

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
REMOTE MEETING

MINUTES

March 31, 2020

(Approved 4/15/2020)

**Remote Joint Board Meeting with Select Board, School Committee,
Board of Health and Parks & Recreation Commission**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT via REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

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

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

None

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT via REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

Michael Welch, Superintendent
Sam Rippin, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance

MEMBERS OF THE SELECT BOARD PRESENT via REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

Dennis Guilfoyle, Chair
James MacDonald
Sarah MacDonald
Dimitria Sullivan
Dennis Teehan

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH PRESENT via REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

Leanne Jasset, Chair
Katherine Reda, Vice-Chair
Mary Ellard

MEMBERS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION PRESENT via REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

Jonathan Briggs, Chair
Tye Donahue, Vice Chair
Chuck Dello Iacono
James Maher
Lisa Moran

Meeting Location: Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A sec. 20, the meeting was held via online Google Hangout Conference as posted on the agenda.

Remote meeting commenced at 6:00 p.m.

Select Board Chair Dennis Guilfoyle stated that all votes in tonight's joint meeting will be taken by roll call. (Meeting also live and being recorded by Dedham TV.)

Chair Dennis Guilfoyle opened the Select Board Meeting. All members present.

Chair Leanne Jasset opened the Board of Health Meeting. All members present

Chair Jonathan Briggs opened the Parks & Recreation Meeting. All members present.

Chair Kevin Coughlin opened the School Committee meeting. All members present

COVID-19 Discussion & Updates

Town Manager Leon Goodwin

- As of March 16 local State of Emergency in effect
- Legislation has been passed to postpone Town Elections
- Board will vote this evening to formally postpone April 11 election and May Town Meeting
- As of March 19 Town Hall and facilities closed (Employees working remotely)
- Policy & Fire and dispatch fully staffed
- Visit website for services being provided to residents
- Call Center being operated out of Town Hall, five days a week @ 781-751-9100
- Communication being done via COVID 19 Webpage, signage, press releases, virtual Town Hall meetings
- Today Governor Baker closed non-essential business through May 4
- Parks, fields and recreational facilities are closed
- Weekly Public Service announcement with Dedham TV being done every Friday
- Notable- Council on Aging and Dedham Food Pantry continuing to assist Dedham Residents
- Notable- Local company MS Walker making hand sanitizer for front lines
- Notable- All first responders and essential employees who are working on the front lines

Superintendent Michael Welch

- Supt. Welch thanked the following people for their extra hard work during these unprecedented times
 - Dedham Public Schools Technology Director Don Langenhorst and Technology Department
 - Town Manager Leon Goodwin and Assistant Town Manager Nancy Baker
 - Board of Health
 - Interim Health Director Bridget Sweet
 - Public Health Nurse Jessica Tracy
 - Dedham Public Schools Director of Health Services Gail Kelley
- Schools have been closed since Friday, March 13
- Communication via nightly emails to families using Blackboard Connect
- Supt. Welch thanked Communications Coordinator Sara Errickson for her work keeping the website updated with current information
- All school buildings have been deep cleaned and are closed to all staff (with the exception of custodians and essential personnel)
- Beginning March 16 Food Service department, under the direction of Food Service Director Jeanne Johnson has been providing “grab and go” meals to the students of Dedham
- Central Administration is open from 8:00am to 1:00pm with a small group of Administrative staff to receive mail and deliveries
- Transitioned to an online presence for remote learning
- Staff is balancing family and work load
- Governor has closed schools through May 1
- Students in grades 6-12 have Chromebooks, students in grades PK-5 can contact principal for a Chromebook
- Employees are still working from home, over 50 virtual meeting held this week

Park & Recreation Director Bob Stanley

- March 6 - Clipper swim team Championships cancelled
- March 13- Dedham Pool and recreation center closed
- March 16- Long term closures began
- March 17- Playgrounds closed followed by fields closure
- Trails remain open
- Reviewed Parks and Recreation director closures around the country
- Dog Park remains open
- All events in April have been cancelled
- Full-time staff still working
- May 4- MIAA season is scheduled to begin
- Starting to think about making a decision regarding the annual Flag Day parade (taking funding into consideration.)
- Starting to think about considerations for summer program including hiring

Interim Board of Health Director Bridget Sweet

- Thanked Jessica Tracy and her work on case contacts
- March 16 - Board met with Town for emergency declaration and closed playground structures
- Board is meeting weekly, creating weekly press releases and personal service announcements

- March 18- Voted to follow the 10 people or less social gatherings federal guideline, closed rinks, indoor athletic facilities, non essential personal car service, and daycares
- After receiving many complaints about lack of social distancing, parks and fields were closed (walking trails open)
- Discontinue reusable bags
- Allowing maintenance of golf course
- Providing Personal Protective Equipment(PPE) for first responders and facilities
- Received grant funding to case contact follow up (wrap around services)
- Health department and school nurses working closely together
- Medical Reserve Core volunteer helping to overcome cultural barriers
- Communicating with food service establishment to enforce guidelines while supporting local business
- Communicating with local, state and federal organizations on an ongoing basis

General Discussion

Sarah MacDonald asked Bridget Sweet to elaborate on why there has been a shift to not provide town level data. Ms. Sweet noted this was a recommendation from the state to only provide county level data.

Kevin Coughlin thanked Supt. Welch for working around the clock during the pandemic and thanked all school staff for their hard work. He asked whether food service staff is maintaining social distancing and if they have enough PPE.

Mr. Rippin stated that the school food service workers were practicing social distancing, wearing PPE where advisable and adhering to best practices to minimize risk.

Superintendent Welch asked the Health Department for additional masks for food service workers if supplies allowed.

Ms. Sweet noted food controls are in place to limit any transmission through food and at this time masks are not being required for food service workers. She is happy to look into it with the Board of Health and order more PPE if needed.

Ms. Jasset thanked all Boards, employees, and the residents of Dedham for doing their part, working together and being socially responsible to mitigate the spread of the virus. Board of Health weekly meetings will continue to occur on Wednesday nights. Reporting strategy will be discussed at the next meeting tomorrow night.

Questions (officials only)

Ms. MacDonald noted that Town Hall is preparing a mailing for residents and asked when that would be going out. Mr. Goodwin stated it should be arriving at homes today or tomorrow. (Mailing will have ending date of April 7 not the Governor's new deadline of May 1.)

Ms. Sullivan asked about the Town website being translated into other languages. Mr. Goodwin explained this is a limitation of the current website. They are trying to post things in a format that can easily be translated by Google Translate. They have reached out to the School Department and private services for additional help.

Mr. Briggs thanked Bob Stanley and the Parks and Recreation Department for their hard work and quick response. He also stated he understands the need for social distancing but also the need to get outside for physical and mental wellbeing.

Ms. MacDonald asked the Board to consider economic relief for local businesses. Mr. Goodwin agreed with the consideration.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to adjourn the virtual School Committee meeting of March 31, 2020, Ms. Briggs second; a roll call vote was taken:

Steve Bilafer- Yes

Mayanne Briggs - Yes

Joshua Donati - Yes

Dr. Melissa Pearrow - Yes

Tracey White - Yes

Lisa Laprade, Vice-Chair - Yes

Kevin Coughlin, Chair - Yes

Motion passed 7-0

Remote School Committee meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.