

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
REMOTE MEETING

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**MINUTES**

**May 20, 2020**

*(Approved 6/3/2020)*

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 (Joined regular meeting at 6:50 p.m.)  
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](https://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.

Ms. White motioned to enter Executive Session under Exemption 3, contract negotiations, 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**

The Committee returned to regular session at 6:50p.m.

## **Superintendent's Update**

The Governor released the state's much anticipated reopening plan this past Monday. There was very little guidance directed at public schools in terms of possible summer school or other on-site reopening. At this time, there is very limited access to school buildings, with custodians now scheduled to work three days a week in limited, socially distanced shifts with appropriate personal protective equipment at all times.

Educators have briefly spent time in their school buildings over the past two weeks, cleaning out rooms and preparing rooms for summer custodial cleaning. All student materials are being collected, bagged, labeled and distributed through pick-ups coordinated by the school principals.

The district continues to conduct remote learning sessions each day. Educators are finding more and more creative ways to reach out to students and provide support for parents as they do their best to help their children.

There have been a series of updates on the FY20 and FY21 Budget forecast, but none that provide great clarity future projections.

Dedham Public Schools received \$264,000 through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). This funding comes under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and provides districts with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools. The district allocations for ESSER funding are calculated based on the proportion of Title I, Part A funds each district received in FY20. Additionally, DESE has used some of the state's funding to make sure every district receives at least \$20,000. DESE's Federal Grants Office will be facilitating the application process for districts. These funds must also be shared with students who attend private schools in Dedham, regardless of whether those students actually live in Dedham under federal "equitable service" provisions. Thus, DPS expects to receive only about \$150,000 of this aid, and approximately 90% will be allocated in FY21.

Supt. Welch and Assistant Supt. Sam Rippin met with Town Manager Leon Goodwin and Interim Town Finance Director Shawn McGoldrick yesterday. The Town has also received a \$2.23 Million grant from the CARES Act, and school and town representatives are working together to see if there are COVID-19 related expenses in the schools that can be charged to the Town's grant. It is unclear the extent to which this is possible, and meetings will continue to occur to make sure federal funds are being maximized.

The Leadership Team has spent many hours preparing scenarios regarding potential cuts to the FY21 Budget. Supt. Welch is awaiting guidance and direction from Town Manager Goodwin regarding the magnitude of any possible cuts. More information will follow.

The Class of 2020 Steering Committee has met and discussed ways to celebrate this year's graduating seniors. The plan is for a vehicle-based ceremony and awarding of diplomas on the original date of Saturday, June 6th beginning at 1:00 PM. This will be followed by a more traditional in person graduation ceremony tentatively planned for Saturday, July 25. More details will be sent after guidance is received from DESE and Mass. Department of Public Health.

The district has begun to issue refunds to families for unused yellow bus transportation fees and spring sports athletics. Families who request refunds (using the appropriate Google request forms) by Friday, May 22 will receive checks from the town on Friday, May 29.

Supt. Welch heard back from the Massachusetts District Attorney's office this week that they are continuing to pursue complaints lodged by the district and parents regarding the CloseUp Foundation (DMS Washington, D.C. trip vendor) and their refund policy. As of now, families will receive an additional \$100 refund on their security deposits.

Supt. Welch held his third town-wide PTO Officers' meeting this past Monday night. Fourteen parents and eleven members of the district leadership team participated on the call. The next meeting is scheduled for June 1.

Supt. Welch continues to participate on periodic "Task Force" calls with Dedham town leaders. These calls are helpful to hear about what is happening around the town.

Today Supt. Welch completed his final session of senior exit interviews. Every single DHS senior was invited to meet with the Superintendent throughout the school year. He met with approximately 130 of the 199 members of the senior class in small groups to discuss their experiences.

Supt. Welch continues to participate on at least 3-5 video conference calls each week with superintendents from across the state. These calls confirm that Dedham is informed and consistent with other districts in terms of current practices and preparations for what the future will hold for education this fall and in the future.

### **Old/New Business**

#### Discussion and Vote on Paraprofessional Contract

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Paraprofessionals was proposed to the Committee. Ms. White reported that the agreement was able to be reached in three months. Mr. Coughlin stated the full Committee voted unanimously in tonight's Executive Session to accept the agreement, 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 Paraprofessional Unit for the three-year period of September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2022, Ms. Laprade 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 on Cafeteria Workers Contract

Mr. Coughlin stated that there would not be an update on the Cafeteria Workers contract this evening.

#### Update on YCN Transportation Contract

Mr. Rippin explained that YCN Transportation supports the district's need for Special Education transportation within the district. Due to the closing of schools and suspension of in-district transportation, YCN has agreed to cut the contractual obligation by 37%. Mr. Rippin thanked Dedham resident Matt Gillis who is the Director of Operations for the Brookline Public Schools for his assistance in negotiating this agreement.

Ms Briggs motioned to approve the amended agreement between the Dedham Public Schools and YCN Transportation during the school closure due to the Coronavirus, 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**

#### Update on Class 2020 Graduation Ceremony

Mr. Coughlin stated that the 2020 Graduation working group decided on two graduations for the Class of 2020. On Saturday, June 6 there will be a rolling graduation ceremony in front of Dedham High School. On Saturday, July 25 there will be a more traditional graduation.

Supt. Welch stated he had two criteria for the graduation. First that it is safe and, second that all students are able to participate.

Supt. Welch and Mr. Coughlin thanked the members of the working group including the Dedham Police, Department of Public Works, Board of Health, High School staff and parents.

### **Minutes**

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes from the remote meeting on May 6, 2020, 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**

### **Public Comment**

Andrea Griffin, 12 Benjamin Street, has two students in the Dedham Public Schools and is also an elementary teacher in Boston. Ms. Griffin read a statement reviewing her experience of the past few weeks from the perspectives of a teacher and a mom. She expressed her disappointment with the lack of interaction her children have had with their teachers.

Beth Gleason, 42 Wilson Avenue, expressed her negative experience and displeasure with the service of YCN Transportation.

## **Acknowledgements and Announcements**

Ms. Laprade thanked Select Board member Sarah MacDonald for facilitating the School Committee meetings being added to the Town's calendar.

Ms. Laprade spoke about a free support group sponsored by Bryte called "Parents Helping Parents" that assists with the parenting challenges of the stay at home order.

Ms. Briggs stated that the Human Rights Commission has created a task force to create a resource page to deal with issues related to Covid-19.

Ms. Briggs reminded the audience that Public Comment should not be used to disparage Dedham Public School employees.

Mr. Bilafer noted that, in honor of Memorial Day, flags will be placed in front of Dedham High School to honor the graduates who have given their lives to serve their country.

Ms. Briggs motioned to adjourn the remote meeting of May 20, 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**

Remote meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.