

**MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Mattapoisett, Massachusetts**

**October 26, 2020**

**BY: ZOOM LINK**

**and**

**BY: HYBRID – 133 Marion Road, Mattapoisett MA**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 26, 2020**

Regular meeting of the Mattapoisett School Committee was held on Monday – October 26, 2020 and called to order by Chairperson James Muse at 6:34pm.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** James Muse, Chairperson (remote); Carly Lavin, Vice-Chair (hybrid); Carole Clifford (remote); Shannon Finning (hybrid); and Karin Barrows (hybrid)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools (hybrid); all others by remote - Jannell Pearson-Campbell – Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning; Howard Barber – Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Rosemary Bowman, Principal – Mattapoisett Public Schools; Kevin Tavares, Associate Principal – Mattapoisett Public Schools; teachers; staff; parents; members of the press and public; and, Toni Bailey, Recording Secretary

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.

**MEETING TO ORDER**

Mr. Muse stated the meeting will begin with open comments, and instructed the committee members, administration, parents, members of the public and press how the open comments will be run. Mr. Muse stated if the public would like to speak, they would send Ms. Toni Bailey, Recording Secretary, a message stating their name and address and Ms. Bailey would inform the Chairperson, in the order of the requests, the person's name and address. Mr. Muse stated there is a three-minute time limit per person, and when there is one minute remaining, a warning sign will be held up by Ms. Bailey to let the person know of the remaining time. Mr. Muse stated it will be at the discretion of the Chairperson to allow a person to speak a second time, as long as it is a new topic.

**OPEN COMMENTS:**

**Allison Costa – Pocohontas Way**

**Ms. Costa stated the following:**

I understand parents are looking at a timeline for when they will have a return to school type plan and what that plan will look like. Ms. Costa stated there has been a slow uptick in the cases in the district (5 now) and every time parents receive a notification they keep thinking, "No, not another one – we want our kids to keep going to school as long as we can." Ms. Costa stated she sees other school districts, if they have an uptick, have their students go remote for two weeks at home, re-evaluate the situation after the two weeks, and then return back to school depending on the outcome. Ms. Costa is wondering if that is a consideration at this point as well, and what it would look like if we did go full remote.

Mr. Muse stated the process to go full remote would require a vote by the school committee members and all of the facts are taken into consideration.

**Michael Kwoka – Pine Island Road**

Mr. Kwoka stated the following:

On the absence of transparency from the school system on this topic to date, On October 7, I mailed a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request to the Superintendent, Michael Nelson, requesting that all his emails, either sent or received, that contained statements of in-person learning or learning models for the fall, be provided to me. Mr. Kwoka stated a copy of this request was also sent to both the Chairman of the School Committee, as well as the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Kwoka stated he looks forward to reviewing these documents when they are provided and then sharing them with the community.

Mr. Kwoka stated he would like to spend the rest of his time to address the community in attendance, and stated as follows: My name is Michael Kwoka. I served this country honorably for over a decade as an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corp, an inherently dangerous job, even at peace time. Unlike some of my peers, I was very lucky that only once in my career did I have to put an 18-year old young man in a coffin and send him home to his family. I absolutely understand the enormity of the responsibility that comes with being charged with the health and well-being of other people's children. I understand risk and I understand risk mitigation. I also understand courage and courage takes two different forms. There's physical courage and there is moral courage, and rest assure physical courage is the easy one. The tough one is moral courage. Doing the right thing even when it may not be popular. I know this is a small community. I know there is concern about potential blow-back on the children, but I'm asking all of you to think about your children when you tuck them in tonight and look them in the face – can you say to yourself, "Are you doing everything possible to advocate for them?" I know I can't. Frankly, I don't give a damn if you don't like me, or if you don't say hello to me in the village. If you attempt to take this out on my child - good luck, shame on you because I am here tonight to advocate and fight for every child in this town. The question I need to ask, "Do the youngest and most vulnerable children belong in school?" I would argue yes. We need to ask the question, "Why aren't they in school? Plenty of places locally have figured it out, but we can't?" We are an extremely fortunate community with significant resources and I am certain the community would rally if it meant getting the kids back in school.

Tonight I am asking you to stand up and be recognized, speak out and demand that our youngest and most vulnerable are back in the classroom. To those teachers out there who have quietly said that you want to be back in there full-time – the union works for you. They can't fire you. Stand up and say you want to be back full-time. Demand that your leadership goes back to the table and figure this out.

Mr. Kwoka stated in closing, "After the conduct of the statements made by the Chairman of the Mattapoisett School Committee during the special meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, you've lost my trust and confidence and I have to wonder if you have, or should consider, if you are the right person to lead this community at this time."

Mr. Muse stated the school district's counsel is apprised of Mr. Kwoka's FOIA request and they are following the appropriate laws to respond to his request.

Mr. Muse further stated that he would not consider not leading this community, and sometimes it takes moral courage to make a decision that is difficult for people, even though you very much would like to say just "yes", the students can be back in school.

**Tiffini Reedy – Riverbend Lane**

Ms. Reedy commended Mr. Kwoka for his advocacy and stated the following:

Mr. Kwoka is exactly what our community and children need especially during this unprecedented time. As most of you may or may not know, I spoke at the last meeting and I am a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner with specialty across the lifespan and the emotional and psychological distress this virus has played on our children is incredible. It far out ways the medical morbidity experienced by both

youth and adults in America and worldwide. So, just to touch upon what Michael stated, as a community member, as a parent of a child in Center School, I am willing to do anything it takes to get our kids back in school because I believe that the social and emotional distress they have experienced is going to take some kids through their lifespan. You will undoubtedly see kids not graduate high school because of COVID. You will see, as we saw recently in Fall River, a young child was found deceased due to malnourishment and severe emotional abuse and neglect in the home. We are going to see cases like this grow locally and nationwide. How can we address these before we see them happen? I think this is what we need to be discussing tonight – how can we open schools? We all anticipated a spike in COVID once schools opened, so each Friday at 9pm when I get an email saying that there is another case of COVID within the ORR District, I'm not surprised – I'm not upset. I still want to send my daughter to school on Wednesday morning. That's not what bothers me. What bothers me is the fact that my child is not in school five days a week. Since September, I can tell you that the growth academically I've seen with my child going to school two days a week has really been tremendous and I owe that to her 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Aarsheim, because I am really unable to provide her with much during the week as I work full-time. I can only imagine going twice a week, seeing what I would see if she was in school five days a week. I think all of our community's children deserve that. They deserve to be in school. They deserve to be taught by our educators. We talk about equity in schools and how can we improve equity and fairness across the board – what about the kids who aren't able to be tutored on the remote days and on their hybrid out days? What about those kids? The gap between those who have and those who have not is just growing. It's growing by the day. I think that's what the focus of this meeting and every meeting forward with the school committee needs to be on.

**Stephanie Clark – Acushnet Road**

Ms. Clark stated she would like clarification because she sees there is "Open Comments" later on in the agenda and she would like to hear what the proposals are and the updates, and then be able to ask questions at that point. Ms. Clark wants to make sure she will be given the opportunity based on the Agenda published, that she will be able to hold her comments until then.

Mr. Muse stated the Agenda reflected the "Open Comment" section was listed at the beginning of the Agenda to give the community the opportunity to voice their comments at the beginning, then the Superintendent would comment, followed by the school committee having the opportunity to discuss. Mr. Muse gave Ms. Clark the opportunity to make her comments.

Ms. Clark stated the following: We need to have the Plan that was supposed to be submitted to the Department of Education. We need that published and reviewed so we can understand. I have true concerns, based on the meeting we had last Thursday, that Mr. Chairperson stated we had three Plans provided and three Plans voted on. That is factually incorrect. There were only two Plans that were shown and they were only voted on. We have asked since August for that. If we do not get that tonight, I continue to echo Mr. Kwoka's comments. I have no faith in the school committee to do what's right for the children. Honestly, I have already looked in to a recall, unfortunately we don't have that in the Town of Mattapoisett, but there are other avenues within the state. My patience is exhausted. If you think I was a pain before, you have no idea how much of a pain I can be. I will use the rules provided, but to say that you still don't have anything to show or to share tonight is not acceptable. It's just not. I am not advocating that we go back tomorrow. I am advocating that we have a safe plan in place that we can make right decisions. We have Fairhaven that has been red for weeks and yet they are still in-person, full-time for the children. Why can't we do that? Westport – in school – why can't we do that? We have the means to make it work if you would share what you need us to work on with you – we will work appropriately. I am sorry I'm getting upset, but this is just unacceptable. So, I urge you to get it done tonight, otherwise it's done and we are going to the media and we are not going to take no for an answer. Thank you.

## **Kearney Klein – Upland Way**

**Mr. Klein stated: What we've heard from many different parents here is that outcomes are important, but also it is the lack of transparency in this process and the way things are being decided. I will add to the list of schools that are in session full-time – Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire. We are the exception to the rule. The process needs to be transparent. I've heard arguments from those who say the hybrid model is actually pretty good – obviously being there full-time is the best, but hybrid is pretty good. Let me be absolutely clear, hybrid is not good. For those who prepare themselves to educate their children at home full-time and make the preparations to do so, it is good. But to force it on parents and households that do not have the resources to do that and are forced to make a choice between maintaining work and paying the mortgage or having to leave their kid to sit in front of a computer in grades K to 3, is not a choice a parent can make in any reasonable way. The flu is 4 times more deadly than COVID for this age group – 4 times! Meningitis is more deadly. At this point we are seeing suicides and 25% of kids under 16 thinking about suicide. This is the cost of COVID and we are all feeling it. The committee needs to be considering what the parents are saying. We are sitting in front of children that cries for no reason and they can't express what they are feeling – it is because of anxiety. A five-year old who begins to wet herself at night again, can't express it – why? – because of anxiety. That is what is happening to our children. This is not okay.**

**Mr. Klein stated he would like to remind the committee and reiterate on some of the comments:**

**The committee is here to represent the parents and he is hearing from the Mattapoisett Parent's Coalition that we have just begun to express our views.**

**Mr. Klein thanked Mr. Muse for his years of service on this committee and his last year serving on this committee.**

## **MEETING TO ORDER**

### **I. Approval of Minutes:**

#### **A. Minutes**

##### **1. Regular Meeting Minutes – September 14, 2020**

**MOTION:** by Carole Clifford to accept the meeting minutes of September 14, 2020 as written

**SECONDED:** Carly Lavin

**ABSTAINED:** Karin Barrows

**OPPOSED:** None

**MOTION PASSED – 4:0**

**ABSTAINED: 1**

**Role Call: Carole Clifford – Yes; Carly Lavin – Yes; Shannon Finning – Yes; Karin Barrows – Abstained; James Muse – Yes**

##### **2. Executive Session Minutes – September 14, 2020**

**Mr. Muse stated these will be approved during Executive Session**

### **IV. General**

#### **A. Update on Reopening Plan**

**Superintendent Nelson asked Chairperson Muse if Amanda Stone from the Town Health Office, be able to join him in his presentation tonight - Mr. Muse said yes.**

**Mr. Nelson started off by addressing to the question: "When would we pivot to go remote or back to hybrid, based off of getting an email around COVID-19 on a particular case?". Mr. Nelson stated the following: Each time there is a scenario, he works with the health department immediately in terms of which geographical location. For example, if it is the region, Center School or Old Hammondtown School, he works with the Mattapoisett Health**

Department, and decisions are made based off of all of the information obtained in terms of what recommendation is brought before the school committee. It is ultimately the school committee that makes the decision of what learning model we are in.

Superintendent Nelson continued:

Last week we held a special school committee meeting to hear from parents/guardians and school committee members regarding our schools re-opening. I, and my administrators, appreciated the perspectives shared and are committed to moving forward collaboratively. I understand the passion, the frustration and the different perspectives no matter what they are in terms of what's best for our kids and community.

Last week we shared an overall update on how school is going – including enrollment, learning model enrollment, and other information regarding the first weeks of school thus far. We shared with you our plans to track student progress and the importance of using Aimsweb Benchmarking to understand any learning loss and the need to put interventions in to place in moving forward. We also talked about the safety and health protocols we have implemented including cohorting, face coverings and masks, following DESE transportation guidance, and the importance of social distancing. Our plans stem from the DESE, DPH & CDC guidance and with our partnership with the association of teachers.

Earlier this evening, I shared with the four Tri-town School Committees a “Dashboard” report to be shared with stakeholders on a weekly basis. This “Dashboard” and key indicators include state and local COVID-19 data, stakeholder recommendations, and operational mitigation factors to consider. This information, moving forward, will be released on a weekly basis or as needed. Our goal remains providing as many supports and learning opportunities in-person, and doing it safely.

Mr. Nelson thanked the Mattapoisett Health Department for their ongoing support in answering the call whenever that need may be.

Mr. Nelson welcomed Amanda Stone, Public Health Nurse, to the meeting to speak and share some remarks and her thoughts on where we are currently.

Amanda Stone stated the following:

I am the Public Health Nurse for the Town of Mattapoisett and I am in the process of retiring. However, due to COVID, my retirement has been delayed eight months. Emily Field will be taking over as the Public Health Nurse upon my retirement.

Ms. Stone stated on behalf of the Board of Health, with regard to COVID-19, the Board of Health consults, through its agents, with many organizations, stakeholders and experts in the field of infectious disease control and prevention and also with Dr. Steve Mendes, who is the medical consultant to the Board of Health. Mr. Nelson and I are in very frequent communication and the goal is to have all students in the ORR school-wide district, learning 100% of the time in-person. Right now students have the opportunity to spend 40% of learning time in-person. In order to move the needle forward toward more fully in-person, there are a number of things to consider.

Ms. Stone stated she appreciated the opportunity to hear all of the parents stories this evening – they are all moving and she feels the struggles. Ms. Stone stated she hears the stories of all ages of the life-span in the community and those voices too need to be heard and considered, as well as how we are all connected in terms of what happens in the schools impacts the community and vice versa. Ms. Stone stated they closely monitor the community transmission because that will impact the school, and they monitor the school transmission, because that impacts the community. Ms. Stone stated we are at a critical point where if we continue to see the 7-day average positive test rate increase in our community, then we will be moving the needle the other way. Ms. Stone stated as we move to the cooler months and people move

inside, windows are closed and there are more gatherings because of the holiday season, we don't really know what the impact of the increases will be. This is a consideration we should be considering with great caution.

Ms. Stone stated in the pediatric population the asymptomatic carriers could significantly impact our more vulnerable community members and the people with multiple health issues are fearful for their health and well-being. Ms. Stone stated they are trying to consider "all", and without enough information yet as to what is going to happen over the next few months, makes it all more difficult. Ms. Stone stated based on what we know, and considering all the things we don't know yet, and how this virus is going to behave, we really need to proceed with caution, with the understanding that the goal is to have 100% of students in the fully in-person learning model as soon as possible.

Chairperson Muse thanked Ms. Stone for speaking tonight on behalf of the Board of Health, and also thanked her for extending her position during this very difficult time of this pandemic.

Mr. Nelson thanked Ms. Stone for joining the school committee meeting this evening and for speaking on behalf of the Mattapoisett Board of Health.

Mr. Nelson stated our Team has been and will continue to look at and examine routes and different options to improve programming. Mr. Nelson stated he heard the school committee's requests loud and clear last Thursday and as he mentioned tonight, we have released the "Dashboard" to all school committee members not only to Mattapoisett, but to the other four districts as well this evening, and it will be shared with the school community moving forward on a weekly basis. Mr. Nelson stated in terms of the requests from certain parents tonight, by close of this school week on Friday, we will release all of the feasibility data, and an Addendum to our "Back-to-School Plan" that includes a more detailed, in-person section, for the school committee to use to make decisions in terms of what best learning model to operate the Mattapoisett School District in.

Mr. Nelson thanked Chairperson Muse for the opportunity to address the community at large tonight.

Mr. Muse stated that he has worked with Superintendent Nelson to identify the matrix and create the dashboard which will create additional information for the school committee as well as the town. Mr. Muse stated as requested, a timeline was prepared and agreed to by the close of this week, a full, in-person plan will be presented - not to say that we will be implementing it.

**Carole Clifford**

Ms. Clifford asked if there will be some sort of matrix and some sort of plan for full or partial return to school, if not for all, maybe for the lower grade children?

Superintendent Nelson stated in terms of the Old Rochester Mass Superintendent- Union #55 COVID Dashboard mentioned tonight, that Dr. Finning asked for in writing, and the key indicators that were listed on the dashboard – they took it a step further and created a formula based on the towns' population so that it can be compared to the state data, the tri-town data and the individual towns. Mr. Nelson noted they meet every three weeks per the DOE guidance, with the health officials. Mr. Nelson stated he wants it to be clear that the ultimate decision-makers on what learning model we are in, rests with the Mattapoisett School Committee members for Center School and Old Hammondtown School. Mr. Nelson stated he submitted a plan to the DOE, on time, in August, and he did not receive any feedback from the DOE, in terms of it not being in good standard.

Mr. Nelson stated additional alternatives in terms of more “in-person” learning can look like as follows: 1) Full, in-person return – if there were no restrictions (this would be a more critical operating model); 2) Learning model with modifications – which means including safety requirements and protocols; and 3) Specific grade-level return (lower grades or certain sub-population) – how we can possibly use resources differently. Mr. Nelson wants to make sure that the committee understands, from the Administration perspective, including the building Administration, of what that could mean in terms of impacting other areas of programming. Mr. Nelson also stated that the Governor of Massachusetts could also issue another State Order, that could mandate a particular learning model.

Mr. Nelson stated in August, all four school committees met and reviewed the “Back-to-School 2020/2021 Plan” (of approximately 54 pages). This Plan was approved by all four school districts, and was shared with the community. It included what hybrid learning, remote learning and in-person learning would look like. Mr. Nelson stated at this point, the community is looking for a more detailed “in-person” or “in-person” options would look like, including feasibility data to drive these decisions.

Shannon Finning – As a follow-up to the start of the meeting, she would like to clarify what Alison Costa was asking – What “body” would make the decision if we had to go fully remote in a quick decision, and would the decision look similar to what other school committees have done in other districts in the southeastern part of the state – being remote for 2 weeks? Ms. Finning stated the school committee would make that decision.

Mr. Nelson stated that on each of the five cases that he has reported out, they have all had different elements, different dynamics – including close contact, potential for a cluster, potential for transmission, could be related to another case, etc. Mr. Nelson is cautioned against giving a specific - If this happens we will do this - If this happens we will do that. This is not the best practice when it comes to the unknown. Mr. Nelson stated each time there is a scenario, he works with all key stakeholders, starting with the Board of Health, in terms of what recommendations make the most sense. Mr. Nelson stated if he ever thought there would be a pivot to return to a different learning model, he would call for an emergency school committee meeting to discuss with the committee all the factors and what steps would come next.

#### **B. Transportation Update**

Mr. Nelson extended a “thank-you” to Amaral Bus Company who met regularly throughout the summer and the beginning of this school year with Administration, and they have prioritized our needs, not only in Mattapoissett, but for the entire Tri-town District.

Mr. Howie Barber stated the following:

- Transportation is provided by Amaral Bus Company
- Mattapoissett consists of 7 buses
- Under state guidelines – out of a 77-passenger bus, we are able to utilize 32% occupancy (24 riders or 25 if sibling related)

Mr. Barber provided to the school committee a ridership document, which provided the following information for both Center School and Old Hammondtown School as follows:

| Bus #                  | Cohort 1 Ridership | Cohort B Ridership | Full In-Person Ridership |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1                      | 17                 | 14                 | 31                       |
| 2                      | 15                 | 9                  | 24                       |
| 3                      | 25                 | 21                 | 46                       |
| 4                      | 13                 | 6                  | 19                       |
| 5                      | 7                  | 15                 | 22                       |
| 6                      | 18                 | 22                 | 40                       |
| 7                      | <u>14</u>          | <u>12</u>          | <u>26</u>                |
| <b>TOTAL RIDERSHIP</b> | <b>97</b>          | <b>89</b>          | <b>208</b>               |

Mr. Barber stated under DESE guidelines, we are close with 4 out of the 7 total Cohort A/Cohort B (combined joint venture transportation ridership) to be over the 32% occupancy (24 to 25 ridership). Mr. Barber stated at a minimum, we would need 9 buses to go forward with a full in-person ridership, keeping in mind it costs approximately \$80,000 for a new bus, and there would be an additional cost for a driver. Mr. Barber stated presently there is no waiting list for students to be able to obtain transportation by the Mattapoisett School District. Mr. Barber stated he meets with Amaral Bus Company regularly and discusses with them concerns/problems/issues; cleaning is done in between the secondary school runs and the elementary school runs (a static sprayer is used as well); and, sanitizing products are provided to all bus drivers, along with additional masks should a student board a bus without a mask.

Carly Lavin –

Wanted to confirm that the DESE guidance on ridership is 32% of the buses' ridership capacity

Mr. Barber stated if you have a bus that holds 77 students, a maximum capacity of ridership at 32% is 24/25 students per bus.

Ms. Lavin stated out of the 365 current students – 57% are riding the bus in at least one direction.

Shannon Finning

Mr. Barber, if there was a recommendation to move full in-person, do you have a total amount of what it would cost for the 2 additional buses as well as the personnel costs?

Carly Lavin

Mr. Barber can you also provide the cost of the cleaning per bus, and how long does it take to clean a bus?

Mr. Barber stated it takes approximately 15 minutes to clean a bus – using the static spray and then it takes approximately 10-12 minutes to let the spray settle for any contaminates, and allow additional students back on the bus.

Mr. Barber stated for a new bus it would cost approximately \$80,000 per bus, and would take approximately 5 to 7 months at a minimum to have a new bus produced/made and for us to obtain one. Mr. Barber stated it would cost approximately \$67,000 per bus for personnel (this includes salary, benefits and fuel for the bus).

Shannon Finning

Ms. Finning estimated the following:

2 new buses - \$80,000 each = \$160,000

150 days @ \$368/day = \$54,000 x 2 buses = \$108,000.00

Total: \$268,000.00

**Carly Lavin**

**At this time, we are not riding at full capacity (Monday-Friday). Are we receiving any credit?**

**Mr. Barber stated we receive \$55/day for non-ridership buses noting there are other operational costs that we are still being charged for on our overall contract for the fiscal year. Mr. Barber also noted that we do still use additional buses for Mondays for students who attend a 4 or 5-day program.**

**Carly Lavin**

**If families are still interested in riding a bus, who do they contact?**

**Mr. Barber stated they can contact him directly, that there are some buses that are at full capacity, and it may take a couple of days to configure additional ridership availability.**

**Karin Barrows**

**Ms. Barrows asked if guidelines were changed regarding additional transportation ridership, would families be re-pollled?**

**Mr. Nelson stated yes we would re-poll. Mr. Nelson further stated that if a student suddenly arrived at a bus stop, they would not be turned away. Mr. Nelson further stated at present, there is no waiting list on any particular bus ridership.**

**C. Student Handbook Revision Approval**

**Kevin Tavares, Associate Principal, reported on the Handbook Updates, Edits, New Language for the 20-21 Fiscal Year as follows:**

**Page 18 – (reflects new drop-off times)  
In-Person Arrive time/Tardiness**

**Page 19 (reflects Hybrid/Remote attendance) – based on DESE guidance  
Attendance/Tardiness Policy – it also defines “Present” and “Absent” and how those are recorded**

**Page 21 (reflects new drop-off and pick-up times and procedures)  
Student Drop Off and Pick-up at Dismissal Time  
Center School: Arrival – students may be dropped off between 8:15-8:30 at the Hammond Street entrance of the school near the tennis court  
End of Day: All students being picked up at the end of the day will be dismissed from the Hammond Street entrance**

**Old Hammondtown: Arrival – cars should use the Shaw Street entrance (to avoid buses) and students may be dropped off at 8:15am by the flagpole; Dismissal – cars should use the Shaw Street entrance (to avoid buses) pick-up will begin at 2:45pm by the flagpole**

**Safety and Security Section:**

**Pages 21 and 22 – all information regarding Fire Drills and Evacuation/Lockdowns has been removed. The district made a commitment to follow “ALICE” this year - Mr. Tavares stated that he was sent for training on ALICE procedures and guidelines.**

Page 24 (added new language regarding visitors in the building) based on COVID-19 guidelines by the state. Volunteers and Visitors are restricted from the buildings at this time and will only be allowed in to the building on a case-by-case basis.

Page 24 (removed 2 paragraphs regarding volunteering, based on DESE COVID-19 guidance)

Page 25 (added Mask and Face Coverings Policy)

Pages 30 and 31 (updated transportation policy language) deals with bus route information, how to contact the bus company and safety on the bus

Page 33 (removed In-School Chorus language from the document)

Page 53 (added page: COVID-19 Guidance)

This page lists symptoms to look out for and whether or not you should send a student to school, as well as good hygiene habits.

Mr. Tavares concluded that a copy of the new handbook was provided to the school committee members.

Carly Lavin –

Ms. Lavin is concerned that the policy is more rigid than what was originally discussed, and would like to know if there would be more flexibility on hybrid out days for students/families, who have already expressed a challenge.

Mr. Tavares responded as long as a student was participating in a session or completing an on-line assessment/assignment, they would be considered present.

Ms. Lavin –

When you say “on-line assessment” is that something like watching a video, or answering a google form?

Mr. Tavares stated if a student goes in to google classroom, whether it is an asynchronous assignment or if a task is completed, then they would be marked present for that day. As long as they were participating in an assignment, they would be marked present for that day.

Mrs. Bowman stated what was noted in the handbook is DESE guidelines. Mrs. Bowman clarified that in the lower grades, packets are being utilized and there will be flexibility for families. Mrs. Bowman stated they realize families have a variety of hardships and any participation will be classified as attending.

**MOTION:** by Carole Clifford to approve the Student Handbook Revisions as written  
**SECONDED:** Karin Barrows  
**IN FAVOR:** ALL  
**OPPOSED:** None  
**MOTION PASSED – 5:0**

**Role Call:** Carole Clifford – Yes; Karin Barrows – Yes; Carly Lavin – Yes; Shannon Finning – Yes; James Muse - Yes

## **V. New Business**

### **B. Business**

#### **1. Financial Report**

Mr. Howard Barber provided a summary memorandum as well as a copy of the financial statement as of October 26, 2020, and stated by the end of this week, he hopes to have all of the encumbrances and modifications to the budget, ensuring that we fully identify projected costs, including those in our encumbrance values, closer to what the FY20-21 budget will be.

**Total Budget (approximately): 7.3 million**

**Currently Unencumbered (approximately): \$ 740,000**

Included in this unencumbered gap are costs such as:

**Substitute costs - \$ 62,000**

**(Note: the amount in the budget was based on last years' substitute rate which has basically doubled for this year)**

**Special Education-**

**Extended Year Services of approximately \$50,000**

**Transportation Fees of approximately \$40,000**

**Out of District Placement costs of approximately \$240,000**

Mr. Barber stated we have to take into consideration additional facilities costs (repairs to either of the buildings) and/or additional operations costs for each of the buildings - \$30,000 to \$40,000. Mr. Barber stated by December he likes to have at least 50 to 60% of the budget identified and by March/April – he would like to have approximate final figures of what the FY21 budget will finish at. Mr. Barber stated this year the IDEA grant is being used for paraprofessionals instead of teachers.

Mr. Barber reported on the Facilities Director's Report (By: Gene Jones) as follows (for both Center School and Old Hammondtown School):

- Ground mosquito spraying of our fields and grounds completed
- COVID-19 protocols strictly adhered to for HVAC, Cleaning, Sanitizing and traffic control
- Nightly sanitizing all our buses with static spray sanitizing equipment
- Deployed all DESE/CDC required Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
- Protective shields installed in all required areas
- Testing shields acquired and available on site
- Playgrounds temporarily closed per DESE/CDC recommendations
- Nurse and student services issued required additional safety PPE
- Annual Occupancy Permit issued from the Town
- Conducted routine maintenance on all facility systems

Mr. Barber reported on the Food Service Director's Report (By: Jill Henesey) as follows (for both Center School and Old Hammondtown School):

In order to increase the meal counts for families picking up meals - the order form to complete for food pick-up has been extended. Families now have from Friday (5:00pm) through Wednesday (9:00am) to place their orders; all of the Mattapoissett lunch pick-ups will be held on Mondays at Center School (OHS school has been eliminated to make it easier for parents to just pick-up at one school); we have added a Monday evening pick-up at the High School campus for parents who cannot make it during the day from 4:30-5:30pm.

## **VI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

Chairperson Muse stated as follows:

I want to assure each and every person that it is not my intention in any way to insult, ignore or otherwise annoy anybody. I am on this committee solely to serve the students in our school district as I

have been for nine years. I appreciate the comment of “having quite a bit of service” and I want to assure everyone that it is absolutely my intent, hope and prayer that all of our students return back to the schools as soon as possible. I am absolutely certain that it is the hope and prayer of every administrator and teacher. I appreciate the fact that many parents are very frustrated, and I understand that and I have complete empathy.

We all are dealing with this horrible virus but every decision that has been made, every action I have taken, and every effort I have made has been solely to do as best we can to provide a safe and equitable education to all of our students. For 26 years I have been advocating for the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly when it comes to education – not just in this town but I have been an advocate at both the state and federal level, for issues dealing with our vulnerable population.

I have absolute faith in the administration, principals and teachers, and I know this past summer hundreds and hundreds of hours were spent to analyze what was available, determine what the options were, prepare plans, and look for any possible way to have the kids go back to school full-time, in-person. It was very clear there was just not the financial resources to do so, and many major encumbrances to make that happen, if we were going to abide by the guidelines (CDC, DESE and follow our ALICE protocols) and a dozen other major criteria to provide for a safe environment.

I struggled with my vote as I struggle with every vote I have. Nothing was done haphazardly and I had to consider everybody’s circumstances. I voted by conscience and I will do it again.

If anybody thinks they need to take action personally against me, in anyway whatsoever, please exhaust your legal remedies because I am here solely to help the children. I’ve been doing it for 26 years vigorously in a dozen capacities in this school district and I’m totally offended by the comments, and I’m not going to just stand by and take it.

I understand there are emotions running high. I am not your enemy. I am here working very hard to give every student the opportunity to have a safe education, and safety is absolutely the first priority and it will continue to be so for me.

#### **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINSTRATOR’S REPORT:**

**Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell – Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning – reported as follows:**

**On November 3, 2020 (Professional Development Day) – there will be three keynote speakers:**

- 1. Mr. Mirko Chardin’s presentation will be on “Beyond Access with Social Emotional Learners”**
- 2. Dr. Kalise Wornum’s presentation will be on “Cultural Proficiency & Equity**
- 3. Mr. Philip Alessi’s presentations will be on “Executive Functioning” and “Fostering Positive Relationships with Our Students”**

**Carly Levin**

**Ms. Levin wanted to know where Old Hammondtown School teachers would be on that day, since it is election day.**

**Mrs. Bowman stated she has spoken with the Mattapoisett Police Department and has been assured that it will be a safe place for the staff of Old Hammondtown School to attend the Professional Development day at Old Hammondtown. Teachers will park in the back of the building by the playground where there is an entrance to the building. Teachers will participate in their own classrooms. Mrs. Bowman stated that many community members have already voted by mail and the voting traffic will not interfere with the teachers entering the building.**

**Mr. Craig Davidson – Director of Student Services – reported as follows:**

**The paraprofessionals took part in two days of training on the Master Teacher eLearning Platform during the teacher’s parent open houses; Mr. Davidson and Dr. Pearson-Campbell took part in the Assistant Superintendent Leadership Seminars giving them the opportunity to collaborate with one another as they both transition into the district together, meeting with over 20 current and inspiring Assistant Superintendents in the community. Mr. Davidson stated attending these seminars creates a**

partnership and working relationship while also being able to network with so many leaders across the state in their prospective fields.

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Mrs. Rosemary Bowman, Principal of Center School/Old Hammondtown School reported the following: Students are back in school – hybrid model, and the positive attitude that the children bring with them every day is noteworthy. Mrs. Bowman understands the frustration the families have expressed, but stated the children come to school joyfully, with a very positive attitude.

Mrs. Bowman reported at Center School there are 16 remote students, OHS - 9 remote students, and homeschooling (combined) - 12 students; Classroom teachers at each grade level communicate with their “Hybrid-Out” students three times during the day – Morning Meeting/Midday Check-In/ Closing Circle; with the younger students, packets have proven to be beneficial, and teachers have provided those – other than those packets, all classrooms are utilizing Google Classroom.

Mrs. Bowman stated all children – K through grade 6 have participated in AIMS WEB Plus Benchmarking Assessment in Reading and Mathematics; Parent Conferences took place on 10/22 and 10/23 by either a ZOOM or a telephone conference (parents chose which option they preferred); and, Lifetouch Photographers visited both schools and the individual photographs taken will be utilized on one sheet to create a class photo which will include a photograph of the classroom teacher.

Carly Lavin – 2 questions:

1. Status of iPads
2. Open House date

Mrs. Bowman stated she will make “Open House” a priority which will be done one grade level at a time. Mrs. Bowman stated it is important for parents to have a visual on what a classroom looks like, what the cafeteria looks like, etc.

Mrs. Bowman stated that cases for the iPads have arrived and Mr. Barber stated that meetings are held weekly regarding the status of all technology ordered for the district, and they have put in place a preliminary set-up program, so that once these devices are delivered they will be programmed as quickly as possible and disbursed to the students.

Mrs. Bowman stated the same protocol will be used for K-1 students with the iPads to/from school.

## **VIII. School Committee**

### **A. Committee Reports**

#### **1. ORR District School Committee**

James Muse reported as follows:

- There was a thorough update from the principals of what is taking place at both the HS/JHS
- They had a lot of thoughtful input from the student advisory members
- Concerns/questions clarifying and solidifying the graduation requirements
- An explanation on MCAS was given
- Requests from students on how the courses taken outside of the normal circumstances would be used in determining class rank
- Highlight – a fantastic job by the students in delivering information and advocating for themselves.

#### **2. SMEC**

Carole Clifford reported as follows:

- All SMEC programs are open
- Hybrid 4-day in-person; 1 day remote
- Enrollment has been stable
- All districts that belong to SMEC meet with the Special Education Directors in each district every four weeks

- The adult SMEC programs (persons over the age of 22 who still need services) are operating at 40% capacity. SMEC and the state are not always in agreement as to what programs are going to be funded

### 3. READS

Superintendent Nelson - They have not met

### 4. Early Childhood Council

Karin Barrows - They have not met

### 5. MASC

Shannon Finning reported as follows:

- The annual meeting is taking place on Saturday, November 7
- The featured presentation is "Understanding the Connection between Cultural Proficiency and Equity"
- Information on a "brown bag" MASC for Lunch (a PD series held monthly on a Friday from 12:00-1:15pm) will be forwarded for pre-registration

### 6. Mattapoisett Capital Needs Committee

Carole Clifford – They have not met

### 7. Tri-Town Education Foundation

Shannon Finning reported as follows:

- They met last week and they will be looking at what the available grants will be this year

### 8. Policy Sub-Committee

Carly Lavin – Next meeting is scheduled for November 9

### 9. Budget Sub-Committee

James Muse – They have not met

### 10. Clock Committee

- Mrs. Bowman stated the clock is as efficient as ever!

### 11. Anti-Racism Committee

Shannon Finning reported as follows:

- They met on October 5
- A representative from each of the school committees, members from the Tri-town Against Racism, as well as a few other active parents from the community attended.
- At the meeting they were asked to share or think about our "WHY" – Why we want to be a part of this?
- Our Goal for the year – talk about the functions and duties of the group. Ms. Finning stated one area of concern that was discussed is the need for student voices to be a part of the group.

### 12. Health & Safety Committee

Carly Lavin reported as follows:

- They will be meeting monthly – this first meeting was very insightful
- Found out first-hand the successful mask wearing practices at both Center and OHS
- Began potential opportunities to make pivots or changes for incremental things for both administration and teachers
- They look forward to having Amanda Stone and/or Emily Field join the next meeting.

**IX. Future Business**

**A. Timeline**

Mattapoisett School Committee will be held on December 7, 2020 @ 6:30pm – hybrid format

Joint School Committee will be held on November 19, 2020 @ 6:30pm – remotely via zoom

**B. Future Agenda Items**

- MCAS Results Report (November/December – depending upon receipt of results)
- Initial Budget Review (January)
- School Lunch Statement (January/June)
- 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 Contracts (May)
- Approval of new School Council goals (June)

**XI. Information Items**

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING**

Mattapoisett School Committee Meeting Agenda – October 26, 2020

Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2020

Food Service Director Report – October, 2020

Facilities Director Report – October, 2020

Principal’s Report – October, 2020

Meeting of the Regular Mattapoisett School Committee meeting ended at 8:31pm

Chairperson Muse requested at 8:31pm a Motion to go in to Executive Session for the Purpose of #7 – to comply with the provisions of any general or special law.

**MOTION:** by Carole Clifford to go in to Executive Session for the Purpose of #7 – only to adjourn  
**SECONDED:** Carly Lavin  
**IN FAVOR:** All  
**OPPOSED:** None  
**MOTION PASSED – 5:0**

**Role Call:** Carole Clifford – Yes; Carly Lavin – Yes; Shannon Finning – Yes; Karin Barrows – Yes; James Muse - Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Bailey, Recording Secretary