

GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10 JT.
Minutes of Budget Committee Meeting (1 of 2)

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

The Gresham-Barlow School District Budget Committee met on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 in the Media Center (Library) of Clear Creek Middle School, 219 NE 219th Ave, Gresham, Oregon. A Zoom link was provided for virtual meeting attendance.

Board Members present:

Heather Coleman-Cox, Shawn Farrens, Kris Howatt, Blake Petersen, Brenna Puderbaugh, Holly Riegelmann, Erasto Sedda

Budget Committee Members present:

Dan Corcoran, Vaden Green, John Hartsock, Nick McWilliams, Ashley Tuomi, Garrett Wood, Kelby Whittington

Other Staff in Attendance:

Dr. Tracy Klinger, John Koch, Dr. Sara Deboy, Michael Sweeten, Heidi Lasher, Carla Gay, Pete Bejarano, Athena Vadnais, Jeff Gibbs, Becky Watt, Kevin Holden, Sheri Rhoderick

Opening Items

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (7:05 p.m.)

Board Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The board and budget committee members introduced themselves, and Superintendent Klinger introduced district staff at the table. Chair Petersen thanked everyone in attendance and reviewed the technical reasons for the meeting. Oregon State law has prescribed the process they will walk through. The budget will be presented for consideration, the budget committee will weigh that information and bring their perspectives to the table, and in the end make their best choice. Not everyone will agree, but they will have the opportunity as a committee to discuss, deliberate, and have conversation. There is time set aside for public perspective. He noted that while it says 30 minutes, they will try to provide 60 minutes for comments to hear from as many people as possible. They will have a goal to cap the meeting at 10:00 p.m. After public perspective, the committee will deliberate with the options to adopt the budget tonight as presented, or bring it back for more information.

2. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair (7:15 p.m.)

MOTION: Move to elect John Hartsock as Chair of the Gresham-Barlow School District Budget Committee.

Motion by Kris Howatt, second by Holly Riegelmann

Motion carries by unanimous vote.

MOTION: Move to elect Garrett Wood as Vice-Chair of the Gresham-Barlow School District Budget Committee

Motion by Kris Howatt, second by Erasto Sedda.

Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Following each motion, those elected indicated they were willing to accept and serve in those positions.

3. Opening Comments (7:18 p.m.)

The committee agreed to move the public comment portion up on the agenda to take place after the budget overview, but before the committee discussion. Superintendent Klinger welcomed those in attendance, and shared that they were gathered to present the proposed budget for the 2026-27 school year. She noted that the development of the proposal has been an intensive process, with their goal being to balance the technical necessity of a fiscally responsible budget with the real human needs of their school. The decisions in the proposed budget have a direct impact on staff, families,

and most importantly, students. There will be transparency and dialogue as they walk through the budget document, the intentional choices they have made, and the K-12 vision they are working to protect.

Discussion Items

4. Proposed Budget and Delivery of Budget Message (7:20 p.m.)

Superintendent Klinger reviewed the budget message, sharing that they are navigating a “perfect storm” of systemic economic pressures that require intentionality, sustainability, and difficult decisions. It is important they ground their discussion in the reality of the Oregon educational landscape. While they are committed to their mission to inspire and empower each student, they are facing a significant gap between state funding and operational costs. They must move away from temporary solutions and operate strictly within their actualized revenue. In order to align their expenditures with projected revenues, the proposed budget includes a \$10.2 million reduction in services which affects personnel across the district. Despite the fiscal constraints, the budget is designed to protect the core of the student experience. Superintendent Klinger reviewed how their work remains rooted in the four conditions for success by the Board, and their priorities for the fiscal year which include inclusive environments, instructional alignment, career pathways, early literacy, and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). While navigating these complex financial realities, their mission is to keep student success at the center of their decision-making.

5. Proposed Budget Overview (7:25 p.m.)

Mr. Bejarano provided an overview of the proposed budget. He explained that during the budget process the committee nominates a presiding officer, reviews the budget document, and approves the Ad Valorem Tax rate. They also participate in the budget presentation, hear from the community, and approve the proposed budget at the function level. They are not approving at the line item level. This is designed per law to allow for flexibility. In terms of decision points, the committee can approve the budget as proposed, change appropriation if forecasted revenue is significantly different than district projections, and approve the tax levy rates. Local budget law requires a balanced budget and the budget sets a maximum legal spending level for expenditures. There is no maximum for revenues. The budget details the district’s best thinking for the future based on preliminary projections that may or may not change.

The budget is made up of four major funds: General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, Debt Service Fund, and Capital Projects Fund. The General Fund is the one the board talks about the most because it is unrestricted. Special Revenue, Debt Service and Capital Projects are all restricted funds that can only be used for specific types of expenditures that have legal implications on how they can be spent. There is only one page of the budget that carries legal weight. Within that are major appropriation levels. Ratios can potentially be changed, but anything in those levels is the purview of the district. This includes things like overtime, substitutes, extra duty, professional development, rentals, utilities, fuel, and legal services among others. Although there is only one legal page, the other pages are presented to show more detail. Mr. Bejarano clarified how FTE (Full Time Equivalent) shows up in the budget, noting that the budget document is a legal appropriation of dollars, not FTE. Anything about FTE is a plan and guideline only. It carries no legal weight and is not an employment contract.

Mr. Bejarano reviewed the current budget challenges. The State School Fund (SSF) is their largest percentage of revenue at over 70%. Current Service Level (CSL) is a term used to speak about the funding level needed to keep current programs and staffing unchanged each biennium to provide the same level of educational service each year. The Legislature allocated \$11.36 billion for CSL when districts needed \$12.1 billion. The inability to hit current service level in Oregon has been ongoing for decades. This is a separate issue from unfunded mandates. Enrollment drives the SSF formula and the district’s enrollment has been declining for the past 10 years, and is expected to continue this decline for the next 10 years. Mr. Bejarano demonstrated that the slope of enrollment and FTE is not in alignment. There was a major increase in FTE with the federal ESSER Grant and when the SIA (Student Investment Account) state grant came

online. The ESSER dollars went away while SIA continued. He reviewed data on FTE by bargaining group over the last several years.

Mr. Bejarano shared that PERS rates are a major factor for why costs are increasing so much faster than revenue. PERS expenses have increased double the amount of inflation. Since 2021 they have been using their reserves and ending fund balance, which is unsustainable moving forward. Right now, they are projected to drop below the board policy requirement of an 8% ending fund balance. If the trend line continues this way, they will be insolvent in a couple years. They can no longer dip into reserves to balance the budget. Federal grant funding remains below 2011 levels. The widening gap means every year districts have to make cuts because federal funding is not remaining in place. These challenges are not one-time costs, they are ongoing, which means solutions must also be ongoing and not "one-time."

Superintendent Klinger outlined their equity-based decision-making process. Is this a requirement by law was always the first question they asked because they have many requirements through statute and policy. Key instructional outcomes have been a focus. In some cases, they can reduce something and continue to do the work, and in other cases they have to do a stronger reduction. Many people are concerned about how reductions will affect student and staff safety. They looked at who is disproportionately impacted, such as students with IEPs and English learners. The last question is connected to community engagement and values, and how that feedback may impact their decisions. She highlighted the community engagement they completed including an in-person budget forum, webinar, special Key Communicator meetings with business and faith-based leaders, and a community wide survey. Groups of staff and families came together at the in-person forum to work through a prioritization process.

Superintendent Klinger shared that as they started to talk about reductions, they began the process by looking at ratios for class size with elementary being 28:1, middle school 30:1, and high school 32:1. They looked at lower enrolled programs and data trends over time to guide the decision making. They tried to reduce rather than eliminate programs. The most impacted programs are elementary music, middle and high school AVID, and class sizes. At elementary when looking at how this starts to look and impact families, they anticipate having higher class sizes and more blended classrooms. PE has come up as a question, and it was not reduced because it has required minutes at the elementary level. There will be changes with fewer performances and parent engagement opportunities. With reductions in 2008 they lowered counseling to half time, but they couldn't do that with current student needs. Additions include a performing arts specialist to help continue music, and added EAs for safety and security. With changes in enrollment, they needed to make reductions at the elementary level commensurate with other levels. This year's senior class has 200 more students than kindergarten, and they have smaller groups of students entering lower grades.

Middle school will also have higher class sizes with minor reductions in electives, and some electives may have mixed grade levels. They will maintain band but will not have any AVID. Activities and athletics will be similar to this year, but they will have fewer parent engagement opportunities. High school will have some reductions in electives, and they paused some CTE courses. Some will be combining classes or be reduced due to low enrollment. Others may change because they are staff specific. Due to Senate Bill 3 (SB 3) requirements there are elective and CTE changes needed in order to add personal finance and career pathways for graduation requirements. Large high schools have reduced one counselor each. There won't be AVID classes or programming, and activities and athletics will have some reductions.

When looking at district office reductions, multiple departments are part of the district office including facilities, technology, special education, partnerships, and human resources among others. Staffing reductions across these departments means less support for schools. They reduced two cabinet level administrators this year. Licensed staff are primarily coaches directly supporting teachers and programs, and saw significant reductions last year. The Child Development Center is cost neutral and will have increased costs for families next year. They may split curriculum purchases over multiple years. There are about \$2.5 million in reductions in each area, elementary, middle, high, and

district, with a reduction of about 70 positions.

Mr. Bejarano reviewed the budget book, highlighting specific pages and examples for the committee. He reminded the group that individual line items are not something being appropriated or voted on. He shared pie charts of General Fund Resources (Revenues) and Requirements (Expenses). Salary, benefits, and payroll are the largest percentage of the budget, and that percentage is decreasing because of all the reductions Superintendent Klinger spoke of. When PERS is broken out it is their largest expense aside from payroll. 10% of the general fund budget is PERS costs. Mr. Bejarano provided several expense page examples demonstrating how funding is utilized for different programs and the role that grants play in the process. Transfers to Special Revenue Funds are used to plan for future purchases such as curriculum, technology, and turf replacement. Costs to maintain these programs are significant and can't be paid for out of one year. Very specific plans are put into place to give the best indication of how much these are going to cost. The district has a number of things coming due soon which is why these numbers are growing.

FTE is not a legal appropriation and is not an employment contract. Mr. Bejarano provided a summary by bargaining group. The reduction for licensed is 9.8%, classified is 4.5%, admin is 7.1%, and confidential remains flat. He reviewed the ratios for the appropriation levels that the committee decides on, and noted that the Ending fund Balance can be misleading because it is broken into all of the different groups, but the legal page doesn't have the same breakdown. This is per Oregon state law. The current Ending Fund Balance for the general fund is not 8%.

6. Proposed Budget Discussion (9:22 p.m.)

This item was moved down on the agenda and took place after public comment. Committee members asked for clarification on what ways are their performing arts reductions at the high school level. Dr. Deboy shared that neither of the major high schools have cuts, but staff is being affected and moved due to the reduction process. The committee asked why the charter schools have an extra million dollars proposed and how they come up with that choice. Mr. Bejarano shared there are rules around the way districts form charters. Once an agreement is signed it lasts for a certain number of years. A charter draws funds based on ADM and enrollment. In the same way the district gets more money each year from SSF, charters get a similar increase. Charter rates per student are slightly different based on laws passed in the 80's and 90's. The pass through amount is what the district expects their enrollment to be. The committee asked when there is a decrease if charters get less money and this was confirmed. They asked if there is any oversight of the money given to them and if it is the district's responsibility or the state's. Superintendent Klinger clarified that most charter contracts have caps to enrollment. Metro East Web Academy (MEWA) continues to grow. Charters are expected to do an audit that is turned into the district.

Committee members noted the trend lines for student population continue to drop, and there are schools operating at low percentages. They asked how much each school costs to keep open, and what the cost difference is for students at a school that is half full vs full. Superintendent Klinger shared that the district has closed two schools, Damascus Middle and West Gresham, more recently than other districts. Damascus middle combined to make Deep Creek Damascus K-8. They do have some schools that are not full, and at some point, they will have to reevaluate and look at what is happening with enrollment. That is an extensive process that wouldn't happen right now, and would need community involvement. The committee noted that it is beyond their scope to direct where they do cuts, and asked if staff have looked at all of these scenarios. If they approve the budget, they would ask them to look at all scenarios because on the surface they look plausible.

Committee members asked for more information about the academic standards for arts passed in 2015 and how any cuts they make are affected on ORS 342.140. There was also discussion of money set aside to do maintenance work on the turf and whether that is something they can defer. The committee encouraged everyone present to contact their legislators with the same passion they brought to this meeting and let them know what they are doing is not helpful.

The committee pointed out that the property insurance premium is quite a bit higher. They asked if that is a defined fixed number and if there is anything they can influence on it. Mr. Bejarano informed them that the district uses the non-profit PACE, which is used by 95% of districts across the state. It is a risk pool and they save significant money over the private market. They have looked into private options in the past and it was significantly more expensive. The reason rates are going up so substantially is the skyrocketing costs of lawsuits and the increased caps of them. The only way the insurance pool can handle that risk is to raise the pool by staggering amounts. They did offer less coverage for the district, but considering district liability the decision was made to not go with less coverage.

There was discussion about budget transfer amounts, and how for 2026-27 they are heavy on tech replacement because there is a substantial number of Chromebooks, iPads, and teacher laptops and desktops needing to be replaced. Part of the transfer amount is the turf schedule which is a little more even. Superintendent Klinger added that the transfer amount is higher because they have not been setting aside and transferring what they needed to. The committee asked if there are any other funds set aside for large scale maintenance. Mr. Bejarano clarified that large scale may translate to capital which have specific pages. Capital project funds are not designed to do these three specific things, they are about replacing large building items like new roofs, boilers, HVAC replacements, or large building replacements over repairs. It is a restricted fund that can only be used for capital per budget law. Committee members expressed feeling uneasy setting aside money for turf when they have other unaddressed maintenance not being taken care of. They asked for tech if there is the ability to not replace some of them. Superintendent Klinger shared they have made changes to how technology is used at the elementary level, such as not sending it home with students. Curriculum has changed and often needs to be utilized through tech. The committee asked if they already have cost proposals or costs for technology since prices are going up. Mr. Gibbs shared that the 5-year was based on January purchase prices and they have gone up since then. They always do their best to get the best prices and shop around. There was additional discussion around warranties, refresh rates, and why they replace all district staff devices at once.

The committee discussed the 7.1% Ending Fund Balance (EFB) and how they feel about being out of compliance with board policy. They asked for additional context about days of school. Mr. Bejarano shared that the EFB is designed to be used when other things fall through the cracks. Recently they had a federal government shutdown that impacted a number of programs and grant money stopped flowing. Nutrition services didn't stop because the EFB kept money flowing. One day of school costs approximately \$710,000, and their current EFB works out to two or two and a half weeks of school. It also affects their bond rating. If they were to go out for a bond, the bond rating company looks at the reserves. The higher the EFB the lower the interest rate which can save millions of dollars. For general cash flow on the EFB, the committee asked what the plan is if the enrollment continues to drop, and what that looks like next year or next biennium. Superintendent Klinger shared they completed a long-range facilities plan where enrollment trends were evaluated. They will have to continue to look at savings through staffing and school closures for long-term stability.

There was discussion around possible scenarios on ways to restore classroom funding. The committee reviewed FTE numbers from previous years and how areas might be able to be adjusted. They noted that admin FTE has not kept pace with other reductions. It was clarified that this didn't reference schools, principals and assistant principals. Superintendent Klinger clarified that the counts include 18 administrators who are unlicensed. There are a number of supervisor and coordinator positions that are technically administrators and are compensated differently. The number of grants they are managing continues to grow, and those grants do cover some admin costs and positions. The grants also require a significant amount of oversight, legal requirements, compliance challenges, and reporting. Some of the change is what's happening with grants as well.

Committee members asked about fuel price volatility and if it is factored into the proposed amount for student transportation. Mr. Bejarano wouldn't say it needs to be revisited for this budget, but it is very fresh on people's minds.

It hasn't been enough to statistically model yet. Barring a catastrophic event, they should be okay for one year. They will have to see about future years. Superintendent Klinger asked Mr. Bejarano to talk about what they expect to see in the next biennium with PERS. He shared that the proposed numbers for the next increase from the state for PERS are 10%. It is going up double the rate of inflation in a year which is really going to take a significant hit to their budget. It is part of the reason they are making difficult cut decisions now.

The committee discussed plans for the next meeting, and noted that they should send any questions to the board secretary so she can outline the agenda. Board Chair Petersen shared that they expect to have a resolution related to the EFB ready to review at their May meeting, and he will work with leadership to draft that. It would give the board the opportunity to adopt an exception to their policy and have conversation around how quickly they want to have that restored. He wanted to advocate that along with the public testimony they received at the meeting, the board has heard for two years about counseling supports and caseloads. The testimony at this meeting has been crushing, and that is what they are trying to wrestle through. Most solutions are going to have to be local. They have asked about Admin amounts every year, but Division 22 Standards grow every year, and obligations grow, and funding doesn't. That takes an administrative burden and it affects the classroom.

Committee members asked if the board is contemplating an option levy, noting they see a lot of passion in the room. If now is not the time, they would like them to articulate what that time looks like. It was clarified that a local option levy is a tax that the local community commits to. A bond is for buildings, and a levy is for programs and people. The Board has not had a formal conversation about a levy, but they anticipate it is one they may have.

They discussed using a different facility for the next meeting, and allowing those who didn't have a chance to speak the option to speak first at the next meeting.

Recess / Reconvene

Committee Recess

The meeting was recessed at 8:06 p.m. in order to organize the public comments. The meeting reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

Public Comment

7. Opportunity for Public Comment (8:04 p.m.)

This item was moved up on the agenda and took place after the proposed budget overview. Budget Committee Chair Hartsock asked those providing comment to state their name, whether they are a member of the district, and their group. He stated they would work to hear as many people as they can in the hour. Comments submitted in writing were added to the Budget Committee Agenda Packet after the meeting.

Gayle Roberts and her daughter Zoey Roberts, a kindergarten student at Hogan Cedars Elementary spoke on the importance of elementary music. Zoey likes music class and her teacher. Gayle shared how the skills learned in elementary music also crossover to literacy, math, and science and fulfill content standards.

Jeanne Marie Johnson, a parent of students affected by music department cuts, expressed the importance of elementary music education and how it helps her non-speaking middle daughter to communicate through music. She shared how their music teacher has helped her daughter participate and use music to express through words.

Stefanie Craft is a parent of alumni students who were all in choir. She is also a longtime volunteer for the last 20 years, founded the parent VIPs for parent support in choir and theater, and was a campaign manager for the successful 2016 bond. She expressed that everyone was there for very important reasons, and that she knows many of the people at

these tables and their hearts are breaking over these decisions. They don't want to lose these programs. Looking at where the depth of funding comes from, they aren't going to find \$10 million in the budget. She shared that they need to push Oregon more because they need more money from the state to cover these funds. Other districts also have huge gaps, and they need to solve some of these bigger solutions. They have to be supportive, band together and try to find a way to support the board and district for alternate ways to support the community.

Community member Susie Jones is a longtime resident of the district and spoke on music in elementary. She shared that Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 329.045 states that districts and public charters must offer students instruction in the arts and must meet academic content standards. They must offer a planned K-12 instructional program. She asked how K-5 students will meet the music content standards adopted in 2015, and expressed concern the district will be out of legal compliance. She urged the committee to vote no.

JJ Johnson, a current band student at Gresham High School, shared they have been a part of music since elementary school at North Gresham. They expressed concern about a drastic decrease in student attendance over music cuts. Students have found passion and joy in music, what happens when that is all removed?

Kaycleann Gallinat, an AVID student at Sam Barlow High School, spoke about the AVID program being cut for next year. She expressed confusion around the program cut since it has been incredibly beneficial. Many students have become more successful in their academic careers. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) closes achievement gaps, prepares for college success, and students participate in rigorous course work. She shared how her AVID teacher has helped her in unimaginable ways.

Janine Kirstein, a retired music educator with grandchildren in the district, expressed how music matters. She shared receiving her education in the district, along with her daughters and grandchildren, followed by teaching music in the district for 25 years. Both of her daughters are now music educators. Elementary music teachers transform the building, they have the heart of the whole school. Enrollment is going down and the district may lose more student's with these music cuts. It is terrible what Oregon has done. She asked them to look deeper at elementary music half time.

Jenni Cruz, PTC president at Hall Elementary, urged the committee to keep the current music teachers who are licensed and educated. She asked them to look again and find the \$800,000 difference. She shared that the parents support the board in advocating to the state to get the \$1 billion dollars sitting in the emergency school fund. They are going to organize a march to Salem because this is a bigger problem than just their district, and they are stronger together.

Joslyn Williams, a senior at Sam Barlow High School, serves on the band council. She raised serious concerns about how decisions were made, and noted that individuals without proper music licenses shouldn't be teaching music. These cuts put students at a disadvantage to other areas that still offer music. She shared data on how music helps with other subjects, and noted that music shapes students in ways that go beyond the classroom through building friendships and opportunities. She asked what alternatives were considered, and what the plan is to reinstate full music. She urged the committee to reconsider these cuts and work with the community to find solutions.

Andrea Houck, a parent of a 6th grade student, shared how band and music programs are important for children's brain development, and how they support other subjects and learning. She expressed concern about replacing licensed educators with non-licensed assistants. Students receive education from a person with a degree in education in public school. She shared additional concerns that this will further reduce enrollment.

Holly Marchi, a student at Springwater Trail High School, expressed frustration over the budget cuts that have displaced a teacher at her school. She shared this teacher is the primary teacher that advocates for students and it would be a

detrimental loss to their school. A new teacher would not be able to replace him. They proposed making the teacher a full-time science teacher at the school to retain their position.

Marie O'Hara spoke on behalf of the Sam Barlow Band aids, a group of parents that volunteer their time to support band students. Their group is in support of elementary music education and keeping it taught by licensed music educators. She shared how music helps build lifelong friendships, and gives student confidence and belonging. Not every family can make music a priority, and elementary school is where it begins. If children aren't exposed to it early on, how will they ever discover their passions.

Penelope Pearl Boehme is a student at Gresham High School. They played tuba in band for 3 years, and it has been life changing and life-saving for them. She shared that she started loving music when playing the recorder at the elementary level. Collaboration is a key part of life. Teachers help students experience things they would not experience anywhere else. She asked them to think about the future of music education and reconsider cutting elementary music.

Peter Nilsen-Goodin, an elementary music teacher at Hogan Cedars Elementary, provided an alternative proposal to cutting elementary music. He noted that this is not easy, and he is not there to advocate for his job, but is there to advocate for students. He shared that without changing budgetary numbers they could keep half of the music teachers by decreasing music to half time. This could be done given the current model with a little extra pocket change. Half time would save \$650,000 and the district would only need to come up with \$45,750. Even given current numbers there are ways to maintain some music educators and others as well. There are maybe some other avenues that can make this work for everybody. He urged the committee to consider the possibilities going forward.

Ethan Solerno is a current member of the Gresham High School band. He understands that a lot of them are not very happy, adding that board members are trying their best and aren't happy with decisions being made. Elementary music builds structures with relationships, and learning math, science, and English better. He thanked Mr. Alsop for music helping him through so many things. He shared how music helped him process the loss of his grandfather in 8th grade, and how disappointed he was to hear his current band director would be moved. He asked them not to remove elementary music because it is such a fundamental part of school.

Allison Wilkinson is a parent and community member who runs the "I Am Music Foundation." She shared how music is the only academic subject that lives in the brainstem. When they cut music programs they are cutting blood flow, and they should be putting more music into classrooms. When people make music together the parent/child bond part of the brain lights up. Music creates a family feeling and gives that affect the most efficiently and cheaply. It is where emotional regulation lives, and if they give children more access to music they have more tools for emotional regulation.

Giana Mezza, a student at Springwater Trail High School spoke to the committee about budget cuts. She shared that she learned about her passion for the arts making her more creative. Many students decide on schools based on successful art programs, and they have won so many awards. Being in a smaller school they don't have as many elective options and it can't continue this way. Oregon districts are receiving budget cuts. Music teachers do not deserve to be replaced. She urged the committee to support music teachers in every way they can.

Jaqueline Salazar is an AVID 10 student at Sam Barlow High School in AVID 10. She noted that many students that look like her grow up thinking college isn't meant for them. She has seen how programs like AVID can really change lives. AVID helped her brother get into an apprenticeship program to become a carpenter. It gives students guidance and encouragement to reach goals after high school. Why cut these programs that mean success for students like her?

Addison Pratish, a Gresham High School student, shared how band and music education have had a major impact on

who they are today. Playing and reading music is like a second language. Everyone deserves a chance to experience music at a young age. These programs shouldn't be cut, and these cuts are stripping teachers from their jobs. AVID cuts are also very detrimental to the student body. She asked them to please reconsider their decisions on all the matters.

Zane Wood, a Gresham High School student in Concert Choir and Overtones was in attendance to convince the committee how far-fetched these cuts to music are. He noted that he reviewed the district survey results and electives ranked highly for importance. They were nearly the top priority for students. He asked how this justifies the removal of 9.5 FTE in elementary music with only \$100,000 cut to athletics. He shared information about a change.org petition noting that it now has 2,300 signatures. This proposal has stripped teachers of their careers.

Merola Youssef, a student at Gresham High School and member of the band council, shared how these cuts have impacted so many teachers, and students that already struggle with attendance. If students show up for the things they are most passionate about, like performing arts, attendance will drop. Many see performing arts as a second home. Their teachers enhance these programs. In elementary school they had many experiences, and the passion for music is evident in the lessons. It is vital music be taught in elementary school. He asked them to please not pass this budget.

At the close of public comment, Budget Committee Chair Hartsock shared that they will make sure all budget committee members have copies of the written comments.

Recess / Reconvene

Meeting Recess

The meeting was recessed at 9:15 p.m. and reconvened at 9:21 p.m.

Action Item (If Needed)

8. Proposed Budget Approval

This item was not addressed during the meeting.

Closing Items

9. Set Agenda for Next Meeting (if needed)

Committee members will send questions to the board secretary to help guide the next agenda.

10. Closing Remarks (10:19 p.m.)

Superintendent Klinger acknowledged the weight of what they are discussing. The process is inherently driven by the rigid requirement to present a balanced budget. This is a task they are legally bound to complete, but the reality is schools are a people business. While students are the heart of their work, they only succeed through the strength of their community, families, and dedicated staff. This is where the work transitions from being technical to incredibly difficult. She shared that they are currently facing the painful rub of technical necessity and the people at the heart of the district. Any reduction in staffing is not just a line item; it is painful, personal, and profoundly difficult. There is a lot of hurt in their community right now. She expressed how it is important to understand that the reductions were not made in haste. They were intentional and designed with the totality of the K-12 experience in mind. Looking at a single reduction in isolation doesn't paint the full picture of their educational ecosystem. Any addition is a reduction elsewhere. Superintendent Klinger addressed those who attended the meeting, thanking them for showing up to share their perspectives and advocacy. These decisions were not made lightly, and their voices are a vital part of this process. She also thanked the budget committee for their questions, clarifying comments, and for engaging in difficult

discussions. She closed noting they move forward with a heavy heart for what is lost, but a firm commitment to the students who remain their primary focus.

11. Adjournment (10:22 p.m.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Submitted by: _____

Sarah Avery
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and
Board of Directors

Note: These minutes were accepted by the budget committee on _____:sa

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