

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

December 18, 2019

(Approved 1/15/2020)

MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Mayanne MacDonald Briggs

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

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

Meeting Location: Dedham High School

Meeting Commenced: 7:00 p.m.

Under the Direction of Avery Music Teacher Sara Santos, the Avery Bell Choir performed for the Committee. Also, under the direction of Fine Arts Director Eytan Wurman, four Dedham High School choir students sang for the Committee.

Donations

Department Chair Amy Richard Hill asked the Committee to approve a donation from Dedham resident Marc Hebert. Mr. Hebert donated a complete 55 gallon aquarium to the Science Department. Ms. Hill explained how the aquarium will help support the science curriculum.

Ms. White motioned to approve with grateful appreciation the donation of the aquarium, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Other Donations

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve with grateful appreciation a donation in the amount of \$100 from Lueders Environmental Inc. to the Dedham Public Schools, Mr. Donati second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to approve with grateful appreciation a donation of \$600 to each of the seven Dedham Public Schools libraries from the Dedham Library Innovation Team to support everyday needs of the libraries, Dr. Pearrow second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to approve with grateful appreciation two donations from the Dedham High School Alumni; one in the amount of \$2,169.91 to the Fine and Performing Arts Department to purchase new drum-line equipment and the second in the amount of \$476.43 for the Industrial Technology Department to purchase Robotics Kits for the Robotics Class, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Student Update

None

Superintendent's Update

Supt. Welch thanked Dedham Public Works Director Joe Flanagan and his department along with DPS custodians and facilities maintenance crews for their work on removing snow, sleet and ice from around the school buildings.

This Friday, December 20 is a half-day, early release for all Dedham Public Schools. As of now the last day of school remains set for Monday, June 22.

On Friday, December 6 Supt. Welch distributed his most recent Superintendent's 30-Day Update which can be found on the district website.

A Facilities Master Plan Community Meeting was held on December 9 at the ECEC. There were about 50 people in attendance and progress was made toward the goal of receiving community feedback. A copy of the presentation is currently on the front page of the district website. The next presentation from SMMA will be on Monday, January 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the ECEC. Things are on track to submit a statement of interest to the MSBA this spring.

Dedham High School's most recent Marauder Message was distributed this week. It contains quite a few articles of interest to the Committee, including outreach to students to participate in regular communication with the Committee as student members. There is also information about the upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration and many other activities at DHS.

This year's TEC (The Education Cooperative) Legislative Breakfast will be hosted by the Dedham Public Schools this year. The annual gathering brings together TEC District Superintendents and their state

legislators to discuss items of mutual interest at the State House level. This year's breakfast will be held on Friday, February 7, 2020 at the new ECEC.

Contract negotiations with Unit B (Administrators) continue to make steady progress with hopes of having a settlement shortly. Four bargaining sessions have been held since the Unit A contract was settled in late October and Supt. Welch looks to have positive news for the Committee early in the New Year.

FY21 Operating Budget Requests from principals and directors were due on Friday, December 13. During the upcoming break, the School department will be working to develop the structure of the FY21 Operating Budget and expect to have some preliminary work distributed to the Budget Subcommittee just after the New Year.

Reports

Fine Arts Update

Fine Arts Director Eytan Wurman presented to the Committee. The presentation will be on the district website. Mr. Wurman introduced two new additions to the Fine Arts Department, Greenlodge Music Teacher Jennifer O'Shea and Middle School Music Teacher Kevin Martins (both of whom were in attendance.) The presentation included the department's new mission statement, Dedham Fine Arts Boosters' vision and mission statements, instrumental music enrollment for 4th and 5th grades, 2019-2020 events, and a vision of the future including suggested new and expanded programs.

The Committee thanked Mr. Wurman for his presentation. They discussed Dedham's partnership with the Dedham School of Music and how the two are still collaborating on community events. The Committee was pleased with the Fine Arts mission statement, the inclusiveness of a PK-12 community, high school students mentoring middle school students, incorporating technology into the arts, and a thoughtful vision of the future. The Committee did ask Mr. Wurman to consider the possibility of music lessons being offered in the afterschool programs and expanding the placement of student artwork in the buildings.

High School Extra Curricular Activity

High School Principal James Forrest and Career Counselor Ashley Mansfield presented an update to the Committee. The Presentation will be on the district website. The presentation included academic enrichment clubs, fine arts clubs, student interest groups, student leadership, participation numbers, partnership with the mentoring group Above the Clouds (which lends support to struggling students), and partnership with Schools to Careers (which provides opportunities to students in grades 9-12 to learn about career opportunities.)

Principal Forrest also mentioned the formation of a Ski Club. He will be back in front of the Committee to request an out of state ski trip to Gunstock Ski Resort in New Hampshire.

The Committee thanked Mr. Forrest and Ms. Mansfield for their report. They were happy to hear about the different activities and programs to engage students. The Committee discussed how the clubs are

funded through stipends in the budget, introduction of trades through bridge programs with unions and local contractors, career fairs, and career planning courses (resume building, interview skills, and job applications). Mr. Forrest noted he would like to see a financial literacy class offered at DHS.

Old/New Business

Vote on Capital Budget

The Budget Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the FY21 Facilities Capital Budget request of \$1,200,000 and the Technology Capital Budget request of \$326,730. They are recommending that the Committee support these budget requests. No further discussion occurred.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to approve the FY21 Facilities Capital Budget as approved by the Budget Subcommittee in the amount of \$1,200,000, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to approve the FY21 Technology Capital Budget as approved by the Budget Subcommittee in the amount of \$326,730, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Discussion of 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

Supt. Welch provided the Committee with data on student and teacher absenteeism on half-day Friday professional development days before a Monday holiday. Student absenteeism doubled in some cases in comparison to a normal full Friday school day. Teacher attendance was better than average on these days.

Supt. Welch would recommend not having professional development half-days on Fridays before long weekends since the research supports an attendance drop.

Mr. Donati noted that chronic absenteeism is also a large factor in the State's accountability scores.

Dr. Pearrow would like consideration of December 23 as a full day off from school to help families who need to travel over the holiday.

Ms. White expressed support of the December 23 recommendation citing safety and traffic concerns on that day.

Mr. Bilafer asked if there were ways to provide incentives to students to attend school on half-day professional development days.

Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Budget

Nothing further to report.

Dedham Organization for Substance Awareness

DOSA had a meeting last week where Director of Health Services Gail Kelley provided a presentation on the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey results. She was featured in the DOSA news letter for her presentation. The coalition is also working on substance free activities for students.

Equity & Inclusion Task Force

Mr. Donati will be meeting with School representatives for an update. Preparation is taking place for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration on Monday, January 20.

Master Plan

Mr. Coughlin thanked everyone who attended the Community meeting on December 9. The next Community meeting will be on January 13, 2020 at the ECEC at 7:00 p.m. The subcommittee will also begin preparing the Statement of Interest to be submitted to the MSBA.

Negotiations

There are currently six meetings scheduled between January and February to negotiate with the Paraprofessionals and the Educational Interventionists. The first two meetings will be to set ground rules for both groups.

Policy

None

SBRC

None

Traffic Circulation Study

There will be a meeting on Tuesday, February 4 at 7:00 p.m. at Dedham High School where the consultant VHB will have plans and recommendations for the community to view and provide a forum for feedback.

Minutes

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of December 4, 2019, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Public Comment

Juliette Byrnes, 57 Clark Street, made the following statement to the Committee:

I am here to dispute the accuracy of the proposed non-binding referendum pertaining to the 0.87 abandoned rail corridor.

Please see the blueprint showing the rail corridor ends at Whiting Ave. Ext. and notice the corridor does NOT end at the Boston/Readville line as stated both in the petition and the proposed referendum. (JB passes out copy)

The corridor in Dedham is 0.87 of a mile, per the engineering firm; the noted "10 acre includes the corridor to the Boston/Readville line which the MBTA and a private developer have control over, not Dedham.

It is important to mention, both the Select Board and the School Committee have care, custody, and control over the corridor and both boards must first agree that the subject question can move forward to a non-binding referendum by way of a unanimous vote. If not unanimous, the question would not be allowed.

This is an intentional misleading question to the public that it would connect to the Boston property line.

I hereby request that the Select Board reject the current language in both the petition and the proposed non-binding referendum for the 2020 ballot and have it at least read the factually correct statement: "That it ends at a fence at the end of Whiting Ave. Ext. in Dedham, which is a private way."

I also request that the Select Board instruct the petitioners that a new petition must be created for gathering signatures as the current petition is inaccurate and misleading to the public.

Mr. Coughlin stated he would take her comments under consideration.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

The All Town Band Concert will be on February 5, 2020.

Mr. Donati thanked the custodians for all their hard work clearing snow so that schools could open.

Mr. Bilafer stated that a lot of consideration goes into the decision of whether or not to call off school due to inclement weather. It is not a decision that is made lightly and is a team effort. He thanked Mr. Welch for his work the past couple of weeks making these difficult decisions.

Mr. Coughlin wished everyone a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year.

Ms. White motioned to adjourn the meeting of December 18, 2019, Mr. Bilafer second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Meeting concluded at 8:40 p.m.