

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 2020

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

Others in attendance Aziz Aghayev

John Ruark called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

SusanMary Redinger read the Vision Statement

John Ruark 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.

Student Report – No report.

Student Advisory Committee Topics

The Committee will schedule their final Student Advisory Committee meeting for June 5th at 10 a.m. The Committee will discuss remote learning with a focus on what is working and what is missing that should be included if remote learning continues in the fall from the student perspective.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to approve the minutes of the May 11th meeting as amended.

VOTE 5/0

Public Hearing on FY21 Budget

The School Committee held a public hearing on the FY21 Budget. School Business Manager, Aziz Aghayev presented an overview of FY21 budget.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and SusanMary Redinger seconded to approve the FY21 budget as presented.

VOTE:

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

Public Comment

Jennifer Finch, 165 Codman Hill Road, Harvard, MA – budget approval

Middle School ramp recommendation

SusanMary Redinger explained that the Finance Committee has changed their funding recommendation for the Middle School ramp. They are in favor of borrowing the money for the base project, but not the extras (stairs, bathrooms, and landscaping) which were intended to be

funded by the Capital fund. The School Committee is being asked to look at the project and decide if they stand by their recommendation for the full project. The Committee decided to take no action at this point and retain their commitment to the project as presented and let the Capital Committee vote on the project as is.

Superintendent Update – See attached

Shannon Molloy agreed to put together supporting words to the Class of 2020 from the School Committee for submission in the Harvard Press.

PreK Tuition; Vote

Dr. Dwight asked the Committee to consider reducing the preschool tuition for the remainder of the year due to the change in service due to COVID-19. Dr. Dwight explained that there were funds in the PreK revolving account to cover the deficit if tuitions were not collected for the full year.

John Ruark made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to authorize Linda Dwight to send out a letter to families of Prek students enrolled in our class that mirrors what we have given to our Kindergarten students with respect to refund/revenue collection of tuitions for the remainder of the school year for the months of April May and June.

VOTE

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

Canceling 2020 Summer Camps; Vote

Dr. Dwight recommended that due to current circumstances she is recommending that the school's 2020 Summer Adventure program as well as summer enrichment programs be cancelled. The School Committee supported her decision.

FY21 Personnel Communication; Vote

Dr. Dwight shared a letter she crafted to send to families to explain that due to financial uncertainty and staffing needs for the 2020-2021 school year remaining unsure at this time the system is making the difficult decision to lay off valued hourly employees and reducing the teaching staff with three fewer teacher across the district. Dr. Dwight agreed to add a sentence that expresses the School Committee's support of the letter.

Bus Agreement; Vote

Aziz Aghayev shared an amendment to the Dee Bus Service, Inc. contract that was prepared by the Westford Public School's legal counsel and shared with districts that use Dee Bus Service. This agreement will allow for a 55% reduction in payment to Dee Bus Service for the remaining amount owed. The savings would be approximately \$81K. The School Committee wishes for our legal counsel to review the contract prior to approval. There was a lot of discussion surrounding the agreement and how it may set precedent for the 2020-2021 school year and in light of the recent need for layoffs. Mr. Aghayev informed members that these payment guidelines follow the direction given for contracted services from the Department of Education and Secondary Education.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move that we authorize Dr. Dwight, pending legal counsel's review and approval to sign the amendment.

VOTE:

Allen (Aye) Cronin (Abstain), Molloy (Nay), Redinger (Aye), Ruark (Aye)

By friendly amendment the contract would come back if it was not approved by counsel.

Policy Review; Vote – Table Policy to the June 8th meeting.

School Committee Self-Review Kick-Off

John Ruark asked that the Committee complete the self-review by the end of June this year. In the next two weeks members will complete the self -review and submit it to John Ruark, he will then have two weeks to collect the data and collate the results. John Ruark suggested using the same rubric as last year and then decide if some questions could be eliminated. Sharlene Cronin suggested having someone shadow John Ruark in order to learn the process. John Ruark will send out the document and will ask for it to be returned by June 8th.

School Building Update

SusanMary Redinger reported the school building project is 41% done in billing and construction. Currently we are looking at a May 18, 2021 move in date. Masons will be setting the granite this week. Dry wall starts this week. Roofing will be done by June 5th and then electrical work can start. COVID-19 guidelines are still being enforced. SusanMary Redinger sent a letter to Governor Baker asking to have COVID expenses covered. The project is almost back on schedule and on budget.

Grant Approval

The following gifts were presented for approval from Harvard Schools Trust:

Graduate Signs - \$500

Generation Genius – One-year subscription - \$795

Aero-gardens – 3rd grade - \$425

John Ruark made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to accept the grants as presented. Allen (Aye) Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye), Ruark (Aye)

Summer Meeting Scheduling

Meetings will be held June 8th and June 22nd as scheduled.

July and August dates will be decided at the next meeting.

Agenda Items

Superintendent Review

Title IX information

Resolution for Federal Funding

School Improvement Plan - Fall

District Improvement Plan – Fall

Student Opportunities Act

SEPAC presentation

Remote learning – standing agenda item

Liaison/Subcommittee Reports

John Ruark reported HEAC met and discussed current and future projects. The lighting project is on going. They began discussion on the new charging car port at HES and will be working on funding sources for that project.

Maureen Babcock reported that there have been 10 new homes sold at Devens, with 7 remaining to be sold. There is no date scheduled for the next DEAC meeting.

Suzanne Allen reported that SEPAC is working on their by-laws.

Suzanne Allen reported that she is participating in the group Dr. Dwight started regarding the re-opening plan for HPS. People are expressing where they think things need to be addressed.

Suzanne Allen reported that the Policy Subcommittee met and made changes as recommended by legal counsel to the Booster Policy. They will meet again next week.

Suzanne Allen reported that the Dashboard Subcommittee will meet next week.

Shannon Molloy – reported that it is amazing to watch SEPAC and the co-chairs dig in, stay focused and accomplish so much. They are so committed.

Shannon Molloy reported that the HES School Council met and discussed remote learning. They are looking to fill open parent spots on the School Council. They continue to discuss the School Improvement Plan and how to move forward on that work.

Sharleen Cronin reported that the Parks and Rec Committee is working to identify and prioritize field maintenance projects. They are also looking to implement user fees and put them into a plan that will offset maintenance costs. There is a town meeting warrant article that if approved will give field jurisdiction to the Parks and Rec Committee for a handful of fields.

SusanMary Redinger reported that Capital meets June 4th to review all warrant articles.

SusanMary Redinger reported that the TBS School Council met and were updated on remote learning and plans for the senior class. They also talked about the School Improvement Plan moving forward regarding new initiatives (comprehensive assessment, homework, mental health focus for middle school health and ninth grade) and initiatives that will continue (learning, respect, school spirit). The TBS School Council will be holding election for open slots for one parent, one community member, one faculty member and some students. The next meeting is scheduled for June 10th.

Commentary

Linda Dwight – work continues on Ann Lees field – bleachers are in. The Conservation Committee approved the foul poles and temporary fencing. The project is moving forward.

John Ruark – meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

VOTE

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

Respectfully submitted

Mary Zadroga

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