A Public Hearing on the FY17 School Department Budget was held on March 30, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Dr. Judith A. Riordan Performing Arts Center in the East Bridgewater Jr/Sr High School. Members present were: Chairperson Jennifer Kitchenham, Vice-Chairperson Gordon McKinnon, Secretary Ellen Pennington, Aimee McAlpine, Theresa Maltz, Superintendent Elizabeth Legault, Assistant Superintendent Gina Williams, and recording clerk Joanne Benner.

Also in attendance were: Principals Mrs. Byrne, Mr. Gentile, and Mr. Vieira, Business Manager Mrs. Lee, Assistant Duprey, Facilities Manager Brian Kiely, district staff members, and community members.

Chairperson Jennifer Kitchenham opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

Motion: Maltz/McKinnon
Vote: 5 in favor

Representative Diehl came to the stage to congratulate Mrs. Kitchenham for her years of dedication and service to the schools and community. Mrs. Kitchenham expressed her respect and thanks for all that the Committee has accomplished along with thanking Liz, Gina, Mary, Barbara, and Joanne. It was an unprecedented year where support was across the board with the Superintendent, Mr. Samia, the Finance Committee, and Board of Selectman all working together for the common goal of producing a budget that the town could support. Thank you to the teachers and leadership team for their hard work on negotiations.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY16 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET

There is a new vision and a new East Bridgewater. Gina Williams is truly her copilot and they lead together as a team. It takes a village and we couldn't have gotten through this without all of the community support. Last year we were looking at a 19.6 million budget and 38 layoffs with no sports or music. Today we are presenting a budget total of 18.9 million.

Salaries represent two thirds of the budget. Superintendent Legault hopes to turn this around in the next 3 to 10 years as we get a better handle on the financial status.

Our district needs to become a 1:1 with technology in order to compete in the global world. It is of utmost importance that each student be offered opportunity and access.
The budget for each school is based on grade and student enrollment. We need to put money into our foundation and curriculum. Part of doing this will be that we are developing our own Professional Development Academy and will use the expertise of our own staff instead of bringing others in. If we cannot offer development a teacher needs we have agreed, with the EBEA, that we will support the teacher and use our collaboratives to get the classes needed.

Last year Superintendent Legault came up with a very unpopular idea and asked the faculty and staff to take a zero across the board. By doing this we did not have to cut staff, programs, sports, and music. The town stopped allocating funds to the school because we were 2.3 million in the hole. We sold the vans and received $240,000.00 back. We all took a zero. Last year at this time we were $-547,000.00 and today we are $565,000.00 to the good and we will remain there going forward. We encumber funds in advance to ensure they will be available when needed and watch every dollar that goes out. We are disciplined and as a result there will not be any layoffs or reduction in programs; we will support the emotional and social wellbeing of all students.

$163,000.00 is not enough to support the students. We will increase this each year along with increasing classroom support. Our Special Education costs are $3,456,480.00, our per pupil spending is the lowest on the South Shore. We need to advocate for our students. The formula for Chapter 70 funding must be changed; it does not work. By law we cannot take funding away from Special Education services nor should we.

We need to charge user fees to offset our costs but they are not going up. We will not be increasing busing fees. The Superintendent met with Lucini Bus and negotiated a new contract that will save $50,000.00 a year for the next 3 years.

Our Food Services Department is self-sustaining and our Director, Mrs. Vaughn does not feel there is a need to increase lunch prices. Next year the high school will be going from 3 to 5 lunches. Kids need time to sit down and eat without rushing.

Long range goals need to be established for our students. East Bridgewater schools will be the best on the South Shore when we get to where we want.

Thank you for welcoming me and your support.

Action is required to certify a level service school department budget for FY17 in the amount of $18,900,000:
Motion: McKinnon/Maltz Vote: 5 in favor
EAST BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL COMMUNITY MISSION STATEMENT
The East Bridgewater Public Schools provides a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, and effective communicators ready to assume their positions as responsible productive citizens.