

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
January 11, 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, Josh Myler

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 students had experienced some concerns with spacing issues in the hallways during the COVID screening held today. Dr. Dwight assured her that the administration is working to make corrections to improve the spacing issues for the testing that will take place tomorrow.

Superintendent Report:

See Attached

Budget Review

Several members of the Finance Committee found an error of significance in our budget that was approved by the School Committee in December 2020. Our approved and submitted budget is \$340,218 higher than the level funded budget we were tasked to create. Between the multiple version for the FY21 budget, the initial failure of the override, and the subsequent decision of the Select Board to further reduce the School District budget before the October Town Meeting, confusion occurred and we built our budget on the incorrect bottom line.

The Budget Subcommittee recommended to delay the locker project so that the \$150,000 from this year and the \$150,000 from next year's allotment from the Deven's fund can be moved back into the operating budget. Additional money would come from the summer professional development line in the amount of \$26,718, and the extra section stipends at Bromfield for \$13,500 will be eliminated. The budget will be brought back to the January 25th meeting for final approval. The Finance Committee and Select Board would like our finalized budget, plus a budget with 5% further reduction submitted to them on January 26, 2021. We will then meet with them on February 10, 2021.

Screening Initiative and Program Guideline Review

Shannon Molloy shared a draft version of the SARS-CoV-2 Screening Initiative Program Guidelines. The guidelines were developed in order to help people understand how participation, confidentiality and donations are handled. Changes were made to the guidelines around confidentiality to make the information more accurate. Dr. Dwight and Josh Myer

reported on how the screening went today and discussed a few changes that will be made to make things work more smoothly.

Learning Model Survey Review

Dr. Dwight shared the parent survey results from December 2020 on the learning models. The survey asked questions about hybrid and remote expectations and assignments as well as workload, asynchronous, communication, adding Wednesdays, adjusting distance and moving forward. The results will be posted to the school website.

Policy Review (VOTE)

The Policy Subcommittee presented Policy JICA – Dress Code with recommended changes.

Abby Besse made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to support the change to Policy JICA as amended.

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

Will bring back policy JICA to discuss in more depth when the dress code portion of the handbook is reviewed and will ask the School Councils to weigh in.

The Policy Subcommittee presented Policy EEAE – School Bus Safety Program with recommended changes.

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to approve Policy EEAE as amended.

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

Anti-Racism Work Update

Dr. Dwight shared that the fourth annual Harvard Community Conference is being held remotely on January 16th. The purpose of HC2 is to spark discussion in the town about diversity and the different contexts within which our identities come into play. Local speakers Christine Zacharer, speaking as a trans woman and Marisa Khurana will talk about fitting in/not fitting in. The program will be from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. You may sign up using the link on the Arm and Arm website.

Warner free Lecture Series – We are the Story, We are the Land. A Journey into Nipmuc Land will be held Friday, January 15th at 7 p.m. A book discussion is set for next Thursday to discuss the book “Braided Grass”. Anti-Racism continues to be the focus for in school professional development, with Wednesday’s PD event centered around structural racism. Dr. Dwight shared that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will be putting together a job description to hire a coordinator/department head position. The position would help with the roles of hiring standards, reporting, and mediation. We will be bringing the plan back to a future meeting for input and discussion.

ATM Report Review

SusanMary Redinger thanked Suzanne Allen for writing the report. The Committee reviewed the report and discussed how to communicate to the town that the budget cuts are in conflict with

the School Committee goals. The report will be approved with changes at the meeting on January 25th.

Grant Approval

The following grants were presented for approval from the Harvard Schools Trust:
HPS Covid-19 Screening Program – Administrative Support – on going
Covid Daycare Support – Cristin Hodgens - \$5,665.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to accept the grant from the Harvard Schools Trust as presented.

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

The following gifts were present for approval:

Coffee Pond –school portrait revenue - \$935.72

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Abby Besse seconded to accept the Coffee Pond donation as presented.

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

Harvard PTO – winter clothing for mask breaks - \$650.00

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to accept the grant from the PTO as presented.

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

Agenda Items for SAC meeting –

General thoughts on COVID

Anti-Racism on the ground reports

Formal agenda list forthcoming

Future Meeting Dates

January 25

February 8th

February 10th

Agenda Items

Budget

Final approval of Annual Town Report

District Improvement Plan review

School Improvement Plan review

Curriculum review – ELA

Policy

Recommendation for next step on in school learning

Minutes

Minutes were presented for the following meetings:
September 26, 2020, December 14, 2020, December 28, 2020

With no objection, SusanMary Redinger considered the minutes of the September 30th, December 14th and December 28th meetings approved as amended.

Liaison and Subcommittee

Sharlene Cronin – reported that the School Building Committee meeting is scheduled for next week and Negotiations are ongoing.

Abby Besse – School Council and DEAC were cancelled.

Suzanne Allen – reported that the Policy Subcommittee updated tonight.

Suzanne Allen– reported that Wellness and HCTV Subcommittees have not met.

Suzanne Allen reported that the Continuous Improvement Subcommittee will be scheduling a meeting soon.

Maureen Babcock reported that DEAC is scheduled to meet on Thursday, January 21st.

Shannon Molloy – SEPAC met on December 22nd and they are planning to hold a program called “Understanding the IEP”. They have also created a tool on the IEP timeline to help families that are looking into services. SEPAC is also working to put together a survey to send out.

SusanMary Redinger shared that HEAC meets Wednesday.

SusanMary Redinger shared that the Bromfield House Committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday. The Committee is aligned on the parameters for acceptable option for the Bromfield House and the property. Bill Ferrence will do some upfront work on the timeline and process. A simple survey will be sent out to gather ideas on what the community would like done with the property and building.

SusanMary Redinger shared pictures she took of her most recent walk though of the new building. They are working on flooring, painting and finish work.

Public Commentary

Katrina Lackner –Parent of 6 grade student – Student Learning Time

School Committee Commentary

Shannon Molloy – From her work on the COVID screening initiative she has worked with the Harvard Schools Trust and appreciates everything they do. Their membership is down among current families and especially with elementary parents. Shannon asked everyone to consider joining the Harvard Schools Trust as they are a critical school partner.

Suzanne Allen – It is important to pick up on the next student survey “how do students feel they are learning this year compared to other years” and also “do students feel connected to school and community”.

Adjournment:

At 8:55 p.m. SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded that we adjourn into executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A section 2 for the purposes to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with Harvard Teachers' Association because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. We will not be returning to open session.

Closing meeting at 8:55 p.m.

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