

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
March 22, 2021
6:15 p.m.

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

Others in attendance Nick Thornton, Taylor Caroom, Brooke Caroom

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

Nick Thornton read the Vision Statement.

Public Commentary: None

Student Report:

Brooke Caroom reported that the Civics Cup winners were declared and notified. Team Robert was the first-place team and was made up of eighth graders Ewan Ward, Isaac Xu and Brady Martel. Coming in a close second were the Civic Gods made up of seniors Freddie Curtis, Ben Brown and Matthew Atwell. The third-place team was a team of senior siblings, the Twinners, with Taylor Caroom, Brooke Caroom, Arianna Thornton and Nick Thornton.

Brooke Caroom reported that the school musical will be held April 9th, 10th and 11th.

Taylor Caroom reported that the class of 2022 had a service project Saturday to allow juniors and seniors to earn service hours. A mental health day presented by the SWAT team will be held on Wednesday. Students will be able to zoom into the meeting. More furniture as well as new spacing measures are being added to Bromfield classrooms to accommodate both cohorts of students returning together for in person learning.

Nick Thornton reported that the Fall 2 season for sports has started.

Superintendent Update - See Attached

Policy Review (VOTE)

Abby Besse reviewed the changes to the Mask Policy – File EBCFA that was presented at the previous meeting. The policy adding language to accommodate spacing during eating periods and water breaks when students are unable to be outdoors.

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to approve Policy EBCFA as amended.

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

Suzanne Allen presented the COVID-19 Travel Policy. She explained that the state is no longer keeping a map of the lower risks states and has changed the travel order to an advisory making the policy unclear. Suzanne Allen suggested the policy be changed to reference the CDC guidelines. She also suggested adding language that would recommend employees and students

continue the COVID safe schools testing before and after travel. It was decided that the Policy Subcommittee would need to meet to update and clarify the policy language before the Committee would be able to approve it. The School Committee will hold a quick meeting on Monday, March 29th after the Policy Subcommittee has had time to review and update the policy language based on the new state and CDC guidelines.

The Committee reviewed the policy “Spacing Between Students and Teachers and Staff” that was presented as a first read at the previous meeting.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to approve the Spacing Between Students and Teachers and Staff - Covid 19 policy as presented.

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

Start time Proposal (VOTE)

Dr. Dwight presented a proposal to adjust the start time at Bromfield from 7:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. with an ending time of 2:50 p.m. to provide our middle and high school students with a half hour longer in the morning to sleep and prepare for their school day. This adjustment to the Bromfield schedule will require a shift of 10 minutes for the elementary students from a school start time of 8:50 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and an ending time of 3:30 p.m. The shift would be a one-year pilot so that we could evaluate the impact and either continue with the change or shift back to the original times depending on the feedback. This evaluation would be done in the spring of 2022. A survey to parents/students/teachers/staff showed that a majority of the stakeholders support the start time proposal as a pilot.

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Abby Besse seconded to approve the start time proposal as presented.

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

Calendar Review

Dr. Dwight presented the school year calendar for 2021/2022 with two options. One has a start date of August 23rd and the other has a start date of August 30th. A vote by staff for the preferred calendar resulted in a fairly even split. Per contract, the calendar using the August 23rd start date would need a vote of the HTA because it requires teachers to begin the school year more than a week before Labor Day.

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to move to support the earlier start date pending a positive vote from the HTA. If the HTA votes against the earlier start date the School Committee agrees to approve the start date of August 30th.

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

Choice Student Slot Allocation (VOTE)

Dr. Dwight presented the leadership teams recommendation for School Choice openings for the 2021-2022 school year as follows:

5th grade – 5

6th grade – 2

7th grade – 2

9th grade – 1

SusanMary Redinger suggested removing slots in grade 7 for the reason that it would bring the class to over 10 school choice students enrolled. The recommendation would be to draw down the school choice carry over to make up for the funding difference.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to approve the amended choice recommendation with the amendment being the removal of the two proposed 7th grade choice students with the rest remaining as proposed.

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

District Van Purchase (VOTE)

Dr. Dwight requested approval from the School Committee to purchase up to three vans from CASE Collaborative for \$1,000 each.

Abby Besse made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to move to approve the purchase of up to three van as presented.

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

Capital Projects Update

Dr. Dwight explained that the architects at Abacus have completed the construction level drawings. When they sent the drawing out for an updated cost estimate, the pricing came in over budget due to much higher price of steel and other materials. To make up the difference they are taking out the programmable lighting system and making some design changes. They will then send the project out for bids. If the price is still too high, we may consider doing the project during the fall instead to avoid the summer crunch prices.

Dr. Dwight reported that Abacus is interested in helping us with the study of the locker rooms. Patrick Harrigan reissued documents needed to receive quotes and sent it out to this architect firm and others.

Dr. Dwight reported that there are 8 companies that came for a walk through for the HVAC bid. Bids are due on March 25th. Construction could begin in June as these are funds that were allocated at the Town Meeting last year.

Grant Approval

Chorus Face Masks - \$3,317 – Fanfare – Mr. Robbins

Outdoor Mask Breaks - Safe Movement and Play – \$244.25 - HST – Amy Bassage

Abby Besse made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to approve the grants as presented.

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

Future Meeting Dates

March 29 – 6 p.m. - Policy

Student Advisory April 7th

April 12 – School Committee meeting

April 26th – Budget Hearing

Future Agenda Items

Vote to approve last day of School

Policy

Budget Public Hearing

Minutes

Without objection SusanMary Redinger approved the minutes of the March 8, 2021 as amended.

School Committee Liaison and Subcommittee Reports

Abby Besse reported that Bromfield School Councils meets on Wednesday.

Abby Besse reported that Parks and Recreation met and they have decided that doing the field rotation schedule is not feasible for this spring and that they will look to start it up in the fall. They are looking forward to having a memorandum of understanding with the library and the schools for maintaining the Bromfield and Pond Road fields.

Shannon Molloy reported that DEI is meeting tomorrow.

Shannon Molloy reported that the testing group met and discussed that the state funding program is likely to be extended, and the new guidance and procedures that are going into place with the full day opening.

Shannon Molloy reported that the Safer Teachers, Safer Schools Collaborative meets Thursday night.

Shannon Molloy reported that SEPAC meets Thursday night.

Suzanne Allen reported that the HES School Council met but did not have a quorum. They will meet again at the beginning of next month.

Suzanne Allen reported that she attended the Safer Teachers, Safer Schools Collaborative last week and enjoyed the robust evidence-based discussion. It was great to see how it informs districts in the roll out of testing and logistics. There was a forward look at potential obstacles to think about before we get surprised.

Maureen Babcock reported that DEAC has sent out an education survey to the residents. Results to be forth coming. The Devens DPW director left, and will be replaced.

Sharlene Cronin reported that the Athletic Advisory met last week and approved Indoor Track for the Fall2 season. There are 28 kids who are participating. The Athletic Field Subcommittee is reconvening, and needs to have a School Committee representative on that subcommittee. Abby and Sharlene will talk off-line and bring back a recommendation to the Committee at the next meeting as to who will represent the Athletic Field Subcommittee.

SusanMary Redinger – The Bromfield House Committee meets on Wednesday. SusanMary Redinger is representing the School Committee's preference for the disposition of the Bromfield House which is to retain the land as a town asset.

SusanMary Redinger reported that she attended the MASC legislative breakfast. She met with State House representatives and gave feedback for the schools that there are more

behavioral/social emotion needs, technology needs, continued COVID related needs, core budget needs, and structural issues of getting more money to the towns on an on-going basis.

SusanMary Redinger reported that the School Building Committee meets this week. The project is still on time for a May 19th start of classes at the new school. The move will take place on the weekend of May 15th. The School Building Committee will be working on a ceremonial ribbon cutting ceremony the day of, with a bigger celebration planned for later in the fall.

SusanMary Redinger reported that the Continuous Improvement Subcommittee met and discussed an idea of a new start date for incoming School Committee members. A July 1 start date would need to be approved by the town but it allows new School Committee members time to transition and gives the outgoing member time to complete the Superintendent evaluation and graduation.

Public Commentary

Kathleen Doherty – Watertown, MA – HTA contract

School Committee Commentary - None

Adjourn

With no objection SusanMary Redinger adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.