



The Town of Barnstable  
**Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC)**  
**367 Main Street, Village of Hyannis, MA 02601**  
v. 508.862.4654 • f. 508.862.4717  
[www.town.barnstable.ma.us](http://www.town.barnstable.ma.us)  
Email: [cfac@town.barnstable.ma.us](mailto:cfac@town.barnstable.ma.us)

**CFAC Committee:**

**Chair:**

Chris Lauzon

**Members:**

Vice Chair, Jim Sproul  
Clerk, Jeremy Shea  
Chris King  
Rimas Puskorius  
Frank Ward  
Lillian Woo

**Staff Liaison:**

Mark Milne

**Councilor Liaison:**

Betty Ludtke

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee**

**03.23.2026**

**6:00 PM**

**Join Zoom Meeting:** <https://townofbarnstable-us.zoom.us/j/82199759936>

PHONE: 877-853-5257

Meeting ID: 821 9975 9936

**Roll Call:**

Chair Chris Lauzon called the CFAC Zoom meeting to order at 6:02pm

CFAC Members Present: Frank Ward, Chris King, Rimas Puskorius, Lillian Woo, Jim Sproul, and Chris Lauzon

- Roll call and quorum verified by Chair Lauzon
- CFAC Members Absent Jeremy Shea
- Councilors Present: None
- Staff Present: Deputy Finance Director-Gareth Markwell, Barnstable Public Schools Superintendent-Sara Ahern, Deputy Finance Director for School Operations-Chris Dwelley
- Others Present: None
- Public Comment: None

Motion to approve the minutes of March 9, 2026, made by Lillian, seconded by Chris K.

Discussion:

- Request for clarification on inclusion of Cape Cod Gateway Airport Enterprise Fund presentation to CFAC
- Minor editing

Roll call vote by Chair Lauzon: Frank-yes, Chris K.-yes, Rimas-yes, Lillian-yes, Jim-yes, and Chris L.-yes

Minutes approved as noted

### ***FY2027 Proposed School Department Operating Budget***

***Review provided by*** Sara Ahern, and Chris Dwelley

- The School Committee (SC) hearing was held on March 18<sup>th</sup>, with an anticipated vote on April 1st, followed by submission to the Town Manager on April 2<sup>nd</sup>
- As this is a challenging budget year, the approach is similar to last year.
  - \* Continuing to review mitigation strategies; engaging in reallocations district wide. As there are very few options available, careful review continues to ensure preservation of services and programs
  - \* Staffing adjustments will be as enrollment numbers, class sizes, and caseload predictions are reviewed. Considerations for staffing adjustments are determined by the number of students on Individual Education Plans (IEP's) as well as English Language Learners ELL's). Enrollment decreases are being seen throughout the region and the state; this allows for the review of vacancies from retirements and resignations while maintaining class sizes but not backfilling those positions. Considerations for budget restorations and addition of new positions have been carefully reviewed, as last year's budget was difficult and the potential for cutting services was considered. With school choice becoming more competitive, maintaining quality services is the highest priority. The small increase in school choice is not necessarily due to school choice, decreasing graduating class sizes is the reason.
  - \* The SC is more comfortable with smaller incremental increases in user fees; they are considering a slight increase for athletics, facility rentals and PreK tuition for full day 4-year-olds on a sliding scale.
  - \* Offsets are happening wherever possible through reallocations with favorable returns to savings from free cash. The SC was asked about the possibility of offset through the school savings account for this current year; this is not a long-term solution
- Priorities:
  - \* Present a balanced budget: Supporting district improvement plan goals, focusing on curriculum and instruction, attending to facilities maintenance and operating costs
  - \* Attend to a diverse set of student needs
  - \* Remain competitive regionally
  - \* Continued focus on equitable allocation of resources district wide
  - \* Efficient and effective systems, class sizes and caseloads
  - \* Sustainability while preserving programs as much as possible. Barnstable's strengths and assets include town size and offerings. Having to potentially cut programs that keep Barnstable competitive is not a preferred option
- The 18 sites were asked to consider new initiatives as well as where they could see savings or reallocate budget items within their control; there were 59 mostly modest submissions totaling \$1.8m
  - \* 21.9 full-time employees (Special Education (SPED) teachers, Interventionists, Instructional Coaches, Counselors, and Social Workers)
  - \* Contracted services / inflationary increases needed to maintain services
  - \* Custodial supplies
  - \* Technology equipment; staff not student related
  - \* Outdated Custodial equipment in need of replacement; these dollars will likely be coming from savings in one-time dollars ensuring they have the tools needed
- Chris provided review of the Operating Budget Projection:
  - \* Proposed budget just over \$96m which is an increase of @\$2.6m (just below 2.8%)
  - \* Supply line decreases due to a one-time expenses in the FY26 budget
  - \* Use of savings dollars remains consistent at @\$3.7m

\* Special note: a basic level budget for the school district is 5%; we are off, meaning cutting and restructuring measures are needed.

- Continued budget review of Budget Assumptions and Major Additions included:
  - \* Year over year change (increase/decrease/or no change), break out of savings which includes one-time projects, support for the operating budget, and dollars needed to balance the budget.
- \* Proposed funding sources largely comes from the municipal side (property taxes and local receipts); use of savings from three (3) revolving funds
  - transportation bus fees
  - school choice - incoming students
  - circuit breaker amount for extraordinary SPED costs; circuit breaker reimbursements are anticipated to remain level for at least the next two (2) years
- \* Recommended investments and budget restorations
  - Position restorations (Social Worker, Custodial position back to full-time at West Villages, one Assistant Principal, and summer hours for one Admin Assistant)
  - Several Principals and / or Directors found offsets within their budgets to reallocate; some of which include staffing positions and increased hours, stipends, increased service needs
  - Increasing the part day Pre-K for 4-year-olds to full day making the more ready for full day Kindergarten. Grant funds for this are anticipated to assist with staffing and materials costs
  - Elimination of a program with the New England Center for Children due to no students who need that classroom; that staff would be allocated to other areas in the district
- One-time expenses reviewed, which included English language development program mandated by the Department of Education
- Inflationary costs for materials and services reviewed; with the transportation contract up for renewal increased costs for that are anticipated as well
- Causes and effects in reductions due to declining and changing enrollments, and reallocation of staffing reviewed
- Minor increases in athletic dues, memberships and game management officials reviewed
- Cost center review included the merging and restructuring of two technology departments into one
- DESE functions included brief review of one-time expenses for technology and maintenance equipment and programs with other schools reflective of an increase in circuit breaker offset related to out-of-district tuition.
- Next steps:
  - April 1<sup>st</sup> – SC budget adoption
  - April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Proposed budget submitted to the Town Manager
  - May 21<sup>st</sup> – Town Council First reading of FY27 budget
  - June 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> – Town Council public budget hearings

#### Discussion:

- Current unspent funds
- Clarification on enrollment increases /decreases district wide, and a regional trend
- Staffing changes largely attributed to the increase needs for student support in mandated programs
- Class sizes by grade, student population by villages, and whether the newly developed apartment complexes are seeing an increased student population reviewed.
- Enrollment issues are seen county wide
- A large number of preschool students are receiving early intervention services and are on Individual Education Plans (IEP's)
- School savings account may be depleted in about five (5) years if the usage trend continues
- MCAS: Still in place but no longer a graduation requirement. Testing measurement continues in grades three (3) through eight (8), and in three (3) subjects at the high school; the high school will also see testing in civics next year. Other internal measurements are also in place through new curriculum materials and a STAR program. A proposal at the state level for new graduation requirements could include end of course exams and assessments

for meeting competency determination. Exams have been devised to that effect, as well as a proposal for additional qualifications and certifications. Increasing student successes continue to be communicated.

\*\* Rimas leaves the meeting @6:40pm, quorum is maintained

- School savings account, it's formula and structure provided; an internal policy is in place on how that free cash is allocated based on the source; the school district is the only department that has a share of free cash that is allocated out. Should any school appropriations be returned, they would be allocated back to the schools' portion of free cash and then a share of the 60% share of any savings. Sara works with Finance on how much of the school's savings will contribute to the annual CIP plan for the school department, this varies year-to-year.

Correspondence from Committee Members:

- The next Operating Budget Subcommittee will be meeting again on March 24th
- Jim reminded members that the presentation to the town Council will take place on March 26<sup>th</sup>, and he will provide it to members.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair: None

Communications from Staff:

- Budget calendar – met with some depts to review OB submissions; the Town Manager has taken it under advisement, any updates determined will be provided to members

The next CFAC meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2026

Motion duly made by Lillian, seconded by Jim to adjourn the meeting

Roll call vote by Chair Lauzon: Frank-yes, Chris K.-yes, Lillian-yes, Jim-yes, and Chris L.-yes

Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm

Respectfully submitted

Theresa M. Santos

This meeting was recorded and is available at <https://townofbarnstable.us/boardscommittees/CFAC>



2026.03.09 Minutes  
CFAC Draft.pdf



School Committee  
Budget Hearing Prese