

School Committee Minutes
Upper Town Hall
Monday, September 23, 2019
6:15 p.m.

Members attending: John Ruark, Shannon Molloy, Sharlene Cronin, SusanMary Redinger, Suzanne Allen and Linda Dwight. Absent: Maureen Babcock and Aziz Aghayev

John Ruark called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.

John Ruark read the Vision Statement.

Public Commentary – None

Student Update

Dr. Dwight introduced Vivien Jamba and Taylor Caroom who will serve as student representatives to the School Committee.

Vivien reported that last week there was an early release day. At the end of the day, there was a community gathering led by students which included a friendly competition. In the evening, there was an Open House for parents and a Club Fair in order for parents to see what clubs are available for students and when they meet. Students are finding the school cleaner this year, recycling will start up soon in the cafeteria, and there seems to be less vaping this year. John Ruark welcomed the students input and invited them to speak up as representatives at the table.

Curriculum Report; English Department on Mindfulness Initiatives

Janet Brown presented an overview of the Mindfulness Initiatives at The Bromfield School.

- To Support Social Emotional Growth
- To Engage with Others in Ways that Increase a Sense of Community & Connection
- To Productively Manage Stress
- To Foster Greater Resiliency
- To Engage in & Meet the Expectations of Rigorous Coursework in Healthy & Balanced Ways

Ms. Brown shared information on a class that she teaches called, “The Art of Being: Mindfulness, Meditation, and Personal Wellness”. The course is an English elective and qualifies as an 11/12 Health credit. The Art of Being reaches out to the community through visits to Hildreth, the Dean College conference, The Beacon, and Harvard Council on Aging. Ms. Brown shared how the program is measured for effectiveness through student surveys, enrollment, course products, student risk survey, course and school attendance and community feedback. In addition, Ms. Brown has held instructional practices on Mindfulness for teachers.

Title IX and Field Report

John Ruark led the Committee in a discussion regarding four general questions –

What is the District/Committee obligation under Title IX, what guidelines on oversight/reporting are suitable for the School Committee, is Title IX Equity determined within “Silos” (Athletic and Extra-Curricular) or measured across “Silos”, and what are the responsibilities and tools to ensure equity regarding money provided by independent booster groups? Mr. Ruark noted that this is most likely the beginning of a much more in-depth future discussion.

Next steps – Review how equity is determined and reported, review policies in place, and review yearly report of complaints and how they have been handled.

Sharlene Cronin gave a report prepared by the Athletic Field Planning Subcommittee exploring a series of issues relevant to the Town's interest in improving the management of its athletic fields.

Key findings:

*no realistic budget for maintenance of fields – work to create a field plan and budget for maintenance.

*Fields are overused – define maximum usage.

*Decentralized – Specific individual to represent school.

Next report will round out inventory, participants and usage, governance, finance and budget.

Agenda Item XVI – Public Comment

Dan Daley – 15 Littleton Road – fields, governance, mindfulness

Dave Kilkenney – 80 Slough Road – fields, Title IX

Kate Stamm, 61 Old Littleton Road – adequate fields

Hannah Murphy – Littleton Road – fields

Sue Voute – 94 Bolton Road – equitability

Gloria Pierce – Stow Road – equitability

Mike Voute – 94 Bolton Road – town government – opportunity for team to work together

Mike Mazzu – town of Ayer – Ann Lee field not best solution- partnering with other schools

Emma Voute – girls should have equal fields

The Committee will bring this topic back at a future meeting to address issues that have been brought up tonight.

School Building Update

The School Building Committee met last week. The contractors are in the process of pouring the foundation now. The topping off ceremony will be held in late November/early December. The public will be invited. There is one complex and lengthy issue that revolves around moving a telephone pole to make an egress road. Things are being worked out regarding that, and everything else is on schedule and on budget.

Superintendent Report – See attached.

PreK Class Approval

The Committee discussed the need for an additional preschool classroom at their last meeting and brought it forward tonight for a vote.

Shannon Molloy made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to authorize the district to hire an additional preschool instructor to begin in January 2020 to provide an additional preschool classroom as recommended by the administration.

VOTE 5/0

Shannon Molloy asked to consider and study the possibility of a free full day kindergarten program in the future.

Superintendent Rubric/Goals; Vote

The Committee reviewed the new rubric provided by the state for evaluating the Superintendent. The pilot is consistent with what the Committee uses now. The Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee is recommending that Harvard be an early adopter of the pilot. The commitment to be a pilot district is minimal. It seems worth trying the new rubric provided by the state.

Dr. Dwight presented her goals to the Committee which include - Curriculum Development, Feedback Improvement and Calibration, and Community Involvement.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to approve the pilot rubric and the Superintendent goals as presented.

VOTE 5/0

Capital Plan Submission Approval; Vote

Dr. Dwight reviewed the FY21 capital requests that will be submitted to CPIC. The biggest change is the cost of the ramp to the middle school. The range would be \$500K to \$900K. The architects are working on a more specific price. John Ruark stated that HEAC is still brainstorming, and may add grant projects to the list.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to approve the plan in such a way that the TBS ramp will include a range from \$500K - \$900K, and that based on subsequent conversations between School Committee liaison and Capital, if the moving expenses and the audit are no longer deemed Capital expenses, they will be removed; all other items are approved as presented.

VOTE 5/0

Curriculum Calendar

Dr. Dwight shared the list of presentations given at School Committee meetings over the last 3 years.

Dr. Dwight shared a list of potential presenters for the coming year, which included:

HES - Health; Social Emotion Learning

TBS Science; Engineering

HES Cross Curricular; Maker Space

TBS Cross Curricular; AP Courses

HES/TBS Wellness, TBS World Language

Sign Language, TBS Social Studies

Global Competency Program

Bromfield ELA – and Unified Arts are also possibilities.

Policy Review

Three policies were brought forward for adoption after being presented as first reads at the previous meeting.

GCQE – Retirement of Professional Staff Members

GCQF – Suspension and Dismissal of Professional Staff Members

AB – The People and Their School District

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to move to approve as presented.

VOTE5/0

Grant and Field Trip Approval; Vote

Harvard PTO grant - 8th grade field trip to Sturbridge Village – \$1,032

Harvard Schools Trust grants:

Steam Museum -bringing the museum into the school - \$1,295

Steam Club – two parents want to start a 4th grade science club - \$500

Turing Tumble – robotics - \$582

Report for Harvard – John Osborne - \$1,000

Shannon Molloy made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to approve all grants as presented.

VOTE 5/0

Agenda Items

Student Advisory Topics

Negotiating update

Enrollments

HEAC

Policy

Field Discussion

Minutes

With no objection, the Chair approved the minutes with no change.

VOTE 5/0

Liaison/Sub-Committee Reports

Sharlene Cronin –reported that she missed the Inclusion meeting and is excited to start moving forward.

Sharlene Cronin – reported that the Athletic Advisory met this Wednesday morning. Goal setting timelines for the year.

Sharlene Cronin – reported that the Negotiation Subcommittee held its second meeting. Things are moving forward.

SusanMary Redinger - reported that the TBS School Council met and they are working on the School Improvement Plan.

Suzanne Allen – reported that parents are coming forward in a positive way to support SEPAC.

Shannon Molloy reported that there have been talks with parents interested in forming a SEPAC in Harvard. Last week they met with someone from the Westford SEPAC for tips on how to get started successfully. Connected us with a Pac to Pac group that will provide advice moving forward.

Shannon Molloy - reported that the Policy Subcommittee will be meeting this week.

Shannon Molloy – reported that the HES School Council met and focused their meeting on planning for the parent survey.

School Committee Commentary

Sharlene Cronin - curious if students in Harvard joined the Climate Change Strike. Dr. Dwight said she was surprised it was very quiet, maybe it was the timing of the year early on and not planned out. Sharlene would like to understand more about how climate change is taught to students and ways she can support that. The School Committee will ask the Green Team to present at a meeting in the future.

John Ruark – thanked Dr. Dwight for getting students involved and looks forward to their participation in meetings.

Suzanne Allen spoke to how great Mrs. Brown’s presentation was and how happy she is that it is being so universally accepted.

Adjournment

John Ruark made the motion and SusanMary Redinger seconded to move to convene into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A section 21(a)(2) and (3) for the following purpose:

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Harvard Teacher’s Association because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee.

The Committee will not reconvene to Open Session at the end of Executive Session.

Roll call vote

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

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Zadroga

