

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

June 19, 2019

(Approved 9/4/2019)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Kevin Coughlin, Chair
Mayanne Briggs
Joshua Donati
Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Steve Bilafer
Lisa Laprade, Vice-Chair

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

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

Meeting Location: Avery School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Coughlin stated to the audience that the Committee is working diligently toward a contractual agreement with the Teachers' union.

Retirement Recognitions

The Committee recognized the following employees, who retired during the 2018-2019 school year, for their many years of dedication and service to the Dedham Public Schools.

Sharon Bernstein, Middle School Speech & Language Pathologist
Carol Donovan, Avery Paraprofessional
Edward Kavanaugh, High School Custodian (In attendance)
Marie Foley, High School Paraprofessional
Jane Meltzer, Middle School Paraprofessional
Kathleen McClain, Middle School Paraprofessional
Barbara Kelly, Riverdale Grade 2 Teacher (In attendance)
Nancy Kundy, High School Paraprofessional (In attendance)
Gail Radzikowski, Accounts Payable Clerk

Paul “Stone” Radzikowski, Oakdale and Avery Custodian
Elizabeth Tavalone, Oakdale Grade 5 Teacher (In attendance)
Arlene Tracey, Middle School Art Teacher (In attendance)
Theresa Zeogas, ECEC Child Care Aide

Student Update

Dedham High School Student Representative, now DHS graduate Abigail Jiminian, updated the Committee on events and happenings occurring throughout the Dedham Public Schools. The Committee thanked Abby for her service for the past two years and wished her all the best at Northeastern University.

Public Comment

Joanna Ciarvardini, 119 Booth Road, had several questions for the Committee. First she wanted to know what was being done to transition students entering the Middle School from other districts. Second she asked how disciplinary actions can be “beefed up” at the Middle School. She noted her son had been assaulted twice and did not feel the consequences for habitual offenders are working. Third, she asked about cameras in the classroom. She understood the Union had voted this down, but wanted to know if it would ever be reconsidered. Mr. Coughlin stated that cameras in the classroom would have to be negotiated and it is not a topic of the current negotiations. As for Mrs. Ciarvardini’s other comments, the Committee took them under consideration.

Reports

New Structure for the Coalition for Drug & Alcohol Awareness

Kristina King, the new Communities Program Director for the Town of Dedham and Michael Butler presented. The presentation will be available on the district website.

Ms. King and Mr. Butler presented this evening to receive an endorsement from the School Committee on the restructure of the Coalition for Drug & Alcohol Awareness.

The report included the history of the coalition, drug free communities grant, proposed organizational chart, examples of action teams, goals, metric of success, data trends and next steps.

The Committee thanked Ms. King and Mr. Butler for their presentation. They were thankful the Town received the grant that allowed the hiring of Ms. King. They understood these are difficult topics to discuss, but feel it is important to educate students.

Supt. Welch thanked Public Health Nurse Jessica Tracey for applying for and receiving the grant. He stated the schools want to partner with the coalition. He also recognized Director of Health Services Gail Kelly (in attendance), Director of Health, Wellness, and Physical Education Mark Carney and Director of Counseling Services Ashley Dubé for their work on curriculum.

Mr. Rippin inquired into the structure of the leadership team and how it would be organized. Ms. King stated it would be a large committee and Mr. Butler added that they would be learning as they go.

Ms. King asked the Committee to review the bylaws and provide feedback by mid July.

Mr. Coughlin asked for a volunteer to be on the Board. Dr. Pearrow volunteered.

Ms. Briggs motioned to endorse the formation of the Committee for the Coalition for Drug & Alcohol Awareness, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor,

Quarterly Budget Report

The following report was presented to the Committee by Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance Sam Rippin:

Fourth Quarter Overview

In summary, we have expended and encumbered \$30,525,345 of the \$39,001,100 Education Operating Budget or 78.27% of the total budget.

For School Facilities, we have expended and encumbered \$3,503,285 of the \$3,974,689* that Operating Budget or 88.14% of the total budget.

*Note that for School Facilities \$74,559 of FY2018 encumbrances carried forward to FY 2019 were not segregated as in the Education Budget and rather were commingled with line items for FY 2019. This issue will be rectified for FY 2020 reporting purposes. Additionally \$100,000 was transferred from the reserve fund for repairs to the Buss Duct at Dedham High School.

Budget Highlights

As of this writing, I am pleased to report that the Dedham Public Schools is on track to finish FY 2019 in a balanced and fully expended position. As you can see from the accompanying spreadsheet, all of our seven schools are on track to spend to their allocated FY 2019 budgets at June 30 based on where spending is as of this writing.

An important note, due to the stalled status of Unit A, Unit B and Educational Interventionist CBA negotiations, we will need to revert an amount that we had budgeted for these contract settlements. Currently we have resources for which believe will be sufficient to cover an eventual settlement in Fiscal Year 2020. Any additional budget available will be expended for prepayment of Special Education Out-of-District tuition. This is due to having an anticipated structural deficit in Fiscal Year 2020 with regard to this budget category. We look to mitigate the exposure by prepayment, plowing FY 2020 budget savings where found into this line item and maximizing Circuit Breaker reimbursement to the extent possible.

Overall in School Facilities, expenses are tracking to budget. One area that is tracking to having a surplus in this area is Electricity. As I write this memo; even with a new encumbrance added of approximately \$100K, there should be a surplus of at least \$250K. Heating, on the other hand as expected is tracking towards a deficit of \$100K based on the \$278K budget reduction in this area for FY 2019.

Areas of Concern/Exposure

What is of concern for this fiscal year is the area of Special Education Out-of-District tuition. As you may recall, we reduced the operating budget by \$500K in this area two years ago for FY 2018. That reduction eliminated much of our contingency for unanticipated cost increases. We are projecting a deficit in this area that is approaching \$200K. We will be utilizing both carryover of FY2018 as well as FY 2019 Circuit Breaker funding to cover it. I will let you know the amount of prepaid tuition for FY 2020 in the FY 2019 final report in August. Please note that no additional funds were added in this area for FY 2020 making this an area that will be a budget driver for the FY 2021 operating budget cycle. Additionally ECEC Kindergarten enrollment is estimated to be as high as 240 students for September 2019. We will know better when we report final FY 2019 financials in August.

The committee thanked Mr. Rippin for his presentation.

Supt. Welch talked about the enrollment numbers of the ECEC. As of today, current enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year is 237. This is up 34 students from the current year and 63 students from the previous year. After taking account summer registrations, it is possible the number could approach 250. With 10 Kindergarten classes and taking into account special needs inclusion, it is possible class sizes could be as high as 25. With the appeal of the new state of the art facility and increase in birth rates it is possible enrollment numbers could be even higher next year.

Mr. Donati stated that he was very uncomfortable with 25 students per kindergarten class. He encouraged looking at 11 classrooms or adjusting preschool numbers.

Supt. Welch explained that Preschool Orientation has already occurred for the 2019-2020 school year, so those numbers cannot be changed. He has been in constant communication with Principal Taylor working on contingency plans. He just wanted the committee to be aware of the current situation.

Ms. White noted the current Grade 6 class has 267 students in it and inquired what was done when those students were in Kindergarten. She also inquired about looking at private kindergartens to see if their enrollment numbers are down there. If not, this may be an ongoing situation.

Mr. Coughlin apologized to Mr. Rippin for not acknowledging a question he had at the last meeting.

Superintendent's Update

Yesterday, Supt. Welch announced the appointment of Eytan Wurman as the next Director of Fine and Performing Arts. Mr. Wurman is currently overseas in Romania conducting a youth orchestra and will not be back in the country until early July. He will be introduced at a future school committee meeting.

Today Supt. Welch concluded the final site visit of the three potential finalists for Principal at Oakdale Elementary School. The finalists are all very qualified candidates and he will be conducting background checks in the next few days. He expects to have this position filled before the end of next week.

As the end of the year approaches, principals and directors have been busy finalizing appointments for remaining open positions. Each school has been active with various awards ceremonies and move-along and step up days. Tomorrow is the annual promotion ceremony for Grade 8 students at the Middle School.

There will be a considerable punch list and final work performed at the new ECEC in the next two weeks. Some finishing work needed to wait until students were out of the building. A meeting on Friday will outline exactly what is going to be done during the next few weeks before the start of extended school year programming at the school beginning on July 8.

Dr. Kelly recently received a letter from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees inviting the Dedham Public Schools to return to its annual conference as a follow up to the district's presentation last year about our 2017 District Restructuring. The dates are Wednesday, November 6 through Saturday, November 9.

Dr. Kelly and his office have also put together an entry for the national publication Supervision and Curriculum describing the work being done in Dedham.

Supt. Welch and the School Committee enjoyed their participation in the Flag Day Parade on Friday, June 14.

ECEC Principal Kim Taylor and her staff have been very busy over the past few weeks conducting Kindergarten Orientations and preschool screenings for students enrolling next September.

On June 7 Supt. Welch attended a conference about public speaking policies sponsored by the ACLU and the Massachusetts Superintendents Association. Supt. Welch believes the Policy Subcommittee should consider the experiences of these other districts. He provided the Committee with a copy of the "Free Speech at School Committee Meetings" presentation slides and a copy of the "Free Speech Ruling vs. Natick School Committee" from MA Superior Court.

On May 31 Supt. Welch met with Don Seager. The Committee recently voted to name the high school practice field in Mr. Seager's honor. He was extremely humble and grateful for this acknowledgement. The Committee will plan an appropriate marker to denote this designation and an accompanying ceremony in the fall.

On May 29 Supt. Welch was invited by Police Chief Mike D'Entremont to attend emergency preparedness training at Legacy Place sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. Supt. Welch learned a lot about how to respond to mass casualty events and will be using some of the lessons about communication and reunification of families as he plans the district's next stages of emergency response trainings in the fall.

The last day of school for students is tomorrow. The District Leadership Team will be meeting for its annual end of year retreat on Monday, June 24 to discuss the year's

achievements and needs, to plan for next year's work, and to prepare for the endorsement of the district's next 5-year Strategic Plan.

On June 21, 2019 Supt. Welch will make a presentation to a group of over 50 district superintendents and leaders at Teachers21 entitled "Shifting Conditions for District Improvement". He was invited to discuss both the district restructuring and the repurposing of his former office space as a faculty child preschool while spending more time in district school buildings.

Supt. Welch provided a link to a video produced by DHS Teacher Sue Scully documenting some of work done by students showcased at the annual Scully Awards on May 15 (the same night as a School Committee meeting.)

Ms. White asked if it were possible to have school events on dates that do not conflict with School Committee meetings.

Old/New Business

Superintendent's Goals for 2019-2020

Supt. Welch presented his 2019-2020 goals at the May 15 School Committee meeting. He is asking for an endorsement from the Committee.

Dr. Pearrow was glad to see goal number 3 about reducing the amount of evenings (177 this year) that the Superintendent spends at meetings. She supports his efforts to reduce that number. She inquired if he could add staffing equity across all buildings somewhere in his goals.

Ms. White expressed the loftiness of the goals, but felt Supt. Welch has the right team in place to help him succeed as well the support of the Committee.

Mr. Coughlin stated that the Committee will endorse the Superintendent's goals at the next meeting with Dr. Pearrow's suggestion included.

Ms. Briggs felt that the equity could be included in goal number 1. She noted that the Town has approved the FY20 budget, so the goals should not depend on outside resources.

Traffic Circulation Study Update

Mr. Rippin stated that adjustments have been to the study based on the community meeting. Summer data collection will occur on July 10 and 11.

Mr. Coughlin advised that the study should include Barrows Street. Mr. Rippin stated that it would.

Mr. Donati asked if there had been any discussion about smaller focus groups. Mr. Coughlin discussed having a meeting with the Subcommittee and VHB to discuss future meetings.

Ms. Briggs agreed that they needed to get recommendations from VHB before moving forward. She also inquired about the study including winter data. Mr. Rippin stated the study would include winter conditions.

School Facilities Master Plan

There will be additional meetings in the fall to continue discussion of the School Facilities Master Plan.

School Committee Summer Retreat

The School Committee Retreat to set goals will be on August 13 and 14 at the MIT Endicott House from 5:30pm to 9:30pm.

Subcommittee Reports & Updates

Budget

Nothing further to report.

Equity and Inclusion Task Force

Nothing new to report.

Negotiations

The parties are trying to find a time to meet over the summer to continue the negotiations process.

Policy

Ms. White stated that the Policy Subcommittee worked with the Administration and the Dedham Police department to update the Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties. The Policy Subcommittee voted unanimously in support of the MOU.

Mr. Donati motioned to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between the Dedham Police Department and the Dedham Public Schools, Ms. Briggs second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

The MOU is available on the district website.

SBRC

Ms. Briggs stated that the next few weeks will consist of completing the punch list and landscaping at the ECEC. The SBRC is looking at August 15 as a sign off date.

Minutes

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes from May 15, 2019, Ms. Briggs second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the minutes from May 22, 2019, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Coughlin asked to hold off on voting the June 5, 2019 minutes as he had some edits he would like to make.

Donations

Ms. Briggs motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a \$250 donation from the Battlefield Trust to the Avery School to support the 5th grade field trip to Minuteman National Park, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a \$500 donation from the Endicott Community Greenhouse to the Avery School to support field trip transportation costs, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to accept with grateful appreciation two \$1,200 donations from the Flag Day Committee to the Dedham Middle School and Dedham High School bands to benefit their music programs, Ms. Briggs second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Supt. Welch noted that Athletic Director Steve Traister provided a Spring Athletics update to the Committee. Supt. Welch noted that the Girls track team went undefeated as the TriValley League champions and the Boys baseball team also won the TVL championship.

The presentation along with the list of TriValley League All Stars can be found on the district website.

Supt. Welch mentioned that in the School Committee folder was a list of all the New England Math League award winners. Dr. Pearrow noted that Dedham was ranked 19 among participating schools.

The Committee thanked the staff and leadership team for all of their hard work this year and wished everyone a happy safe summer.

Ms. White announced that the Boosters' Club would be holding a banquet on June 26 for the TriValley League Champion Dedham High School baseball team.

Ms. White motioned to adjourn the meeting of June 19, 2019, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor.

Meeting concluded at 8:53 p.m.