

School Committee Minutes  
Virtual Meeting  
Monday, July 13, 2020

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

Others in attendance Aziz Aghayev, Taylor Caroom, Brooke Caroom, Vivien Jamba, and Felicia Jamba, and Will Walling-Sotolongo.

Dr. Dwight called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.

Brooke Caroom read the Vision Statement

SusanMary Redinger 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.

**Public Comment:**

None

**District Response to the Open Letter**

Shannon Molloy followed up on the action plan to address the “Open Letter” to the Harvard Press seeking to create a stronger anti-racist school community. Shannon Molloy and Dr. Dwight met with Elise Bilodeau to plan a public forum. It is hopeful that the forum could be held in July. There is significant energy and momentum to support doing something sooner rather than later. The platform of the forum would hopefully be two parts. Part one, sharing the lived experiences of alums. Part two brainstorming action-based solutions. We look forward to hearing back from the leaders of the group soon.

**COVID -19 Learning Plan Update**

Dr. Dwight reported that both schools continue planning for a full reopening in the fall. Both schools have sub-committee meetings nearly every day. They have broken into different groups with each tackling the complexity of issues for the three return scenarios. Task force groups include teaching and learning, schedule, health and safety, transportation, lunch services, spaces, and communication. The principals are setting up focus groups for students and parents to provide feedback on the developing plans. The Committee discussed the possibility of hosting meetings to gain community input on the drafts. This could be a joint School Committee/school leaders forum or held by the school leaders in the evening. There are three plans that will be presented which are full in person, full remote and a hybrid of the two. There will also be a statewide remote option that will be independent of the district. The plan will be sent out in draft prior to the forum so people can come with questions. SusanMary Redinger will send out a doodle meet to members and then schedule the meeting. In the meantime, Suzanne Allen and Dr. Dwight will look at a plan for the medically compromised students.

Dr. Dwight shared that there was a strong response rate from the recent survey. There were many parent/guardians who added additional information for us to consider. The difficulty comes in the fact that written feedback includes conflicting opinions and facts.

In addition, the leadership team have been working on reviewing spaces in classroom and rearranging furniture to determine what is possible. The initial information is that 3 ft. spacing is possible for classes of 20+ with 6 ft spacing requiring smaller class sizes and therefore support a more hybrid schooling option. With the preorder of desks for the new elementary school, we will move 200+ desks to Bromfield to replace tables which have become the most commonly used student furniture pieces.

Dr. Dwight shared that the calendar committee reconvened to review the district calendar and explore the idea of a later starting date. There are multiple advantages to this consideration including more planning and preparation time and fewer of the hottest days from mask wearing. Since the State is still requiring 180 school days, we eliminated the April break in this draft version. The teachers have not had time to provide input on the draft but they will have that opportunity tomorrow and Dr. Dwight will share their input. Dr. Dwight will share the calendar with parents/guardian's tomorrow night to provide the community with time to share their input. There was general consensus that the idea of starting later was good, and the Committee will seek input from the community and vote at a later date in July.

SusanMary Redinger reported that there was an offer to use the Appleworks building if the schools need more room to hold school.

An additional calendar consideration is having a non-school day on September 1<sup>st</sup> to accommodate a request from Marlene Kenney, Town Clerk to allow for voting.

The Chair asked with no objection to present agenda item 12 after agenda item 5.

### **SEPAC Report and Recognition; Vote**

Shannon Molloy introduced and thanked SEPAC board members Aspen Ference and Jenny Gillard for the extraordinary work they have done this year creating and finalizing SEPAC by-laws, mission statement and procedures. Both Jenny Gillard and Aspen Ference highlighted the current work, goals and challenges in becoming a recognized SEPAC organization.

#### **\*Highlights**

Community interest, hosted "Basic Rights" workshop, opened lines of communication with Pupil Services Director, Superintendent and Principals, established parent support group, developed a website, created material for different events, and finalized their mission statement and by-laws.

#### **\*Goals**

Develop a process to collect feedback in order to create a direct line of communication to the district, develop a survey, build membership, establish a collaborative, safe place to work through challenges.

#### **\*Challenges**

COVID 19 – inability to provide any social events

Jenny and Aspen thanked everyone for their support and enthusiasm in this process. They are both happy with the work that has been done over the past year.

SusanMary Redinger and Suzanne Allen thanked Aspen and Jenny for their work and for having this exciting resource for the district.

Jenny thanked Dr. Dwight for working so hard to make Harvard an inclusive district.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Shannon Molloy seconded to recognize the SEPAC as a fully established Special Education parent advisory council.

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

**Superintendent Update** – See Attached.

### **Resolution for federal funding**

Shannon Molloy presented for a vote the resolution in support of increased federal support and stimulus funding for public K-12 education.

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Shannon Molloy seconded to support the resolution in support of increased federal support.

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

### **School Building Update**

SusanMary Redinger reported the following on the HES building project:

\*Abby Besse and Suzanne Allen toured the building today. It was breathtaking.

\*Masonry work continues.

\*Dry Wall, engineering electrical and plumbing continue.

\* A change in the schedule was made to purchase furniture/desks in order to accommodate COVID requirements. 612 desks were ordered.

\*Equipment and technology purchase orders are being finalized.

\*Graphics are being incorporated to include a native nature theme.

\*Next meeting is the third Thursday in August.

### **Grant Approval; Vote**

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

Voces Digital Subscription – Lisa Terrio - \$4,500

Picture Books towards Cultural Competency – Lauren Crittendon/Marybeth Quaadgras - \$1,375

Graduation Sound System – Scott Hoffman - \$1,000

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Abby Bessie seconded to approve the gifts from the Harvard Schools Trust as presented.

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

### **HST and PTO Letters Approval; Vote**

Suzanne Allen presented letters that she prepared to be sent to the Harvard School Trust and the Harvard PTO to acknowledge with gratitude their continued generosity to the Harvard Public Schools.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Abby Bessie seconded to approve the letters as presented.

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

### **Summer Professional Development Review**

Dr. Dwight shared the different types of professional development work that teachers will participate in over the summer. Work includes college courses, teachers offering courses and teachers working together on curriculum. Topics for curriculum work included the Social Studies curriculum standards, virtual learning, and racism.

### **Summer Meeting/Retreat Review**

After feedback from the Committee, SusanMary Redinger recommended having a retreat in the fall. This will allow us time to prepare. If there are agenda items that need to be addressed before the retreat, they can be added to the agenda of a regular committee meeting.

### **Agenda Items**

Superintendent Evaluation  
Graduation Requirements  
Policy Subcommittee – mask policy  
Retreat options  
Remote learning – standing agenda item  
School Improvement Plan – Fall  
District Improvement Plan – Fall

### **Approval of Minutes**

With no objection SusanMary Redinger approved the minutes of the June 30<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting as amended.

### **Liaison/Subcommittee Reports**

**Sharlene Cronin - Field Subcommittee** - moving forward with a prioritized budget for the year. Getting input from the schools as to what is needed. Looking to actually prioritize the requests based on need. Will look from input from the coaches to see what their needs are. Field use will be maxed out at 30 hours per week. Fields are ready for the fall but there will need to be a response plan if we hit the 30 hours on any field.

**Abby Besse – TBS School Council** - will meet on Wednesday.

**Abby Besse - HES Reentry Group** – working on social and emotional subgroup to help support kids and teachers with the school re-entry. Will be working with other subgroups in order to create a FAQ. So much thought is going into this planning. Teachers are heavily invested in making a safe return to school.

**Suzanne Allen- TBS Reentry Group** – working on the scheduling subgroup at TBS – the plan would be to have the same number of minutes per class but not have each class each day to limit exposure. Details have not been worked out. Looking to cohort middle school students to move as a group throughout the day. Looking at physical space and keeping the middle school grades together and then high school students in groups passing together. It's so impressive how hard the teachers are working.

**Shannon Molloy** – presented the following warrant for review:

Warrant 20-27 SCH Amount: \$144,552

**Shannon Molloy- Wellness Subcommittee** - wondered if is there a role for the Wellness Subcommittee in the reentry plan. Will follow up with Colleen Nigzus.

**Maureen Babcock – DEAC** – the final draft of the DEAC newsletter will be distributed soon. Maureen will share the newsletter with the School Committee as well. Homes on Grant Road continue to be occupied. MassDevelopment was planning to bring Vicksburg Square development information to the “Super” town meeting in the fall, but the pandemic may have changed the time line on that.

**SusanMary Redinger - CPIC** - will meet on the 21<sup>st</sup> to do their final close-out. The schools will need to resubmit a trimmed down submission of the Middle School ramp project. We will contact Abacus and develop a plan moving that project forward.

**SusanMary Rediger - Harvard Devens Jurisdiction** – the group is waiting to get other towns up to speed. Victor Normand and Lucy Wallace are doing most of the work on that. Will plan a follow up meeting in September.

**SusanMary Redinger** – the Select board had their retreat and discussed the disposition of the Bromfield House when the school administration moves out. The plan is to keep the land and the house may be sold or demolished.

### **School Committee Commentary**

**Dr. Dwight** – reminded School Committee members that MASC and MASS are holding a virtual institute this week. They have opened up registration to any School Committee members in Massachusetts interested in attending.

**SusanMary Redinger** invited members to the Bromfield graduation on July 31<sup>st</sup>.

**SusanMary Redinger** reminded the community that Dr. Dwight will host an informational session on school re-entry plans tomorrow evening.

### **Public Commentary**

Aron Suliman –Blanchard Road- Re-entry plan

Marisa Khurana – Warren Ave, thanked School Committee members

At 8:40 p.m. SusanMary Redinger with no objection adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Zadroga

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