

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

January 30, 2018

(Approved February 13, 2018)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Lisa Laprade

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

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

Meeting Location: Avery Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 6:35 p.m.

Max Vo, Grade 5 Avery School Student, opened the meeting.

Student Update

Evan Landry and Abigail Jiminian updated the School Committee on recent happenings and upcoming events occurring throughout the Dedham Public Schools.

Members of the School Committee introduced themselves to the audience.

Reports

Avery School Presentation

Principal Dr. Clare Sullivan, along with the Avery Student Council, provided the Committee with an update on the Avery Elementary School. The presentation will be available on the Dedham Public Schools' district website. The presentation included the history of the Avery School, demographics of the school, programs and initiatives for students; programs put on by the Parent Teacher Organization; and a video of students' thoughts and suggestions.

Dr. Sullivan introduced the Student Council members: in Grade 5, Max Vo, Samantha Caul, Timothy Chirokas, Adrian Newman, Emily Gallagher and Sophie Piro; and in Grade 4, Mack Smink, Benjamin Papadamis, Lukas Whelan, Mary Kate Megan and Julia Walsh.

Dr. Sullivan introduced the School Council members: Janet Mattozzi, Community Representative; Karen Maregni, Staff Representative; Lauren Shea, Staff Representative; Barbara Payne, Parent Representative; and William Gallagher, Parent Representative.

Dr. Sullivan introduced the Avery PTO Board members: Katie Richard, Co-President; Anne Stephens, Co-President; Monica DeWinter, Treasurer; and Rachel School, Secretary.

Dr. Sullivan introduced her staff in attendance: Heidi Dineen-Serpis, Allison Kieffner, Sarah Merritt, Julie Moise, Mary MacLean, Erin McGowan, Sarah Twomey, Dana Powers, Mary Gallagher, and Dr. Marjorie Goldstein-Fradin.

Avery Community Q& A

Ms. Anne Stephens, PTO Co-President, expressed her appreciation for the Avery School and thanked the Committee for listening to their thoughts and concerns.

Ms. Kara Tierney announced that on Saturday, March 3, Avery would be holding its annual Discover Camp and Activities Fair.

Mr. William Gallagher expressed concern for the traffic flow and student safety on Recreation Road between the pool and tennis courts, and on High Street where the lights are not always working correctly and signage is missing.

Ms. Elizabeth Straghalis spoke about the diversity and differentiated needs of the Avery School. She expressed concern about the inequity in class sizes compared to other schools in the district. She expressed a need for more qualified paraprofessionals to assist teachers in the classroom, coverage for teacher absences and more support for Principal Sullivan.

Ms. Rachael School expressed the need for typing courses due to expanding technology and funding for curriculum related field trips.

Ms. Suzanne MacRae asked for money to be placed in the budget for instrumental music lessons in the classroom, foreign language classes at the elementary level and civics education.

Ms. Stephens complimented all of the staff and Dr. Sullivan for all of their hard work.

Ms. White thanked the families for coming to the meeting and showing support for their school.

Mr. Donati wanted families to know the Committee shares all of their concerns that were brought up this evening.

Dr. Pearrow stated she appreciated the advocacy of the students and parents.

Mr. Coughlin let the families know that their concerns would be taken seriously.

Mr. Bilafer stated that the transportation needs for field trips are being considered in the FY19 budget.

Ms. Briggs asked the audience to please continue following along with town meetings and Finance Committee meetings. The School Committee will need their continued support when presenting the school budget in front of other town boards.

Ms. White motioned to enter the Public Hearing on the FY19 Budget, Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Public Hearing

Superintendent Welch and Assistant Superintendent Sam Rippin presented the FY19 Operating Budget. The presentation will be available on the district website. The presentation included a review of the District 2020 Vision (5-Year Strategic Improvement Plan); a review of the School Committee Goals; a review of the 2017-2018 Operating Budget; Chapter 70 Funding increase of \$445,577 to the Town of Dedham; Special Education "Circuit Breaker" Reimbursement anticipated loss of \$8,032 directly impacting the School Department; the FY19 Superintendent's Proposed Schools Budget; and the FY19 Superintendent's Proposed Facilities Budget. Supt. Welch explained the greatest portion of the budget is for level service contractual obligations (contractual step increases.)

FY19 Superintendent's Proposed Schools Budget			
FY18 Base Budget = \$37,493,652			
	Amount	Item	Notes
1	\$1,308,948	"Level Service" Contractual Obligations	Step/Lane/COLA Percentage Increase for all units and faculty/staff
2	\$48,000	ELL Leadership & Support	Program Audit + 0.4 Leadership Release time + 0.4 additional FTE Instructional time district-wide
3	\$40,000	1.0 FTE ECEC Library/Media Discovery Center Teacher	Unit A Position offset by current ECEC library paraprofessional assignment @0.6 FTE
4	\$30,000	Reduction in District Yellow Bus Transportation Fee	Lower fee from \$260 to \$180 (\$1 per day)
5	\$30,000	Inclusion Coach @Avery (0.5 FTE)	Training/Support for co-teaching and "Push In" rather than "Pull Out" programming
6	\$15,000	Annual Field Trips/Transportation Budget for elementary and middle schools	\$2500 per elementary (4) + \$5000 @DMS = \$15,000
7	\$10,000	Fine Arts Student Programming	All-State Band/Chorus/Theater at DMS & DHS, before & after school programs/productions
8	\$9,000	DMS Grade Level Team Leaders	Coordination and support of building based initiatives
9	\$8,500	Challenge Day & Link Crew Programming	Challenge Day = \$4500; Link Crew = \$4000
10	\$8,000	Anti-Defamation League Peer Leadership Training @DMS	Year-long Student Leadership Development program for grades 6-8
\$1,507,448 Total			
4.02% Increase			

FY19 Superintendent's Proposed Facilities Budget

FY18 Base Budget = \$3,790,854

	Amount	Item	Notes
1	\$71,392	"Level Service" Contractual Obligations	Step/COLA Percentage Increase
2	\$47,237	1.0 FTE Custodial Rover	Reduce cost of vacation/sick/absent overtime coverage
3	\$59,994	Electricity Cost Increase	Reflects addition of new ECEC in January 2019
4	\$29,587	Custodial/Maintenance Overtime Increase	To reflect projected usage after adding rover position
5	\$27,037	Increase in cleaning supplies/materials costs	Reflects transition to new vendor
6	\$20,571	Increase in purchased services	Increase in monitoring/maintenance fees
7	\$6,000	Increase in water costs	Reflects additional irrigation needs on practice field
8	\$2,400	Increase in phone service costs	Addition of "Push To Talk" connection with Dedham PD
9	-\$278,000	Reduction in heating line item allocation	Reflects correction to historical actual costs
	-\$1,972	Total	

-0.05% Increase

Questions from Board followed.

Ms. White inquired if the Avery School were under contract with Siemens. Mr. Rippin explained the Avery School has different controls and is under a different contract.

Dr. Pearrow inquired to the Budget Subcommittee if they could explain why these items were the ones chosen from a larger list of needs.

Mr. Coughlin explained that he relied on a priority list from the Superintendent which was compiled through staff input. He expressed the list needed to be cut down in order to ask for an appropriate percentage from the Town which is around 4%. It is possible the budget may have to be cut. He also noted that the Subcommittee works to align with the School Committee Goals and Strategic Plan.

Mr. Bilafer reiterated the need to look at the FY18 and FY19 level service obligations first as this number is non-negotiable. The Committee needs to be able to defend this obligation to the Finance Committee before anything else.

Mr. Rippin stated that the Principals did ask for the items parents inquired about this evening, unfortunately they could not all fit into the fiscal constraints of the budget.

Mr. Donati stated that it was an eye-opening experience for him, being his first time on the Budget Subcommittee, seeing the very small percentage allowed to work with after level service obligation were met. He reiterated that parent concerns were heard and that parents need to continue advocating at Finance Committee meetings. He also noted it was important that the budget aligned with the School Committee goals.

A question from the audience was asked around changes in enrollment trends. Supt. Welch noted that he tracks all school, grade and class enrollment closely. The current increase for next year will be students moving from grade 5 to grade 6. Enrollment remains fairly stagnant. However, there has been an uptick in births in the past four years. He feels with the opening of the new ECEC, kindergarten numbers will increase. There may be a need to reallocate staff with fluctuating numbers at grade levels. He noted that students have become more challenging and he has made a case to the Finance Committee providing backup with benchmarking data. He reiterated that the taxpayers must advocate to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Briggs Opened the Hearing for Public Comment

Ms. Stephens noted the increase in the Avery School class sizes over the past three years and that numbers have hit 24 students in a class. She does not feel this allows every student to get what they need. She asked for the Committee to look at all four elementary schools and reallocate resources as necessary.

Mr. Gallagher inquired into the increase in Chapter 70 funds and if the school was going to get that money back. Mr. Rippin stated that revenue goes to the Town. He said that he didn't know until last week the number was going to be so high and he does not know if the Town will reallocate the funds to the schools.

Mr. Gallagher inquired the decrease in Circuit Breaker funds (due to students being kept in district) and asked if it was possible to ask for more funds from the Town. Supt. Welch explained how the School budget needs to align with what the Town is able to spend. At this time the Committee is not considering asking the Town for additional funding to the proposed budget.

Mr. Coughlin explained there is a timeline of dates in the budget process and that the subcommittee had to vote this evening on moving this proposed budget forward to the full Board.

Ms. Straghalis inquired into actual vs. projected numbers and if they are different what happens to the money. Mr. Rippin stated that unspent funds can only be spent on one time spending and excess funds revert to the Town.

1. Ms. Briggs stated that sometimes funds are freed up around mid-year, but must be sent by July 1. The Committee is bound by a timeline.

Mr. Bilafer stated the Town has been very generous with education spending. In the past Chapter 70 funding has been lower than expected and the Town has covered the difference. A case will need to be made to the Finance Committee this year in anticipation of the increase in Chapter 70 funding.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to close the Public Hearing of January 30, 2018, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. Briggs stated the Committee would be voting on the Proposed FY19 Budget on February 6, 2018.

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Michael J. Welch

Supt. Welch stated that this morning's commute to school was a bit more challenging than anticipated due to the timing and intensity of the brief burst of snowfall. He did receive a few complaints. He included a map of closings and delays in the Committee's shared folder for review.

The Superintendent's 30-Day update came out yesterday and provides the Committee and community with the most recent happenings around the district.

Supt. Welch noted that due to the water main break outside of Greenlodge School and the loss of one school day, the students will need to attend an extra day of classes at the end of the year to account for the 180 day requirement.

On January 25 Supt. Welch attended the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' Mid Winter Conference.

The next state Commissioner of Education has been announced. It is Jeffrey Riley, current Superintendent of the Lawrence Public Schools.

This afternoon, the Aspiring Leaders Academy welcomed Jeff Sudmyer, the son of current interim principal Ron Sudmeyer. Jeff is the Regional Superintendent of Achieve Charter Schools.

Ms. White commented on the dedication and commitment of the bus drivers and traffic directors who went out of their way this morning to make sure all students arrived at school safely.

Old/New Business

Discussion & Vote on Traffic Directors Contract

Ms Briggs noted that a vote had been taken in Executive Session to accept the proposed Traffic Directors' contract. No further discussion occurred.

Ms White motioned to accept the contract between the Dedham School Committee and the Dedham Traffic Directors' Association from September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2020; Mr. Donati second; a roll call vote was taken:

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

Motion passed 6-0 (Ms. Laprade was absent)

Discussion on 2018-2019 School Calendar

Ms. Briggs stated that state primary elections will be held on September 4, 2018. Thus, it will not be possible to have students in the buildings on that day as the schools are used as polling locations. September 4 will need to be a Professional Development day.

Supt. Welch noted that the calendar is not being voted on this evening. He mentioned that the agreement with the Dedham Education Association does not obligate its members to work prior to September 1. As of now, the first day of school would be September 6.

The Committee discussed the last day of school, potential snow days, the impact of not being able to attend school past June 30 and the timing of Labor Day.

Ms. Briggs stated that the Committee would need to vote on any side level commitments with the DEA.

Supt. Welch noted the DEA is under no obligation to enter negotiations to discuss the possibility of staff commitments before September 1, however, he did note that if directed by the Committee he would reach out to them.

No further discussion occurred.

Discussion & Vote on Warrant Article to Update School Master Plan

Ms. Briggs read the following Article:

AUTHORIZE AN APPROPRIATION TO UPDATE SCHOOL MASTER PLAN

By the School Committee at the request of the School Building Rehabilitation Committee. To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise, appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow for the purpose of updating the Long Term Facilities Master Plan of the Dedham Public Schools, or take any other action relative thereto. Referred to Finance Committee for study and report.

Ms. Briggs noted that the Warrant would be put forth at the Spring Town Meeting and updating the Master Plan would provide direction to the Committee as to what school building would be updated next. The Warrant was unanimously voted in favor by the SBRC.

Mr. Bilafer said there was no money figure associated with the article and that an amount will need to be included before it goes to Town Meeting. The Master Plan will also discuss the Avery, Middle School and High School Campus as well as the rehabilitation of the other school buildings.

Mr. Rippin stated that time was of the essence in putting together an RFP to be able to provide an estimate to the Finance Committee.

No further discussion occurred.

Mr. Coughlin motioned to approve the language of the Warrant Article presented to update the School Master Plan; Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Policy

No update at the time.

Budget

No additional update at this time.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

No update at this time.

Negotiations

Ms. Briggs stated the next negotiation meeting with the Dedham Education Association will be on February 13, 2018.

SBRC

Mr. Bilafer stated at the last meeting the SBRC discussed the Master Plan as well as the traffic measures for the new ECEC. The SBRC has reached a preliminary agreement with the planning board in regards to the signage on High Street and traffic calming measures. The contractor has also made significant progress on the building and is on schedule.

Minutes

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve the minutes of December 19, 2017 as presented, Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve the minutes of January 2, 2018 as presented, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve the minutes of January 9, 2018 (Mid Year Retreat) as presented, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Donati motioned to approve the minutes of January 16, 2018 (Superintendent's State of the Schools Address), Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor. Ms. Briggs abstained as she was not in attendance at the January 16 meeting.

Donations

Dr. Pearrow motioned to approve with grateful appreciation a donation of an iPad Air 2 for a Special Education student at the Avery School from The John Thomas & Special Friends fund, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to approve with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$100 to the Avery School Lunch Program from Ms. Marina Speare, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to approve with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$1,000 from the Boecher family to the Dedham Middle Drama Program, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. White congratulated the Dedham High School Wrestling Team for taking first place in the Tri-Valley League.

Ms White complimented the Dedham High School physics students who built boats of cardboard and raced them at the Dedham Pool.

Dr. Pearrow stated she would not be able to attend the meeting in two weeks (February 13) when Ms. Dubé would be presenting the Counseling Services update. She inquired if there were any flexibility with the schedule as she would like to be present for that presentation.

Ms. Briggs wanted to thank everyone who participated in the first Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration for their fantastic work on planning a very successful evening.

Ms. White motioned to adjourn the meeting of January 30, 2018, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Regular meeting ended at 9:00p.m.