

Town of Plymouth

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Board of Finance

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1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Eugene Croce, Chairman, called the February 19, 2026, Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Assembly Room. Members in attendance: Victoria Carey - Vice Chairman, Jennifer Brunnoli - excused absence, Jon Draper, Roxanne Perugino, and Tony Osipiak.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Eugene Croce, Chairman, led the group and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Notice of Fire Exits** – Eugene Croce noted the Fire Exits for the record.
4. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION:

Roxanne Perugino made a motion, seconded by Tony Osipiak, to approve/accept the January 15, 2026, minutes as presented

VOTE:

Jon Draper - Yes

Vicky Carey - Yes

Roxanne Perugino - Yes

Tony Osipiak - Yes

Motion passed unanimously

PLYMOUTH, CT
 TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
 RECEIVED FOR RECORD
 2026 FEB 26 PM 3:48
Stella Komarova
 TOWN CLERK

5. Board of Education – General Fund Budget Presentation 2026-2027

Karen Kulesa, Board of Education Chair, noted that a lot of work went into the budget and hopes you find it fair and easy to understand.

Karen Kulesa, Board of Education Chair, turned the presentation over to Brian Falcone, Supt. - Plymouth Public Schools and Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, Plymouth Public Schools.

❖ PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTED BUDGET PRESENTATION 2026-2027

The Mission Of The Plymouth Public Schools Is To Challenge, Inspire, And Prepare
All Students For Success In An Ever-Changing And Complex World.

❖ **Budget Development Schedule**

Brian Falcone, Supt., explained in detail their budget process, which began in October. Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, rolled over the previous year's budget, adjusting for contractual salary increases (teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, etc.) and then looked at actuals - projected costs re. oil and electricity, and was based on past spending.

Brian Falcone, Supt. noted those budget line items that align with their principals and directors, who then consult with their schools, grade levels, departments, and teachers to determine needs and create proposed school budgets.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated both meet with all individuals, then review all requests and develop the recommended budget. Noted the efforts are the Administrative Team's work to create the budget presented and briefly elaborated.

- ❖ Budget & Board Of Education Goal Alignment
- ❖ 2025-2026 Board Of Education Adopted Goals

Student Achievement

- Support All Students In Achieving Their Best Possible Learning Outcomes.

Engagement

- Engage Students In The Learning Process By Providing Authentic Learning Experiences.

Well-Being

- Create An Environment And Opportunities That Support Well-Being For All Students.

Fiscal Oversight

- Align Budgetary Spending With District Goals And Strategies.

- ❖ **2026-2027 Budgetary Initiatives**

GOAL: MAINTAIN OUR CURRENT STAFFING AND PROGRAMS (chart)

Total Budget Additions = \$154,750

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated short – re. library media specialist (2), social worker (1), and school counselor (1) in schools.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated that those positions are considered basic and are not in place because we don't have a budget that supports those positions.

- ❖ Enrollment Projections, Staffing Proposal, Class Sizes, and Caseloads

Vicky Carey questioned whether there are any eliminated, reassigned, or retired positions in the budget.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated yes, there will be - noted a \$75,000 for retirees, already have one retiree, \$30,000 savings projected already in this budget, and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey questioned whether there are cameras on the outside of the buildings (schools)

Brian Falcone noted that a camera upgrade was completed two years ago.

Roxanne Perugino questioned the lunch program's support - \$10,000 loss.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, noted the current unpaid \$6,800 meal debt from last year, and \$14,000 plus, and briefly elaborated.

Roxanne Perugino questioned the security monitor position at the school and the job description.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated we have nighttime security, we have a job description for the evening, not for the day yet, and noted the focus and importance of safety, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned how many exit doors there are in a typical school.

Brian Falcone stated various.

Brian Falcone noted the importance of safety, being proactive, and briefly elaborated.

Eugene Croce questioned whether this position includes benefits.

Brian Falcone noted benefits not carried (stipend) reg. Education (part-time) would not carry benefits, and briefly elaborated.

Fall 2025 Projected Enrollment Data (See Board of Education charts online)

- **Current Enrollment = 1,279 Students**
- **Projected 2035-2036 Enrollment = 1,314**

Discussed in detail: School Staffing & Class Size (See Board of Education charts online)

- **Plymouth Center School**
- **Harry S. Fisher Elementary School**
- **Eli Terry Jr. Middle School**
- **Terryville High School**
- **Districtwide Staffing**

Brian Falcone, Supt. noted caseloads, class size, and briefly elaborated.

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Brian Falcone, Supt. discussed in detail all positions and noted the great importance of all, no extras, and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey questioned the paraprofessionals-to-pupil ratio in the elementary vs middle.

Beth Melillo, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, stated many more in elementary, more challenges, more risks, and needs (1 to 3) eventually (1 to 5), and briefly elaborated.

Roxanne Perugino commented/questioned whether the decision to put in a security position, or if they (Board of Education) find that more important than a librarian specialist or a counselor position.

The Board of Education members noted that their projected amount of increase felt it would be too much to ask for now, and starting with less would still have a positive impact.

Kelly Tilton, Board of Education member, stated teachers' needs and noted the importance of safety as well as academics, and briefly elaborated.

Brian Falcone noted that underfunding a budget while everyone else is moving up and building budgets, and ours is staying flat. It is very hard to understand why some of these pieces aren't in there. We don't have an overall starting number, and briefly elaborated.

Roxanne Perugino commended the Board of Education on their budget.

Eugene Croce questioned the number of students at Eli Terry, which comes up with a different number than the counselor workload.

Brian Falcone stated that those are two different numbers, based on this year, not next, and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey questioned what an interventionist is.

Kelly Tilton, Board of Education member, stated that the position is for students who are not in special education, who are at risk of not reaching academic goals, slightly behind, and need to be caught up to grade level.

Brian Falcone, Supt. noted PCS – one math and two reading - Fisher, and Eli Terry, one for math and reading, and High Schools need that support as well, and briefly elaborated.

Eugene Croce questioned whether the addition is a federally funded Title 1 position that acts as an interventionist.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated our academic coaches work with the teachers.

Roxanne Perugino questioned the possibility of any SEED grants.

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Brian Falcone noted working on the Special Education and Expansion Development (SEED) grant program, which already has Title 1, Title 2, and briefly elaborated.

Matthew Tencza noted applied expenses against it and briefly elaborated.

Beth Melillo, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, stated Title 1 is for jobs that work directly with the students in schools, and Title 2 is for teachers used for professional development.

NOTE: Title 1 supports student instruction; Title 2 supports professional development.

Tony Ospiak questioned the media specialist position and what the cost would be.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated \$25,000, without benefits, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned the library media specialist based at the high school.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted work at the High School and Middle School, one at PCS, Fisher covered by a library tutor, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned enrollment figures. Does that include homeschool students?

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated not counted, State Board of Education (confirmation), and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned whether our coaches are figured into the teachers or excluded.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated our coaches, data dive, work with teachers -how to read data, benchmark, train and work with teachers, in the classroom, model, management, lesson, work closely with principals, and Supt., noted coaching cycles, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned the amount.

Brian Falcone, Supt. Noted number of coaches are 1 (math) and 2 (reading) re. curriculum in presentation and explained in great detail.

Karen Kulsea, Board of Education- Chair, stated that coaches are especially important in a district like ours for several reasons. With so much new programming and curriculum being introduced, they help teachers get up to speed quickly and effectively. We also don't pay as competitively as some surrounding districts, so when teachers leave, and new ones come in, coaches provide critical support during those transitions.

Karen Kulsea, Board of Education – Chair, stated that they help new teachers build their skills and understand the curriculum, which is essential. Even experienced educators would need time and guidance to adjust to a new district's curriculum - so for newer teachers, that support is even more valuable. After meeting with our coaches and learning more about their work, it became clear that their knowledge and impact make them essential to our schools.

Brian Falcone, Supt. noted the number of new teachers (0-5 years of experience in our district) and turnover.

How Is Our Budget Spent?

Schools/2026-2027 Proposed Budget/Required Costs/Remaining Fund Total (See Board of Education charts)

Required Cost & Remaining Fund Totals

Type of Expense	Total Dollars	Percent of Budget
Required Cost	\$28,506,586	99.14%
Remaining Funds	\$ 248,588	.86%

Does not take into account the \$75,000 in projected savings

Based on anticipated retirements

❖ Budget Informational Items

Vicky Carey requested budget categories by percentages.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted - follow-up.

Vicky Carey questioned net current expenditures per pupil (NCEP).

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, noted - follow-up.

Vicky Carey questioned the maintenance budget.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated we have emergency repairs for each school at \$10,000 and the high school at \$15,000. If needed, they would fall back to the non-lapsing fund with board permission.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, noted (contract) that custodial would take care of preventative maintenance.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, noted that the grounds (separate contract) and weed control (separate contract) under athletic fields maintenance, anything outside of the contract would be billed, and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey questioned revenue from Parks & Recreation.

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Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated that we do not charge Parks & Recreation. Except for custodians, if buildings are not occupied.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated that custodians are there for the summer program, custodians leave at 3:00 pm, but the program lasts until 5:00 pm, then Parks & Rec. is charged for 2 hours of overtime. This year, the rate is \$45.00, next year \$57.00, we have informed Parks & Recreation. We do not make revenue; this is a direct pass-through, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned the transportation cost.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted the Boys & Girls Club provides service for our Middle School at \$150 yearly, the High School at \$50.00 yearly for after school program. We have a district van; they also have a van - noted gas (gallon) cost/expense yearly and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak noted cross-billing (would like to eliminate this).

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated the \$20,548 net per-pupil expenditure information amount.

Tony Ospiak questioned the contractual snow removal.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated that the town is in charge of plowing and caring for the parking lot, and custodians are in charge of cleaning the sidewalks and walkways.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated that the town goes out to bid and that we have two different contractors.

Vicky Carey questioned the salaries (increase) and clerical change amounts.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated PCS (Extra days for pre-k administration) and Eli Terry (person + half) last year's budget. This is the differential for the actual number, and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey questioned the position - Family Science salary of \$96,000.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted family consumer sciences, includes re. sewing, cooking, and catering, etc.

Vicky Carey questioned the percentage that teachers received.

Brian Falcone, Supt. stated 4.25%.

Vicky Carey questioned non-certified teachers.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated paras and secretaries at 4.5% ex. \$22.00 to \$23.00

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated nurses will start negotiating noted (last year of contract), and administrators 3.25%.

Roxanne Perugino questioned vocational/agricultural (different schools).

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated MOAGG in Lakeview (36 students), specialty magnet schools (handful of students). Noted the technical - Oliver Wolcott, Kainer, we do not pay tuition to them.

Vicky Carey questioned building rentals.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated (porta-potty).

Beth Melillo, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, noted the SEED expansion grant is something that will expand Special Education to help with the program, not help with the budget.

Vicky Carey questioned the annuities - Brian Falcone, Supt.

Brian Falcone stated yes in the contract posted on the website, 10.5%

Tony Ospiak questioned the Library Media Specialist's duties.

Brian Falcone, Supt. at PCS (elementary), and one at middle and high school.

- ❖ Contractual Increases Within Current Operating Budget (risk) noted placeholder \$75,000 savings. (Chart)
- ❖ Budget Adjustments / Removed From Budget/ Budget Additions

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, noted risk, Health Benefit Savings package (out for bid) will be changing, noted union and negotiation – best guess excess cost. Noted the basic baseline at 70%.

Tony Ospiak noted mandates that the legislature gives to our community/boards and does not provide money, and briefly elaborated.

Brian Falcone noted the governor's flat-funding of education (cost sharing), cutting Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), and ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services), \$12 M funding - so that falls back to us, noted unfunded mandates (60 pages) and growing, and briefly elaborated.

Roxanne Perugino questioned which magnet schools we are obligated to pay for.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated Waterbury Arts Magnet School and Rotella Interdistrict Magnet School also have other options to any of the specialized magnet schools, tuition paid, not transportation, and briefly elaborated.

- ❖ **Current Grant Funded Positions Chart**
- ❖ **2026-2027 Board of Education Adopted Budget Chart**
- ❖ **Board of Education 2026-2027 Budget Funding Chart**

❖ **2026-2027 Budget Support Needed Chart**

❖ **CAPSS**

2026-2027 Board of Education Adopted Budget

Current 2025-2026 BOE Adopted Operating Budget	\$27,578,551	
2026-2027 BOE Adopted Budget Total	\$28,680,173	
Increase From 2025-2026 Budget	\$1,101,622	3.99%

Vicky Carey questioned the sinking fund amount.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated \$404,000, no spend down, can build.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated concern at Fisher Elementary - Heat pumps.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, noted on the capital list, options – secure quotes, working on a grant to offset cost. (DRIP) Grant and Plymouth is approved for over \$98,000 as calculation (bucket principle), reaching out on the process, have a connection awaiting payout in June.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted concern about roofs at PCS and Fisher.

Roxanne Perugino questioned the timeframe for asking for heat pump replacement and roof replacement.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated 6 years.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted solar panel concerns, issues, and quotes do not include removal and installation.

Vicky Carey stated that the Capital Improvements Committee has only been active again for about two years. They completed their scoring, and the results are available. They did request additional information from the Board of Education; as liaison, I helped relay questions that needed clarification.

Vicky Carey stated the committee had previously gone inactive, and the former mayor reestablished it because the state requires us to have a plan in place. The projects are included in our plans, but funding depends on the mayor's including them in the budget. If the cost is high enough, it must go to a referendum. The roof projects are significant, estimated at approximately \$5–8 million.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted the town would have to commit to the project, then acquire funding, and then we can start applying for the reimbursement grants.

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Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated the reimbursement rate is about 70%, but it depends on the type of project - replacement versus renovation/retrofit. A full roof replacement typically qualifies for higher reimbursement, but it also requires bringing the entire roof up to current code. In some cases, updated codes re. pitch requirements, which can significantly increase costs.

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager, stated that a retrofit may receive less reimbursement, but can avoid some of those added code expenses. Another complication is the existing solar panel agreements. I don't have a copy of the contract, but I believe it was done jointly with the town. The structure of those lease-type agreements can also impact what work can be done and how the project is funded.

Vicky Carey listed some of the rankings presented to the Board of Finance and Town Council and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE).

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated we don't belong to CABE. We attend the CABE Conference in November, which is a Board of Education conference, and the related expense is listed as CABE in our budget. However, this designation reflects professional development funding for our board to attend the conference, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned accreditation.

Briane Falcone, Supt., noted \$7,500 for CABE conference cost.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted High School accreditation, CIAC (Athletics), pre-school NAEYC's (Commission on Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation), other dues to be part of Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPPSS), enrollment studies to be done, and necessary to run/ function, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak noted the sinking fund.

Brian Falcone noted that if we use the sinking fund to offset the budget, it creates a hole in the budget and briefly elaborated.

Eugene Croce, stating according to the Charter, the Board of Education is responsible, but historically, public works has been, and briefly elaborated.

Brian Falcone, Supt. noted the number of items that cross over between town and school.

Vicky Carey noted the charter.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated had attorney look at the Charter, and the Board of Education does not have a section.

Brian Falcone, Supt., noted the importance of being in writing, clarification of expectations, or expenses, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned if the budget is cut, you will reassemble and prioritize, reexamination.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated he would meet with the Adm. Team, make adjustments, and then bring the budget back to the Board of Education, and briefly elaborated.

Brian Falcone, Supt., stated will follow up with the percentages of the budget, broken up format.

Eugene Croce requested the Capital list.

Eugene Croce thanked the Board of Education, Board members, and Administrators.

MOTION:

Roxanne Perugino made a motion, seconded by Jon Draper, to cancel the February 23, 2026, Board of Finance meeting.

VOTE:

Motion passed unanimously

6. Future schedule of meetings – will be emailed

7. Public Comment

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, CT - need to look at everything, cut corners, noted costs, room/class monitors.

Jim Moslak, 18 Carriage Drive, Terryville, CT - questioned if the Administrators have contracts.

Ray Engle, 6 Knight Lane, Terryville, CT - noted same line of work as Matthew Tencza, concerned about Health Care Costs – went to a higher deductible, told would save money (turned out to be not accurate).

8. Correspondence

Eugene Croce read into the record a letter from Torrington Health District.

The Torrington area health district's per capita rate is staying at \$5.48, but we're going from \$11,766 to \$11,879, so we're increasing from \$64,478 to \$65,097. Copies were provided to Vijay Dora, Finance Director, and Mayor Sekorski.

Board of Education budget reports

9. Board Member's Comments

Jon Draper - Thanked the Board of Education, appreciated the detailed presentation.

Vicky Carey - Thanked the Board of Education, list of projects completed from the sinking fund, and requested confirmation of the completed project list.

Roxanne Perugino - Thanked the Board of Education, "Great job."

Tony Ospiak - All members exercise their best judgment; we will do the same, and a budget will emerge that will benefit our community. Questioned liaison Ray Engle about the number of roofs done.

Ray Engle stated several roofs, sections (High School), total, portion of Fisher, and briefly elaborated.

Tony Ospiak questioned the Freedom of Information invitation.

Eugene Croce, Chairman, noted you will be invited in the future.

Eugene Croce, Chairman, thanked everyone!

10. Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board of Finance, a motion was made by Tony Ospiak, seconded by Roxanne Perugino, to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Yokubinas

Michele Yokubinas
Recording Secretary