

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
REMOTE MEETING

MINUTES

May 6, 2020

(Approved 5/20/2020)

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 REMOTELY PRESENT:

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

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: meet.google.com/yim-hnzo-sze or by phone 1-406-905-1917 with PIN: 623 570 779#

Remote meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Coughlin called the School Committee meeting to order. A roll call attendance was taken:

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

Mr. Coughlin read the following statement regarding the remote meeting:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Dedham are being conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. We have arranged for a call-in number for those who would like to listen to this meeting. While it is possible that some members of the public may be invited to comment, it is also possible that despite our best efforts, we are not able to provide for real-time involvement, we will post a recording of this meeting as soon as we are able.

Mr. Coughlin noted the need to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3, contract negotiations, Mr. Donati 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

The Committee returned to regular session at 6:50pm.

Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Welch provided the following update to the Committee:

Coronavirus Update:

1. The Memorandum of Agreement with Unit A is effective only until May 4. The Negotiation Subcommittee is working on the next phase of the agreement.
2. Phase 2 of the Remote Learning Plan was released on April 12 and Phase 3 began on April 24
3. New food service guidelines are in place. Residents through age 21 are eligible; residents need not be present to receive meals. Food Service is providing close to 500 meals per day. On May 4, Food Service Director Jeanne Johnson received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the Eos Foundation.
4. Over 260 Unit A members have completed formal training to conduct video conferences with students.

The School Committee Budget Sub-Committee met on April 29 to discuss the FY21 Budget. They are working to develop budgets that reflect no increase to the FY20 budget, a 1% increase and a 2% increase.

Supt. Welch and Assistant Superintendent Rippin continue to monitor the FY20 Budget sequence reviewed with the Committee at the last meeting.

Dedham Public Schools has been awarded a \$50,000 Safe Schools grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Supt. Welch gave credit to Denise Moroney who wrote and submitted this grant on behalf of the district. The grant will provide funds for the purchase of 36 Motorola two-way radios for internal use at all schools and 8 Dedham Police radios allowing for direct communication with Dedham Police and Fire. In addition, the grant provides funds for the replacement of the alarm systems at Greenlodge and Riverdale Elementary Schools.

Supt. Welch and Dedham Middle School Principal Karen Hillman received a positive response from CloseUp (Washington D.C. Trip vendor) after sending them a letter in conjunction with the Westwood Public Schools expressing disappointment regarding their trip refund policy. Principal Hillman will be sending information out to parents about this tonight.

Supt. Welch held his second bi-monthly Town Wide PTO Officers call this past Monday night. Eighteen parents were on the call, representing each of the schools in the district. There continue to be concerns expressed about the variability of video conferencing at different grade levels. The number of teachers now conducting these conferences is over 300 across the district and increasing daily.

Supt. Welch continues to participate on periodic "Task Force" calls with Dedham town leaders several times a week to keep informed on Town updates.

This week Supt. Welch is hosting virtual meetings with the remaining high school seniors with whom he was unable to meet in person due to the school closure.

On May 7, Chair Kevin Coughlin, Supt. Welch and High School Principal Jim Forrest will be meeting with 16 other people on a "Class of 2020 Task Force" meeting to finalize graduation plans for this year's seniors.

On May 4, Supt. Welch participated in a video conference with DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley regarding the following issues:

1. Massachusetts CARES Act funding (\$214 Million to Massachusetts from federal government to states) will mirror Title 1 funding guidelines (hopefully \$250,000 for DPS). Specific amounts for local districts will be released by DESE later this week.
2. No updates on what to expect for FY21 funding from state level in terms of Chapter 70 and Student Opportunity Act (SOA).
3. SOA guidance -Commissioner says no urgency to submit original plan documents due April 1
4. Seniors exempt from MCAS CD requirements but must show proof of successful completion of comparable content courses in high school.
5. Science MCAS CD requirement still in limbo. No ruling from the Board of Education yet.
6. General guidance regarding grading will be released later this week. All local decisions. DESE expects very few students to be retained and virtually all students to be promoted on to next grade.
7. DESE is setting up a "Task Force" to explore reopening guidance for all districts.
8. There is currently no guidance regarding possible summer "in person" learning possibilities

Tomorrow Supt. Welch will be participating in a town-wide Department Heads meeting discussing plans and projections for the FY21 Town Budget.

Old/New Business

Discussion and Vote on Paraprofessional Contract

Mr. Coughlin announced there would not be any discussion or vote on the paraprofessional contract.

Discussion and Vote on Educational Interventionist Contract

Two Memoranda of Agreement with the Educational Interventions have been proposed to the Committee. Miss White stated that the negotiating subcommittee voted unanimously to accept both agreements. Mr. Coughlin stated the full Committee voted unanimously in tonight's Executive Session to accept both agreements as well. No further discussion occurred.

Dr. Pearrow motioned to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Dedham School Committee and the Dedham Education Association Educational Interventionist Unit for a one-year period of September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019, Mr. Bilafer 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

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Dedham School Committee and the Dedham Education Association Educational Interventionist Unit for the three-year period of September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2022, Mr. Bilafer 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

Discussion and Vote of School Choice Participation

The School Choice Program allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. Tuition is paid by the sending district to the receiving district. Districts may elect not to enroll school choice students if no space is available. More details regarding School Choice can be found on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website.

Supt. Welch recommended to the Committee to **not** participate in School Choice. The state's reimbursement of funds does not cover the per pupil expenditure in Dedham. Supt. Welch also factored in the ambiguity of the FY21 Budget. The Superintendent is mandated to report to DESE by June 1 whether the district will or will not participate in the School Choice Program. This decision requires a vote from the Committee. No further discussion occurred.

Mr. Bilafer motioned that Dedham Public Schools opt out of the School Choice Program for the 2020-2021 school year, Ms. White 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

Minutes

Ms. Briggs motioned to approve the minutes from the remote meeting on April 15, 2020, Dr. Pearrow 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

Public Comment

Beth Gleason, parent, spoke about the regression in children with autism during the "stay at home" advisory. Her daughter is also missing a half day of instruction from Confidence Connection. Ms. Gleason has spoken with Eve Webber from Confidence Connection who would be willing to do in-home visits and ABA training for parents. Ms. Gleason asked the Committee to consider this offer.

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Dr. Pearrow noted that it was Teacher Appreciation week and thanked all Dedham Teachers for their hard work.

Ms. Laprade also thanked those teachers who attended tonight's virtual meeting.

Mr. Donati motioned to adjourn the remote meeting of May 6, 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 meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.