



**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**418 Bumps River Road, Osterville, MA 02655**  
**February 12, 2025 – 5:15 PM**

**1. Cracker Barrel Discussion**

- **Local District Issues**

Board members are invited to share current concerns and challenges in local educational arena

- **Questions / Concerns**

**2. OPEB Trust Board of Trustees Meeting (5:15)** Presenters: Patrick Murphy and Bill Friel

The meeting was called to order, and roll call was conducted to confirm the OPEB Trust Board's presence. Board members and Collaborative staff who attended the meeting virtually have "R" for "remote" noted after their names.

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes; Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes.*

**Overview of OPEB Trust:** Patrick Murphy explained the purpose of the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Trust, established approximately a decade ago to fund retiree healthcare liabilities. The Trust operates as a separate lockbox account, strictly used for covering retiree health insurance costs. To date, it has never been drawn from, as retiree healthcare costs have been covered through the general operating budget. **Current Financial Status & Funding Considerations:** The Trust currently holds \$2,940,000, with an actuarial funding level of 124% well above the requirements. Historically, the Board has allocated \$180,000 annually to the Trust. However, the actuarial recommendation suggests adjusting this to \$100,000 for FY23, considering that \$50,000 of retiree healthcare costs are covered through the operating budget.

**Discussion on Allocation Options:** Two options were considered: **1.** Maintain the existing \$180,000 annual contribution. **2.** Adjust to \$100,000 for FY23, aligning with actuarial recommendations. Factors influencing the decision included the high funding level, upcoming capital expenditures (e.g., purchasing buses), and long-term financial planning. The Board acknowledged that maintaining a funding level above 100% does not provide additional benefits such as lower insurance rates. **Investment Strategy & Future Planning:** The Board discussed investment strategies and risk management, noting that while the Trust has grown significantly, market performance and retiree decisions could impact future funding needs. There was agreement on the importance of regular reviews to adjust funding strategies as necessary. **Decision:** The Board deliberated on whether to adopt the actuarial recommendation or continue with the previous funding level. A final vote was taken, affirming the decision for the FY23 annual allocation to be adjusted to a one time \$100,000 based on actuarial recommendations while maintaining flexibility for future financial adjustments.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve one time reduction in contribution to OPEB Trust FY23, Mr. Fichtenmayer 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes; Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr. Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes. The Motion passed.*

Ms. Lythcott made a motion to adjourn OPEB Board of Trustees Meeting, Mr. Fichtenmayer 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes; Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr. Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes. The Motion passed.*

### **3. Call to Order & Roll Call Regular Board of Directors Meeting**

Chair Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. The meeting occurred in a hybrid fashion, with participants present in person and attending virtually through the Zoom application.

Roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes; Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr. Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes.*

In attendance were:

**Bourne** Maureen Fuller - R  
**Eastham** Devon O'Rourke - R  
**Falmouth** Terri Medeiros - R  
**Martha's Vineyard** Roxanne Ackerman - R  
**Nauset** Cathryn Lonsdale  
**Provincetown** Ngina Lythcott - R  
**Truro** Tyler Medley - R (until 7pm)  
**D-Y Regional** Phil Morris - R  
**Monomoy** Brad Schiff - R  
**Wareham** Brennan McKiernan - R  
**Upper Cape RTS** Robert Fichtenmayer  
**Brewster** Steve Leibowitz - R  
**Orleans** Kathy McNamara - R

**Administrative Board Representative** Dr. Marc Smith - R

Also in attendance were:

**Executive Director** – Hope Hanscom  
**Business Manager** – R. Patrick Murphy  
**Treasurer** – Bill Friel  
**Associate Business Manager** - Amy Lipkind  
**Director of Special Education** Dr. Joan Woodward  
**STAR Program Director** - Julia Bryant  
**Director of Special Projects** - Dr. Chris Bogden – R  
**Human Resources Coordinator** - L. Troye Thompson  
**Manager, Special Project** – Gwyn Chingos

### **4. \* Amended Minutes February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - vote APPROVED**

Ms. Fuller pointed out 3 small errors to be corrected. Julia was spelled Julie, Mr Fichtenmayer was not listed as present initially and Ms Fuller was not noted as remote with an 'R' . Ms. Lythcott made a motion to approve January 8th, 2025 Board Meeting as Amended Minutes, Mr. Fichtenmayer 2<sup>nd</sup> this motion.

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-abstain; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-abstain, Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-abstain; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr. Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes. The motion passed.*

### **5. Executive Director's Report**

- **Transition** Presenter: Hope Hanscom

The new Executive Director provided an update on her transition since starting on January 21st. She expressed gratitude for the warm welcome she received and shared that she feels confident in her decision to join the organization.

Over the past 17 days, she has:

- Met one-on-one with nearly all administrative staff and key consultants.
- Attended and participated in the Legislative Breakfast on January 24th, where discussions focused on legislative priorities, collaborative facility funding, and special education. The event was well-attended, and valuable connections were made with policymakers.
- Engaged with state and local leadership, including legal counsel and collaborative organizations, to understand ongoing initiatives and ensure smooth operations.
- Worked with the administrative team to restructure meetings for efficiency, ensuring task-driven discussions and appropriate participation. The new structure includes:
- Monthly large administrative meetings before board meetings. Smaller, focused meetings for programs, special projects, transportation, and operations.
- Finalized team norms to guide collaboration and decision-making as challenges arise.
- Implemented and tested new snow protocols, which have been successfully used twice.
- Undertaken training and administration of ACCESS testing for English learners at STAR and Waypoint programs.

The Executive Director also emphasized the importance of statewide collaboration, having engaged with other executive directors across the state's 24 collaboratives. She is actively leveraging these relationships to support the organization's goals. Overall, the transition has been fast paced but productive, and she looks forward to continued progress in the coming months.

- **Program Updates**

- o **Program Engagement & Staff Meetings:** Hope Hanscom  
Meetings held with STAR teachers, therapists, and paraprofessionals, as well as Waypoint staff. Focus on gathering feedback on what staff love about the programs, areas needing attention, and general insights. Emphasis on building relationships with staff and understanding their needs.
- o **STAR Program Updates:** Julia Bryant
- o **Waypoint Program Updates:** Hope Hanscom, Joan Woodward  
Focus on refining IEP goal writing and aligning instructional strategies with curriculum frameworks. Upcoming professional development day (March 28) dedicated to IEP development and instructional alignment. Partnership with Dr. Hauser to create streamlined data collection tools for teachers. Ongoing training in de-escalation techniques and physical restraint procedures through QBS Safety Care training. Two new students enrolled, with additional referrals in process. High school students participated in MCAS science retakes (biology and physics), and some took ACCESS testing.
- o **Special Projects:** Hope Hanscom and Chris Bogden  
Regarding **Professional Development (PD)** Training for Educators, secured commitments from local educators and districts for a specialized PD program focused on differentiating educational challenges related to language acquisition and learning disabilities. The cost of the training was approximately \$8,000, requiring a commitment threshold to be met for funding, which has been far exceeded. **Next Steps:** Continue outreach efforts to additional districts, including New Bedford and others suggested by board members. **ASLP** is collecting student applications for the February 14<sup>th</sup> deadline. Enrollment will likely reach 210. Steve Kelleher is currently conducting interviews for 3 teaching positions. **Next steps:** Review student applications and notify of acceptance on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2025.
- o **Transportation:** Anders Erikson and Patrick Murphy  
**Staffing & Recruitment:** Staffing levels have remained steady since last month, but there is still a need for additional drivers. **Operational Challenges:** Illnesses, particularly flu cases, have led to staff shortages, requiring all available personnel, including dispatchers and supervisors, to cover routes. Despite staffing challenges, transportation operations continue successfully due to the dedication and coordination of the team. **Snowstorm Response:** The storm over the weekend required extensive bus cleaning efforts across six lots. The entire office staff worked collaboratively to clear buses, ensuring they were ready for service by Sunday afternoon. Coordination with district and town personnel allowed for efficient snow removal. **Special Coverage & Efforts:** Team members have been traveling to Nantucket for

transportation coverage, going above and beyond their regular duties. Acknowledgment and appreciation were expressed for the team's hard work in maintaining smooth operations despite ongoing challenges.

**Next Steps:** Continue recruitment and training efforts to address driver shortages. Monitor staffing levels and adjust coverage as needed. Maintain strong coordination for weather-related challenges.

- **Staffing Updates** Hope Hanscom

- **Registered Teacher Apprentice Program Grant:**

The collaborative explored applying for the Registered Teacher Apprentice Program Grant, which funds individuals in paraprofessional or similar roles while they train to become certified teachers. Due to the extensive RFP process and lack of full district buy-in, the decision was made not to apply for FY25. Planning will begin in March to submit the application for FY26 instead.

- **Cape Cod Regional Education Job Fair:**

The Collaborative is co-hosting a Cape Cod Regional Education Job Fair on Saturday, April 5th, from 10 AM - 2PM at the Sturgis Community Center in Hyannis, in partnership with multiple districts, including Barnstable, Falmouth, and Sturgis, with a goal to collaborate rather than compete for highly qualified educators.

- **\*Staffing Updates (Vote Required):**

The board reviewed the latest additions, reductions, and status changes in personnel since the last meeting. Request was made to change the term **termination** to **reduction** to better reflect staff departures.

- **Waypoint Cafeteria Manager Update:**

The former cafeteria manager at Waypoint left his position. Miss Amy has returned and is working with Miss Jerry to support the culinary program, which is running smoothly. The program remains fully operational and continues to be a highlight for students.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve staffing additions, reductions and change of status, Ms. Medeiros 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes; Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr. Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes. The motion passed.*

## 6. Financial Review

- **Business Manager's Memo-FY26 Assumptions discussion** Patrick Murphy

- **FY26 Budget Planning:**

The Collaborative is considering several key factors that will impact the FY26 budget, including tuition rates, salary increases, health insurance costs, capital projects (e.g., boiler project, bus radio upgrades), and potential new vehicle purchases. Budget decisions may require trade-offs to balance priorities while ensuring financial sustainability for both the collaborative and member districts.

- **Collaboration with Districts:**

Mr. Murphy and Dr. Woodward continue to engage with special education directors and business managers to discuss budget needs and ensure districts understand potential tuition increases and staffing requirements. A priority for FY26 is securing BCBA's for all programs, as this remains an area of need.

- **Salary Competitiveness & Tuition Rates:**

The Collaborative has been working to bring teacher and paraprofessional salaries closer to the regional median to remain competitive. A comparison model of tuition rates across Massachusetts collaboratives indicates that Cape Cod Collaborative remains on the lower end of tuition costs, though additional models are being explored to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

- **Next Steps in Budget Process:**

The FY26 budget process began in September/October, with ongoing discussions and data-sharing to provide transparency and avoid sudden financial impacts for districts.

Board members were encouraged to review the list of budget assumptions and reach out with any questions. No action required at this time.

- **\*Warrants Approval: FY25 Warrants #26, #27, #28, #29, #30 - vote APPROVED**

Ms. Lythcott made a motion to bundle warrants #26-30, Ms. Medeiros 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes; Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr. Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes. The motion passed.*



Mr. Fichtenmayer made a motion to approve warrants #26-30, Ms. Medeiros 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:  
*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes;  
Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes; Mr.  
Medley-(R)-yes; Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes. The motion passed.*

- **FY25 Financial Review:** Patrick Murphy
  - **Revenue and Forecasting:**  
The Collaborative is continuously assessing and forecasting revenue based on student enrollment projections for both Waypoint and STAR programs. Factors such as appropriate staffing and the right students being enrolled may affect whether these enrollment targets are met. **Forecast for End of Year:** The projected deficit for FY25 is expected to be similar to previous years, possibly in the range of several hundred thousand dollars. The Collaborative plans to cover this shortfall using the cumulative surplus.  
**FY26 Budget:** The goal for FY26 is to move closer to creating a balanced budget from the start,
- **Boiler procurement updates:** Patrick Murphy
  - **Project Overview:** The boiler replacement project, managed by BLW Engineering, includes specifications, drawings, and procurement assistance. **Estimated Cost:** The project is estimated to cost over \$400,000, though the final cost will be determined once bids are received. **Timeline:** Bid submissions expected by March. Work planned for spring, summer, and possibly fall. **Scope:** The project involves replacing one boiler and associated hardware.

## 7. New Business

- **\*Addition of Plymouth:** Hope Hanscom
  - The addition of Plymouth Public Schools to the membership of Cape Cod Collaborative is in the process of being finalized. Changes to the Articles of Agreement have been proposed to include Plymouth as a full member. The changes, reviewed by Paulajo Gaines from DESE and attorney Sarah Spatafore, include updates to membership status and regulatory adjustments. Next **Steps:** School committee meetings in March will need to vote on the changes. A minimum of eleven school committees, including Plymouth, must approve the changes by April 1. **Additional support:** The Collaborative will distribute memos and proposed Articles to school committees for their consideration. **Meeting Date Proposal:** Special meeting is scheduled for **February 26 at 4:30 PM** to vote on the changes,
- **Board Operations**
  - **Agenda Structure:** A review of the current Board meeting agenda structure was discussed. While no immediate changes are being made, the intention is to be responsive to Board members' needs. The meeting materials will still be mailed to those who have requested paper copies, and the agenda will continue to include hyperlinks to related documents for easier access. **School Committee Reports:** Required by statute, Board members must report to their school committees quarterly on the activities of the Collaborative. A new quarterly report will be distributed starting in April to assist in fulfilling this requirement. **Leadership Changes:** April Meeting: There will be a reorganization of officers, including the selection of a new chairperson, as the current chair is not running for re-election in May. The Board was advised to consider potential changes to the leadership structure as elections approach. **Feedback:** Board members were encouraged to provide feedback on the new agenda format and the upcoming quarterly reports.

## Treasurer Evaluation

- **Annual Treasurer Evaluation:** The board is required by statute to evaluate the treasurer annually. Dr. Hanscom met with Mr. Friel to discuss a new evaluation template used by other collaboratives. Historically, the board has taken a collaborative approach to review the treasurer, incorporating feedback from administrative staff in conjunction with Mr. Friel's input. **Evaluation Tool:** Hope Hanscom presented the evaluation template for Board consideration and sought feedback on using this tool moving forward. Mr. Friel expressed no objections to the approach and welcomed the use of the template if the Board is in agreement.
- **\*Job Description-Assistant Transportation Coordinator- vote APPROVED**

The Board reviewed the new job description for an Assistant Transportation Coordinator.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the new job description for the Assistant Transportation Coordinator, Ms. Medeiros 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes;  
Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes;  
Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes.*

#### **8. Adjournment 7:00pm**

Ms. Lythcott made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Fichtenmayer 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, roll call was taken:

*Ms. Fuller-(R)-yes; Mr. Morris-(R)-yes; Ms. Medeiros-(R)-yes; Ms. McNamara-(R)-yes; Ms. Lythcott-(R)-yes;  
Mr. Fichtenmayer -yes; Mr. Schiff-(R)-yes; Ms. Ackerman-(R)-yes; Mr. Leibowitz-(R)-yes; Mr. McKiernan-(R)-yes;  
Ms. Lonsdale-yes; Mr. O'Rourke-(R)-yes.*