

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
Monday, September 27, 2021
6:15 p.m.

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

Others in Attendance: Linda Dwight and Ingrid Nilsson

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

Abby Besse read the vision statement.

Public Commentary

None

Montachusett Tech Representative Opening

SusanMary Redinger introduced Amy Morton who has been serving as the Harvard Representative to the Montachusett Technical School Committee. Amy has been serving in this role for 3 years and is ready to step down and would like to get the word out in order to find a replacement and ensure that Harvard is represented. The Monty Tech Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month for 90 minutes. The School Committee will help to get the word out to the community and have interested candidates contact Amy Morton for further information. On behalf of the town, SusanMary Redinger thanked Amy Morton for her service.

End of Year Financial Report

Ingrid Nilsson presented the end of year financial report. Included in this report is a summary of School Department expenses organized by categories as set by DESE. Expenses are funded by the Town of Harvard's general fund as appropriated at Town Meeting as well as revolving accounts, local, state and federal grants, including COVID relief grants. For Fiscal Year 2021, a total of \$17,776.836 was spent to support our students. \$13,984,923 coming from the general fund and supplemented by \$3.79 million in planned offsets, grants and over \$379,000 in state and federal COVID relief funds.

Climate Resolution Working Group Presentation (VOTE)

Ellen Sachs Leicher presented a warrant article written by the Harvard Energy Advisory Committee and the Community Resilience Work Group to address climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change, and mitigating the impact of extreme weather events. Ms. Leicher is looking for School Committee support when the article is presented at the October 16th Special Town Meeting. The Committee will take a vote of support at their next meeting.

Margaret Bromfield Blanchard Memorial Park Presentation (VOTE)

Bob O’Shea presented a plan for a future use of the “Bromfield House” property should the town retain ownership. Recreation is an allowed educational use in the Bromfield deed restriction and respects the spirit of the gift. The site would be used for a pump track, Pickleball courts and a skateboard park. Additional space could be used for outdoor classrooms and recreation facilities for school sports. With School Committee support the project will be presented at the fall town meeting to seek funds for a professional design which would then allow an estimate of the project to be added to the CPIC future projects list. The Committee will take a vote at their next meeting to support the Parks & Rec plan for the Bromfield House property to be used for education/recreation purposes.

Superintendent Report

See Attached.

In order to provide consistency in safety measure for volunteers and presenters Dr. Dwight presented a proposal that volunteers and presenters who wish to be in the school buildings while students are present must present proof of vaccination. These individuals are also invited to participate in weekly pooled testing.

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to move that we direct the Superintendent to direct testing and vaccine mandates to all school volunteers.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

The Committee debated a proposal to increase pay for Substitute Teachers from \$100 a day to \$125 per day as proposed by Dr. Dwight.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Abby Besse seconded to approve the increase in Substitute pay as presented by Dr. Dwight from \$100 per day to \$125 per day.

VOTE: Allen (Abstain), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

School Opening Survey Results

Dr. Dwight presented the Start of Year Survey results from a survey that was taken in September 2021. There were 707 responses in total from students, parents and faculty/staff members. Questions were asked to rate satisfaction with COVID safety measures, the sharing of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion information, the use of grants and the shift in start time. The overwhelming majority reported in a favorable way on all topics.

Capital Plan Review (VOTE)

SsusanMary Redinger presented the FY22 Capital Plan for the Schools. The items proposed for FY23 are installation of HVAC units, installation of card access system, replace locker sections, replace damaged flooring, upgrade the network backbone (servers, switch, routers), renovation study of The Bromfield School and renovation of the locker rooms at The Bromfield School. As well as the park proposal that will be co-sponsored with Parks and Recreation.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move to approve the capital plan as presented.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move to approve the athletic field complex proposal with the school as a cosigner as presented.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Policy Review (Dress Code and Covid-related) (VOTE)

Abby Besse presented a change to the mask policy related to clarifying the data collection in preparation for an off ramp for optional masking. Vaccination records need to be sent to the school nurse by October 15 in order for the schools to collect data that will allow for optional mask wearing when 80% of students are vaccinated.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move that we make a change to the covid policy as presented.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Suzanne Allen discussed the proposed edits to the dress code, but would like to take it back to subcommittee and invite student input. It was recommended to table the dress code policy for tonight.

Superintendent /School Committee Goals (VOTE)

Tabled.

Curriculum Presentation Review

Tabled.

Grant Approval

Ingrid Nilsson presented for approval an anonymous donation of \$26,000 to the Harvard Public Schools to have the school purchase Air Doctor 3000 air purifiers – HEPA filter machines for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade classroom in The Bromfield School and all classrooms at Hildreth Elementary.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move that we accept the generous donation of \$26,000 for the purpose of purchase filters as outlined.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

SusanMary Redinger will craft a letter of thanks to the donor.

Future Meeting Dates

October 12, 2021 (Tuesday)

Agenda Items

Policy
Budget Process and Timeline
Enrollment numbers
Bromfield Park
Climate Proposal
Curriculum Presentations
Graduation Requirements
Complete Streets Input
District Improvement Plan
Superintendent Goals
Student Representatives-SAC meeting and topics

Minutes

With no objection, SusanMary Redinger approved the minutes of the September 13, 2021 meeting as amended.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye).

SC Liaison and Subcommittee Reports

None

Public Commentary - None

Adjourn

SusanMary Redinger made the motion to go into Executive Session for the following purpose:
In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Section 21. (a) A public body may meet in executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. The Committee will not be returning to open session.

Respectfully Submitted

Mary Zadroga