



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES March 3, 2020

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| Meeting: | School Committee |
| Date: | March 3, 2020 |
| Location: | MERMHS Learning Commons |
| Attendees: | Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Eric Bourke Sarah Wolf Ken Warnock Caroline Weld Ann Cameron |
| Absent: | Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson |
| Guests: | Eli Boling, MBTS BOS Chair, Cheryl Marshall, Director MBTS Parks & Rec, Sean Daly, MBTS Parks & Rec Committee Chair, Jennifer Roberts, Principal EES and Ashley Sartell, EES SWING Teacher |
| Recorded by: | Gail Hunter |

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order** – Ms. Fitzgibbon called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
- B. Business Meeting Open Session**
 - 1) Public Comment** – There was no public comment this evening.

2) Student Report – Lucas Shan a sophomore is the new student representative to the School Committee. Ms. Fitzgibbon thanked Lucas for volunteering. Lucas highlighted the following High School activities for the committee:

- Winter sports concluded for the year with the Boys' Basketball Team making it to the finals. Unfortunately, the team lost to Georgetown.
- DECCA competition was held this past weekend with 9 students moving on to the International competition in Nashville, TN. Lucas noted two of the students moving on were first time participants.
- Drama Fest was a great success with the Team moving forward in the competition for the first time in 9 years. MERHS Drama Team will participate in the semifinals on March 14, 2020.
- The 6th Annual Cape Ann Career College Fair will be held at Gloucester High School March 11th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Lucas stated the Fair is an excellent event for sophomores to learn about career opportunities.
- Math Team's final competition will take place this Thursday at Wilmington, High School.
- Science Team's 2nd to last competition will take place next Tuesday at North Andover High School.

Superintendent Beaudoin asked Lucas if the students had received her annoying email about completing the Strategic Survey. Lucas stated he had received the email. Ms. Fitzgibbon thanked Lucas again for his participation and let him know he was welcome to stay or leave. Lucas stayed for the School Committee meeting.

3) Chairman's Report – Ms. Fitzgibbon stated she had spoken with Ms. Erdmann and was aware the School Committee members had received the MASC newsletter containing a new policy for Public Comment. Anyone from the public interested in commenting will be asked to sign in before the meeting. Ms. Fitzgibbon indicated this protocol will be in place at the next meeting, Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

4) Consent Agenda

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes – 1/7/2020, 1/28/2020 and 2/4/2020
- Approval of Out of State Travel -- None

Mr. Warnock moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5) Sub-Committee Reports

- Elementary Facilities/MSBC (Caroline Weld/Ann Cameron) –

Ms. Cameron reported the Memorial School Building remains on budget and on time. The Building Committee had reviewed some critical issues around playgrounds. Ms. Cameron is happy to report with strategic changes playgrounds are now on budget. There was a change order

request around borings at the back staircase of the building. The issue has been resolved resulting in a savings of \$58K. Currently FFE (which is everything in the building that if the building were turned upside down would drop out) is over budget by \$124K. The Building Committee has decided to go out to bid for these items and will know within the next few weeks if significant savings can be realized.

The Committee reviewed a slide presentation of the 3 playgrounds proposed for Memorial School. The pre-kindergarten playground for children ages 3-5 has a village theme including miniature vehicles to ride around the village. The playground for first and second graders has a maritime theme including a ship with assessible bow and stern and the final playground for grades 3-5 focuses on physical activities for students.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked if there were sitting areas planned for parents and caregivers. Mr. Urbas stated the sitting areas are part of the landscape budget not the playground budget but there are plans for sitting areas around the playgrounds. Mr. Warnock asked if the playgrounds would be accessible on the weekends. Mr. Urbas stated playgrounds would be open and accessible on weekends.

- Finance Committee (Anne Cameron/Shannon Erdmann) –

The Finance Committee collaborative group has not met since the last School Committee meeting.

- Policy Committee (Eric Bourke/Rachel Fitzgibbon) –

The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on March 25th.

- Negotiation Team (Sarah Wolf/Ken Warnock) – No Updates

6) Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Beaudoin stated her lead topic is Covid-19. The District will rely on notifications from the Advisory Group including Superintendents, State DPH and the local Boards of Health. The District is preparing but not panicking for a likely outbreak and treating preparations like the H1N1 virus preparations in 2009. Cleanliness and good judgement are key. If a person has symptoms stay home.

The District is following CDC guidelines for cleaning all District buildings which are flu season level cleaning. School closures will pass through the chain of command and be communicated like snow days. Additionally, the District is developing an Educational Continuity Plan in the event of school closures. In the Middle and High School, the District will rely on Google Classrooms and Principals are working on plans for the Elementary schools.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the District has a delegation at Yale's RULER Conference led by Principal Maino who is serving on a panel focusing on implementation of RULER in the Middle School. The delegation reported the Conference has been a good use of time and new

information on how the District can utilize RULER more effectively implement RULER has been acquired.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the 2020-2021 School Calendar will be ready for approval at the next School Committee meeting. The first day of school will be September 2, 2020. The Professional Development Group is reviewing the calendar for Professional Development days. Ms. Weld asked that the calendar be reviewed for religious holidays. Superintendent Beaudoin stated it will be.

Superintendent Beaudoin reported on the status of the Strategic Planning Survey which has been completed by 200 parents and community members, 30 staff and 20 students. The cut off date has been extended to March 13th. School Committee members will be receiving an RSVP request for the March 30th and 31st World Café forums.

7) Continued Business

○ Manchester Field Committee Report – Cheryl Marshall and Sean Daly

Ms. Marshall introduced Mr. Daly, Chairman of the MBTS Parks and Recreation Committee. Mr. Daly stated the Town working with a landscape architect from Weston & Sampson has developed a field improvement strategy and a draft concept plan for Sweeney Park. In addition to Sweeney Park Weston & Sampson also reviewed Masconomo Park for improvements of pathways to allow for ADA accessibility and grading of the playing field, Brook Field and the possibility of a field on Pine Street.

The Parks & Recreation Committee working with Weston & Sampson met with interested residents at public meetings, conducted online surveys and met with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and other stakeholders regarding field improvements in Town. Sweeney Park is the highest action item and the plan developed focuses on recommendations for Sweeney Park.

Mr. Daly stated the objective of the study was to solve the challenge of too many hours of use on grass playing fields. The study proposes a new synthetic field for Sweeney Park. The new turf field would be expanded into the tree line to allow for a larger rectangular playing field. Ms. Marshall stated the High School Girls' Softball Team uses Sweeney Park as their home field.

Mr. Daly indicated grass fields are best maintained if used for no more than 550 hours annually allowing for restoration of the natural fields. Current field usage is over capacity.

As part of the conversation Ms. Marshall stated the Brook Street tennis courts will be resurfaced following construction of Memorial School. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the "new" tennis courts were 10 years old and may need resurfacing. Mr. Daly thanked the School Committee and hopes for support from the District which would be appreciated.

- Western Woods – Eli Boling

Mr. Boling stated preserving the 500 acres of Manchester's Western Woods is a bold and timely initiative that will serve the Town and the region. It is an initiative that helps protect the Town's water supply, improve climate change resiliency, protect habitat and biodiversity, and expand opportunities for education and outdoor recreation.

The Town is developing a Forest Stewardship Plan outlining how to manage and use the Western Woods. He is asking for guidance from the District on what areas of the Western Woods might be utilized by the District. Mr. Boling specifically mentioned development of cross-country training trails and the possibility of biological sciences using the Forest to study species. He is not asking for an investment in the project simply the opportunity to sit down with one or two key people to gauge interest.

Ms. Fitzgibbon stated she believed the opportunity was fascinating and worth the time for the District to participate. She appreciated Mr. Boling coming to the School Committee. Superintendent Beaudoin believes Mr. Boling would benefit from speaking with practitioners including Dr. Riordan, Mr. Gray and the Athletic Director, Mr. Edgett. Superintendent Beaudoin will facilitate those meetings.

Ms. Wolf stated she is working with a young student who gets to spend 2 hours a day as part of a special project in conservation land and he stated he wished he could do it every day it was his favorite part of the school day. She fully supports students spending time in the woods and believes it may help relieve stress. Mr. Warnock has worked with Trustees of Reservations and taken kids on hikes he fully supports the Town's efforts for preservation and conservation in the Western Woods.

- Essex Elementary School Spotlight Report

Principal Roberts and Ms. Sartell presented the Essex Elementary School Report with focus on a pictorial presentation of Then and Now, changes over a ten-year period. Highlighting resources, programming and new staffing.

Resources: Principal Roberts

Technology – EES has 5 Chrome book carts, 3 iPad carts and Active Boards in every classroom.

ELL – District Program is at EES with Ms. Bolio the program teacher having created a welcoming space for direct instruction.

SWING program provides academic, social and behavioral support for students with autism, cognitive and physical disabilities.

RULER initiative has been successful.

School Resource Officer is a huge success. EES benefits from increased communication with the Essex Police Department and Officer Locke has engaged the Essex Juvenile Officer in EES activities.

Essex Fire and Police Departments are actively involved in the school's safety protocols which are referred to as "Quiet Safety Drills".

School Climate: Ms. Sartell

Ms. Sartell stated the school climate has shifted from an environment of rules and compliance focused on rote skills to an Informing Climate. EES has defined Core Values and a Mission Statement. Every September students experience and demonstrate expected behaviors and learn about school safety during a day set up throughout the school.

Understanding Our Differences – engages students in grade 3, 4 and 5 with people who have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism. The program introduces students to members of the community and High School students who have some of these challenges.

Inclusiveness – High School students from GSA have presented to staff and as a result the ballroom dancing class no longer identifies opposite gender couple roles but teaches students to both lead and follow.

Green Team – helps students learn responsibility with before and after school jobs.

Kindergarten Helpers – 4th and 5th graders are assigned to assist kindergarten students adjust to EES.

Student Council – raised funds for two international causes this past year.

Backyard Growers – planted and harvested fall vegetables.

EES Got Talent – is a program developed and featuring student talent.

Principal Roberts informed the Committee teachers are now joining in with their talents.

Principal Roberts talked about 10 years ago children moved during recess and PE. And rules were posted.

Now with the RULER model the District is working in the framework of emotional intelligence. The recent parent survey asked if parents were seeing RULER at home and 57% responded they were.

Classroom Charters at EES each classroom has its own charter asking students how they want to feel at school. Every student can recite their class charter and across grade levels students are developing language around emotions. By the time the 3rd and 4th graders come into Middle School they will have a shared language.

Mood Meters – “if you can name it you can tame it” children are learning the vocabulary and are able to identify their feelings in the moment. Principal Roberts stated the language is even being used in literacy lessons. How is this character feeling at this moment? At EES we are teaching students to be their best selves.

DESSA assessments provide a 2nd tier of instruction. One on one counselling with the Adjustment Counselor is the next level of support for students.

Community Partnerships: Ms. Sartell

Then parents were informed by mail or through the Town Library.

Now the PTO sponsors events and enrichments programs including trips to Appleton Farm, PEM, Lowell Mills, Cruise, Ship Building Museum and more.

Change in simple teaches students in grade 2 about the life cycle, grade 3 about the ocean and rain forests and in grade 4 responsible recycling.

Happy as a Clam 5K Race shows support for the school with t-shirts and programs for parents and children.

Polar Plunge Principal Roberts paid \$40.00 not to participate.

Goodbye to Eagle’s Nest Playground was a special event all teachers and students went out to the playground said goodbye and took a picture to the music of John Denver.

Community Reads is another PTO sponsored event all children receive a copy of the same book and read the book collectively.

Parents receive a weekly newsletter, EES is on twitter and Instagram and Principal Roberts has a blog.

Ms. Sartell gave special recognition to Ipswich YMCA for providing and supporting the EES after school program.

Global Day of Play a special day when children bring in board games from home and socialize.

Principal Roberts stated it is all about the team, and the amazing staff who put the students first.

Ms. Weld thanked Principal Roberts and Ms. Sartell for the presentation and for providing her with a sense of what it is like at EES. She feels she now understands the unique quality of EES.

Ms. Wolf asked about the ELL program and if the District population of ELL students has grown. Superintendent Beaudoin stated that when she and Principal Roberts first came to the District there was no ELL program. Now there is a full-time teacher who supports the District and the population District wide is 1% to 1 ½% of students receiving ELL support.

Ms. Cameron thanked Principal Roberts and Ms. Sartell stating she was very impressed. She appreciated the SPED evaluation and engagement of students in the classrooms. She was amazed with the variety of seating options and the fact that children can appropriately get up and move around the class. She was also impressed with the number of Police Officers in the picture. Principal Roberts credits the new SRO with managing the inclusion of the Essex Police Department in EES activities.

Ms. Fitzgibbon stated she thought the parent engagement was phenomenal. Also, she knows first-hand that EES sets a tone, expectations and values for the students to follow and kids rise to meet the expectations. She was impressed with the community partnerships and cultural inclusion piece which she noted is a challenge at the secondary level. She also praised the Town librarians for their programs and support of EES. She asked if the Scholastic Book Sale and Field Day remained EES events. The Scholastic Book Sale is this week and Field Day is the last day of school according to Principal Roberts.

Mr. Warnock stated frequently the School Committee focuses on costs, spending and infrastructure and it was a welcome break to see the benefit side. He knows how much the playground means to the community and understands how strong the environment and feelings are within the Town.

- Essex Elementary School Playground Update

Mr. Warnock recapped where the EES Playground Committee was in the process of working toward a new playground. Part of the process is the community developing an understanding of the constraints and rules for building a playground. Ideas around the community build like in 1987 have surfaced and is the new playground what the Town wants. Questions around private donations and volunteer labor have been asked. Along with what are the roles of vendors. Mr. Warnock stated meetings have been juggling many topics.

Mr. Urbas stated the timeline defined by the School Committee requires the state contract approach utilizing the in-place State procurement process. Mr. Urbas suggest the best approach is the MHEC vendors who are pre-approved like the MSBA process used for the Memorial School, who look at the whole project installed. Mr. Urbas cautions if the project does go out for bid the deadline will be missed. According to schedule the School Committee will approve the project at the April 6, 2020 meeting.

Superintendent Beaudoin is concerned the working committee will not meet the charge of the School Committee. Ms. Cameron stated she is concerned community input will become community design. It is the role of the Committee to gather information and execute decisions while meeting deadlines.

Mr. Urbas stated the firms making presentations to the Committee are experienced and reputable. Understand the size of the playground needed, regulatory requirements, including accessibility, fall and use zones and poured in place surface requirements. Mr. Warnock stated the community is concerned the playground is 2/3 the size of Eagle's Nest. Mr. Warnock stated the size of the

playground is determined by the number of students and the need for fall and use zones which were not defined in 1987.

Superintendent Beaudoin asked a clarifying question is the fall date a charge of the School Committee. Mr. Urbas stated if the working committee selects a pre procured approach at the March 9, 2020 meeting it is still possible to meet the fall date.

Ms. Mandello asked on behalf of the community what are we giving up to meet the deadline. She stated some of the options presented were bland noting the community is in favor of a maritime theme. Ms. Whitman strongly supports a playground installed by fall. And suggests the community involvement can be realized in landscaping, artwork and customization.

Ms. Weld reiterated the School Committee charge to complete the project by September. Ms. Fitzgibbon stated there needs to be a time to put the pencils down.

- FY21 Budget Update

Mr. Urbas updated the Committee on the status of the FY21 Budget:

- ✓ The budget status is stable, Mr. Urbas will continue to monitor for any surprises in the spring mentioning move ins.
- ✓ Health Insurance increase is anticipated at 6% as long as the current level of claims remains consistent.
- ✓ Out-of-District placements continues to be monitored.
- ✓ Applications have been submitted for Circuit Breaker Extraordinary Relief.

Ms. Fitzgibbon confirmed the Committee would know more about Circuit Breaker funding in mid-April which would be a significant help in moving into FY21. She confirmed that transportation would be reimbursed at 25%. Mr. Urbas stated that is the plan and will be available in quarterly installments from the State.

Ms. Cameron asked about extraordinary circuit breaker and what qualifies. Mr. Urbas stated if enrollment of ODD placements grows by more than 25% annually the District will qualify and can reapply for the additional revenue from the State every year the growth is 25% plus.

8) School Committee Comment – There were no additional comments this evening.

C. Adjourn

Ms. Cameron moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Weld seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

