

Barrington School Committee
Barrington Middle School
261 Middle Highway, Barrington
February 26, 2026

Roll Call:

School Committee: **Chair**, Thomas Peck, Tim McNamara, Karen Rasnick
School Administration: Superintendent, Robert Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent Ruth Corley, Acting Finance Director, Teresa Gomes, Budget Analyst, Alex Prignano, Director of Technology, Rebecca Trahan, and Attorney Lombardo.
Frazier Bell, and Elizabeth Singh, were not present.

School Committee Chair Thomas Peck **welcomed** everyone, and called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment:

None at this time

Superintendent Report:

Achievements/Recognitions:

Mr. Mitchell expressed his appreciation to Jason Malafronte and the facilities and maintenance staff for their hard work over the past several days clearing snow from the school buildings. He noted that the School Department and the Town worked closely together to communicate and prepare for the storm. He thanked everyone for their collective efforts in ensuring that we are ready to safely welcome students and staff back to school.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Peck asked the committee if there was any discussion regarding the consent agenda, seeing none. Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mrs. Rasnick moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

School Committee Business

Title IX Investigation: Superintendent's Final Determination

Mr. Mitchell addressed families and the broader school community, stating that the findings outlined in the report are deeply disturbing. The conduct detailed in the investigation involves the sexual abuse of children. He emphasized that such behavior is unacceptable and should never occur. He reminded the community that the matter was referred to law enforcement and that the individual has been criminally indicted by a grand jury. The District will continue to cooperate fully with any ongoing criminal proceedings.

Mr. Mitchell shared that his thoughts are with the students who were harmed and with their families. He acknowledged that public discussion of the report may reopen wounds for those affected. He has been in contact with the families and understands the profound impact this has had on them. He noted that it was their courage in coming forward that brought the investigation to light and asked the community to remain sensitive to that fact.

He clarified that the individual at the center of the report was not a District employee, but was employed by the District's transportation vendor. Mr. Mitchell read excerpts from the determination during his remarks.

Speaking on behalf of the School Committee, Mr. Peck stated that the report is absolutely devastating and that the Committee is outraged by its findings. He described the conduct as the ultimate betrayal of students whom the Public Schools are entrusted to protect. He said what occurred is unconscionable, particularly in a setting where parents and caregivers should feel absolute trust in their children's safety. He noted that Attorney Timothy Groves conducted the investigation and that the District will release the full investigative report on the school website in the morning.

Mr. Peck stated that while we cannot go back and change what happened, the District has implemented a series of changes, most importantly in leadership and culture. He assured the Barrington community that this matter has been, and will continue to be, taken extremely seriously. Student safety is non-negotiable, and the District's responsibility is to protect and support every student. He emphasized that the entire school community and the School Committee stand with the affected students and their families every step of the way. He shared that the hearts of the BPS and School Committee members are broken for the students who were harmed. He also thanked Bob for his exceptional leadership throughout this process.

Award Transportation RFP:

Mr. Peck stated that the RFP process resulted in a bid from First Student. He shared that the School Committee and District have engaged in a series of conversations with First Student representatives and that the company has indicated it will prioritize making its absolute best efforts to allow current school bus drivers to retain their routes.

Mr. McNamara commented on Ocean State Transit's lack of participation in the investigative process and described the company as uncooperative. He noted that this response raises serious concerns about Ocean State's vision of partnership and collaboration with the District.

Mr. Peck made a motion to award the Transportation RFP to First Student. Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

FY25 Audit:

Alex Prignano presented the Fiscal Year 2025 audit. He explained that Barrington requires 2% of any surplus funds to be transferred to a capital account once the audit is complete. He noted that the audit process typically takes approximately eight months to finalize.

FY26 Financial Update:

Mr. Prignano and Mrs. Gomes provided the Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Update, reporting year-to-date figures through January 2026. They highlighted several unbudgeted expenses, including snow removal, special education services, and retiree costs. Mr. Prignano noted that Barrington's budget is prepared much earlier than in many other districts, and at this time, the health insurance rate for FY 2027 remains unknown.

They also reported that some schools have remaining funds while others have overspent. Mr. Prignano recommended running this financial report monthly, presenting it to the School Committee, and making amendments as needed to maintain fiscal oversight.

FY27 Budget Presentation:

Mr. Prignano and Mrs. Gomes reviewed the feedback on budget-related issues requested by the School Committee at the last meeting. They noted that the proposed budget requests a 4% increase from the Town, includes funding for an additional School Resource Officer (SRO) at the middle school, contains no layoffs, and funds six new positions.

Mr. McNamara emphasized that a policy regarding SROs should be established before allocating budget funds for an officer. The School Committee engaged in a discussion regarding world language offerings at the middle school, the director of finance position, additional SRO and the additional six funded positions.

The Committee thanked Mr. Prignano and Mrs. Gomes, noting that they found the presentation incredibly helpful. They praised the accuracy and detail of the information and specifically thanked Mrs. Gomes for stepping up.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the fiscal year 27 budget, with the amendment, that all funds designated to SRO would be classified as general security. Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

School Building Project, Requests to Award (RTA):

Mr. Chris Spiegel spoke on the updates of the school building project. He explained the four recommendations to approve, and went over the RIDE milestones.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve RTS's 1, 2, 3, and 4. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voted in the affirmative.

Shawmut Contract:

Joining the meeting via Zoom was Rhode Island construction attorney Attorney Heald. Mr. Peck noted that he is recognized as a top construction attorney in Rhode Island and has been working with Deidre from Hennous, Carroll, and Lombardi on contract negotiations with Shawmut Construction.

Mr. Spiegel spoke highly of Shawmut, noting that they are performing exceptionally well as the pre-construction (pre-con) contractor. The pre-con phase concluded in December, and the agenda included approval of January and February pre-con work with Shawmut.

Discussion focused on liquidated damage provisions in the construction contract. Shawmut is fully aware of the project schedule and budget requirements. The contract is owner-favorable, and one key focus is maximizing work completed during the summer of 2026. For each school, a substantial completion date will be established, followed by a 30-day grace period. After this grace period, liquidated damages would be assessed at \$5,000 per day for any delay. Conversely, if a project is completed early, Shawmut would be compensated \$5,000 per day. While early completion is unlikely, this provision provides a strong incentive for Shawmut to ensure that the schools are finished and ready in the timeline.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the Shawmut Construction Contract. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voted in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the additional months related to the Shawmut pre-con contract. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voted in the affirmative.

Public Comment:

Kim Cobb, of North Road, commented on the decision-making process regarding the installation of solar panels on school buildings. She encouraged the District to consider taking advantage of available federal tax credits. Ms. Cobb also emphasized the educational benefits of integrating solar energy while highlighting its potential to enhance community resilience and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Superintendent Announcements:

Mr. Mitchell congratulated the Barrington High School gymnastics team for finishing the season strong. He also recognized Hampden Meadows School students for collecting 6,000 cans of soup for the TAP-IN Food Pantry. Additionally, he noted that the Primrose Hill School community celebrated Sandy Reed, a lunch aide, who turned 90 last month. Mr. Mitchell announced new hires Kerri Thornton, TA at BMS, Jillian Frage TA at Nayatt and Angelo Dellagrotto custodian at PHS and Nayatt.

Additionally, Mr. Spiegel mentioned that the next community meeting regarding school construction will be at Nayatt on March 2nd. He also shared that a third-party consultant, hired through Left Field, will provide free pre-construction home inspections for property owners within a 300-foot radius of the project. He thanked the Town for providing the list of affected homes. The inspections will document existing conditions, videotaping foundations, rooflines, and other key areas, so that if any damage occurs during construction, it can be easily compared and assessed. This process helps ensure that homeowners or abutters can be reimbursed more efficiently for any potential damage.

Agenda Setting:

Amend school calendar

Superintendent search

Demographic study for Belton Court

Mr. Peck requested a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Rasnick moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Rasnick, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Adjourned: 8:58 PM

Approved: March 12, 2026