

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting November 18, 2020 Lincoln/virtual

PRESENT: Heinrich, Hughes, Luna, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT: Gundersen, Stefanovicz

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 9, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented three items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Establish an appropriation for the Coronavirus Relief Fund for the FY 19/21 in the amount of \$855,575

C.3. Permission to apply for the Federal Head Start Grant for the 3/1/2021 - 2/28/2022 period

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Meggers seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Unavailable.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Update on Humanities and STEAM

Mr. Geary noted this is the first time we are analyzing the data gained from March through November. Ms. Burns and Ms. Ghetia will provide thoughts on how to move on the data.

Ms. Burns and Ms. Ghetia's presentation is available on the website. They reviewed what previous standards were and what we have adjusted them to during this time. They also noted several considerations for the 21-22 budget, including early intervention transitional classes, Foundations for grade 1, summer learning opportunities, adding a third reading consultant to Bennet, and expanding Read180 for Grade 7.

Mr. Pattacini noted this presentation helped frame what is happening in classrooms. He wondered when we will see the next update, to see progress. Ms. Burns noted that the next benchmark is given after the holidays, so another presentation could be scheduled for the Board at the end of January/early February.

Ms. Burns explained the EIP (Early Intervention Program) she participated in years ago in our district. The class was made up of about 10-12 students that were on the cusp of requiring retention in grade 1, but were moved to grade 2. By providing extra support in smaller classes, by March in the school year it was easily identifiable which students could move on to grade 3 and which should be retained in second grade. The class was co-taught by a special education teacher. Currently we have about 60% of first graders in the "does not meet" band. They will be striving readers and we worry about their success.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the ladies for their presentation and to the staff for all their hard work. He appreciated the parents connection to their student's educational experience.

Mr. Meggers felt this was a comprehensive presentation. He wondered if parents are aware that students do better in in-person learning experiences. Mr. Geary felt that while parents realize that remote learning is a struggle, they may make that choice for health and safety concerns in their own extended family. Mr. Meggers acknowledged valid reasons for choosing remote learning, but hoped that parents realized they will need to help their child more with remote learning than they would if the child was in the building with the teacher, especially in elementary school.

Dr. Radikas noted that report card conferences are happening at this time and for the next few weeks. It is imperative that teachers share things that parents can do at home to help their child, especially in the younger grades (ie., practice the alphabet, sight words, etc.).

F.2. Update on Buckley and Approval of Ed Specs

Mr. Geary reviewed that approval of the Ed Specs is the next step in the Buckley renovation. Randall Luther was here from TSKP Studio to review the plans.

Mr. Luther noted that he has been working on this since March 2020. We are now at the point that we go to the state for review of the documents prior to us going out to bid. The plan is to go to bid at the end of this year, start construction in the summer and finish up in August 2022. The target for this project is to be a Net Zero School. That means the building will generate as much, or more, power on site as it uses over the course of the year. There are no public schools in Connecticut or Massachusetts that have achieved true Net Zero status. Many in Massachusetts have tried with no success yet. A few private schools in Connecticut, such as Choate, as well as higher education facilities, have achieved this status. It is remarkable to achieve this in a renovation and not a new build.

Mr. Luther reviewed that the construction estimate is \$24,656,589 and the projected budget total is \$29,400,000, which includes everything from construction, furniture, technology, and surveys as well as money set aside for contingencies. We are currently on budget. Some contingency money was set aside for the Geo Thermal Well, which drills down 500 feet. If those results come back next week differently than expected, there is contingency money to deal with that.

Mr. Luther explained the plans to the group, noting that the drawings tell the contractor how much of something is needed and where it goes (ie. windows and their locations). The Specs show what the product is made of, the exact size, etc.

Mr. Luther noted that kitchens are the area that requires a lot of energy, so in order to achieve Net Zero the kitchen will use no fossil fuels and will be all electric.

The rotary solar tracker will be a focal point for the property. It is a large object that looks like a flower. It's petals open in the morning and close at night and track the sun during the day, turning around. The plan is to plant smaller sunflowers around the tracker.

Mr. Thames asked about the Geo Thermal Well. Mr. Luther explained that about 10 feet down the earth's temperature is about 50 degrees year round. There are 60 500 foot wells under the ball fields and in the summer the cool air will be used to cool the building and in the winter that heat helps heat the building.

Mr. Thames asked about the start date. Mr. Luther expects construction to start the day after school lets out for summer, 2021. Prior to that some prep work may be possible.

Mr. Pattacini is excited about the solar flower/sunflower area and feels it is not only useful but makes a good showcase for this property. He wondered if the building committee had already approved the details of the project. Mr. Luther noted that due to scheduling, the Board of Education is approving the Ed Specs first, and he meets with the Building Committee on 11/30. However, he has met with them monthly thus far and they have already reviewed the estimate. Once we approve the numbers this evening there is no changing them. Mr. Pattacini wondered if, other than the Net Zero aspect, there was anything different from the other renovation projects. Mr. Luther noted there are always minor differences and he learns from them each time, budgeting more appropriately in each project. Mr. Pattacini was in support of the proposal.

Ms. Luna thought the smart flower was a cool concept. She wondered, in inclement weather, how much maintenance it would require. Mr. Luther explained that each night when the sun goes down the flower closes, at which time it wipes off the petals as it goes. The system also measures wind speed and will rotate or fold down if the speed is over 30 mph. There is also a manual override. The company that manufactures this is nearby in Massachusetts.

Mr. Thames asked what typically happens once plans are submitted to the state. Mr. Luther noted the process has evolved over the past few years. He meets regularly with the state instead of just once at the end of the process. They give feedback and notes along the way so they know what to work on. He has an appointment with the state December 2nd, which is a 4 hour meeting. Approval should be given in 7-9 days. Then we go to bid.

F.3. Update on COVID-19

Mr. Geary stated that the Governor and Commissioner of Education are advising against long-term school closures at this point. Mr. Geary plans for us to stay live for as long as possible, with rolling closures as needed if too many staff are quarantined. We will continue mitigation strategies. Everyone expects the numbers to continue to rise, but Mr. Geary is not inclined to make decisions based on one number. Things to consider in closing a building or the district include staffing, substitute shortage or if we start to see spread within the schools.

Mr. Thames asked about coordination with the health department. Mr. Geary noted he has regular communication with the local health department about the community spread rising. He sits in on municipal calls with the Department of Public Health. There is also a weekly superintendent call.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to approve the plans and specifications for Phase 1-site and building construction for Buckley Elementary School, dated November 18, 2020, prepared by TSKP studio, and the associated cost estimate prepared by O&G Industries, for submission to the Department of Administrative Services, Office of School Construction Grants for Review of Final Plans for Construction authorization. Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Thames asked what the reimbursement is with the state.

Mr. Geary noted that the state reimbursement is 56% and we also receive local funding that was approved already in a referendum.

The vote was called.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

None in person.

From Facebook there was a question about how bus drivers get paid and how many hours they are getting.

Also from Facebook there was a question about data and pacing of remote learning as well as the possibility of using Khan Academy.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Thames gave out the subcommittee assignments for the year:

Buildings & Sites - Heinrich, Pattacini, Hughes, Meggers.

Curriculum & Instruction - Meggers, Gundersen, Patterson, Luna.

Personnel & Finance - Thames, Patterson, Hughes, Meggers.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Meggers, Patterson, Thames, Luna.

Policy - Gundersen, Hughes, Thames, Stefanovicz.

Transportation - Luna, Thames, Gundersen, Hughes.

Mr. Thames also reviewed he is the liaison for the CREC Council and Head Start Policy Council as well as the legislative liaison.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

December 14, 2020 - Fall Data Update

January 11, 2020 - Budget Presentation

January 25, 2020 - Budget Update

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary