

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
October 26, 2020

Members attending: Sharlene Cronin, SusanMary Redinger, Suzanne Allen, Abby Besse, Shannon Molloy, Maureen Babcock and Linda Dwight

Others in attendance Josh Myler, Taylor Caroom, Brooke Caroom, Aziz Aghayev, Patrick Harrigan

SusanMary Redinger called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Taylor Caroom read the Vision Statement

SusanMary Redinger read a statement indicating that the meeting was being held remotely and the meeting was being held via video conferencing. Members in attendance were identified through a roll call process.

Public Commentary: None

Student Report: Brooke Caroom reported that the Student Council met and brainstormed ideas and topics to focus on this year. Students felt that activities to help students with organizing time and materials as well as homework would be of interest. The Student Council would also like to become involved at some level with the Racial Justice Club. Taylor Caroom reported that there has been a lot of positive feedback with regard to fall sports, which will be wrapping up soon.

Superintendent Update

See Attached.

HVAC Findings Update

Dr. Dwight presented the HVAC Evaluation report provided by RW Sullivan. The report is an assessment of the heating and ventilation system at the Bromfield School. The report provided a performance review of the heating and ventilation units, heat recovery units and rooftop units. The report identified at least eight units that require repair. Working off the list of identified problems, Patrick Harrigan and David Woodsum were able to make the necessary repairs to get everything working. With the exception of the HVAC systems replaced in the past three years all of the HVAC units are 18+ years old. Dr. Dwight asked the School Committee to approve up to \$75K to be used to continue HVAC repairs through the year. Mr. Harrigan is working with Buckley and Trane to get cost estimates for new and replacement units.

Abby Besse made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move to allocate up to \$75K from the Devens funds for upgrades to the HVAC system.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye) and Redinger (Aye)

In careful consideration of the facts, the leadership team plan to continue the current ½ day, hybrid model of teaching/learning until at least January 4th. We considered other models, visited other districts, reviewed the data of COVID-19 cases in our district and in neighboring districts, and reviewed the HVAC report. We do not want to add additional risk into our model, as it has proven successful to date. Our plan is to communicate this information to families following this meeting while also providing them with some of our reasoning. We would like to convey the School Committee's agreement, if that is possible to ascertain. SusanMary Redinger polled members who all agreed to endorse the plan.

Budget Overview

Aziz Aghayev, presented the timeline that will be used for budget development so that the FY22 Budget is ready to submit to the town on December 15, 2020. School Committee members are invited to attend meetings with the Cost Center managers that are scheduled to begin after the first week in November. The FY22 budget directive from the town is to present a level funded budget. A 95% (or minus 5%) budget, and a budget that would include additional items if money was available.

District Improvement Plan (DIP) Review

Dr. Dwight presented the District Improvement (COVID) Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. *The Student Achievement Goal* is to develop a remote and hybrid learning model that expands student knowledge, provides safety and support, and capitalizes on the benefits provided by these circumstances.

The School Climate Goal is to create a district culture that confronts racism, actively addresses aggression and educate all on the harm of silence.

After final edits, the District Improvement Plan will be brought back at the next meeting to approve.

Superintendent Evaluation

SusanMary Redinger shared the results of the Superintendent Dwight's performance evaluation for the 2019/2020 school year. Dr. Dwight received an overall rating of "exemplary". Dr. Dwight received top marks for her outstanding leadership of the district. In addition, Dr. Dwight was commended on her ability to form working relationships and pulling teams together to handle the pandemic. Dr. Dwight responded to the evaluation by saying she is especially honored and very grateful to all of the members for their work on the review. The School Committee discussed the evaluation process in terms of the timing, mentoring new members and documentation. Shannon Molloy thought that reviewing the Superintendent reports was a good way to review data.

20/21 Superintendent/School Committee Goals Review (VOTE)

The Committee reviewed School Committee/Superintendent Goals for School Year 2020/2021 as amended from their last meeting. After discussion, the Committee agreed that they align with the goals as amended. The edits will be made and the document returned at the next meeting for a vote to approve.

SC Operating Norms (VOTE)

SusanMary Redinger presented the School Committee Norms as amended from the last meeting.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Shannon Molloy seconded to move to adopt the norms as amended.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye) and Redinger (Aye)

Presentation of Screening Consent Form

Suzanne Allen presented the Policy Consent Form prepared by the Policy Subcommittee and reviewed by Counsel. The form will be used in the event that Pooled Testing for COVID-19 is approved by the district. There are separate forms for individuals under the age of 18 or over the age of 18. The Committee made changes to the form and will bring the form back when pooled testing information is complete.

Employee Health

Dr. Dwight explained to the Committee that the Select Board is considering a change in health care providers. The School Committee discussed allowing the Chair to write a letter in support of the HTA if they are feeling strong discontent for the change. It is important to show support for the HTA but the School Committee will wait until the HTA weighs in with their preference before writing the letter.

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded that if there is a 2/3 majority vote the School Committee authorizes the Chair to write a letter in support of the HTA to be presented to the Select board.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye) and Redinger (Aye)

HES Building Project Update

The School Building Committee last met on October 14th. Jeff Hayes, the new facilities manager for the town is on sight. Jeff will be doing the school building inspections at no additional cost. At the last School Building meeting \$30K was approved in changes. \$10K of the changes were due to COVID which may be reimbursed. Right now, our construction contingency has \$500K remaining and the owner's contingency has about \$225K remaining. On site soil testing is scheduled for Veterans Day in order to determine the quality of the soil. The project is 65% complete. The move in date is mid-May and the project completion date of November 2021.

Student Enrollment and Projection

SusanMary Redinger presented the Enrollment Projection Spreadsheet using this year's enrollment as of October 1st of 986 students in grades K-12. The Cohort Survival Method considers birth rates from the previous 5 years to determine the projected enrollments with the average "survival" rate of student in each cohort from year to year. This year is the lowest enrollment in over 15 years. It appears that COVID has dramatically reduced enrollment and it is difficult to determine if the current low point indicates a trend or a temporary condition.

Future Meeting Dates

November 9th and 23rd
December 2nd Student Advisory
November 7th - MASC Delegate Assembly
December – budget meetings

Agenda Items

Screening Update
Student Advisory agenda items
Remote learning update
Curriculum Presentations
PTO update
Mass Development (Maureen)
Budget
Goals – final edits
DIP – final edits
Policy

Minutes

Without objection SusanMary Redinger approved the minutes of the October 13th meeting as amended.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye) and Redinger (Aye)

Liaison/Subcommittee

Suzanne Allen – The Policy Subcommittee is working through the “H” policies which focus on Negotiations. Of the three policies in that section the subcommittee will present a new MASC policy as well as edits to the other two policies in that section. The Subcommittee will pick up their schedule to review policies in section “J” and will likely bring those forward at the next meeting.

Suzanne Allen – The HES School Council met and began the discussion on the student survey that will be done this year. There was discussion around when and how to survey and the complications around COVID. Normally the survey questions are similar from one year to the next but the Council is looking at different types of questions to ask and also doing the survey earlier in the year so feedback can be incorporated.

Shannon Molloy – The SEPAC met last week and discussed making a request on the FY22 budget. They also talked about developing a family survey to be distributed to the district sometime in the future.

Shannon Molloy – The Anti-Racism Committee met with students and talked about how they will coordinate with the next teacher PD. The plan is to have a round table that connects student students with teachers after an Anti-Racism PD session. It worked well in September and they will do that again on October 28 and 29th.

Shannon Molloy will take the place of Sharlene Cronin as advisor to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Shannon Molloy – The RFP to procure a product for the COVID Screening Initiative was prepared and advertised.

SusanMary Redinger - CPIC – will be sending out questions to the school department asking for explanations on the capital projects the schools has submitted for FY22.

Public Commentary

None

School Committee Commentary - None

Adjourn - With no objection SusanMary Redinger adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Zadroga

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