Melrose School Committee
Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 7:00 PM
562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176
Council Chamber, First Floor, Melrose City Hall

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Margaret Raymond Driscoll	Member	Present	
Mayor Grigoraitis	Mayor	Present	
Matt Hartman	Vice Chair	Present	
Melissa Holleran	Member	Present	
Seamus Kelley	Chair	Present	
Sheri Leo	Member	Present	
Jen Razi-Thomas	Member	Present	
Cari Berman	Interim Superintendent	Present	

Also in attendance: Interim Deputy Superintendent, Ken Kelley and Recording Secretary, Kristen O'Connor. With a roll call vote with seven (7) present, the meeting convened at 7:00 PM.

2. SWEARING IN OF NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mayor Grigoraitis called forward the three newly elected members of the School Committee, and the members were officially sworn into service.

3. VOTE FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

In accordance with Section 4.2(a) of the Melrose City Charter, along with Article 3, Section 3.2 of the School Committee By-Laws, it is incumbent upon the School Committee to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

In her capacity as Executive Secretary of the Committee, the Superintendent conducted the elections for Chair and Vice-Chair for calendar year 2026.

The Superintendent asked for nominations for the position of Chair. Mr. Hartman nominated Mr. Kelley for Chair, seconded by Ms. Razi-Thomas.

Pursuant to the roll call vote of the Committee, Mr. Kelley was elected to serve as Chair of the Committee, effective January 13, 2026.

MOTION:	To Nominate Seamus Kelley as School Committee Chair for Calendar Year 2026

RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Matt Hartman
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

The Superintendent asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Mr. Kelley nominated Mr. Hartman for Vice Chair, seconded by Ms. Razi-Thomas.

Pursuant to the roll call vote of the Committee, Mr. Hartman was elected to serve as Vice Chair of the Committee, effective January 13, 2026.

MOTION:	To Nominate Matt Hartman as School Committee Vice Chair for Calendar Year 2026
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Seamus Kelley
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

The Superintendent congratulated the elected members, and asked if there was any further business in this regard. There being no further business in this regard, the agenda item was complete, and the Chair retook the gavel.

Chair Kelley welcomed those in attendance. At 7:06 PM, the Chair announced a brief recess for a photo session.

4. PUBLIC HEARING ON SCHOOL CHOICE

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 76, Section 12B(d), the School Committee is required to vote annually on school choice. School choice allows students to attend public school in a city/town where the student does not reside.

MOTION:	To Open the Public Hearing on School Choice for 2026-2027 School Year
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
SECONDER:	Matt Hartman
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

With no members of the public present to speak the Chair entertained a motion to close the public hearing on school choice.

MOTION:	To Close the Public Hearing on School Choice for 2026-2027 School Year

RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Sheri Leo
SECONDER:	Melissa Holleran
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

MOTION:	To Open Public Comment
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

With no members of the public present wishing to speak, the Chair entertained a motion to close Public Comment.

MOTION:	To Close Public Comment
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Sheri Leo
SECONDER:	Matt Hartman
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

6. REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

There were no student representatives present this evening.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

1. Report: Superintendent Updates

   Superintendent Berman shared several updates, beginning with an invitation to support the Unified Basketball team as they play at the Boston Garden this Sunday at 8:00 am. This is a free event open to the community. She announced that the district is in the process of posting positions funded by the override, with building principals expected to post these positions soon. Finally, she noted that the district is entering the second half of the school year, with high school students focused on completing their mid-term exams.

   Ms. Razi Thomas asked about potential classroom shifts to address larger class sizes. Superintendent Berman explained how the district will be evaluating the applicant pool to determine how new educators can best support students, likely through the creation of smaller groups. She noted that splitting classes mid-year is not ideal, and the district aims to use these new positions to provide support without disrupting existing classrooms.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Holleran requested that the meeting minutes for December 16, 2025 be removed. They will be move to the Announcements of the Chair. All other Consent Agenda items were approved as presented.

MOTION:	To Approve the Consent Agenda
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Matt Hartman
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

1. Warrants

   FY26 School - S26046 - $776,357.56
   FY26 Refunds - S26047 - $14.00
   FY26 December High School Student Activity Wire - S26048 - $50,500.74
   FY26 January Debit Card - S26049 - $1625.00
   FY26 December Meals Tax - S26050 - $36.96
   FY26 December MVMMS Student Activity Wire - S26051 - $3,720.00

2. Regular Meeting Minutes Dec 16, 2025

9. SUBCOMMITTEES (COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE)

1. Finance and Facilities

A Vote: Budget Summary/Grants/Revolving Accounts

Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley presented the budget summary, grants and revolving accounts from the packet and offered to answer any questions from the Committee.
Discussion included: how the override funds will be added to the budget, how the ECC tuition generates revenue, and how the ECC is on track to meet the budgeted offset target, numbers fluctuate based on enrollment.

MOTION:	To Approve the YTD Summary, Grants and Revolving Accounts
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Matt Hartman

SECONDER:	Seamus Kelley
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

B Informational Review: FY24 End of Year Final Report

2. Policy and Planning

A Vote: Committee's Self Evaluation

Mr. Hartman presented the results of the annual self-evaluation work completed in December, referencing the summary data and individual evaluations included in the packet. He highlighted some successes such as: articulating student budget needs, the successful override, transparency in sharing information with the public and strengthening relationships between the District and staff. Mr. Hartman also identified specific areas for growth, such as aligning policy decisions more closely with the strategic planning process, further enhancing public communication, and building stronger ties with district leadership. He also emphasized the need to refine meeting agendas with more focus on the work being done.

MOTION:	To Approve the School Committee's Self Evaluations
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Seamus Kelley
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman
ABSTAIN:	Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

3. Educational Programs and Personnel

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHAIR

1. Vote: School Choice

Chair Kelley presented the need to vote on a decision regarding school choice for the 2026-2027 school year. Discussed included: looking at enrollment data, the financial discrepancy between the higher per-pupil expenditure and the lower reimbursement rate provided for school choice students, how the program is no longer fiscally competitive as it once was, and also clarified that if the district were to participate, enrolled students would remain in the district through graduation.

MOTION:	Not to Participate in School Choice for the 2026-2027 School Year
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
SECONDER:	Matt Hartman

AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

2. Discussion: SubCommittee and Liaison Requests

   Chair Kelley provided updates regarding subcommittees and liaisons. He clarified that any member, excluding the Mayor, is eligible to serve as a Chair or Vice Chair. Members were asked to submit their subcommittee or liaison preferences via email.

3. Discussion: Rolling Agenda

   Chair Kelley reported that a draft rolling agenda has been submitted to the Superintendent and her team for review and is expected to be presented at the next meeting. He explained that the rolling agenda serves as a roadmap for future meetings, providing a preview of upcoming items, it remains subject to changes as needed.

4. Discussion: Outreach Report
   There were no outreach reports.

   Meeting minutes from December 16, 2025 were removed from the Consent Agenda. A motion was made to approve by Ms. Razi-Thomas, seconded by Mr. Hartman. With five (5) in favor and two (2) abstentions, the motion passed.

MOTION:	To Approve Meeting Minutes from December 16, 2025
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
SECONDER:	Matt Hartman
AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman
ABSTAIN:	Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

11. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Kelley sited the need for Executive Session to conduct collective bargaining with the MEU-Unit A Teachers regarding a grievance filed by the MEU at level three with the Melrose School Committee, to conduct collective bargaining with the MEA-Unit C Paraprofessionals regarding a Side Letter with the Melrose School Committee and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel Cari Berman.

MOTION:	To Adjourn to Executive Session
RESULT:	**ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
SECONDER:	Melissa Holleran

AYES:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 7:33 PM and did not return to Public Session.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. To conduct collective bargaining with the MEU-Unit A Teachers regarding a grievance filed by the MEU at level three with the Melrose School Committee.
2. To conduct collective bargaining with the MEA-Unit C Paraprofessionals regarding a Side Letter with the Melrose School Committee.
3. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel Cari Berman.

13. ADJOURN