



Old Rochester Regional School Committee Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

December 21, 2022 AT 4:30 p.m.

<https://oldrochester-org.zoom.us/j/95990142726?pwd=Q0xHSkVzYkVZVEZLTjdIZkJOc0o5dz09>

Meeting ID: 959 9014 2726

Passcode: 486060

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Beauregard (via zoom), Marion School Committee, Katherine Duggan (via zoom), Rochester School Committee, Frances-Feliz Kearns, ORR School Committee, Cristin Cowles (via zoom), Mattapoisett School Committee, Margaret McSweeny, ORR School Committee and Joseph Pires, ORR School Committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services, Sharlene Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning & Michael Nelson, Superintendent of Schools.

MEETING TO ORDER at 4:34 p.m. by Ms. Frances-Feliz Kearns

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 25, 2022 – Superintendent Nelson explained that the minutes needed to be approved from the last meeting. Ms. McSweeny requested a motion for approval of the minutes. Ms. Kearns expressed that she believed there was a brief discussion that was not captured in the minutes, Ms. McSweeny agreed. Mr. Nelson suggested that the minutes be held until the next meeting.

Mr. Nelson requested that the Policy Sub-Committee approve to review the Library District Adopted Procedures first knowing that some of our Librarians have joined us virtually. The members of the policy sub-committee all agreed to this change.

3. Library - District Adopted Procedures Update from Dr. Fedorowicz – Dr. Fedorowicz thanked Colleen Johns and Jessica Barrett for attending the meeting. She reported that she met with Librarians twice since the last meeting in October and reviewed the district adopted procedures extensively and at this time the recommendation to the policy sub-committee is to leave the procedures as is, therefore the recommendation is to make no changes to the Library District Adopted Procedures.

Mr. Pires asked if a special hearing could be held to discuss this. Mr. Nelson explained that Mr. Pires that a special hearing is a separate request and he also explained that such a request would have to be sent to the school committee chair, he expressed that he believes one had already been sent and the Ms. Smith had denied the request for a special hearing. Ms. Cowles expressed that she thought it was important to note that no member of the policy sub-committee requested any proposed changes to the District Adopted Procedures.

Motion by Ms. Kearns to approve the recommendation from Dr. Fedorowicz

Seconded by Ms. McSweeny

ROLL CALL: Beauregard: yes, Duggan: yes, Kearns: yes, Cowles: yes, McSweeny: yes, Pires: no)

Mr. Nelson reported that for the recorded Dr. Fedorowicz had representation from all six schools.

2. Review the following policies: MASC Policy Newsletter Recommendation: Please refer to the guidance in the MASC Newsletter: *Increased scrutiny of district finance policies stemming from state review for Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief grant funding for capital uses, as well as ongoing questions arising regarding the role of the School Committee in grant approval and signature of warrants, has led to this review and update of district finance policies. In the process, we have also clarified language in several locations, ensured proper legal citation, and added further appropriate cross-referenced policies. MASC's designation of a -1 policy is one specifically for regional districts. A municipal school district should consider the policy without -1 as their template; regional school districts those with -1 a template.*

Before the sub-committee started to review the policies Ms. Kearns had the following recommendation: to change finance committee to budget committee to align with our terminology. Mr. Nelson recommended that they accept the recommendations from MASC and possibly have this discussion with your own school committee. And

she also inquired about what Regional School District meant. Mr. Nelson explained that Regional would be 7-12 and the others would be the elementary districts.

Ms. McSweeney inquired about Policy DK-1 and where it talks about the committee designating a single member to be responsible for the review and approval of the warrants. She expressed that she thought that each member still needed to approve the warrants. Mr. Barber expressed that doing through email and having Mr. Muse be the only person who signs just allows us to be able to process warrants in a timely manner.

Mr. Nelson reviewed the MASC Guidance and following policies with the sub-committee.

DB-1 Regional School District Annual Budget – adds “school committee members” and broadens to “municipal officials” those for whom the budget should be “clear and understandable”, paralleling the language of DB and better reflecting intent of policy. Drops “policy” from “Finance Subcommittee”, better reflecting district procedure.

DB-1-R Budget – Apportionment of Expenses for Regional School Districts –Substitutes “by state formula” to internal legal citation which is more properly cited at the end of the policy.

DBC Budget Deadlines – Updates to “Select Board”, reflecting growing nomenclature. Rearranges ordering of paragraphs to better reflect actual process. Adds legal citation.

DBD Budget Planning – Eliminates unnecessary word.

DBG Budget Adoption Procedures – adds legal citation.

DBG-1 Regional School Budget Adoption Procedures – adds legal citation.

DBJ Budget Transfer Authority – Substitutes “district” for consistency. Changes to “School Business Official” to reflect use of the field. Adds legal citation.

DBJ-1 Regional School District Budget Transfer Authority– Substitutes “district” for consistency. Changes to “School Business Official” to reflect use of the field. Adds legal citation.

DD Grants, Proposals and Special Projects – Clarifies required acceptance of School Committee by changing “shall” to “must”. Adds sentence and note to ensure district administration creation and adoption of procedures stemming from policy provides district with necessary documentation and process to appropriate grant oversight and process. Adds both state and federal legal citations.

DGA Authorized Signatures – Aligns policy with updated warrant process allowing single signatory of all warrants and clarifies process following signature. Adds legal citation and cross reference. Updates note to reflect updated allowed process.

DGA-1 Regional School District Authorized Signatures - Aligns policy with updated warrant process allowing single signatory of all warrants and clarifies process following signature. Adds legal citation and cross reference. Updates note to reflect updated allowed process.

DH Bonded Employees and Officers - Updates language to better describe provision. Adds appropriate cross-reference and additional legal citations.

DH-1 Regional Districts Bonded Employees and Officers - Updates language to better describe provision. Adds appropriate cross-reference and additional legal citations.

DI Fiscal Accounting and Reporting – Adds language to tighten policy in reference to administrative procedures required, referencing language used by the Department in ensuring appropriate oversight. Adds federal legal reference.

DIE Audits – Specifies period during which audit must be conducted and notes legal recommendation of consideration of outside firm for student activity accounts. Adds appropriate cross-reference.

DIE-1 Regional School District Audits – Notes requirement of independent auditing firm. Specifies period during which audit must be conducted and clarifies to whom the report is given. Updates to “Select Board”. Adds bullets. Edits typo in Federal Grant Audits. Notes legal recommendation of consideration of outside firm for student activity accounts. Adds appropriate cross-reference.

DJ Purchasing – Adds “or designee” to signature requirement.

DJE Procurement Requirements- Updates reference to “law”. Adds reference to intergovernmental agreements for purchasing, as noted in review of federal grants. Adds language to review requirements under different purchasing threshold under the state purchasing law. Adds legal references.

DK Payment Procedures – Clarifies responsibility of superintendent regarding budget allocations. Adds language outlining process of authorization of signatory with appropriate cross-reference and note.

DK-1 Regional School District Payment Procedures- Clarifies responsibility of superintendent regarding budget allocations. Adds language outlining process of authorization of single signatory, with appropriate cross reference and note.

KCD Public Gifts to Schools – Aligns policy with legal requirements regarding grants and gifts. Clarifies handling of gift funds. Adds legal reference and appropriate cross references.

Motion by Ms. McSweeney to approve the policies listed above as presented

Seconded by Ms. Cowles

ROLL CALL: Beauregard: yes, Duggan: yes, Kearns: yes, Cowles: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes)

Mr. Nelson explained that these policies will now be sent to all school committee members for feedback and will then be approved at the next Joint School Committee meeting.

4. Review JH Student Absences and Excuses Policy – Please refer to “JH Student Absences and Excuses”.

Mr. Nelson explained that JH Student Absences was being presented to the Policy Sub-Committee after being reviewed with Principals. He explained that this policy falls in line with DESE regulations, he also reviewed that after this policy is approved the student handbooks would also be revised and that Policy JE Attendance Policy would cease to exist. The policy sub-committee reviewed the policy by section. Mr. Nelson explained that the last section titled NOTE: is the information that would be listed in the handbook or in our own internal procedures.

Motion by Ms. McSweeney to approve policy JH Student Absences and remove policy JE Attendance Policy

Seconded by Ms. Cowles

ROLL CALL: Beauregard: yes, Duggan: yes, Kearns: abstain, Cowles: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes)

Mr. Nelson explained that this policy will now be sent to all school committee members for feedback and will then be approved at the next Joint School Committee meeting

Additional Policy Work:

Mr. Nelson reported that he wanted to address two requests that had been sent to the Ms. Russo and himself to be addressed at the next Policy Sub-Committee meeting. The first one was from Ms. Cowles in reference to Policy BEDH Public Comment at School Committee Meeting. Ms. Cowles suggested that the policy be amended by adding the following language: *“If an attendee continues to disrupt the meeting after a clear warning, the Chair has the authority to order that person to leave. If the person does not leave, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting. Should an attendee be removed from a meeting by the authority of the chair, said removed person shall be prohibited from attending future in-person School Committee meetings for the remainder of the school year. Said removed person may attend future School Committee meetings remotely. Said prohibition is appealable by said removed person to the School Committee for reconsideration.*

Mr. Pires expressed that he believes that’s wrong, he expressed that what happened on November 7th happened out of frustration, not allowing someone to come to meetings is wrong.

Ms. Beauregard expressed that we have had open comment section in most meetings and the chair of each committee always reviews the policy, she expressed that it’s common sense that the members of the public need to be orderly and if they are not they need to be removed.

Mr. Nelson expressed that he doesn’t think we should include the remote reference because the zoom option is only in effect until March 31, 2023, everyone agreed to strike that language. Everyone agreed to leave the first two sentences and strike the remainder.

Mr. Pires also suggested that the period of time should be revised, he suggested that there should not be a limit. Member of the sub-committee did not agree with that but they all agreed on increasing the time from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. The following changes were approved.

“If an attendee continues to disrupt the meeting after a clear warning, the Chair has the authority to order that person to leave. If the person does not leave, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting.” And change 15 minutes to 30 minutes in item number 1.

Motion by Ms. McSweeney to approve policy BEDH as revised by the Policy Sub-Committee

Seconded by Ms. Cowles

ROLL CALL: Beauregard: yes, Duggan: yes, Kearns: yes, Cowles: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes)

Mr. Nelson expressed that the other request was in reference to a policy concerning surveys and he wanted to publicly state that currently in our policy manual we have policy ILD Student Submission to Educational Surveys and Research.

Mr. Pires expressed that he would like any policies related to transgender students being able to use the bathrooms should be shared at the next meeting, he expressed that he believes it's a safety issue.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:03 p.m. by Ms. Cowles

Second by Ms. Kearns

ROLL CALL: Beauregard: yes, Duggan: yes, Kearns: yes, Cowles: yes, McSweeney: yes, Pires: yes)