

MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Mattapoisett, Massachusetts

BY: HYBRID FORMAT

MEETING MINUTES
January 10, 2022

Regular meeting of the Mattapoisett School Committee was held on Monday – January 10, 2022, and called to order by Chairperson James Muse at 6:32pm.

Chairperson Muse stated the meeting is being conducted via Zoom only for School Committee Members; and, the public has the ability to participate remotely through zoom as well with the link provided.

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Muse, Chairperson – Remote; Carly Lavin, Vice-Chair – Remote; Tiffini Reedy – Remote; Carole Clifford – Remote; and Karin Barrows – Remote.

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools – Remote; Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning – Remote; Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services – Remote; Rose Bowman, Principal, Mattapoisett Public Schools – Remote; Kevin Tavares, Associate Principal – Mattapoisett Public Schools – Remote; Toni Bailey, Recording Secretary – Remote; teachers; staff; parents; members of the press and public- via zoom.

MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairperson, James Muse stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being video-taped, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the Agenda will be followed as outlined.

I. Approval of Minutes:

1. Approval of Minutes

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review and approve the minutes of December 6, 2021

1. Regular Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2021

MOTION: by Carole Clifford to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of December 6, 2021, as presented

SECONDED: Carly Lavin

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED – 5:0

Roll Call: Carly Lavin - Yes; Carole Clifford -Yes; Karin Barrows - Yes; Tiffini Reedy – Yes; James Muse - Yes

2. Executive Session Minutes – December 6, 2021 and January 4, 2022

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review and approve the Executive Session minutes of December 6, 2021 and January 4, 2022.

Mr. Muse stated these minutes would be approved during Executive Session.

3. Budget Sub Committee Minutes – December 9, 2021 and January 4, 2022

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review and approve the Budget Sub Committee minutes of December 9, 2021 and January 4, 2022

MOTION: by Carly Lavin to approve the Budget Sub Committee minutes of December 9, 2021, as presented

SECONDED: James Muse

OPPOSED: None

ABSTAINED: 3

MOTION PASSED – 2:0

Roll Call: Carly Lavin – Yes; Carole Clifford – Abstained; Karin Barrows – Abstained; Tiffini Reedy – Abstained; James Muse - Yes

MOTION: by Carly Lavin to approve the Budget Sub Committee minutes of January 4, 2022, as presented

SECONDED: James Muse

OPPOSED: None

ABSTAINED: 3

MOTION PASSED – 2:0

Roll Call: Carly Lavin – Yes; Carole Clifford – Abstained; Karin Barrows – Abstained; Tiffini Reedy – Abstained; James Muse - Yes

IV. General

A. FY23 Initial Draft Budget Discussion

Recommendation:

That the School Committee discuss the FY23 Draft Budget Superintendent, Michael Nelson stated the following:

“The budget sub-committee has met several times in recent weeks to work on the drafting of the FY23 budget. So far the process has shown momentum as we continue to work towards a budget that we believe meets the educational needs of our students and families and enables our faculty to do the great work that they do. We also are working with a mindset that our budget needs to be fiscally responsible as well as to the Town of Mattapoisett as a whole. Educating children requires fiscal support and we are working towards having a budget that we believe meets both of our goals. At this point, our next step is to invite a member of FINCOM and also the Town Administrator- Michael Lorenzo, to one of our next budget sub-committees to further our discussions.”

COMMENT(S)/QUESTION(S) BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Carly Lavin:

Ms. Lavin stated she appreciates the chance to work with this sub-committee and thinks they have been very thorough at this point and appreciates the patience with the number of her questions.

James Muse:

Mr. Muse noted everything is moving along well and he looks forward to having the town involved to move along further.

Mr. Nelson noted the next steps for the committee members - once we have conversations with where it is at as a budget sub-committee (when Ms. Lavin and Mr. Muse feels it is at a place to bring it to the committee as a whole) – it will be brought to this committee for a budget public hearing where we will listen to the committees feedback and also get feedback from other stakeholders. Mr. Nelson stated once you approve the number, it is then sent to the town for ultimate approval at the Town Meeting.

B. Tiered Focused Monitoring Audit Update

Recommendation:

That the School Committee hear an update from administration Superintendent, Michael Nelson stated the following:

“Recently we received our report for the Tiered Focused Monitoring Audit that looks at our schools implementation of both special education and civil rights regulations. The Department of Education looks at relevant documentation, student records, interviews staff members and solicits parent and guardian feedback. I want to thank Director of Student Services, Mr. Davidson for his leadership on working through this cumbersome process and recognize the positive feedback we received.”

Director of Students Services, Craig Davidson stated the following:

“Throughout the process, I could not have asked for a better Team to be surrounded by. The teachers in the Mattapoisett School District, along with Mrs. Bowman and Mr. Tavares were great assets throughout the whole process. Most importantly, Special Education Secretary, Jenny Rusinoski, was outstanding as it was her third time through this process.

This was the first of two audits that will take place over the next six years and through this process with Julie Evans from the Department of Education, there were no findings at the end of the audit. I am very proud of the work that our special educators and secretarial staff do day in and day out in having no findings. It was outstanding for us and we are very proud of that.”

C. 2022-2023 Draft School Calendar

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review for feedback the 2022-2023 School Calendar.

Superintendent Nelson stated tonight is the first look at the 2022-2023 draft calendar. Mr. Nelson reminded the committee that they do not approve the calendar, noting that action belongs to the Joint School Committee and at this point we are in the process of sharing the draft calendar with the building administration, school councils, and the school committees for feedback. Mr. Nelson stated all feedback would be shared with the Joint School Committee for discussion.

Mr. Nelson presented the draft 22-23 calendar as follows:

August

30th - first day of school

September

2nd and 5th - off for Labor Day Weekend

21st - first early release PD day

October

10th – off - observe Columbus/Indigenous People Day

20th and 21st – early release days for parent conferences at the elementary schools

November

10th - first full PD day

11th – off - observe Veteran’s Day

23rd – 25th - Thanksgiving break

December

22nd - school vacation would start (with an early release day) and run through the 2nd of January

January

16th – off - recognize Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

17th - hold our second and final full PD day

February

8th – early release for PD purposes

20th – 24th – school vacation

March

8th - early release for PD purposes

23rd and 24th - early dismissal days for parent conferences in Mattapoisett only (per the teacher’s contract)

April

7th – no school

17th - 21st - school vacation

May

29th – off - recognize Memorial Day

June

7th - last half PD day

16th - last day of school without any school cancelations

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Carly Lavin:

In looking at November, having a full day off on the 23rd does not seem like it is necessarily a norm here on the south coast. Why has our school district elected to have this a “mini” break after there is already a four-day weekend for students and families in November? Ms. Lavin wondered if we had considered an early release day or even a full day of school on the 23rd – is there any history on this day?

Ms. Lavin would be a fan of seeing the 23rd at least a ½ day.

Mr. Nelson noted he has heard in the past that it allows family’s additional time for travel.

Carly Lavin:

The Christmas holiday being observed on December 26 - is it the District’s practice to observe the 23rd as well, along with the ½ day before that?

Mr. Nelson noted there have been years where there has been almost two weeks off during this time period, which they have received feedback that it is too long for students and families. Mr. Nelson stated it was a good place to start in terms of a conversation regarding the break - having a ½ day on the 22nd and no school on the 23rd would allow for additional travel time for parents/guardians.

Ms. Lavin questioned when Hanukah and Kwanza was in December.

Karin Barrows:

The last day of school (if no snow days) is scheduled for June 16 – would Juneteenth be celebrated if we were to have days off due to weather, etc.?

Mr. Nelson stated yes it would – that is why it has been identified on the draft calendar as such.

Tiffini Reedy:

Ms. Reedy noted she would like to look into making December 23 at least a half-day. Ms. Reedy also questioned why Easter, being a Catholic holiday, do we need Good Friday off since we are a public school. Ms. Reedy would like to consider Good Friday as a half day if we are not going to observe Hanukah and Kwanza.

Chairperson Muse reminded the committee members that they are not voting on the proposed calendar, that it is voted on by the Joint School Committee members, but all of their feedback will be taken into consideration, which Mr. Nelson will bring back before the Joint School Committee.

Carly Lavin:

Ms. Lavin noted the last few years the weather has been challenging and the amount of days off, whether it was electrical or bad weather, has pushed us quite deep into June. Ms. Lavin stated she would prefer to see less extra days off throughout the year so that school ends earlier in June.

Ms. Lavin noted in the last 18 months there was talk about whether DESE was moving to counting hours in the classroom versus days – has there been any movement on that?

Mr. Nelson stated they are still following the total number of instructional days and the total amount of instructional hours – it a combination of the two. Mr. Nelson noted the elementary level has a different set number than the secondary level and stated DESE has not forgiven any days/hours as they did in the first year of the pandemic.

D. Meeting Structure

Recommendation:

That the School Committee discuss the meeting structure

Chairperson Muse stated he would like to adopt a goal for all of the regular meetings to be limited in time to no more than 90 minutes. Mr. Muse noted he understands sometimes there are lengthy presentations and they can go on, but with the number of meetings that are necessary in the district, it would allow the administration to manage it.

Mr. Muse noted this could be done by keeping our comments planned; having committee members see the Agenda and reading the minutes, etc. beforehand thoroughly; and, during presentations (which are typically given for information) to limit questions.

Mr. Muse noted typically there are two different types of items on the Agenda – one is for information and the other is for a vote. Mr. Muse stated items that require a vote need to be discussed and thoroughly debated and the debate would not be limited to reach our goals. Mr. Muse noted items that are presented, if we could do our best and take the information and if something isn't complete and it is not necessary for a clearer clarification to the public, that we limit those discussions. Mr. Muse noted he is not saying that follow-up questions cannot be made to the administration or the presenter at any time.

Mr. Muse stated having a meeting last 2, 3 or even more hours is not fair and we should be able to hold meetings to 90 minutes. Mr. Muse reminded committee members there is always a 20-minute block kept open for questions from the public.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Karin Barrows:

Ms. Barrows stated the Agenda does not always explicitly state which items would be voted on by the committee. Ms. Barrows stated if in advance the committee and the public knew which items were going to be voted on, this would help keep the meetings more concise.

Carole Clifford:

Ms. Clifford stated if the items were noted which ones would be voted on, we would not have to put a limit – and she stated that sometimes it is just a two hour meeting or longer. Ms. Clifford noted we all have to be conscious of trying to make it shorter or be concise in what we are doing, but to put a limit on it, Ms. Clifford does not agree with that.

Chairperson Muse noted if there is something that requires debate then we will debate until it is necessary, but otherwise we should plan and attempt to complete our work within a 90-minute period.

Carly Lavin:

Ms. Lavin stated she does not think it is appropriate to put a limit and it is fine to say that we would like to have a target of 90 minutes. Ms. Lavin agrees with Ms. Clifford that having a cap to these public meetings would be inappropriate.

Chairperson Muse stated again that if there were discussion or a debate on a specific item to be voted on, we would take the time that is necessary. Otherwise, we should be considerate of the time things take particularly with discussion, comments and questions on items regarding a presentation as oppose to items that require a vote.

Carly Lavin:

Ms. Lavin stated she still takes the same stance, and she noted having clarity on the Agenda would be helpful.

Chairperson Muse stated he is not asking for a Motion regarding this item and that he has brought this item up before to just take it into consideration especially for the Administration, as well as for members who have multiple other committees and sub-committees they serve on. Mr. Muse noted when there is an outside presentation it should be limited to format and that the presenter provides, if necessary, the information written in advance. Mr. Muse noted in previous years the presenter was limited to no more than five minutes and reiterated the committee would still be able to discuss or debate an item as much as necessary to reach their vote, but thinks the committee should be very conscious of extending the meetings.

V. New Business

B. Business

1. Financial Report

Recommendation:

That the School Committee hear a report from Mr. Barber.

Superintendent Nelson stated Mr. Barber was not available for this meeting, but that he did provide to the committee members his Financial Report for the committees review regarding expenditures. Mr. Nelson also stated the Facilities Report and the Food Service Report have also been provided to the committee members for their review.

Mr. Nelson stated the good news at this time is that currently in Mattapoisett the budget is exactly where we want it to be based off of supplies, substitutes, operational costs, etc. - we still have approximately \$540,000 remaining.

Mr. Nelson stated with regard to the Food Service Report– a few minor repairs were made and participation in both breakfast and lunch continues to be where we want it especially after last year.

Mr. Nelson stated with regard to the Facilities Report – we had our big first snowstorm and we were able to manage that.

Mr. Barber's memo as of January 5, 2022 indicated the following:

The Mattapoisett School District currently has \$542,701.00 available of the general funds appropriated in the 2022 Fiscal Year. The year-to-date Budget Report by Department, indicates we are able to identify how our funds are encumbered and expended. The report recognizes that of the \$7,511.872 appropriated to the District, consisting of both the Mattapoisett School District and Bristol County Agricultural enrolled student operational costs, 83.70% of funding spent or encumbered are directly related to student instruction.

Food Service Director's Report (By: Jill Henesey) dated January 2021, as follows (for both Center School and Old Hammondtown School):

- Meal participation continues to remain strong
 - Breakfast participation is a struggle at OHS
- Nation-wide supply chain disruptions and price increases are having a significant impact on our program
 - Changes to posted menus may happen without notice. Please have patience and understanding. We will ensure that all students are provided a well-balanced, nutritious meal that meet the USDA nutrition standards
- Cost of food and supplies are increasing significantly
- Service and repairs to Dish machine completed

Facilities Director's Report (By: Gene Jones) dated January 2022 as follows:

Center School:

- Completed one snow/ice removal operation
- Completed fire sprinkler inspection
- Completed state boiler inspection
- COVID-19 protocols set for HVAC, cleaning, sanitizing
- Conducted routine maintenance on all facility systems

Old Hammondtown School:

- Completed one snow/ice removal operation
- Completed fire sprinkler inspection
- Completed state boiler inspection
- COVID-19 protocols set for HVAC, cleaning, sanitizing
- Conducted routine maintenance on all facility systems

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

None

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chairperson Muse stated for the rest of this year and going forward, "thank you" to all of the teachers, staff and administrators and explicitly extended a "thank you" to Mrs. Bowman for this year and all of her many years of service.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINSTRATOR'S REPORT:

Superintendent Nelson stated the following:

"It is not a secret that our community and beyond is going through a COVID surge right now based off of the most recent variant. Obviously, it is a difficult time as an educator to be able to manage all of those different moving pieces within the building, but as you all know, I am very proud that our schools continue to operate in-person learning and we have been able to overcome a lot of the challenges regarding staffing, the number of cases, etc. That is just a

testament to the teachers, paraprofessionals, food services, custodians and for everyone else you may have at Center and Old Hammondtown Schools every day. They make it look a lot easier than it really is. It has been a difficult time period for sure, but I will say that I feel very fortunate and I am sure that you will agree in terms of the type of people and the type of staff available in your buildings, they do incredible things each and every day.

The mask mandate has been extended through February 28 and the isolation and the quarantine protocols have been updated – this information has been shared with the school committee.”

Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Instruction reported as follows:

- The Office of Teaching and Learning led an IXL webinar for parents and guardians in December. During the webinar important information such as students’ username and password information was provided along with information on how parents and guardians can assist students with the use of ixl.com.
- On Tuesday, January 18th a full day of professional development for educators will take place. We will continue to focus on the following 3 key areas: Global Citizenship, 21st Century Learning, and Social Emotional Learning. Keynote speaker, **Loretta LaRoche**, will start off the morning speaking to all educators regarding stress management. Ms. LaRoche is an expert who helped pioneer the use of humor as a coping mechanism.
- www.ixl.com representatives will visit each school; educators will be able to ask questions regarding accelerated learning with IXL. In addition, Ms. Diane Lizotte will offer AIMSWEB support for progress monitoring for any educators wishing to ask questions.

Mr. Craig Davidson – Director of Student Services reported the following:

- Part of the “Test and Stay” program that our school nurses facilitate each and every day – we have saved 1,277 school days district wide as a Tri-town as part of this program. Nurses are running this program in all of our buildings, and we are able to continue providing education to our students during these tough times.
- The Old Rochester Regional School District partnered with Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative and created a new partnership offering – free, on-line workshops for the Tri-town and SMEC families focusing on Social/Emotional Learning, 21st Century Learning Skills and Global Citizenship.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Mrs. Rose Bowman, Principal of Center School/Old Hammondtown School stated the following:

- Information is provided regarding Professional Development that Dr. Pearson-Campbell has shared
- The PTA shared information regarding two programs they are sponsoring with artist, Bren Bataclan and with the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra in coming back to do individual classroom presentations in the 3rd grade
- Lisa Lourenco, Technology teacher at Center School and Old Hammontown School, received the Worcester Polytechnic Institute/NE FIRST STEM Week grant for both of the schools. This grant gave Center School and OHS \$6,000.00 worth of robotic equipment and Ms. Lourenco received four Professional Development days from a Team at Worcester Poly Tech. Ms. Lourenco has already participated in the first two PD offerings remotely.

The grants name is NEW ENGLAND FIRST – what “FIRST” stands for is “For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology”. New England First is an operational partner in first robotics and they are supporting in the New England states the opportunity for children to receive additional education and more importantly the materials for these robotics programs.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Chairperson Muse stated this is fantastic and it is also indicative of what the administration, staff and teachers do to go the extra mile constantly to make this a great school system.

Superintendent Nelson extended a “thank you” to Frances Kearns of the ORR School Committee who brought this grant opportunity to his attention.

VIII. School Committee

A. Committee Reports

1. ORR District School Committee

Mr. Muse reported as follows:

- The fall sports were a great success and everyone in the high school is very happy to be able to have extra curricular activities
- The senior class is planning their prom and other senior events and there is a sense of normalcy, which is great to see
- The new District Agreement was adopted which specifically means there is weighted voting now based upon the student populations in the various towns

2. SMEC

Ms. Reedy stated their next meeting is scheduled at the end of January.

3. READS

Mr. Nelson noted, as an informational item, he provided SMEC’s Annual Report to the school committee in the shared folder.

Mr. Nelson reported READS met on December 16 and reported as follows:

- The main focus was on the FY22 Budget – the amendments and the current status
- Started talking about the FY23 Draft Budget
- Discussions took place regarding their plan on their old property
- Heard recommendations from the Executive Director around the approval of new staff and accepted resignations

4. Early Childhood Council

Ms. Barrows stated the next meeting is scheduled to take place on January 19.

5. MASC

Mr. Muse reported the following:

- The Joint School Committee and the Superintendent’s Association attended the MASC Conference via virtual meetings
- There are unlimited resources that MASC provides to us (Mr. Muse encourages everyone to take a look at their website to gain whatever resources they can from MASC)

6. Mattapoisett Capital Needs Committee

Ms. Clifford noted there is nothing to report at this time.

7. Tri-Town Education Foundation

Ms. Barrows stated the next meeting is scheduled to take place on January 25.

8. Policy Sub-Committee

Ms. Lavin stated the next meeting is scheduled to take place on January 13, 2022 and voting will take place at the next Joint School Committee regarding several policies.

9. Budget Sub-Committee

No report.

10. Clock Committee

No report.

11. Anti-Racism Committee

Mr. Davidson stated a meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of January.

IX. Future Business

A. Timeline

Mattapoissett School Committee will be held on Monday, February 28, 2022 @ 6:30pm

Joint School Committee is scheduled for January 20, 2022 @ 6:30pm

B. Future Agenda Items

- Approval of Chairperson's Annual Report (February)
- Interim report on School Committee progress toward goals (February)
- Budget Approval (public hearings) (February)
- School Committee Reorganization (May/June – depending on election date)
- School Choice Public Hearing (May)
- Administrator Contract (May)
- Approval of new School Council goals (June)

X. Open Comments

Chairperson Muse stated at this time for anyone who is participating via zoom, if you would like to make an "Open Comment", add your name and address to the chat, we will acknowledge that we have a request, and with the Chairperson's permission, anyone with a public comment can speak up to three (3) minutes – there were no "Open Comments".

Carly Lavin:

Ms. Lavin noted regarding the Food Service report, she is seeing very limited percentages of breakfast at Old Hammondtown School (grades 4-6). Ms. Lavin asked Mr. Nelson if the numbers are different at Sippican and Rochester Memorial?

Mr. Nelson stated he would look into Ms. Lavin's request, obtain the comparable numbers and provide the information to the school committee.

XI. Information Items

LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING

- Mattapoissett School Committee Meeting Agenda – January 10, 2022
- Regular Session – Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2021
- Budget Sub Committee Minutes – December 9, 2021 and January 4, 2022

- Draft School Calendar 2022-2023
- Financial Report dated January 5, 2022
- Food Service Director Report dated January, 2022
- Facilities Director Report – January, 2022
- Principal’s Report – January 10, 2022
- SMEC’s Annual Report

XII. Executive Session

Recommendation

That the School Committee enter into Executive Session for the purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal.

MOTION: by Carole Clifford to go into Executive Session at 7:20pm for the Purpose of #3 and #7, and to return to the regular School Committee meeting as scheduled only to adjourn

SECONDED: Carly Lavin

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED – 5:0

Roll Call: Carly Lavin – Yes; Karin Barrows – Yes; Carole Clifford – Yes; Tiffini Reedy – Yes; James Muse - Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Bailey, Recording Secretary