

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

December 4, 2019

(Approved 12/18/2019)

MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Kevin Coughlin, Chair
Lisa Laprade, Vice-Chair
Stephen Bilafer
Mayanne MacDonald Briggs (arrived @ 6:43 p.m.)
Joshua Donati
Dr. Melissa Pearrow
Tracey White (arrived @ 6:44 p.m.)

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael J. Welch, Superintendent
Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent (arrived 6:43 p.m.)
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

Meeting Location: Greenlodge Elementary School

Meeting Commenced: 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Coughlin announced the need to enter Executive Session under Exemption 2 to hear a Unit A Grievance.

Ms. Laprade motioned to enter Executive Session under Exemption 2 for a Unit A Grievance Hearing, Mr. Bilafer second; a roll call vote was taken:

Stephen Bilafer - Yes
Joshua Donati - Yes
Dr. Melissa Pearrow - Yes
Lisa Laprade, Vice-Chair - Yes
Kevin Coughlin, Chair – Yes
Motion passed 5-0

Mr. Coughlin announced the Committee would return to open session for the regular meeting. The Committee returned to open session at 7:15p.m.

Recognitions

The School Committee recognized Grade 5 Greenlodge Students Mollie Maguire and Brigid Downey who initiated a fundraiser to raise money for the “No Kid Hungry” program. The girls spoke on how they made and sold slime as well as organized a school-wide corn hole tournament. They raised \$2,150 toward their cause.

Student Update

High school student representative to the School Committee, Senior Macayla Madan, updated the Committee on events and happenings at each of the schools.

Donations

High School Principal James Forrest, Director of Health Services Gail Kelley, DHS Athletic Trainer Meghan McColgan, and Mr. Jack Nealon from Mass Heartbeat came before the Committee asking to accept a donation in the amount of \$6,000 from the 21Fund to provide ECG screenings to Dedham High School students. The screenings are intended to detect heart abnormalities in students who may not present any symptoms. The screenings will be performed by MASS Heartbeat and the funding will allow the first 250 students to sign up be screened for free. After that, there is a \$35 cost per screening. Parents must give consent by signing up for the screenings online.

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation the Donation in the amount of \$6,000 from the 21Fund to perform ECG Screenings through Mass Heartbeat to Dedham High School students, Mr. Bilafer second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Superintendent’s Update

Yesterday, December 3 was the first cancellation of school due to inclement weather this school year. The last day of school is now set for Monday, June 22.

As mentioned at the last School Committee meeting, the S.O.A. (“Student Opportunity Act”) school funding formula bill was signed into law by Governor Baker on Tuesday, November 26th. The bill provides a \$1.5 billion increase in Chapter 70 funding to cities in towns over the next seven years. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will be requiring proposals from every city and town to justify expenses for these new funds. These proposals will be due this spring for the FY21

budget process. DESE will be providing more information about what cities and towns need to provide to access these funds.

On November 24 over 100 Dedham Public Schools choral students in grades 5-12 performed two songs at the Providence Bruins game. Supt. Welch thanked music teachers Heather Kirby, Chris Molinaro, Jennifer O'Shea, Steve Bergman, and Sarah Santos who coordinated and attended the ceremony, along with Director of Fine and Performing Arts, Eytan Wurman.

All off-site evacuation drills at the elementary schools have been completed. The Oakdale drill was completed on November 25 where the entire student body evacuated to their off-site location at the Endicott Estate, then boarded buses to return to school. The Avery School completed its off-site drill on November 21. The entire school evacuated to the St. Mary's Church parking lot and also returned to school via buses. At this time we have determined that the ECEC will not complete a full bus evacuation. The Safety Super Team will be meeting this Friday to determine next steps in safety planning and emergency readiness.

The Facilities Master Plan Community Meeting will be held on December 9 at the ECEC beginning at 7:00 p.m. A press release prepared by communications director Sara Errickson that will be included in this Friday's Dedham Times as well as the Dedham Transcript. Emails have been sent out to all elementary schools and the ECEC alerting everyone to this community meeting.

Report cards will be distributed at the Middle School next week and elementary report cards and parent conferences will be happening on December 12, the early-release Professional Development day.

Reports

ELL Audit Review

ELL Department Chair Jennifer Robins presented the recent ELL Audit findings performed by Humanity Advanced, LLC to the Committee. The presentation will be on the District website. The report included the roles of the ELL department head, background of Dr. Bertha-Elena Rojas who completed the program audit, audit findings strengths and needs (culture, structure, practice) of students, and a five-year plan.

The Committee expressed concerns about the pace of the audit recommendations and some of the notes made by Dr. Rojas. They would like to see more action taken immediately, possibly targeting the elementary levels first. Dr. Kelly explained that there are some items, such as scheduling, that can be done fairly quickly and expressed the need to implement cultural diversity training as soon as possible. Other training on best practices may take more time to incorporate. They also discussed compliance. Dr. Kelly explained that the District could be in compliance with the law, but not necessarily utilizing best practices. That is why a private audit was conducted. Ms. Robins would like to see new students tested over summer instead of the fall to improve the rate of getting students services. It is also an important time to form relationships with families. The Committee concluded the discussion by noting that Blue Hills Adult Education Center at the Capen Building has been a positive addition to the community.

FY21 Capital Budget Presentation

Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance Samuel Rippin and Technology Director Don Langenhorst presented the FY21 Facilities and Technology budget requests to the Committee. The presentation will be available on the District website.

The Technology report included past accomplishments (new Chromebooks, whiteboards, interactive projectors, fiber ring, network refresh), FY21 technology capital requests, and a FY22-FY25 year technology plan.

The Facilities report included a review of FY15-FY20 completed projects, FY21 school facilities capital request, FY21-FY25 facilities five year capital plan, and upcoming projects that will impact capital planning.

The Committee discussed the entrance to the Middle School vestibule and why it was not a capital request. Mr. Rippin is hoping to fund that project through the Safe Schools act. The Committee also discussed the renovations to the Dedham High School Library as a top priority and has been put off for too long.

The Committee will vote on the Capital Budget at the next meeting on December 18.

Old/New Business

Discussion of 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

Supt. Welch provided the Committee with a draft of the 2020-2021 school calendar. He reviewed the starting date of August 31 (as pursuant to the Unit A contract), professional development days, and the last date of school. He asked the Committee to review the calendar and provide feedback. He would like the Committee to vote on the calendar before February break.

Mr. Donati stated that he supported half day professional development days on Fridays before long weekends. However, he asked what the impact was on attendance and the new accountability measures. Supt. Welch said he would look into these numbers.

Supt. Welch also noted that many districts have a professional development day the Monday after Thanksgiving break.

Discussion and Vote to Donate Surplus Textbooks

Mr. Rippin provided the Committee with a list of surplus outdated curriculum books that he would like to donate to the BKP. BKP is a nonprofit organization that supports and builds libraries in the Philippines.

Ms. Briggs motioned to donate the cases of surplus curriculum books to BKP to be donated to the Philippines, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Budget

Nothing further to report.

Dedham Organization for Substance Awareness

The next meeting will be on December 10 at Town Hall.

Equity & Inclusion Task Force

The subcommittee is working with the Human Rights Commission organizing the MLK Celebration to take place on January 20.

Master Plan

There is a Community meeting at the ECEC on December 9 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will include round table discussions and tours of the building.

Negotiations

The first negotiation session with Paraprofessionals will be on Monday, December 9 with a tentative second meeting scheduled on December 16.

Policy

None

SBRC

None

Traffic Circulation Study

The draft of the report from VHB has been received and there is a review meeting with the firm scheduled for Wednesday, December 11.

Minutes

Ms. Bilafer motioned to approve the minutes of November 20, 2019, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Dr. Pearrow announced the High School concert has been rescheduled to Thursday, December 5 at 7:00 p.m. She also thanked the custodians and Public Works department for clearing the snow so schools could reopen today.

Mr. Donati complimented students who participated in the “Snow Day Challenge” and worked on reinforcing their educational skills at home on the December 3 snow day.

Ms. Briggs motioned to close the meeting of December 4, 2019, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Meeting concluded at 9:25 p.m.