

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

May 2, 2017

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Mayanne Briggs, Chair
Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair
Kevin Coughlin
Joshua Donati
Lisa Laprade
Melissa Pearrow
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Dedham Middle School

Meeting commenced at 7:07 p.m.

Recognitions

The Committee recognized Felicia Fox as the winner of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials "What Home Means To Me" poster contest. ELL teacher Elizabeth Peterson spoke about Felicia's experience preparing for, entering and winning the contest which included a trip to Washington D.C.

Student Update

Kayla Haney & Evan Landry updated the School Committee on happenings throughout the Dedham Public Schools. Highlights included MCAS and AP testing, field trips, the elementary chess tournament, science and technology enrichment, reading initiatives, spring sports, DHS Career Fair and Senior activities. An honorable mention went out to Jeff Bolduc for being inducted into the Massachusetts Drum Corps and Music Educators Hall of Fame.

Discussion & Vote- DHS Spanish Exchange Program

Foreign Language Department Chair Alison Guifarro provided details to the Committee on the Spanish Exchange Program. The exchange will occur during the 2017-2018 school year. Students from Spain will visit Dedham, stay with host families and attend a week of classes at Dedham High School. Dedham High School students will then go to Spain over February vacation, stay with host families and attend school in Spain. Since the trip is twelve days long, Ms. Guifarro is asking for the group to be allowed to leave on the Thursday before February break.

Ms. Laprade asked if this is the first time DHS is doing this type of exchange and if there a minimum number of students needed in order to go. Ms. Guifarro said as far as she knew this was the first time DHS was engaging in a double exchange. The minimum number of students needed is ten. Ms. Laprade inquired whether Ms. Guifarro had spoken to other districts that have been on this exchange. Ms. Guifarro has spoken to three other department chairs that have used this travel company and support the trip.

Ms. White inquired about the chaperone/student ratio and whether chaperones stayed with the host families as well. Ms. Guifarro stated the ratio is one chaperone to five students and the chaperones do stay with a host family, usually another teacher.

Ms. Pearrow inquired if the trip were open to all high school students. Ms. Guifarro responded that she would like to open it to upperclassman first and then, if necessary, open it to other students.

The Committee was unable to access the documents in the shared folder related to the Exchange Program. Thus, the Committee will wait until the next meeting to vote.

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Michael J. Welch

Jeff Bolduc, Dedham Public Schools Director of Fine and Performing Arts, was inducted into the Massachusetts Drum Corps and Music Educators Hall of Fame on April 29.

Dedham Public Schools has received its preliminary data from the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, conducted in early November this school year. Gail Kelley, Mark Carney, and Deb Gately will be presenting these preliminary findings from the Middle School and High School at the next School Committee meeting on May 16.

On April 26, the School Committee Negotiations Subcommittee held its second collective bargaining session with the Dedham Education Association's Unit A Bargaining Team. The next meeting is scheduled for May 16.

Dedham's Annual Spring Town Meeting will be held on May 15 at 7:00 p.m. at Dedham High School. Warrant books were distributed to School Committee members today. Article 3 and Article 4 pertain to the School Department.

Last week, Supt. Welch attended his final New Superintendent's Induction Program South Consultancy. The focus was ongoing issues of concern and budget preparations across districts.

On April 28 Supt. Welch filmed the 7th edition of “Ask the Superintendent” on Dedham Cable TV.

Reports

Review of DPS Facilities Usage & Fees.

The report was presented by Asst. Superintendent for Business and Finance Sam Rippin and Facilities Director Denise Moroney. The presentation will be available on the DPS website. The presentation included information on school usage policies, allocation of revenue, usage of facilities by school and group, and rental fees.

Ms. Laprade noted that the Policy Subcommittee is in the process of reviewing and rewriting the policy manual and inquired as to what Mr. Rippin would like to see updated. She also asked if Dedham was in line with other districts. Mr. Rippin replied that he would like to see a flat custodial fee, rounding up the cost per hour to the dollar. He would like to add traffic details to the Avery, Middle School, High School campus when all facilities are in use at the same time. He also stated that School Dude has the capacity to view benchmark data of other districts and he feels that we are in line.

Ms. White inquired if it were possible to set up an email chain updating neighbors when several activities are occurring at the same time. Mr. Rippin explained that School Dude does have the capacity for public access, but the portal is not yet open. He would also like to see Parks and Recreation activities incorporated into the schedule. Ms. White would still like to see email notifications set up.

Mr. Coughlin expressed concern about the scheduling of multiple large events at the same time. He would like to see only one large event occurring on the campus at one time. He also expressed concern regarding the police detail of an event comprising of 250 people or more. He wants to make sure that if three small events total over more than 250 patrons, a police detail will be present. He also inquired into who was assuring the presence of the police detail. Mr. Rippin noted all of Mr. Coughlin’s concerns. Mr. Coughlin stated that there was a mention in the presentation regarding “large equipment” and asked what that encompassed. Mr. Rippin explained that was the Greenlodge outdoor classroom. Mr. Coughlin then inquired about the turf field and its maintenance and ultimate replacement. Mr. Rippin explained the funds for this would come out of the capital budget when necessary. Mr. Coughlin stated that he thought the fees from the turf field were supposed to be put toward its maintenance and replacement. Mr. Coughlin asked Mr. Rippin if he thought we were getting greedy in respect to the renting of the facilities. Mr. Rippin stated he is trying to allow reasonable access as well as not having to dip into the capital budget.

Mr. Bilafer reiterated Mr. Coughlin’s concerns regarding the police detail at times when there are three small groups that could total over 250 patrons as well as providing parking signage. Mr. Rippin stated this is one of the reasons he is looking into traffic details. He will also look into providing renters with parking requirements. Mr. Bilafer felt it might be helpful to assign certain parking areas to certain renters.

Supt. Welch noted that Dedham is fortunate to have such desirable facilities. He understands the Committee’s concerns regarding the management of the facilities and he looks forward to working with the Policy Subcommittee to address these issues.

Ms. Briggs asked about the renting of the campus facilities and whether renters are directed toward the other schools. Mr. Rippin explained that the quality of the facilities on the campus is what the renters desire (auditoriums, gymnasium, kitchen facilities), but he will explore the suggestion.

Old/New Business

Discussion - District Strategic Improvement Plan and Restructuring

Supt. Welch updated the Committee on the current hiring process. The interviews for the instructional coaches are complete. The interviews for the Director of Counseling Services are complete. The searches for the Elementary Education Team Leaders are under way. Announcements are forthcoming.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Ms. Laprade stated the Policy Subcommittee met on Monday and continued the review of policy manual and alignment with current standards. They are working directly with the MASC. The Committee has finished sections A & B and is hoping to have the review wrapped up by November. The next meeting of the Subcommittee will be Thursday, May 4 to discuss the Middle School schedule and High School student requirements.

Ms. Briggs announced the need for additional items under 'Old/New Business'; the Town audit and update on the school bus contract.

Mr. Rippin explained the audit processes the Town and School Department encounter including the end of year pupil and financial report which is available in the Committee's shared drive. On the school side, there was one minor finding related to placing information in the wrong column. The other findings in the report were on the Town side and revolved around methodology

Mr. Bilafer questioned if the discrepancy was between the School Department and the Town. Mr. Rippin answered no, the Town actually provides the School Department with the information, but the audit found the backup did not cross.

Mr. Coughlin inquired if Munis will help. Mr. Rippin stated that Munis is an accounting system and should help. Mr. Coughlin inquired about vocational transportation. Mr. Rippin explained this line item represents transportation costs to Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School.

Mr. Rippin explained the bus contract went to bid with only one bid - from the current contractor, Connolly Bus Company. There is a 5% cost increase, but that includes camera systems. Mr. Rippin asked whether the Committee needed to take a vote; it is his recommendation to approve.

Mr. Donati asked Mr. Rippin to describe the bid process. Mr. Rippin explained the advertising, bid packages and the bid meeting. Mr. Donati asked how many companies pulled packets. Mr. Rippin stated five or six, but only one company appeared at the bid meeting.

Ms. Laprade asked what percentage increase occurred under the last contract. Mr. Rippin stated approximately 3%.

Mr. Donati inquired into the leverage of only having one bidder. Mr. Rippen explained the negotiation process when only one company shows up to the meeting. Mr. Donati expressed his concern of having only one bid to view.

Mr. Coughlin inquired if the number (cost) was within the budget for next year. Mr. Rippen stated that it was and that he will provide the package to the Committee.

Ms. Briggs asked for comparisons from other districts, such as price per day, so that the Committee has a basis for comparison. Ms. Briggs also asked whether the new activity bus will save on bus transportation. Mr. Rippen is estimating a savings of \$20,000.

Minutes

Mr. Coughlin motioned to approve the minutes of April 12, 2017 as presented, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Donations

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$500 from Virginia Melendez and the Wells Fargo Bank's Matching Gift Program to the Avery School. Mr. Bilafer second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Ms. Laprade motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$500 from The Norfolk District Attorney's Office in Support of the Senior Class After-Graduation Party; Ms. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. Briggs announced that two students from Dedham attended and placed in the Spanish Spelling Bee.

Ms. Briggs announced the need to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3.

Ms. White motioned to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3, Mr. Coughlin second; a roll call vote was taken:

Lisa Laprade- Yes

Joshua Donati- Yes

Melissa Pearrow- Yes

Kevin Coughlin- Yes

Tracey White- Yes

Steve Bilafer, Vice-Chair- Yes

Mayanne Briggs, Chair- Yes

Ms. Briggs announced the Committee would not be returning to regular session.

Regular meeting concluded at 8:34 p.m.