

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

December 11, 2019

<https://vimeo.com/379827104>

PRESENT

Committee Members:

Cary Humphrey CHAIRPERSON	Heather Burke VICE-CHAIRPERSON	Tina Rood	Joseph Pires	Paul A. Goulet, Jr.
James Muse	Stefan M. Gabriel	Michell Smith		

ABSENT

Committee Members:

Suzanne Tseki

ALSO, PRESENT

Dr. Douglas White SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS	Michael Devoll PRINCIPAL ORR HIGH SCHOOL	Vanessa Harvey ASST. PRINCIPAL ORR HIGH SCHOOL	Silas Coellner PRINCIPAL ORR JUNIOR HIGH	Kelly Chouinard ASST. PRINCIPAL ORR JUNIOR HIGH
Gene Jones FACILITEIS DIRECTOR	Susana Cunningham Human Resources	Members of the Press		

MEETING TO ORDER

The Old Rochester Regional District School Committee meeting was called to order on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Junior High School Media Room.

OPEN COMMENTS

A clarification statement was shared by Mr. McGrail, Marion Town Administrator, in regard to comments reported in the press that were made at the Marion finance committee meeting by a member suggesting Marion with draw from the ORR school district. He went on to state that these comments do not reflect the intentions of the town adding that they are fully committed to working together to strength the district. He went on to say that the town is concerned with the update and revision of the regional agreement, e.g. teacher contract negotiations, capital planning and funding. He also shared it was unfortunate that the press's take away from the productive Marion Finance committee meeting was one idea from a member. He also shared a comment he made about the current superintendent that was taken out of context when the point he was making was around the district agreement reform. Mr. McGrail extended his gratitude to Dr. White's helpfulness and the pleasure it has been to work side by side. He went on to say that it may be difficult to accomplish an agreement and present it at the spring town meeting given Dr. White's upcoming retire. He shared that he hopes the future superintendent will continue to find common ground with all three towns. He also shared that touring ORR put into perspective all the great things happening at the school.

Selectman Waterman added to Mr. McGrail's comments stating that he often raises questions about expenses and not to be misconstrued as being anti education. He went on to share a number of expenses the town of Marion is currently challenged with. He asked the committee collectively with the town look towards the future in order to manage education costs.

Vice-Chairperson Burke thanked both gentlemen for sharing their comments and touring the high school. She went on to share that there is an ongoing significant amount of concern and focus balancing the needs of the schools and the challenges of the towns.

Mr. Waterman requested that the committee publicize and make people aware of the efforts that are being made. As an example, he referred to Sandwich's presentation of their budget. Ms. Rood chimed in and shared that this is already being done every March and all are welcome to join.

A few members of the committee thanked the Marion Town Officials for taking the time to apologize and clarify the situation. They agreed that transparency, communication and collaboration are essential. Chairperson Humphrey requested that both Town officials help rally Mattapoisett and Rochester to be apart of the budget process as well.

Dr. White added that there has been a lot of work done by the school committee around the agreement and with attorney help the push could be made to get it to a vote at the next Marion town meeting. He went on to share that tapping into his ten years of historical knowledge can be beneficial in the process. Vice Chairperson Burke and Ms. Rood will be presenting the regional school agreement on January 22, 2020 at the next ORR District School Committee meeting. Vice Chairperson Burke shared that it has been long overdue, and Dr. White's expertise will and has helped the process. Ms. Rood added that the current draft has been shared with the three towns.

AGENDA ITEM I.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

AGENDA ITEM I.A.

REGULAR SESSION

Minutes of October 23, 2019 - "ORRSC 12112019 October Minutes"

MOTION: Mr. Muse made a motion to approve the October Regular Meeting Minutes with amendments
SECOND: Vice Chairperson Burke
VOTE: Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM V.

GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM V.A.

INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. White introduced Ms. Cunningham from human resources and went on to share that they met with the teachers association, custodians and retirees in order to take a look at the current plans as well as other available programs to ensure the best insurance plan is provided.

Ms. Cunningham shared that Old Rochester has been with the Gateway Health Group since 2005. Ms. Cunningham put out to bid the health insurance receiving a quote from MIIA, one of the biggest health groups in MA. She went on to share that because of having an older workforce, claims tend to be higher making it difficult to get a better plan. She also shared a few details about MIIA and that it allows the subscriber to customize their own plan based on employee needs.

Ms. Cunningham thoroughly compared both plans sharing that Gateway will decrease in FY21 because the unions have agreed to go into a deductible plan. MIIA did come with a bigger decrease, unfortunately the plan does not include dental like Gateway and the deficit penalty for leaving the plan is factored in the cost. She also shared another downside would be the increase in cost to the employees who wanted to add dental coverage.

Dr. White added to Ms. Cunningham's comments sharing an overview of what was discussed with the advisory council sharing that the savings from Gateway compared to MIIA with no penalty would be a good move but as a result of having to pay a penalty the savings as a district would be less. He added that staying with Gateway for another year since the rates will be lower than they have been in the past is the administrations' recommendation. Dr. White also shared that for the first-time employees are going to be shifting into a deductible plan and looking forward human resources will reevaluate the need to change in the future. The committee agreed with the administrations recommendations.

Dr. White thanked Ms. Cunningham and stated that she has made a tremendous difference in central office and has been very helpful to employees at all six schools. Ms. Cunningham received a round of applause from the committee on the work she is doing and the difference it will make in the district.

AGENDA ITEM V.A.

SCHEDULE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

The School Committee agreed to meet on Tuesday, March 3rd to present the FY21 budget at the public hearing.

AGENDA ITEM V.B.

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION

AUDITORIUM LIGHTING

Ms. Rood shared a few details of the money that has been collected to help with the cost of replacing the stage lighting in the auditorium through donations. Dr. White proposed allowing the high school administration and maintenance department prepare a plan that includes the actual cost, timing and available funds for this project. Once the plan is in place a meeting will be set to determine next steps.

COPPER BEECH TREE

Mr. Jones shared that the Class of '70 Alumni would like to donate a 10' foot Copper Beech Tree to the school. Vice Chairperson Burke brought up concerns about cost of maintenance in the future and taking on things that incur more expense due to the budget challenges. Dr. White proposed reviewing the policy around donations to make sure that language is included and covered about these types of donations.

MOTION: Mr. Muse made the motion to accept the Cooper Beech Tree

SECOND: Mr. Pires

VOTE: Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM V.C.

UPDATE ON SOLAR PROJECT "ORRSC 12112019 Solar Project"

Dr. White shared an updated on the solar project stating that the special legislation has been drawn up and will be voted on and once agreed it will allow the school to enter in to a renewable entity agreement with Solar Select. He went on to say that once this is approved the next step would be to continue to work on the contract language and the savings for the district. Dr. White also shared that currently the cost is at sixteen cents and this agreement will eventually be in the nine to twelve cent range adding that this will be a good savings. Please refer to ORRSC 12002019 Solar Project for detailed information.

AGENDA ITEM V.D.

HIGH SCHOOL CLASS SIZE REPORT "ORRSC 12112019 Class Size Report"

Principal Devoll presented a comprehensive review of the class size report. He stated that the report is a contractual item that requires reporting out each year. He made the committee aware of individual cases where class size exceeded the numbers presented in the contract. He shared that each case was carefully reviewed and the decision to exceed fit each circumstance. Please see ORRSC 12112019 Class Size Report for more detail.

AGENDA ITEM V.E.

APPROVAL OF PROGRAM OF STUDIES REVISION "ORRSC 12112019 Program of Studies"

Principle Devoll reviewed the Program of Studies for English 12 with the committee. He shared if the programs are approved the 12th grade will be provided with two new options giving them a total of five college prep classes with honor credit offerings creating a dual path within the same class. Mr. Gabriel posed the question about last years' challenges and opportunities based on the experience with AP and Honors US History and Principal Devoll responded with not so favorable result due to being bound the AP curriculum not allowing time for more. Using that experience the English coordinator and Social Studies coordinator met and reviewed the pros and cons. AP US History is a staple and will continue to be an offering.

The members of the Student Council chimed in on the new class options sharing that the changes are great and beneficial additions for students that want to commit to honors in preparation for college. They further added after reviewing the course descriptions, they would have taken the class if given the option. Due to the time constraint on the AP curriculum there is no option to focus on interesting subject such as the new offerings of Multicultural Literature and Media Literacy.

Vice Chairperson Burke agreed that giving new seniors options is great and received confirmation from Principal Devoll that the professional training and curriculum are in place. Mr. Gabriel asked if these elective classes would be open to underclassmen. Principal Devoll explained that because there is a four-year requirement the class will need to be filled by upper classmen first.

Principal Devoll went on to present the elective Social Studies offering. Mr. Gabriel agreed that it is a good idea to arrange alternating schedules because of enrollment challenging and knowing in advance when classes will be offered makes academic planning easier.

Principal Devoll presented the changes to Science portion of the Program Studies sharing that a couple of full year classes will become half year (Environment Science & Forensic Science). Honors are offered for kids that want to study Forensic Science in more depth and a new half year class, Genetics, will also be offered.

Please refer to ORRSC 12112019 Program of Studies for more details.

MOTION: Vice Chairperson Burke made the motion to approve the course updates and new courses as presented with the stipulation the Principal Devoll will return to the next school committee meeting to introduce the honors options for the English 12 courses.

SECOND: Ms. Rood

VOTE: Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM V.F.

APPROVAL OF GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS REVISION “ORRSC 12112019 Graduation Requirements”

Principal Devoll introduced Mr. Bernardo the 7-12 foreign language department coordinator. He went on to share that Mr. Bernardo has carefully looked at restoring the two sequential year requirement for a foreign language. Foreign languages had been voted out of the program of studies in the past, making ORR one of the few schools in the Southcoast without a language requirement. The department of education has foreign language as a part of their MA core curriculum. Students upon graduating high school should have two sequential years of the same foreign language. This information needs to be reported back to the state with the percentage of students meeting the requirement. Less than ten students from the graduating class each year do not meet this requirement at ORR. The standing Committee for Graduation Requirements can waive certain reasons for not taking a class they also review transfer classes to determine if they meet the requirements for graduating. Currently Spanish and Latin are offered, and a portion of students have taken sign language courses. Any classes taken outside of the norm will be reviewed by the Committee for Graduation Requirements. Mr. Goulet shared his concern that this requirement removes the option to choose and puts a hurdle on students that are not planning to attend a four year college and Ms. Rood weighed in expressing that it's an opportunity to get exposure and experience for students and the states views learning a foreign language as valuable. Mr. Gabriel also shared that this is a good demonstration of ORR's view and the importance of being a global citizen. Assistant Principal Harvey also shared that another language can open a number of opportunities to a students' future and career opportunities.

Chairperson Burke asked if this item can be moved to the next meeting. Ms. Rood also asked that the information be revised in order to make it more reader friendly.

Please refer ORRSC 12112019 Graduation Requirements

MOTION: Ms. Rood made the motion to approve the two-year graduation requirement for language

SECOND: Mr. Gabriel

VOTE: 5 Pass (2 abstain - Vice Chairperson Burke and Mr. Muse)

AGENDA ITEM V.H.

APPROVAL OF AUDITOR CONTRACT “ORRSC 12112019 Auditor Letter”

Dr. White shared that after reviewing the budget and current audit costs the administration recommendation is to change the audit company. He went on to say that the current auditor has done a good job but it has been determined the cost is outside the norm. The new auditor (established, certified and insured) will be a cost savings to the district. Ms. Rood added that each year the school is audited, and all results are available to share. Please refer to the ORRSC 12112019 Auditor Letter for more information.

MOTION: Mr. Muse made the motion to approve the three-year contract as presented
SECOND: Mr. Gabriel
VOTE: Unanimously Pass

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.1.

FINANCIAL REPORT “Please refer to “ORRSC 12112019 FY20 Financials”

Dr. White shared an overview of the financial report with the committee indicating that any items over charged can be covered within the program or part of a charge back. He shared that he and Mr. Lynch will continue to work on the financials and feel that it will be in good stead for the end of the year.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.3.

FY21 BUDGET TIMELINES “Please refer to “ORRSC 12112019 Budget Timelines”

Dr. White shared that the budget subcommittee met earlier that evening and will continue to meet in order to get the budget prepared to bring forward to the town officials. The public hearing will be on March 3rd. Please refer to ORSC 12112019 Budget Timeline for more details.

AGENDA ITEM VI.C.4.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT “Please refer to “ORRSC 12112019 Student Opportunity Act – Fact Sheet”

Dr. White shared that the Student Opportunity Act has passed at the state level in the house and senate. The formula for Chapter 70 will be changed and take seven years to fully be implemented. Taking into consideration the actual cost for health care to the school (2.5M) and having the number be identified as they bring in new Chapter 70 dollars. This will be the biggest impact because it’s where a greater part of the budget is tied up in health care and the reimbursement will help offset the cost. Other consideration will be special education enrollments and costs, English language learners counted differently and provide funds according to the shares of low-income housing for students in the district. Dr. White went on to share that since money has already been spent to update the guidance and psychology areas, when funds are available the district will be ahead. Circuit breaker (transportation) has not been regarded in the past but now qualifying dollars will be available. Dr. White shared that once the amount is known the next step will be to justify where the money will be spent.

Chairperson Burke’s concern was that if this is going to be an increased administrative burden for the staff, they will need to look at that in the budgeting process over time. Dr. White shared that the department of education is due to put a template out to help with this process. She also requested that Dr. White share the information at the Budget hearing in order to understand the historical past and what is coming.

AGENDA ITEM VI.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Chairperson Humphrey shared that the superintendent search is moving in a positive direction and the next meeting with Mr. Hardy will take place to review the survey results and focus groups and he will report out the findings at the next school committee meeting.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Dr. White thanked the students and staff for helping put on the many celebration and performance in the month of December throughout the district.

Dr. White extended an invitation to the committee to join the January 17th professional development day on Diversity Talks including Cultural Proficiency workshops and [Adolf Brown](#) at 12:30 in the high school auditorium. Dr. White shared that Adolf Brown is inspirational and entertaining, he shares his experiences and

how to move forward from them. Please refer to [“Trauma Informed Speaker & Self Care Promotion w/ Dr. Adolph Brown's "Two Backpacks & Empathy Gap"”](#)

FACILITIES

Ms. Rood shared the concern about the ongoing issues with the fields especially the standing water when it rains. She reminded the committee not to lose sight of the need to update the fields. She also asked if it would be considered that this be put on the town as a project this year. Mr. Jones agreed and stated that this is on his facilities report along with photos. Please refer to ORRSC 12112019 Grounds and Field Report for more details.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

HIGHSHCOOL

Principal Devoll expressed how proud he is of the high school students’ efforts and the great performance by the drama club in the past week. He went on to acknowledge two Standard Times Southcoast players of the year Alex Craig for cross country and Meg Hughes for soccer.

JUNIOR HIGHSHCOOL

Principal Coellner shared a few learning activities happening at the junior high; tryouts for Romeo and Winifred, GSA Club went to the regional meeting, Thanksgiving food drive and prostate cancer awareness fundraiser and best beard contest. He also shared that the new junior ambassadors (following the high school model) under the leadership of Ms. Julie Taylor and volunteer food service workers did a great job with the 29th Annual Thanksgiving Banquet; 250 plus senior citizen meals were distributed and there were 100 door prizes.

STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

The student advisory council shared that they attended the second regional meeting furthering initiatives and assigning homework in each workgroup within school climate. They also attended the state advisory council and continued work in each group as well. School Council at ORR is focused on helping individual families. Each grade is assigned a family to help support during the holidays through various fundraisers.

AGENDA ITEM VII.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SMEC

No update

LOCAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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

- Recognized Ms. Karen Santos 25-year retirement
- Approved new kindergarten report card

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

- Ms. Rood was unable to attend, no update

Mr. Muse shared the following items that were discussed at the Mattapoisett School Committee meeting

- Ms. Henesey shared nutrition information on sugar levels of beverages served at the school
- Approved new kindergarten report card
- Discussion on creating a new committee to review the school facilities and town hall

TRI-TOWN FOUNDATION

No update

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

Ms. Rood shared the following items that were discussed at the Budget Subcommittee meeting

- Started the FY21 budget process
- Insurance information report out
- New Auditor Contract
- Preliminary look at the athletics budget and how it fit into the operation budget
- Information about incurring savings as a district and best use of these funds

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Ms. Rood shared a communication that was received from Mr. Tom Flynn reaching out to the Rochester representatives with various questions from the Turf Committee about facilities.

She went on to share a few items from Mr. Flynn's email such as

- Auditorium Project, which a timeline has been set,
- Press Box Project, which was tabled at the Rochester town meeting and Mr. Flynn proposed the School committee consider asking the Rochester Capital committee for the funds to match the funds committed from the CPA
- Track Project, which will be discussed at the budget subcommittee
- Turf Project

Ms. Rood stated that she will share the communication with the committee and request that it be become part of the record.

Ms. Rood requested that at the next meeting the members for the Facilities Subcommittee be voted on. Chairperson Humphrey agreed that it will be addressed and clarity will be provided because there seems to be some miscommunication.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Vice Chairperson Burke shared the poster with the committee for their first proof review and suggested the high school Ambassador Club distribute the poster with Principal Devoll agreement.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Vice Chairperson Burke shared the following items that were discussed at the Policy Committee meeting

- Rental policy feedback from the various school committees was reviewed making it clear that there is a difference between the elementary and regional schools.
- Committee is in agreement that at the district level private rentals cannot be funded and direct cost needs to be recouped
- Collection of rental cost are still in the works in order to begin the change to the existing policy and the public process it will entail
- Next meeting is January 6, 2020 at 5:30

DISTRICT AGREEMENT COMMITTEE

The agreement continues to be in process of being reviewed and once more information is available it will be shared with the ORR District School Committee.

JOINT COMMITTEE

Next meeting 12/12/2019

AGENDA ITEM I.X.

OPEN COMMENTS

Mr. Muse shared some information with Principal Devoll and the committee about a program in Quincy called Seniors for Seniors which high school seniors provide public service and public relations for seniors in the city with various benefits.

Ms. Smith once again thanked Mr. McGrail and Selectman Waterman for clarifying the statements made and the support ensuring a great start to the year to come.

Chairperson Humphrey added that many times individuals who criticize education costs don't have a true understanding of what truly happens and have not attended the meetings, yet are quick to make unfavorable

comments on social media. He went on to share that most of the members on the committee have served multiple terms and have worked alongside Dr. White and the administration. Chairperson Humphrey along with the committee extended their appreciation for all of Dr. White's hard work.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Muse made the motion go into Executive Session at 8:24 p.m. to discuss for purposes of #3 negotiations with non-union personnel and return only to adjourn the regular meeting.

ROLL CALL: 7:0

Cary	Heather	Tina Rood	Joseph Pires	Paul	James	Stefan
Humphrey	Burke			Goulet	Muse	Gabriel
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Dr. White requested that Principal Devoll join the executive session.

MOTION: Mr. Gabriel made the motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. and continue the regular meeting

SECOND: Ms. Rood

VOTE: Unanimously Pass

ROLL CALL: 7:0

Cary	Heather	Tina Rood	Joseph Pires	Paul	James	Stefan
Humphrey	Burke			Goulet	Muse	Gabriel
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

The school committee approved the musical theater director position at \$2,000 annually and gave Dr. White permission to draft an MOA with the association. The MOA will be presented at next month's meeting.

ADJOURN MEETING

MOTION: Mr. Muse made a motion to adjourn meeting

SECOND: Ms. Smith

VOTE: Unanimously Pass

Meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, January 22 at 6:30

Submitted by:

Jenn Seco

Recording Secretary