



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES June 16, 2020

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	June 16, 2020
Location:	Via Webex
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Sarah Wolf Ken Warnock Caroline Weld Ann Cameron Eric Bourke Lukas Shan, Student Representative
Absent:	
Guests:	Julie Riley, Director Curriculum and Instructional Technology
Recorded by:	Gail Hunter

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order** – Ms. Erdmann called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
- B. Business Meeting Open Session**
 - 1) **Public Comment** – There was no public comment prior to the meeting.
 - 2) **Chairperson’s Report** –

Ms. Erdmann stated the District budget passed at the Essex Town Meeting. Ms. Erdmann credited the success of the budget passing to the collaborative process and a lot of hard work between the Towns and District. Ms. Erdmann encouraged parents to attend the MBTS Town Meeting and to bring friends.

Ms. Erdmann mentioned a recent email from Massachusetts Association of School Committees containing two proposed resolutions for consideration. The resolutions were not on this evening's agenda and will be discussed at the next School Committee meeting. The resolutions relate to unfunded mandates in the State's Covid-19 guidance for reopening schools and an anti-racist resolution requiring additional programming.

3) Student Report –

Lukas stated with school ending on Friday some students are concerned about fall. Ms. Erdmann stated the District would receive additional guidance from the Department of Education by mid-July and she anticipates school will reopen with a hybrid program half of the student body in and half remote. Superintendent Beaudoin stated school will not reopen the way it was although she recognizes that would be the students' preference.

Ms. Erdmann stated she hoped Lukas was looking forward to summer and relaxing. Superintendent Beaudoin informed Lukas he has the summer off, but she will include him in the Committee meeting notices and the Committee would welcome his participation.

4) Consent Agenda

- Acceptance of Warrants – None
- Minutes – 6.2.2020

Ms. Cameron moved to accept the Consent Agenda, Mr. Bourke seconded the motion. The motion passed with all School Committee members present approving the Consent Agenda.

5) Sub-Committee Reports

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

Ms. Cameron reported the School Building Committee met last week and the Memorial School project is still on time and on budget with the building demolition to be completed this week. The Building Committee had a long discussion regarding a change order relating to Covid-19 expenses and concluded the change order would be charged to the Construction Manager's contingency plan. Additional charges are anticipated relating to Covid-19. Ms. Cameron concluded the meeting was uneventful and construction is going well.

- Finance Committee (Anne Cameron/Shannon Erdmann) – Report

Ms. Erdmann reported the Essex Town Meeting went well with the successful passing of the District budget for FY21. Ms. Cameron stated the Town asked for the School Committee's continued support of the new playground for fall of 2020. Ms. Erdmann stated everyone on the Committee is behind the project and the playground will be discussed at a future meeting.

- Policy Committee (Eric Bourke/Rachel Fitzgibbon) – No Report
- Negotiation Team (Sarah Wolf/Ken Warnock) – No Report

6) Superintendent’s Report – with Dr. Riley

- School Closure, Reopening Outlook & Timeline

Dr. Riley highlighted training for educators as the District moved to remote learning in March.

- Zoom training with additional individual trouble shooting and a Zoom update to the newest version. The faculty did well and felt good with the support provided.
- The District identified ways for faculty to organize curriculum and support among the faculty allowed for moving curriculum content online.
- Google classroom was utilized as an instructional platform.
- Dr. Riley offered recognition for teachers and administrators for their efforts through the three phases of remote learning defined by the Department of Education.
- Friday trainings were recorded and are available for staff on the District website.
- Tech staff also offered one-on-one tutorials when needed.

Ms. Cameron asked if Dr. Riley believed teachers knew when to use what tool, so students understand the rhythm. Dr. Riley stated at the beginning lessons were left on teachers’ desks when we went home in March. Every three weeks there were updated versions of state guidance. We are now in the place where faculty understands expectations and standards. We all evolved with the process. There will be additional training and organization on the structure during the summer.

Dr. Riley indicated other curriculum areas were moving forward at the same time the District shifted to remote learning.

- ELA Program review is currently in professional development online as a District learning course running concurrently with remote learning.
- Math program review of best practices at Middle School level; research will be picked up in fall with additional research.
- K-12 trajectory for computer science define and build infrastructure for computer literacy with support of a Department of Education grant. District is working in concert with the Department of Education, this is a three-year process. Ms. Foster is the liaison with Department of Education.
- Aligning course work with new Social Studies standards. Civics Course in Middle School and developing core curriculum for High School.
- During the summer grades 6-12 Health and Social Studies course development will continue.
- STEM scopes program development to support teachers and engage students.

Ms. Wolf thanked Dr. Riley for her presentation. She asked if given the current climate if equity and social justice piece were considered for K-5. She understands the pieces are in place for grades 6-12. Dr. Riley stated the District is currently doing work at the Middle and High School connecting data, training around the current curriculum. The District has done a lot of work not all the work and currently we are building back to the Elementary level.

Mr. Bourke asked if the District was working with other Districts around younger children to build out the vision and structure in curriculum. Superintendent Beaudoin stated there is a Principals Group and a Leadership Group that work in concert with each other. Yes, we are working with other Districts.

Ms. Cameron asked how all curriculum development is progressing in the Covid-19 environment and how is all this being achieved. Dr. Riley replied much of the curriculum work was in process pre Covid-19. The District has amazing teachers part of the process committed to work and ready and willing to dive in. Some of our efforts do not feel like work and yes, we are all exhausted.

Ms. Cameron asked about math in High School not for this year but for next year, are you on solid ground in the review process and will you be able to share research with the School Committee? Dr. Riley indicated many of the curriculum development programs are a two-year process. The math review includes Middle School staff and Principal and the High School Department Chair.

Ms. Erdmann noted curriculum development is not an overnight process mentioning the Social Studies standards which were first proposed in 1995. Social Studies standards are updated but the District is still waiting for new materials. Work done with students is project based. How we look at this in Middle School and High School has been addressed in person and how that happens remotely is an additional challenge.

Ms. Weld asked if additional phases are anticipated for remote learning. Dr. Riley replied yes, we will move into a new phase teaching remotely and in person whatever we do in the fall we will do in two venues.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated underpinning everything is robust remote learning and the Program Development Committee will gauge what teachers need to achieve that objective throughout their summer meetings.

Ms. Weld asked how schedules will be pulled together if things change. Superintendent Beaudoin replied she does not know what school will look like and she wished she had the answers. She went on to state we know health and safety plans coming from the Department of Education will structure the year. Most likely there will be a hybrid schedule and some parents will decide to teach their children from home.

At this time, the District does not know how many children will be allowed in a classroom as a result it is difficult to build a traditional model for Middle School and High School schedules. It is anticipated that the Elementary classes will hold a fixed number of students for the day with lunch brought into the class. The District does not know the proposed rotation schedule or

guidance for transportation. Hopefully more structured guidance in late June will allow for the District to develop and build the schedule and curriculum in July and August. Remote learning will be part of programming.

In late July, the District will forward a Return to School survey to parents. In order to plan and understand who will be sending their children back to school and who plans to use transportation or carpool. Superintendent Beaudoin stated everything is tentative and subject to change.

Dr. Riley stated the District is working to have robust programs waiting for kids. With remote learning the objectives are to support parents, help students use platforms and make sure all families receive information on devices and each student has their own device. Superintendent Beaudoin stated we will be better prepared. Dr. Riley indicated we are learning from what has gone on in the past months and aligning resources.

Ms. Weld thanked Superintendent Beaudoin and Dr. Riley for all their work. Mr. Warnock stated it is important to have community involvement with parents helping parents not everyone is in the same position. Mr. Warnock also thanked Superintendent Beaudoin and Dr. Riley.

Ms. Erdmann asked how the District planned to address kids who are returning to school with deficits. Dr. Riley stated that was a challenge for every school system in the country and the challenge will be figured out and will be effective. Kids returning to school will be nervous and require support academically and have social emotional needs. We will be prepared to support a wide range of groups and students.

Ms. Erdmann stated she appreciated all the fantastic work and understands more work is being done to prepare for school year 2020-2021.

7) Continued Business

- FY20 Budget
 - Closing & End of Year Transfers

Mr. Urbas stated at the end of the year the Committee traditionally reviewed the full end of year budget. This year the District will realize savings not likely to occur in future years. Mr. Urbas is proposing moving the savings into a dedicated reserve fund. He projects the District may need the funds to cover proposed use of reserves approved in the FY21 budget at the February meeting in the amount of \$250K and revised due to the anticipated loss of state funding to \$335K.

Mr. Urbas discussed putting the proposed budget transfers in context. For FY20 the District did not expect significant savings in personnel expenses. The transportation stabilization fund is in excess of budget \$63K and with the savings from not using substitute teachers personnel line item is over \$56K. Mr. Urbas requested a motion to transfer funds in excess of budget into stabilization.

Ms. Cameron moved to transfer funds in excess of budget into stabilization, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Urbas proposed increasing the payment for Out of District Placements from FY20 amount of \$150K to a prepay for FY21 of \$275K. The funding for this increase will be achieved through the savings in transportation, supplies and administration.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked where in the salary line item was the funding for the Dean of Students. Superintendent Beaudoin replied funding was under Principal and Assistant Principal and the change had been previously approved by the School Committee. Ms. Fitzgibbon asked about the SRO position and payment for that position. Superintendent Beaudoin stated payment will depend on final accounting from the Town of Manchester and thanked Ms. Fitzgibbon for the reminder.

Ms. Wolf asked if funding for the Essex playground was coming from the stabilization fund or from reserve funds. Mr. Urbas stated funding for Capital projects was coming from interest income from bond proceeds in FY19 the District received \$318K and anticipated the same amount in FY21 additionally there was an insurance reimbursement of \$170K.

Ms. Cameron moved to accept budget transfers as proposed on the transfer sheet, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- FY21 Budget
 - Essex Town Meeting Report

Budget passed at the Essex Town meeting.

- Update Revenue Assumptions

There is no additional information at this time regarding revenue.

- Planning Scenarios & Timeline

Planning and Timeline for fall 2020 will likely be finalized by mid-August. The stated budget is down 25%.

- Preparation for Fall 2020
 - Summer 2020 – Program, Facilities & Preparation

Superintendent Beaudoin stated there will be no Summer Camp Program. Summer literacy and summer services for special education will take place. The District's facility rental program is anticipating opening in January 2021. There will be no student activities until further notice. After school care in fall will be allowed under state guidance. The Y childcare program was part of the Emergency Child Care program the Y is a licensed provider and the District hopes to have key pieces of childcare in place for September.

- Initial Estimates for PPE Costs

Mr. Waldron and Mr. Urbas have been working to define and place orders for required PPE items for school opening. The estimated cost for three months of PPE including masks, gloves and additional PPE for District nurses is \$100K. It is unknown how long the initial order will last and the anticipated cost for School Year 2020-2021 is \$350K.

The MASC resolution addresses the large price tag for PPE indicating Districts and Municipalities do not have resources to cover these costs. There are funding sources like Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, CARES Act, FEMA and Coastal Villages Region Fund but it is unknown if these resources will be available to help.

- Memorial School Transition

Superintendent Beaudoin stated Memorial School storage and labor for safety and cleaning is an unknown. The School Committee will be updated as the costs are defined.

- 2020-2021 Tentative Calendar

The School Year 2020-2021 Calendar indicates the anticipated first and last days of school and traditional breaks for holidays. The first day of school may be delayed for staff safety training. Updates to the calendar will be posted on the District website throughout the summer.

8) School Committee Comment –

Ms. Erdmann was reminded by Ms. Cameron that two School Committee members would be leaving following Town elections. Ms. Fitzgibbon from Essex has served on the Committee for three years and Ms. Weld from MBTS has served on the Committee for nine years. Ms. Erdmann stated Ms. Fitzgibbon has been a fantastic voice of reason and Ms. Weld did an incredible job with the Memorial School Building Committee working tirelessly on the project from the ground up. The Committee owes each of these members a debt of gratitude.

Ms. Cameron recognized Ms. Fitzgibbon for holding the Committee to a high standard and Ms. Weld who will be missed as a Committee member and friend.

Ms. Wolf asked to return to the Essex playground stating the District is committed to having kids play as part of their educational program. It is important to get kids to play outside this summer with masks!

Ms. Fitzgibbon stated it was an honor and privilege to serve the people of Essex on the School Committee.

9) Adjourn

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