

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

JULY 20, 2023

A meeting of the School Committee was held at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, July 20, 2023 at the Central Middle School Media Center with the following members present: Melanie Fiore, Chair, Betty Pryor, Vice Chair (Remote), Jaime Wallace, Nicole Nial and Megan Samborski. Also present was David Ljungberg, Superintendent, Kathy Martin, Assistant Superintendent, and Leia Secor, Director of Finance.

Chair M. Fiore called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 6:00 P.M. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Approval of Items by Consensus

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the minutes of June 22, 2023, Warrant #2352 in the amount of \$436,228.55, Warrant #2353 in the amount of \$324,004.46, and Warrant #2402 in the amount of \$85,646.98. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

B. Consideration for Items Withdrawn from Consensus

None

C. Public Comment

J. Wallace read a letter that she received from Jessica Killilea regarding the ESY Program.

D. Approval of 8th Grade Waivers

David Pignone requested 8th grade waivers for Boys and Girls Cross Country, JV Field Hockey and JV Boys and Girls Soccer. He also requested continued approval of Girls Ice Hockey co-op with Melrose.

ACTION: A motion was made by N. Nial and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the 8th grade waivers as requested and also the continuation of the Girls Ice Hockey co-op. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

E. Consideration/Approval of High School Handbook 2023-2024

Principal Lombardi outlined the proposed revisions with the 2023-2024 handbook that included:

- MCAS requirement changes
- Tardy guidelines
- Absence mailing notification
- Bathroom occupancy violation
- Cell phone use
- Update language regarding use of drug and bomb sniffing dogs
- Ordering outside food delivery
- Code of Conduct
- Athletic/Extracurricular Eligibility Conduct

A discussion followed and the Committee agreed to the following changes:

- Page 28: Clarify: food delivery not during school hours
- Update the school calendar to the newest revision
- Page 28: Expand cell phone policy to include technology and social media devices

ACTION: A motion was made by B. Pryor and seconded by J. Wallace to approve the High School Handbook with the added revisions. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

F. **Hiring Update**

Superintendent Ljungberg reported that there have been over 50 staff changes for a variety of rolls and read the list of current vacancies. The ESY program has been struggling this summer due to staffing shortage issues.

G. **Enrollment Update – Challenges with Existing Space and Forecasted Growth**

Superintendent Ljungberg reported on the following:

- Current enrollment 2314 students
- Colonial Park kindergarten is full – new enrollments are processed through the Assistant Superintendent’s office and placed at either Robin Hood or South school based on address and educational needs
- Preschool referrals from Early Intervention is increasing
- Enrollment concerns for Grade 1 at Colonial Park and Grade 3 across the district
- Enrollment projections based on data received from Town Hall registered births
- New developments in town, impact on enrollment and the need to move district lines

The Committee discussed the urgent challenges that face the school department and the need for additional resources due to enrollment projections and new developments in town. The consensus among the Committee was that the Spot Pond development would put a burden on the school department, police and fire.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by N. Nial to go on record as not in support of the Spot Pond project. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call. The Committee will submit a formal letter to the Select Board.

H. **Physical Space Challenges (District Offices and Modular Classrooms)**

Superintendent Ljungberg updated the Committee on the following:

Modular Classrooms: Received an emergency waiver to bypass RFP process for the modular classrooms but not able to bypass the process for services that include walkway, electrical and plumbing. Need to come up with solution on where to put the two classrooms, Dig Safe will review spaces to make sure not placed over gas lines. Price for each box is \$300,000 and the plan is to bring forward to the Capital Committee to help cover some of the expenses; otherwise it would have to come out of the operating budget and we would need to make budget cuts or apply for a waiver to increase preschool ratio class sizes.

District Offices: Four sealed bids were received. Least expensive option is \$200,000 per year. Will conduct site visits and need to consider location, parking and utilities. We also need a space for the SHINE program that was not included in the original design. It appears that it would be more cost effective to own rather than lease. We have the \$500,000 specialized grant for design.

I. Appointment of Interim SPED Director

Superintendent Ljungberg recommended approval of Marc Kerble for the .5 interim Special Education Director effective July 31 through June 30, 2024. The second .5 candidate has made a verbal commitment.

The search for Special Education Director and Assistant Superintendent for the 2024-2025 school year will begin early this fall.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by B. Pryor to appoint Marc Kerble as the part time Special Education Director. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

J. Committee Liaison/Subcommittee Reports

Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee: N. Nial and B. Pryor reported that they have put together a 26-page template and gave it to Superintendent Ljungberg to complete evidence in each category and provide it to the School Committee. The timeline is as follows:

- August 24 meeting: template and evidence reviewed
- September 7 meeting: pass out evaluation and request completed evaluation be returned to N. Nial by September 28.
- October 12 meeting: formal evaluation
- A short version mid-year review will begin in January/February to complete before the April election

Policy Subcommittee: M. Fiore reported that they met last month and are still plugging through 500 pages of policy.

K. School Building Committee

N. Nial reported that the project is 12 working days behind schedule but they think that they can make this up for turn over of the building as scheduled on June 28, 2024. Pressure testing will be done next week, the parking lot is scheduled for August 18 and windows are scheduled to be installed in October. The Building Committee will have two tables at Town Day and will be asking the community what they would like to put in the time capsule.

Superintendent Ljungberg reported on the raising of the parking lot and traffic flow. Lights will be on 24/7 and security cameras will be set up. Mr. Lombardi has sent detailed instructions to students on parking permits. This year students will need to show a valid driver's license before being assigned a space. There will be no painting of parking spaces due to chemical reactions.

L. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ljungberg reported on his attendance at the MASS conference last week and the annual administrators' retreat that will take place next Monday and Tuesday at the Wylie Center at Endicott College.

M. Discussion/Correspondence/New Items

M. Samborski reported on the free lunch program at South School Monday through Fridays.

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by B. Pryor to enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2) and (3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with STA Bargaining Unit, to discuss pending litigation and to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiation with non-union personnel – and the chair so declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call at 8:16 P.M

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
DAVID LJUNGBERG, SUPERINTENDENT**