Subcommittee – Mallory Ellis, Josefa Scherer (Crystal Clarke as alternate)
Communications & Policy Subcommittee – Jessica Reske
Resources & Capacity Subcommittee - Frank Hains (Josefa Scherer as alternate)
Representative to Union #73 School Committee – Mallory Ellis, Josefa Scherer, Crystal Clarke
Joint Labor & Management Committee - Mallory Ellis, Crystal Clarke (Josefa Scherer as alternate)
Representative to the R.C. Mahar Regional School Committee – Frank Hains (Mallory as alternate)
Payroll Warrants – Mallory Ellis
Bill Warrants - Mallory Ellis
Clerk to the School Committee – Chrissy Rodriguez
CES Collaborative Representative – Mallory Ellis

CAPS Representative – Crystal Clarke (Dr. Liz as alternate)

School Building Committee - Josefa Scherer

OETA Sick Bank - Jessica Reske

OETA ESP Sick Bank - Jessica Reske

Teacher Negotiations- Mallory Ellis, Frank Hains (Crystal as alternate)

ESP Negotiations- Mallory Ellis, Frank Hains (Crystal as alternate)

SEPAC - Mallory Ellis, Crystal Clarke

- a. Report of Union #73 Committee - This committee has not met.
 - b. Report of the R.C. Mahar Representative - Crystal reported that they voted on the budget.
 - c. Report of the Leadership, Accountability & Measurement Subcommittee - This committee has not met but will meet at the end of April.
 - d. Report of the Communications & Policy Subcommittee - see above policy info
 - e. Report of the Resources & Capacity Subcommittee - Frank reported that they talked about new cameras that have been installed in the school. Microphone update - the vendor gave an estimate and they will most likely be set up by the beginning of next school year.
 - i. Journal Entry Vote - ***On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Josefa Scherer, the committee voted unanimously to approve the journal entry as presented. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.***
 - f. Report of the CES Representative - Mallory reported that they are experiencing significant financial challenges. The next meeting is on 5/28/25.
 - g. Report of the CAPS Representative - The CAPS meeting was held on Wednesday, April 9th.
 - h. Report of the School Building Committee/Solar Panels - see energy report above
 - i. Report of the SEPAC Representative - This meeting did not happen.
11. Next Meeting - June 9, 2025
 12. Items for Future Consideration - How often does Para coverage happen? (Item for JLMC meeting).
 13. Adjournment - The committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:21pm.

Approved: 6/9/25

Signature of Secretary _____

The agenda reflects topics that the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed.

Public Comment Protocols

The School Committee welcomes public comment on items that are within the scope of the School Committee's responsibilities. The Public Comment agenda item is reserved for this purpose. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should be aware of the following guidelines:

- ☐ The Chair will recognize those wishing to speak and give them the floor. Only persons recognized by the Chair may speak. For purposes of the minutes, speakers should identify themselves at the beginning of their remarks.
- ☐ The purpose of Public Comment is to receive input from the community, not to engage in prolonged conversation with the Committee. The Chair will ensure that any comment or question that requires a response from the committee or the School Department will be addressed in a timely manner.
- ☐ All comments should be addressed through the Chair, not any individual committee member or to others in attendance.
- ☐ Speakers are expected to respect confidentiality. This includes the confidentiality of the speaker's own child/ren as well as that of school staff and personnel.