

**Dedham Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
May 10, 2023**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Victor Hebert
Stephen Acosta
Mayanne Briggs
Dr. Leah Flynn Gallant
Cailen McCormick
Christopher Polito

MEMBERS OF TOWN ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Paul Munchbach, Town Clerk

Location: Middle School Library

Mr. Hebert called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

AGENDA:

Update on School Committee Member Appointment Process with Town Clerk Paul Munchbach

Paul Munchbach, Town Clerk, reviewed the requirements for replacing a vacancy on the School Committee.

Tracey White's resignation letter must be filed with the Town Clerk's Office. At that point, the resignation is official and the next steps of the process can begin. Since her resignation is 120 days outside of the next election, then the Select Board can choose to call a special election to fill her vacancy. This special election cannot be held sooner than 64 days after the special election is called. If the decision is made to replace Ms. White with an appointment, then the vacancy for the appointment must be posted for 30 days. After a 10 day application period has passed, the vacancy is closed. At that point, applicants would be interviewed and nominations would be voted by each member of the Select Board and School Committee separately. The length of term for an appointment would be for a year unexpired term until the next general election. If vacancy is filled through a special election, then the position term would be until 2025.

Mr. Acosta asked how frequently vacancies have occurred and if vacancies are ever filled with a special election? Mr. Munchbach replied that, over the past 30 years, all vacancies, except Select Board have been filled by appointments even though many have been outside of the 120 days from election. Select Board vacancies are only allowed to be filled by an election.

Dr. Flynn Gallant asked about the process for the special election. Mr. Munchbach said the special election would be the same as the general election. The election would cost the Town ~\$38K. The election would have to be approved at Town Meeting. It would be one general ballot for Town-wide vote.

Mr. Hebert asked about the dates for the election. Mr. Munchbach said the earliest election date would be July 15th, and the next available dates would be July 22nd and August 12th.

Mr. Polito asked if the special election could be held on a weekday. Mr. Munchbach said the Select Board could choose any day but usually Saturdays are selected. Ms. Briggs pointed out that if the special election is held on a weekday, then schools would have to be closed, even during the summer because summer Town Clerk Munchbach left the meeting.

Reorganization of Subcommittees

Mr. Hebert announced that he started to fill out a spreadsheet for the 2022-23 School year. The spreadsheet is available in the Google folder. He reported that he and the new Superintendent, Nan Murphy slotted people into committees based on experience and strengths. Mr. Hebert said he thinks it best that he steps down from the SBRC. He said the goal is to get newer members into the SBRC because older member's terms are shorter in duration. He said he had added Stephen Acosta to the SBRC subcommittee and Leah Flynn Gallant was put into the Budget subcommittee with Chris Polito. Both Dr. Flynn Gallant and Mr. Acosta were put on the Policy subcommittee.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Budget

Mr. Polito will remain on this committee as the Chair. Victor Hebert and Leah Flynn Gallant agreed to be on this committee as well.

Negotiations

Mr. Polito requested to remain on the Negotiations subcommittee. He said the Joint Labor Task Force is requesting that a working group be established and he feels the school needs to be represented by someone with experience. The Joint Labor Task force request needs to be discussed with Dr. Kelly.

Finance and Warrant

Mr. Hebert and Ms. Briggs explained that the main duty of the members of Finance and Warrant is to sign for food service requests, out of district tuition and other vendor requests. They need a total of four on that subcommittee. Mayanne Briggs, Chris Polito and Stephen Acosta agreed to be on this committee with Victor Hebert.

Communications

Ms. McCormick volunteered to stay on the Communications subcommittee. The members discussed only needing one person on this committee due to the enhanced role of Sarah Errickson. Ms. McCormick said she thinks that this committee could be successful with only one person who acts as more of a facilitator.

Ms. Briggs and Dr. Flynn Gallant raised the idea of holding coffee hours before the School Committee meeting for people who don't want to talk in the public meeting. Mr. Hebert and Mr. Polito said this could be readdressed at the Summer Retreat held in July.

Traffic Circulation

Traffic Circulation subcommittee relevance was discussed. Most members feel that the School Committee does not have the influence to impact traffic circulation decisions. Ms. Briggs said she could remain on Traffic Circulation if the group decided to retain that committee.

SBRC

Ms. Briggs would be willing to remain on the SBRC and Stephen Acosta will be added as the second member.

Financial Policy Review

Two members are needed for the Financial Policy Review committee. Chris Polito agreed to serve again. After review of requirements Leah Flynn Gallant offered to be on the Financial Policy subcommittee as well.

Parks and Rec

The group discussed whether the Parks and Rec committee would need to be retained. If retained, Mr. Acosta, Mr. Polito and Ms. McCormick agreed to serve on this committee.

TEC Collaborative

Dr. Kelly is the key member of this committee. Ms. Briggs said she would agree to be the alternate, if necessary.

Human Rights

Vicki Castagnola is the community representative on this committee. Ms. McCormick said she would be an alternative when needed. They discussed that they will make decisions about this committee at a later date.

Curriculum Advisory

Ms. McCormick and Ms. Briggs volunteered to be on this committee.

D.O.S.A.

Mr. Hebert said will serve on DOSA.

Transportation Working Group

Trish Sullivan is the community representative on this group. Ms. Briggs said she would volunteer to be included in this group.

Norfolk County Sheriff

This subcommittee did not meet this year. The group decided not to have a regular committee, but just choose a member to attend meetings on demand.

Dedham Coalition for Equity and Inclusion

Ms. Briggs and Mr. Polito agreed to serve on this committee.

Council on Aging

Ms. Briggs said they need to find out whether Nan Murphy wants to retain this subcommittee. It's a liaison to the Council on Aging. The member needs to be the Superintendent or Superintendent designee. It is a monthly meeting. Mr. Acosta said he would be happy to do it or share it. Mr. Hebert said he will talk to Nan Murphy.

Fields

Mr. Acosta and Ms. McCormick agreed to be on the Fields subcommittee, but it was also agreed that discussion about the role of this subcommittee needs to take place.

It was noted that MASC may revise any of these plans, when they meet with the School Committee later in the year.

Old/New Business*

Ms. Briggs reported that the survey for the Oakdale Project was drafted at the SBRC meeting last night. The online survey includes links to site maps of the potential sites. She stressed the importance of the School Committee making a decision about enrollment by the first week in June. She said that School Committee members should feel free to contact her or Mr. Hebert with questions. Dr. Kelly made edits to the Education Plan which affects enrollment. The updated Education Plan has been placed in the folder. Recommendations on the site will need to be discussed at the June 21st joint meeting with the Dr. Flynn Gallant asked what would happen to the Blue Hills if Capen becomes the top choice for the site? The group discussed that there would be other sites that the Blue Hills could move to in Dedham.

The group discussed the flag policy and Kevin Bresnahan feedback. Mr. Polito said the decision that needs to be made is whether the School Committee wants a separate flag policy from the Town. Mr. Polito said if the schools had their own policy, then the school system could be sued. However, he said the schools need protection from any group that wants to hang a flag in the schools. Mr. Bresnahan had commented that he wanted to wait until some other towns had made a decision about flag policies before Dedham made a decision about having a separate policy. Mr. Polito asked if Ms. Briggs could share Atty. Bresnahan's email about this matter.

The group discussed the optimal time to vote on the subcommittees. It was decided that they would vote on the subcommittee memberships at the School Committee meeting.

Motion was made to adjourn at 8:10 pm and approved by a roll call vote of 6-0.

Submitted by

Virginia Quinn

Recording Secretary