

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2015

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Tom Ryan, Chair	Susan Butler-Walko, Vice Chair
Kevin Coughlin	Mayanne Briggs
Rachel McGregor	Lisa Laprade

MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Dr. Cynthia Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance

Also Present: SBRC Members

Location: Dedham Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room

Meeting began at 6:34 p.m.

VOTE ON NEW SITE OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER

Mrs. Briggs motioned to approve the vote by the SBRC in favor of the brand new ECEC at the Dexter property. Motion was seconded by Mr. Coughlin.

DISCUSSIONS - followed

Susan Butler-Walko's statement

This is a very difficult vote for me. I have not only been a big supporter of new facilities and school buildings, but I have also been an active participant to “get out the vote” for these initiatives, beginning with the science labs at DHS, the DMS, and Avery.

As a School Committee member, I am not voting for this model because I am not confident this is the building for our town. In my opinion, it is not sustainable for decades to come. School buildings are very expensive and will be used for at least 50 to 70 years, perhaps longer. They should be flexible to adopt to changing enrollments and changing education methods and practices.

I cannot support a school building that is completely inflexible to accommodate any future needs of our town – that maybe decided 10, 20 years from now.

We are letting this building dictate our school model and that should not be the case. We should be leading the way; our community should be leading the way. In September, we are beginning to spearhead that process with our strategic plan by looking at the changing needs of our schools

and determining our future, with community-wide participation. What is on the table now may contradict that outcome.

Data shows our student population has been on the decline for the past decade and I believe we should be looking at ways that deliver more effective and efficient education. Not building a school for only two grades.

I can't in good conscience state this is the best solution for our students. Yes, we solve one problem by getting the students in a new building, but beyond that, we have not solved any other school building or population problems.

For these reasons, I cannot support the ECEC at the Dexter site.

Mrs. McGregor's statement:

This was also a difficult vote, spending months, days, and weeks measuring the pros and cons for this project. We did not ask the public whether they supported this education model. Before the original application was submitted, we never went out to the community and asked for input on the model. When 3 options were put forward, Greenlodge came out and we listened, we heard and we took Greenlodge off the table. We did not do that with the educational model.

Now the current School Committee appears to have to make a decision to leave the students in an old tired building or build a new space to only accommodate Pre-K - K for the life of the building. I question this decision with increasing enrollment. Voting for this building is voting for an ed model that we have not asked the public about. I have promised the Dedham Community members that I would listen and I stand by that promise.

A no vote does not condemn our Pre-K - K students to an old building. It actually opens the doors to looking at our current model and buildings to see how we best meet the needs of the students and all our community members. So for this reason and reasons stated by my colleagues, SBRC and School Committee, I have to vote no on this project.

Mr. Welch's statement:

I respect all the opinions of the School Committee members, and the SBRC and the work they have done putting together this plan. The issue before the committee is the importance of allowing the community to weigh in and to select the selected #1 option of the 3 options to move forward from this point. In the days ahead we will see an increasing number of needs for our Kindergarten and Pre-School students. This discussion around childhood education was a prime issue at the Superintendent's Association conference. Anticipate on seeing increasing number of students at this level and increasing needs.

Mr. Welch recommended to move forward with a favorable vote on the motion.

Mr. Ryan stated he also would like to move forward with the vote:

Vote: 4 - 2

Mr. Ryan, Mrs. Laprade, Mrs. Briggs and Mr. Coughlin approved the motion and Mrs. Butler-Walko and Mrs. McGregor voted no.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE:

Mr. Welch welcomed and introduced Ms. Elizabeth O'Connell to the committee, the new Director of Special Education.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Cecelia Butler, chairman of the By-Law Review committee. She stated she is requesting to meet with the School Committee and will need some future dates with Nancy Baker.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW

Mr. Welch provided a rubric for the School Committee to review that includes a self evaluation with the following levels of unsatisfactory, needs improvement, proficient, and exemplary on each indicator. Mr. Welch suggested that he invite the MASS Association of School Committees to come and meet with the School Committee on how the committee will evaluate him. Mr. Ryan stated he is hoping to meet in August or early September to develop this evaluation to be used in the future.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUB COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Mr. Ryan suggested to table this at this time until we get a the new School Committee member. Agreed with the Selectmen for a date on August 13th to interview and evaluate the new School Committee candidates for a joint meeting. Mr. Ryan will forward the letters of intent to the members.

Mrs. Briggs stated the need for a meeting with the Policy Sub Committee to discuss the MOU between Parks and Rec and the DPS. A meeting was set for Monday, July 27 at 7:00 am. in the Superintendent's office. The MOU will be forwarded to the members.

HIGH SCHOOL SURPLUS BOOKS

Mr. Rippin reported that Principal McCarthy requests to dispose High School unused materials. A list of all items have been given to the Committee. Mr. Rippin put the list on the business website but has not received any request back. Mr. Poole commented suggest that these items by re-cycled.

Mr. Coughlin motioned to approve the disposal of High School books thru a re-cycling method, seconded by Mrs. McGregor, voted5-0 (Mrs. Butler Walko not present).

DONATIONS

None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

MINUTES

Mrs. Briggs motioned to accept the minutes of the June 17, 2015 School Committee meeting, seconded by Mrs. McGregor, voted 5-0 (Mrs. Butler not present).

Mrs. Briggs motioned to accept the minutes of the June 24, 2015 School Committee meeting, seconded by Mr. Coughlin, voted 5-0 (Mrs. Butler not present)

Mr. Coughlin suggested a need to post a meeting to vote the minutes of this meeting on Monday at 7:00 a.m. followed by the Policy Sub meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

Mrs. Briggs motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Coughlin, voted 5-0 (Mrs. Butler not present)

Meeting ended at 7:03 p.m.