

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

April 24, 2018

(Approved May 15, 2018)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

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 7:00 p.m.

Supt. Welch opened the meeting.

Post Election School Committee Swearing In

Town Clerk Paul Munchbach swore in Kevin Coughlin, Lisa Laprade and Stephen Bilafer to the School Committee Board. Members have signed all appropriate paperwork with the Clerk's office and have received a copy of the opening meeting laws.

School Committee Reorganization

Ms White thanked Ms Briggs for her service as Chair over the past year. Ms Briggs thanked the Committee for all of their support and dedication to the Committee. Supt. Welch thanked Ms. Briggs for her dedication to the students of the Dedham Public Schools.

Ms. White motioned with honor to nominate Steve Bilafer as the School Committee Chair, Mr. Donati second, no discussion or opposition, the Committee voted in favor 6-0.

Dr. Pearrow motioned with honor to nominate Kevin Coughlin as the School Committee Vice-Chair, Ms. White second, no discussion or opposition, the Committee voted in favor 6-0.

Student Update

Senior Evan Landry and Junior Abigail Jiminian updated the Committee on happenings and events occurring throughout the Dedham Public Schools.

Superintendent's Update

James Forrest has been named the permanent principal of Dedham High School and Kimberly Taylor has been named the new principal at Dedham's Early Childhood Education Center. Ms. Taylor will be starting her new position on July 1, 2018. She will attend next week's May 1 School Committee meeting for a more formal introduction to the Committee.

In early April, Supt. Welch was notified by Assistant Town Manager Nancy Baker that the Town had been a bit behind in its completion of Annual Town Reports. All town department heads were asked to complete the past three years of reports by Friday, April 6. On April 3, Supt. Welch met with Nancy Baker, Chair Mayanne Briggs and Sam Rippin to discuss the requirements. Supt. Welch then reached out to former Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Cynthia Kelley for help. Dr. Kelly reviewed the 30-Day Superintendent Updates and regular School Committee reports, and compiled the reports for all four years. Copies of the reports were shared with the Committee.

On April 23, Supt. Welch held a second meeting regarding the philosophy and participation in the Middle School athletics program. Participating were Principals Karen Hillman and Jim Forrest, Athletic Director Steve Traister and Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Deb Anderson. Committee Members Steve Bilafer and Chair Mayanne Briggs also attended. Supt. Welch anticipates the distribution of a survey to solicit interest from students and parents during the week of May 7.

On April 12, Supt. Welch held the monthly Dedham Youth Services Network meeting. In attendance were representatives from the Dedham Public Library, Parks and Recreation, St. Mary's Life Teen, Dedham Community House, the YMCA, Department of Children & Families, DPS Counseling Services, and the Dedham Youth Commission. The group continues to explore ways to share and coordinate resources for the children of Dedham.

On Tuesday, April 17 the concrete floor pad in the kindergarten wing of the new ECEC was completed. Next week should see the pouring of the pre-school wing floor, followed by the floor in the cafeteria/lobby/playroom. This is a significant accomplishment and the project continues to be on time and on budget despite the significant challenges posed by the recent inclement weather.

Ms. Laprade inquired into the Panorama survey that went out before vacation. Dr. Kelly stated that he has received over 200 responses and has asked principals to continue urging families to complete the survey.

Mr. Donati inquired if the survey is available in other languages. Dr. Kelly believes there is a translation button on the survey page, but will double check.

Mr. Bilafer thanked Dr. Cindy Kelly for her work on the Town Reports and asked that they be posted to the website. He also encouraged parents to take the Panorama survey.

Reports

Technology Report by Technology Director Dr. Don Langenhorst

The presentation will be available on the district website.

Dr. Langenhorst introduced the Technology Team. In attendance this evening were Technology Integrator Judy Foley, Database Specialist Mike Dewar, and Network Systems Administrator Mike Yang.

The report included the three year technology plan (FY17-FY19), technology updates and improvements in the Dedham Public Schools, improvements to the website, student data privacy, unified protection management (firewall protection), implementation of the PowerSchool Special Education system, interactive professional development, blended and digital learning, internet access in Dedham homes, 1:1 device initiative, the new high speed fiber network, and key technology trends and challenges in K - 12 education.

Dr. Langenhorst made special mention of his team who stayed late on the half-day before December break to get a group of students access to the internet so they would be able to utilize their Chromebooks over vacation.

Questions and comments from the Committee followed.

Ms. Laprade inquired as to whether all the desk tops were going away. Dr. Langenhorst explained the majority have been removed. Ms. Laprade asked if all staff were going to be issued Chromebooks. Dr. Langenhorst stated that all teachers and paraprofessionals at the secondary level have them. They are also available to paraprofessionals at the elementary schools and the ECEC.

Mr. Donati complimented Dr. Langenhorst on his work and noted we should be promoting these accomplishments throughout the community.

Dr. Pearrow inquired into robotics and virtual reality classes. Dr. Langenhorst stated that there are a couple of robotics classes at the High School as well as 3D Printing and Coding classes at both the High School and Middle School levels. He is also hoping to add emerging technology classes and is currently looking into augmented reality.

Ms. Briggs expressed the importance of artificial intelligence and virtual technologies in regard to Special Education. Dr. Langenhorst explained how he works closely with the Special Education Department as well as the March of Dimes. Ms. Briggs asked if there were anything the Technology Department needed from the Board. Dr. Langenhorst explained that the department was well coordinated, but just needed time to let some of this technology be absorbed.

Ms. White asked if there was an opportunity to conduct parent classes so parents can keep up with the technology their students are using. Dr. Langenhorst stated it is something he has begun to consider.

Mr. Coughlin made note of the Fiber Ring, thanking The Finance Committee and the Town of Dedham for their support in this venture. Dr. Langenhorst agreed that the Town Boards are very supportive to the students in Dedham.

Mr. Bilafer also thanked the community and town committees for helping to provide the resources for technology improvements. He also thanked Dr. Langenhorst for utilizing funds to the best of his ability.

Supt. Welch feels that Dedham is one of the top districts in the area of Technology. Supt. Welch thanked the entire Technology Department for its efforts in supporting student learning. He noted the new ECEC will be on the cutting edge of technology. He would like to see more students enrolling in top tier computer classes. He also mentioned that next year all students will be required to take the MCAS on computers and, thanks to Dedham's advancement in Technology, the district is well prepared in this area.

FY18 Quarterly Budget Update by Asst. Supt. for Finance Sam Rippin

Mr. Rippin presented the budget report as of March 31, 2018. Mr. Rippin reviewed pay cycles, salaries, non-personnel spending, and facilities projects and their impact on the budget. He discussed out of district tuition and the transfer of circuit breaker funds causing an increase to the system wide remaining balance. He also explained how the Governor has approved a supplemental appropriation to Districts for students who have been displaced from Puerto Rico. The reimbursement to Dedham was \$17,632. Mr. Rippin reviewed the calculation of the formula used to determine this amount. Dedham is expecting to receive a second reimbursement payment which may be higher. However, the additional funds being spent on ELL teachers as well as a liaison for the Oakdale community will exceed the reimbursement. Mr. Rippin concluded his presentation by stating he expects to finish the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

Dr. Pearrow inquired into when the second appropriation installment could be expected. Mr. Rippin stated the end of the fiscal year.

Supt. Welch explained that the reimbursement will not cover the expenses of the required ELL instruction time. These funds will have to come out of the operating budget.

Ms. White asked if plans had been made for ELL expenses next year. Mr. Rippin stated there may be an additional appropriation from the State in FY19. He also explained how Chapter 70 aid is calculated as of October 1 and not received until the following year.

Supt. Welch stated additional ELL teaching time as well as an ELL audit has been added to the FY19 budget.

Mr. Bilafer thanked Mr. Rippin for his stewardship of school finance.

Old/New Business

Update on Finance Committee Meeting from April 23, 2018

Mr. Bilafer stated the Finance Committee had met the previous evening where there was a discussion around the repurposing of the rail trail. In particular, there is a proposed warrant article, Article 19, being written and put forth at the Spring Town Meeting which includes a traffic study of the congested school campus. Selectman Mike Butler and Selectman Brenan Keogh were in attendance this evening to discuss the proposed Article.

Mr. Butler explained there are three parts to the motion. Part 1 discusses the hiring of a collaborator, Part 2 is a circulation/traffic study, and Part 3 is a requirement of the Board of Selectman. The Board of Selectman limited its voting to Parts 1 and 3, deferring to the School Committee to vote on the language of the traffic study.

Ms. White stated that she attended last night's meeting. Her main concern is the safety of the students, staff and visitors to the schools. She stated should would only support traffic study if it included the area beginning at Memorial Field on Eastern Avenue, down Whiting Avenue to River Street, to Milton Street, to High Street, to the center of Town. Ms. White is also concerned about the traffic in Dedham Square. She also would like the School Committee to oversee the study.

Mr. Butler noted some of this area is currently covered in the draft of part 2. He agrees there is some work that needs to be done on the scope of the streets with the School Committee's input. He also stated Article 19 was proposed by Town Meeting members and not by the Board of Selectman. He understands the School Committee's point of wanting to oversee the study.

Mr. Bilafer stated that the School Committee would share any data gathered in the study with other Boards. The information needs to be useful for the School Committee as well as other reasons besides the Rail Trail.

Mr. Donati stated the traffic study is an opportunity to be able to comprehensively answer all questions that the School Committee may have.

Ms. Briggs also feels the timeline is important. She feels the traffic study needs to be done over a full year to include all weather conditions as well as the different events that occur during the year. Although it is not in writing, she hopes it is implied that the School Committee would like to be part of the mediation process.

Mr. Keogh agrees that safety is a concern and including surrounding streets to the traffic study is a good point. He will bring that suggestion back to the Board of Selectman.

Mr. Coughlin stated the School Committee has consistently been asking for a traffic study. He referred to a Vimeo video of a Board meeting on June 15, 2016, where he specifically asked for this study and was told by then Town Planner Rich McCarthy that it would be accomplished. He also said he is frustrated with the project and asked the selectman what they wanted from the School Committee. Did the BOS want the School Committee to write Step 2? He also asked why this needed to be accomplished so quickly.

Mr. Butler stated he is responding to Article 19 that was presented to the Finance Committee. He believes there has been enough discussion on both sides to bring this proposal to a vote. He would like to work with the School Committee to map out the streets of the traffic study.

The Committee discussed how far out the traffic study should go.

Mr. Butler noted that the area covers about a one mile radius now with increased frequency.

Ms. Briggs reviewed the detailed work of mitigation that is occurring at the new ECEC. She noted how expensive it has been for the Town and how it possibly could have been handled differently. She feels it is owed to the DPS campus neighborhood to look at as many aspects as possible in this study.

Ms. Laprade inquired if there was still \$50,000 available for the Traffic Study. Mr. Butler said he would have to get back to the Committee on that question.

Supt. Welch also discussed the traffic mitigation at the new ECEC and the mobilization of the neighborhood for traffic safety. He noted there are almost 1,000 children coming and going around the

DPS campus. There have been two children struck by cars in the past two years. He cannot recommend moving forward favorably until a comprehensive traffic study is done.

Mr. Bilafer noted the School Committee would be meeting Thursday to discuss what should be replaced in the current draft of Section 2.

Mr. Bilafer opened the floor to public comment.

Public Comment

John Heffernan, Finance Committee Member from District 6, wanted to discuss process. He explained to the Committee that the Finance Committee will be voting on proposed Article 19 Thursday evening. However, the School Committee has time as they can file a substitute motion at Town Meeting. He does not want to see the language rushed just to make Thursday evenings vote. He feels the clearer the language in the Article, the better.

Susan Butler, Precinct 6 Town Meeting Member and abutter to the proposed Rail Trail, urged the Committee to review the goal of the traffic study. She also inquired as to what type of metrics are being used to weigh the pros and cons of the possible reuse of the rail bed.

Shari King, Riverdale Precinct 1 resident and parent, complimented the Committee on the Technology Report she heard this evening. She is a Rail Trail supporter, but understands there are still many concerns to be addressed. She supports a traffic study around the campus. She would like to see the community move forward while keeping safety in mind.

Jean Daley, Precinct 3 Town Meeting Member and abutter to proposed Rail Trail, asked the Committee if after the circulation study is complete, the Board would consider giving up a parcel of land back to the Town,

Mr. Bilafer stated that the School Committee does have care and custody of the parcel of land in question and the Committee has significant stake in the Rail Trail issue. He cannot comment on any decision until after all the data has been compiled and reviewed and a proposal has been presented.

Lindsay Barich, Precinct 6, inquired into the traffic studies done when the Avery School and the Middle School were built. He also asked if the traffic study would address existing traffic or increased traffic in the area.

Mr. Bilafer stated the traffic study would be to deal with current congestion in the area, but can be used by other boards as they see fit.

Ms White is only in support of "Part 2" in order to get the traffic study completed that has been requested for years.

Ms. Laprade noted that it would difficult to determine the impact of traffic associated with the Rail Trail until it was actually built and her concern right now is the current traffic around the campus.

Ms. Briggs addressed the fact that the traffic study is finally being done because of the Rail Trail. She also stated that traffic studies are always done when schools are built but not to the extent they are asking in this study.

The Committee discussed how traffic studies are done when schools are built versus how this study needs to be more comprehensive.

Mr. Coughlin stated he feels the traffic study needs to be done for the neighbors regardless of the Rail Trail issue.

Ms. Laprade asked if the study would take into account foot traffic.

Mr. Bilafer said that there are some studies that do take into account foot traffic.

Ms. Laprade asked what the cost was of the traffic study for the new ECEC.

Mr. Rippin explained the traffic study was part of the feasibility study which cost a total of \$70,000.

Discussion & Approval of Town/School Cost Sharing Agreement

Mr. Rippin shared with the Committee an agreement drawn up between the Town of Dedham and the Dedham Public schools as the result of the Department of Education's end-of-year audit requirement. Only one finding was determined and that was the lack of an agreement between the Town and Schools on the methodology to be used when allocating, distributing or assigning municipal expenditures to the District.

The Committee asked for additional time to review the document before voting to accept the agreement. There was no opposition to postponing the vote until May 1.

Dedham Human Rights Commission Nomination- Discussion & Vote

The Committee needs to designate a representative to the newly formed Dedham Human Rights Commission.

The Committee asked for additional time to determine a nomination. There was no opposition to postponing the nomination until May 1.

Ms. Laprade asked if the representative had to be a School Committee member or could it be a designee. Mr. Bilafer believed it is a representative chosen by the School Committee and not specifically a board member.

The Committee discussed the timing on when the nomination needed to be made. Mr. Bilafer felt the Board still had time to make an appropriate nomination.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Policy

Ms. Laprade stated that the Sub-committee met this evening and voted 3-0 to recommend the new Policy Manual to the Board. Ms. Laprade asked if the Vote to accept the Policy Manual in its entirety could be postponed until May 15, so all members could have time to review it. No one opposed Ms. Laprade's suggestion; the vote will be postponed until May 15.

Budget

Town Meeting will be on Monday, May 21.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

The Task Force met on April 11. It had been two months since the last meeting. A main topic of conversation was a parent survey that was recently distributed. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 9.

Negotiations

Negotiations have begun and are progressing with Unit A, Custodians and Secretaries. Supt. Welch and the Negotiation Committee will keep the full Committee updated as negotiations proceed.

SBRC

The next meeting will be Monday, May 7 at Town Hall.

Minutes

Mr. Donati motioned to approve the minutes of March 20, 2018 as presented, Ms. Briggs second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of April 3, 2018 as presented, Mr. Coughlin second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor. Mr. Bilafer abstained as he was not in attendance at the meeting on April 3.

Donations

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$500 from the Endicott Community Greenhouse to the Early Childhood Education Center to support the purchase of identifiable t-shirts for students to wear on field trips, Ms. Briggs second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Dr. Pearrow congratulated Mr. Rippin on a clean audit.

Ms. Laprade noted the Greenlodge PTO is holding a fundraiser this Friday evening, April 27 with Jim Plunkett at the Victory Grill.

Mr. Donati mentioned that the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center will be holding its annual celebration on June 16.

Mr. Coughlin congratulated his brother who was recently named one of the most 100 influential people in Boston.

Ms. White noted that this Sunday, April 28, several events will be taking place around Dedham including Take-A-Walk, James Joyce Ramble and the Little League Parade.

Mr. Bilafer noted the need for Executive Session under Exemption 3, Contract Negotiations.

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

Lisa Laprade - Yes

Joshua Donati – Yes

Melissa Pearrow – Yes

Mayanne Briggs – Yes

Tracey White – Yes

Kevin Coughlin, Vice-Chair – Yes

Steve Bilafer, Chair - Yes

Regular Session ended at 9:45 p.m.