

**Cumberland School Committee
Special Session Minutes
January 28, 2026**

APPROVED 2.12.26

A Special Session of the Cumberland School Committee took place on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. The meeting was held in the District Training Room at the Cumberland High School Transitional Building, 2602 Mendon Road, Cumberland, RI.

Committee Present: Amy Vogel, Heather Chea, Kerry Feather, Andrew Bacon, Jason Dean, Lisa Goldstein

Committee Absent: Keri Smith

Administration Present: Antonio DiManna, Assistant Superintendent

Legal Counsel: None.

Guests: Meghan Havrilla, Annmarie Andrade, Colliers

AGENDA TOPICS

I. Call to Order: Ms. Vogel, 5:37pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Heather Chea

Second: Kerry Feather

Approved 6-0

IV. Old Business

A. Discussion and/or Vote on Motion to rescind the Committee's decision at its January 8, 2026 meeting on the process for approving construction change orders up to \$25,000, which was described as follows on that agenda:

1. *"Discussion and/or Vote to Authorize the Superintendent to Bind the Committee to Change Order(s) of up to \$25,000 Per Change Order on Current Construction Projects. Said Authorization Shall be Granted Through December 30, 2026, Unless Renewed or Terminated by the Committee."*

a. **Motion to rescind made by Ms. Feather, seconded with discussion by Ms. Goldstein.**

b. Mr. Dean discussed comments by the Mayor during the last Town Council meeting. Asked if Ms. Vogel spoke to the Mayor before or after meeting; Ms. Vogel stated she did not. Mr. Dean asked if the Superintendent is acting as "Superintendent" or "member of the construction committee" when approving change orders. Ms. Vogel stated superintendent is both. Ms. Vogel reviewed the change order process in place since 2018 and concerns about slowing down the construction process. Mr. Dean discussed not having a strong opinion about change orders until SC seemed to lean towards amendment, and assisted with wording only. Mr. Dean asked since it passed, and Mayor and Town Council

state they are the funding source and can override decisions, why not let TC do this responsibility.

- c. Ms. Vogel states she cannot speak to the TC meeting as she was not there, does not want to change something that has been going well since 2018.
- d. Mr. Bacon discussed while TC has final funding authority, BC/SC has ultimate say in building. Discussed his recusal last session when this was discussed. Mr. Bacon expressed concern that if change orders sit idle, this could slow down the project. Mr. Bacon inquired when the change order in question was ready for review/approval; Ms. Andrade stated it was received 1/2/26 but was being discussed and prepared in the background for a few weeks. Mr. Bacon discussed potential for increased costs for delaying orders, losing contractors, and delaying project. Discussed his conversation with Dr. Thornton about the process for change orders and that amended language removes this process and why change it if it is working well.
- e. Ms. Chea discussed concern about delay of construction, concerns about RIDE reimbursement, and stated agreement with motion.
- f. Mr. Dean stated he agrees with someone making the decision and discussed his previous work experience, but had no strong feelings last meeting and agrees that someone should make this decision in a timely way, stated his concern that SC made a decision that we are now rescinding because the Mayor made phone calls. Also discussed situation with school start times where SC made decision and reconsidered for the same reason.
- g. Ms. Vogel stated she cannot speak to TC meeting but sees increased burden on administrative staff clearly. She stated that with no process formulated with added amendment last meeting, process became difficult and order was being pushed out, and she was asked to place this item on agenda for reconsideration. Mr. Bacon stated that he asked for this item to be placed on agenda because he had information that needed to be discussed but couldn't due to recusal, not because of TC meeting. Mr. Dean reported that he offered verbiage only, agrees with Mr. Bacon's email request to Ms. Vogel and for approval of \$25,000 for change orders, but does not agree with process of how SC got here and SC having to rehear things when TC, mayor or superintendent is not happy with a SC decision. Mr. Bacon states that situations are not the same case.
- h. Ms. Goldstein thanked Mr. Bacon for input and apologized for mistake in vote last meeting, stating that it added more to administrative burden, strained relationships and slowed down the process.
- i. Mr. Bacon asked if this is rescinded will change order request to SC be null and void. Ms. Vogel discussed the full process.
- j. Ms. Harvilla stated for transparency provided history of previous practice since 2018 which has been working without issue. If no BC meeting scheduled, change orders would be passed along to 2 members of BC (Mark Fiorillo and Mark Lindgren) for reason and review, with a cc: to Dr. Thornton and Finance Director. Colliers would provide narrative/cost and once BC members MF and ML would approve, Dr. Thornton would send approval email which would be sent to contractors via Colliers. Ms. Harvilla stated that the authorization would be to proceed with work, there would be no payment authorization until the next full BC meeting. Ms. Harvilla stated this would not be sent to the SC as the cost was not exceeding the project budget. If over project budget, then SC would be brought

in. Ms. Harvilla states this worked smoothly, this is common practice among school districts and that thus far this process has been successful.

k. MOTION TO RESCIND PASSED 6-0

B. Discussion and/or Vote to Authorize the Superintendent to Bind the Committee to Change Order(s) of up to \$25,000 Per Change Order on Current Construction Projects. Said Authorization Shall be Granted Through December 30, 2026, Unless Renewed or Terminated by the Committee.

Motion: Andrew Bacon

Second: Heather Chea

Approved 6-0

V. New Business

A. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve BF Norton Construction Project Change Order CR006-Elevator Power Voltage Change Order; Total Amount is \$4,188.98

1. Due to the approval of IV. B., no discussion/vote was necessary on this item.

VI .Comments from the Public

None.

VII. Adjournment

Motion: Andrew Bacon

Second: Kerry Feather

Approved 6-0

Meeting was adjourned at 5:57pm.

Meeting minutes submitted by Lisa M. Goldstein, Clerk, Cumberland School Committee