

## OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Marion - Mattapoisett- Rochester, MA

Media Room, Jr. High School

ORR School District

133 Marion Road – Mattapoisett, MA 02739

### MEETING MINUTES

January 22, 2020

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/6201781/video/386984403>

#### PRESENT

Committee Members:

Cary Humphrey  
CHAIRPERSON

Heather Burke  
VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Tina Rood

Joseph Pires

Paul A. Goulet, Jr.

Michelle Smith

Suzanne Tseki

#### ABSENT

Committee Members:

James Muse

Stefan M. Gabriel

#### ALSO, PRESENT

Dr. Douglas White  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
SCHOOLS

Vanessa Harvey  
ASST. PRINCIPAL  
ORR HIGH SCHOOL

Silas Coellner  
PRINCIPAL  
ORR JUNIOR HIGH

Kelly Chouinard  
ASST. PRINCIPAL  
ORR JUNIOR HIGH

Gene Jones  
FACILITEIS  
DIRECTOR

Jenn Seco  
RECORDING  
SECRETARY

Members of the  
Press

Catherine Cooper  
SMEC EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

#### MEETING TO ORDER

The Old Rochester Regional District School Committee and Administration meeting was called to order on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 6:32 p.m. in the Junior High School Media Room.

#### AGENDA ITEM V. B.

##### **SMEC MEMBERSHIP** “Please refer to ORRSC 01222020 SMEC.”

Dr. Cooper gave some insight on items that come before the SMEC board which is made up of one school committee member from each of the member towns and most business items are approved at that level. She went on to share that there are some items after being approved by the SMEC board that also have to go out to all membership districts for a vote.

Dr. Cooper brought forth **two items** for the committee to vote on.

##### **1. Amendments to the Articles of Organization –**

The main reason for the amendment is that the Fall River School Committee formally requested to join the collaborative and the request has been approved by the SMEC board members. The next step is to have this request go out to all school committee members for a vote. If approved, the amendment then goes to the Commissioner of Education. Dr. Cooper also added that a few items were reworded for clarity and added that the business manager for the collaborative be attached to the public records requester officer as one position.

##### **2. Capital Reserve Account -**

Dr. Cooper shared that in 2015 the board and all members of the school committees voted to allow SMEC to establish a Capital Reserve Account in order to set funds aside for capital purchase/projects.

Dr. Cooper stated that SMEC is growing and they are looking for new space. She also shared that

currently many of the SMEC locations are older and come with higher maintenance/improvement expenses. She requested that the maximum potential balance be increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000 and also to allow the use of these funds on long term lease properties. She noted that the board will continue to have internal control and vote on all uses of the funds.

- MOTION:** Ms. Smith made the motion to approve the amended SMEC Articles of Agreement and amended SMEC Capital Reserve policy as submitted.  
**SECOND:** Mr. Rood  
**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

#### AGENDA ITEM I.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### AGENDA ITEM I.A.

### REGULAR SESSION

Minutes of Dec 11 - "ORRSC 12112019 December Minutes"

- MOTION:** Ms. Burke made a motion to approve the December 11, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented  
**SECOND:** Ms. Smith  
**VOTE:** Pass, (Ms. Tseki Suzanne abstained)

#### AGENDA ITEM IV.A.

### DISTRICT AGREEMENT PRESENTATION "Please refer to District Agreement Presentation for more detail"

Ms. Rood shared some information about the impact the agreement and described the regional school district as "hybrid". She went on to explain uniqueness of the way the district is formed containing four school districts as well as five school committees (elementary schools have school committees within their towns and the Junior/High school have the ORRD school committee as one). Ms. Rood went on to say that this will not impact the elementary schools and emphasized that this district agreement is only for the junior high and high school. Ms. Rood stated that this agreement is the only way for the junior high and high school to raise funds from the towns in support of the budget for both schools.

Ms. Rood went on to share that two years ago the main take away from a presentation given by the Department of Education and Department of Revenue to the Tri-Town school committees and town officials was that a regular review of the agreement is essential. Thus, forming the Regional Agreement Subcommittee. Since the last amendment to the agreement was in 1986, it was sent for a thorough legal review by the Department of Education along with best practices by DESE, State Auditors Report and an overall review by the subcommittee. Ms. Rood gave an overview of the changes needed to the agreement per the prior reviews made. Ms. Rood requested that the school committee thoroughly review the detailed documents.

Dr. White shared a meeting will take place that will include the ORRD Committee, Regional Agreement Subcommittee, Town Administrators (3), Selectman and the person that generated the report. Ms. Rood added a vote to approve the agreement would need to take place at the next committee meeting to ensure it is included on this year's town meeting warrant.

Vice Chairperson Burke shared that the Collins Report is a study done by the [Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center](#) for Public Management through a grant obtained by Mattapoisett to study the assessment that the ORR district puts on the town. The information was provided by the district and the Collins Center combined that data along with their expertise in this area. The period studied is FY2012–FY2019.

Vice Chairperson Burke presented the findings reported on the [Assessments at the Old Rochester School District](#) and encouraged/encouraged that the report be read fully in order to understand the findings in depth. Please refer to <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11stDCniv8ev3nfyL29kOP4Ox1Ln4SUN8/view> for full details.

Ms. Burke went into more detail on finding 5, stating that she felt it was a critical finding because it points to the physical pressure that the towns and the school district have felt since 2016. The pressure is due to slow growth in Chapter 70 and foundation budget funds requiring the school district to make up for the lower state funds by increasing the assessment funds to maintain the statuesque operational budget of the school. As the state contributed less and as costs rise the gap rose. The pressure was felt in all school in Massachusetts and recognized legislation which is why the Student Opportunity Act became law in late 2019. She shared that the causes of this situation were outside of the schools control and mentioned a few of the efforts taken such as advocating for the Student Opportunity Act, securing additional regional transportation funding, finding created ways to address rising health care costs, and successful grant writing.

Vice Chairperson Burke added to finding 6 that as educators and school district it is a competitive space, students have options of where to go and for the good of both the school and town budget ORR needs to be an attractive choice. ORR is the least expensive choice in schools for towns to send students to and ORR services the most students.

In finding 7, in district spending is less than the state average. Given the fact that MCAS scores are consistently higher than the state average and the many markers of student achievement, Tri-Town taxpayers are getting an incredible return on investment at ORR. However, on the surface this looks good, but it is not sustainable. Ms. Burke did highlight that ORR spends no out of district expenditures on special education saving many dollars and thanked the Mr. Nelson for his tireless efforts.

Vice Chairperson Burke went on to review the recommendations and shared that the report validates and reinforces a lot of what is recommended in the proposed Regional Agreement and helps explain the pressures felt over the last five years. She concluded that it quantifies how fiscally responsible ORR School district has been in the last eight fiscal years.

#### AGENDA ITEM VI.

#### **STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT**

The Student Council shared that the State and Southeast student advisory council met and are moving forward in the respective assigned work groups. The Regional Council will meet February 4<sup>th</sup>. Senior Superlative nominations are wrapping up and the final ballet on February 5<sup>th</sup>. The senior trip will be coming up and prom coordination is under way. The prom this year will be held at the Belmar in Newport, RI.

**MOTION:** Chairperson Burke made the motion to approve the out of state venue for the Class of 2020 Senior Prom on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Belmar in Newport.

**SECOND:** Ms. Rood

**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

Student government in all four grades are coordinating spirit days which will take place the week before February vacation and class Olympics will be the day before vacation starts.  
Discussing around creating a fundraiser for the Australian bush fires or focusing on local needs.

Vice Chairperson Burke shared that seventeen Decca members made it to the next level and they have a Go Fund Me page along with a calendar fundraiser.

AGENDA ITEM V. C.

**APPROVAL OF MUSIC DIRECTOR POSITION** “Please refer to ORRSC 01222020 Music Director”

Dr. White gave quick overview of the amended contract presented to the committee and requested a motion to approve the Music Theater Director Position

- MOTION:** Ms. Rood made the motion to approve amended contract as presented  
**SECOND:** Ms. Tseki  
**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM V. D.

**UPDATE FROM JOINT LABOR COMMITTEE**

Dr. White gave a quick update stating that as part of the negotiation with the association by January they would come back to the committee after meeting with administration. This will be present at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM V. E.

**PURCHASE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION VAN** “Please refer to ORRSC 01222020 Van Purchase”

Dr. White shared that the program continues to expand. Currently there is one van which has wheelchair accessibility in the back not meeting all needs and all students do not fit on one van. There are funds available for a new vehicle that would meet all the student’s needs. The dollars set aside for the paid off vehicle are more than the new vehicle resulting in savings and outsourcing transportation would not be needed saving \$5,000 in the FY21 budget. This van would cost less than the current one due to state incentive for student service vehicles of \$6,000.

- MOTION:** Ms. Smith made the motion to approve the purchase of a special education van as presented  
**SECOND:** Ms. Tseki  
**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM V. F.

**SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Chairperson Humphrey shared that unfortunately due to an overlap on meeting dates, interviews were taking place at the same time as the current committee meeting. On January 29<sup>th</sup> a special joint committee meeting will take place and recommendations will be made along with next steps.

AGENDA ITEM V. G.

**REVIEW OF SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020-2021** “Please refer to ORRSC 01222020 School Calendar”

Dr. White shared that starting in September 1<sup>st</sup> will be difficult due to primary election because there is a school that is used for elections in the district. Dr. White went on to say that since it will be the first day of school children would not be able to be moved to another location as they have been in the past. He suggested that September 1<sup>st</sup> be the first day for teachers and the 2<sup>nd</sup> for students and having school on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> keeping in mind that other stakeholders are also reviewing the calendar. He also added that November 3<sup>rd</sup> is also elections and can be used as a PD. The committee went on to discuss few other possibilities/challenges. Dr. White suggested reviewing the calendar, gathering feedback from staff/families and coming back with an agreement in order to go to next joint meeting in March.

AGENDA ITEM V. H.

**APPROVAL OF PROGRAM OF STUDIES REVISION** “Please refer to ORRSC 01222020 Program of Studies”

Assistant Principal Harvey presented two proposed technology courses

- Web Design Develop 1-meet ½ elective and is a cost neutral course (staffing and software currently available). This class is based on feedback received from first year college students that were lacking skills in JAVA.
- AP Computer Science A. In the future there would be two selections AP Computer Science A and AP Computer Science Principle depending on students because they drive the course selection drives. This course is also cost neutral.

Vice Chairperson recommended clear communication to students will be needed in order for students to understand the differences due to the course names being so similar. Assistant Principal Harvey went on to share a few of the course descriptions that were updated and a clarification of credit for honor versus college.

**MOTION:** Ms. Rood made the motion to approve the course descriptions revisions as presented in the packets  
**SECOND:** Ms. Tseki  
**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

**AGENDA ITEM V. I.**

**FACILITIES COMMITTEE OVERVIEW**

Chairperson Humphrey recommended that this agenda item be table due to 2/3rds of the members not being present and Dr. White added that to his understanding this item was to verify the membership of the Facilities Committee. Ms. Rood expressed her concerns about time passing and the continuously holding off the discussions around the needs of the fields, tracks, tennis courts etc. She went on to express that it was unfortunate the membership has not been resolved causing these needs come to a standstill. Based on Mr. Rood’s comments, Vice Chairperson Burke requested that the initial committee member vote minutes from the Policy Subcommittee be shared in order to discuss in the future. Dr. White also recommended asking for legal counsel to be present when the vote takes place in order to follow guidelines. He also added that the Budget Subcommittee needs to make some hard decision according to what dollars are available. Chairperson Humphrey stated that all sub committees are important and all members are valuable and what they bring to the table is essential. The meetings are open and all are welcome the concern is the legality of current community members. An audience member voiced his concerns about communication within the towns when information such as budgets are passed along and are not shared.

**DONATION from Friends of Old Rochester Drama**

**MOTION:** Ms. Rood made the motion to accept a donation from the Friends of Old Rochester Drama of \$10,000 for the purposes of lighting in the auditorium  
**SECOND:** Vice Chairperson Burke  
**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

Dr. White added the goal is to have the project done by April and he thanked Mr. Jones for all his hard work in the lighting project savings.

**AGENDA ITEM V. J.**

**APPROVAL OF OUT OF COUNTRY TRIP**

Assistant Principal Harvey presented an overview on the out of country trip to Scotland and Ireland starting April 15-24, 2021. Students would miss one day of school. The cost per student would be \$3,750 and there are 25 students interested. Fundraiser will be organized to help offset.

**MOTION:** Vice Chairperson Burke made the motion to approve an eight day trip to Ireland and Scotland on April 15-24 2021 as presented  
**SECOND:** Ms. Rood  
**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.1.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Dr. White reviewed an overview of the financials with the committee. He went on to share that any lines that are in the negative can be managed within the program or charged back to the three communities. He will continue to monitor budget each month.

AGENDA ITEM VI.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Humphrey thanked the principals so far this year. He added as a DECA alumni he is proud of their accomplishments, growing so fast and doing well. The next step in concern to the Superintendent search will intense.

**CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

Dr. White shared that the Student Opportunity Act was approved. Receiving \$30 additional new dollars per student. He will be attending a superintendent conference on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and will hopefully have a better understanding of why the funds are so little. Vice Chairperson Burke added alongside of funding comes new reporting mechanism that administration will need to supply further burdening the school.

Dr. White extended his gratitude to Mr. Nelson and the great job he did leading PD on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Overall the day was a success. Many messages were received from the staff about the experiences.

**PRINCIPLE REPORT**

HIGHSHCOOL

No Update

JUNIOR HIGHSHCOOL

Principal Coellner shared an overview on news and important upcoming dates which can be found in more detail in the Junior High Principles Report dated January 22, 2020.

**OPENCOMMENTS**

Ms. Smith read an overview provided by DECA with details of placement recognition in recent competitions.

AGENDA ITEM VII.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

SMEC

Ms. Tseki shared the following items that were discussed at SMEC

- Fall River joining SMEC
- Presentation from an independent auditor
- Approve van purchase

LOCAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ms. Smith shared the following items that were discussed at the Marion School Committee meeting

- Presented budget and presented to the town

Ms. Rood shared the following items that were discussed at the Rochester Memorial School Committee meeting

- Presented budget

- PTO presented possible fundraisers for all to tap into. Ms. Rood sent Kudos to the members of the PTO and the great work being done.

TRI-TOWN FOUNDATION

No update

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

No update

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

No update

POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. Tseki shared the following items that were discussed at the Policy Committee meeting

- Building use policy. Mr. Jones provided an estimate use cost

Vice Chairperson Burke shared that for the next joint school committee policies will be sent for review.

DISTRICT AGREEMENT COMMITTEE

No update

JOINT COMMITTEE

No update

**MOTION:** Ms. Smith made the motion to adjourn

**SECOND:** Ms. Tseki

**VOTE:** Unanimously Pass

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.