

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rochester, Massachusetts  
16 Pine Street - Rochester, MA 02770**

**MEETING MINUTES  
April 8, 2021**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Thursday – April 8, 2021 at 6:30pm., by Zoom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sharon Hartley– Chairperson, Anne Fernandes – Vice-Chairperson, Robin Rounseville and Katherine Duggan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tina Rood

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools; Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Instruction; Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services; Derek Medeiros, Principal; Charles West, Assistant Principal; Toni Bailey, Recording Secretary; teachers, parents and members of the press and public.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm., by Chairperson Hartley. Ms. Hartley introduced the Rochester School Committee members and 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.

Ms. Hartley stated one item has been added to the Agenda, which is a presentation by David Arancio, a representative from the Town of Rochester’s Capital Planning Committee, who will be talking to us about the capital budget for this year.

Ms. Hartley stated a presentation will be held regarding the FY22 Budget by Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations of the Old Rochester Regional School District and once Mr. Barber has completed his presentation, the school committee will adjourn this meeting to go into a brief Executive Session meeting, and then return to the regular meeting as scheduled.

**FY22 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**

Michael S. Nelson – Superintendent:

*“Good evening everyone. As Ms. Hartley has mentioned, our first order of business is the FY22 budget public hearing for the Rochester School District.*

*The budget development process started in late fall/early winter and required numerous meetings to strategize the financial direction of Rochester Memorial School moving forward.*

*Our school committee members listened to our building administration share their visions for our school building moving into next year and collaborated with central office administrators, the town administrator of Rochester, and FINCOM representation to bring forth tonight’s FY22 budget proposal.*

*During the budget development process, we assessed and considered the current financial climate, our immediate school programming needs, discussed what needs we may have in future school years, and prioritized what we know about the educational needs of our students, families, and staff members heading into the 2021-2022 school year.*

*The impact and reality of the COVID-19 pandemic also has played a major role in the budget process this year in the direction moving forward.*

*As a result, tonight Mr. Barber our Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations will present our FY22 budget proposal to the public. We feel this budget represents not only a fiscally responsible proposal but a budget that allows us to continue to service our students and families, meeting Rochester Memorial School’s educational expectations. I want to thank all those who have contributed to this process and Mr. Barber for his financial leadership during this process as well.”*

Mr. Howard Barber began by thanking the following people: Ms. Sharon Hartley, Chairperson of the Rochester School Committee, Superintendent Nelson, members of the School Committee’s Budget Sub-Committee (who attended endless meetings from December to now), school faculty and staff, school principals, the finance committee, directors, Board of Selectman – stating that all of these stakeholders had an integral part of what we used to build our operational budget for providing instructional education for our students.

Mr. Barber presented the Rochester School District’s Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget as follows:

Budget Methodology and Goals: (Mr. Barber noted there were various points of interest relative to the budget, based on our achievement levels)

- To provide a modified zero based budgetary method
- To provide level, but cost effective programming and staffing
- To be proactive, rather than reactive
- To achieve administrative and departmental based goals
- To integrate all funds – budget approach

What is the Total Operational Cost of Rochester School District? (Mr. Barber provided FY21 Budget to the proposed FY22 budget as follows:

- FY21 Budget \$ 6,913,905
- FY22 Proposed Budget \$ 7,076,069
- Increase of: \$ 162,164
- Net Percent Increase 2.35%

Mr. Barber provided a breakdown of the FY2022 Overall Operations Budget as follows:

| Department                        | Roch School District | Bristol County<br>Agricultural HS | Total General Funds | Funding Offsets | Overall Budget |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Rochester<br>Memorial School      | \$ 4,858,681         |                                   | \$ 4,858,681        | \$ 181,861      | \$ 5,040,542   |
| Bristol County<br>Agricultural HS |                      | \$ 321,268*                       |                     |                 | \$ 321,268     |
| Central Office                    | \$ 158,188           |                                   | \$ 158,188          |                 | \$ 158,188     |
| Facilities                        | \$ 426,826           |                                   | \$ 426,826          | \$ 24,000       | \$ 450,826     |
| Student Services                  | \$ 515,269           |                                   | \$ 515,629          | \$ 71,932       | \$ 587,201     |

|                          |                     |                   |                     |                     |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Technology               | \$ 90,708           |                   | \$ 90,708           |                     | \$ 90,708           |
| Transportation           | \$ 427,355          |                   | \$ 427,355          |                     | \$ 427,335          |
| <b>Total FY22 Budget</b> | <b>\$ 6,477,007</b> | <b>\$ 321,268</b> | <b>\$ 6,798,275</b> | <b>\$ 277,793**</b> | <b>\$ 7,076,068</b> |
| FY21 Budget              | \$ 6,309,641        | \$ 300,190        | \$ 6,609,831        | \$ 304,074          | \$ 6,913,905        |
| FY22 Budget<br>INC/DEC%  | 102.65%             | 107.02%           | 102.85%             | 91.36%              | 102.35%             |

(\*Note: Bristol County Agricultural HS is based on 13 students – tuition/transportation, as of October 1, 2020, and \*\* you can see we have generated \$277,793 in additional offsets for FY2022)

Mr. Barber stated “offsets” enables us to reduce the costs that are presented to the Town of Rochester from the overall town assessment. Mr. Barber listed the following Financial Budgetary Offsets:

| <u>Direct Offset Funding Source</u> | <u>Amount</u>     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Title 1 Grant                       | \$ 13,000         |
| IDEA Grant                          | \$ 88,360         |
| State Grants (EEC & REAPS)          | \$ 45,500         |
| Circuit Breaker                     | \$ 71,933         |
| Building Use                        | \$ 24,000         |
| Revolving Funds                     | \$ 35,000         |
| <b>Total Offsets:</b>               | <b>\$ 277,793</b> |

Mr. Barber noted the following:

- The offsets are made up from grants - State Grants (Early Childhood and REAPS –“Rural School Achievement Funding Grant”), circuit breaker (State reimbursement from Student Services), building use fees and School Choice.
- These funds are common reoccurring resources to reduce the town Assessment.
- Includes 3 paraprofessional under the IDEA grant, Reading Specialist Teacher percentage from Title I and the REAP Grant, a percentage of the Project Grow Teacher from Preschool Tuition in addition to Tuition from Day School

Mr. Barber noted the General Funds Budget (the “Operating Budget”) is proposed as follows for FY2022:

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| FY21 Budget:          | \$ 6,609,831      |
| FY22 Proposed Budget: | \$ 6,798,275      |
| <b>Increase of:</b>   | <b>\$ 188,444</b> |
| Net Percent Increase: | 2.851%            |

Mr. Barber stated the Superintendent’s priorities and strategies in developing the FY22 proposed budget of \$6,798,275, included the following:

- We generated a Modified Zero Based budget looking at the overall operations, acknowledged student enrollment to sustain high academic standards and also provided new platforms from what we learned with COVID-19 impacting our District.
- We maintained Level Services
- Acknowledged Educational Interventionist need support – 1.0 FTE
- Acknowledged financial plans of contract negotiations.

Mr. Barber stated we recognized both our Union Contracts (teachers, paraprofessionals, etc.,) and Independent Contract Agreements, and noted the following:

- In the Teacher’s Union Agreement – 2 current staff retirements, and negotiation planning will be taking place
- In the Paraprofessional Union Agreement – 1 current staff resignation, and negotiation planning will be taking place
- We were able to save money due to the retirements and resignation (anyone hired for these positions would come in at a lesser rate)

Mr. Barber stated Department and Organization Costs are usually a net increase and noted the following:

- We recognized operational cost increases over the last fiscal year included the following:
  - ❖ Increase in tuition programs for student placements - Day school \$21,000; Collaborative \$6,000
- Prior year reduction from the operating budget, post March, 2020 was reduced (estimate of \$52,000) which included general school supplies of \$14,000 that had to be added back from the School Committee’s approval for the Town Meeting Approval offset
- Technology and software new equipment updates - \$7,000
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> year Custodial Consulting contract increase of \$16,000

Mr. Barber stated in working collaboratively with Mr. Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services, there was a net decrease in student services for bus monitors in the amount of \$12,000.

Mr. Barber stated the proposed Chapter 70 funds for FY22, which is “state aid” funds, projected by the Governor is as follows:

- FY2022 – the projected amount is \$2,072,039
- This is a .70% state aid increase – less than a 1% increase
- This includes the proposed additional \$30.00 per student or a net increase of \$14,490 from FY2021

|                                | FY21                  | FY22                | Change      | % Change |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|
| Enrollment                     | 514                   | 483                 | -31         | -6.03%   |
| Foundation Budget              | \$ 5,386,709          | \$ 5,238,927        | -\$ 147,782 | -2.74%   |
| Required District Contribution | \$ 3,382,851          | \$ 3,515,179        | \$ 132,328  | 3.91%    |
| Chapter 70 Aid                 | <b>\$ 2,057,549 *</b> | <b>\$ 2,072,039</b> | \$ 14,490   | 0.70%    |
| Required Net School Spending   | \$ 5,440,400          | \$ 5,587,218        | \$ 146,818  | 2.79%    |

**\* Final Chapter 70 received after State of Massachusetts passed Budget 12/14/2020**

Mr. Barber stated you can see, based on the reduction in enrollment from October 1, 2019 compared to 2020, we reduced 31 students from our enrollment. (Note: students who are “home-schooled” are not counted, since we are not technically educating those students)

Mr. Barber noted we are anticipating a few students will be returning next fiscal year from being home-schooled or other forms of non-public education.

Mr. Barber stated Chapter 70 Financial Aid is projected from the Governors January 2021 budget to be at \$2,072,039 – which is a \$14,490 or 0.70% increase over last year.

Mr. Barber stated the presentation given above leads to the following Rochester School District’s Proposed FY2022 Superintendent’s Budget as follows:

| Department                     | Fiscal Year 2022 | Fiscal Year 2021 | Department Changes |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Rochester Memorial School      | \$ 4,858,681     | \$ 4,710,784     | \$ 147,897         |
| Bristol County Agricultural HS | \$ 321,268       | \$ 321,268       | \$ 21,078          |
| Central Office                 | \$ 158,188       | \$ 164,961       | \$ (6,773)         |
| Facilities                     | \$ 426,826       | \$ 412,321       | \$ 14,505          |
| Student Services               | \$ 515,269       | \$ 80,452        | \$ 10,256          |

|                               |                     |                     |                   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Transportation                | \$ 427,335          | \$ 449,690          | \$ (22,355)       |
| <b>Total Assessed Budget:</b> | <b>\$ 6,798,275</b> | <b>\$ 6,609,831</b> | <b>\$ 188,444</b> |

Mr. Barber concluded the proposed FY22 Budget is \$6,798,275, which is an increase of \$188,444 or 2.851% increase over FY21.

Chairperson Hartley asked the School Committee members if they had any questions/comments regarding the proposed budget – there were none.

Chairperson Hartley asked if there were any questions/comments by the community members, teachers or parents present at the meeting – there were none.

Mr. Nelson stated he appreciated the fact that all of the Rochester School Committee members regularly participated in all of the meetings and he believes this is one of the reasons there are no questions. Mr. Nelson stated the School Committee members have been with us from the start of this budget process and there were many conversations in terms of how this school year has gone, what we think we are going to need moving forward and in the years to come.

Mr. Nelson extended gratitude to the Town of Rochester, who continuously answered the call when we were looking for guidance and support as well, not only with the budget process but also with this challenging year, as we all navigated this COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Hartley extended a “thank you” to the Administrators and everyone else who participated in this budget process. Ms. Hartley stated it was a great team effort!

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:00pm, and go into Executive Session for the purpose of #3 – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining; and #7 – to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements, only to return to the Regular Meeting as scheduled.

SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes

SECONDED: Robin Rounseville

IN FAVOR: 4:0

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Roll Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

## **XII. Executive Session:**

### Recommendation:

That the School Committee enter into Executive Session for 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 grant-in-aid requirements.

RETURNED TO REGULAR SESSION AT 7:18pm

Chairperson Hartley stated we are beginning this meeting with the knowledge that all of our students have returned back to school full-time, grades K through 6, and noted we are very excited to have our children back in the building. Ms. Hartley stated Principal Medeiros will provide an update on the students’ return back to school and extended a “thank you” to the administration, the entire Rochester Memorial School Community, parents, grandparents, bus drivers, food service personnel and the custodians, for making this such a smooth transition.

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

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: March 4, 2021

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review and approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of March 4, 2021.

Chairperson Hartley asked if there were any changes to the minutes of March 4, 2021

MOTION: by Robin Rounseville to approve the Regular Session Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2021 as presented

SECONDED: Anne Fernandes

IN FAVOR: 4:0

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Roll Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes –Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan- Yes

B. Approval of Minutes – Executive Session: March 4, 2021

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review and approve the Executive session minutes of March 4, 2021.

Chairperson Hartley stated these meeting minutes were approved during Executive Session.

**IV. General**

A. FY22 Budget Approval

Recommendation:

That the School Committee approve the FY22 Budget

MOTION: by Chairperson Sharon Hartley, to approve the Proposed Fiscal Year June 30, 2022 Operating Budget in the amount of \$6,798,275 for the Rochester School District

SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes

SECONDED: Robin Rounseville

IN FAVOR: 4:0

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Roll Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes –Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan- Yes

B. Full In-Person Pivot

Recommendation:

That the School Committee hear an update from the Administration

Michael S. Nelson – Superintendent:

*“As you all are aware – we are absolutely back! We officially pivoted grades 3 through 6 to full in-person learning this past Monday. I want to thank our administrators, the teachers, staff members, school committee members, and other stakeholders for helping us navigate our full return throughout the school year. I also want to thank our parents, guardians, and students for their unwavering patience, resolve, and support throughout the year. Change is never easy and we have had plenty of it this particular school year.*

*Prior to the recent pivot, we surveyed our families once again asking for them to select either full in-person learning or remote learning moving forward for the remainder of the school year. It is important to note that families continue to have the option of remote learning for this academic school year if it best meets their student’s needs. In addition, we asked about their needs for transportation and food services.*

*Tonight, you will hear a presentation from Principal Medeiros outlining the highlights of the full in-person pivot that recently occurred, while providing us an update on how the first four days have gone from his perspective.*

*The major changes in our school so far, based on updated in-person guidance released by the Department of Education are:*

- social distancing between students is now three to six feet*
- all desks should be facing the same direction*
- staff members should continue to maintain six feet of distancing from each other*
- six feet of distancing between all individuals during meal times should continue*
- all individuals in our school buildings should be wearing masks, and others recommendations*

*Our main goals remain teaching and learning, social emotional well-being, and maintaining safety in the current covid-19 environment.*

*At this time, I would ask Principal Medeiros to present to the school committee the full in-person pivot.*

Mr. Medeiros stated they are thrilled to have the students back in the building, full in-person and noted he held a Q&A session for parents/guardians on March 29, 2021, in which he presented a slide show for them as well.

Mr. Medeiros extended a “thank you” to the Rochester’s Re-Opening Committee, not only to be able to speak to the success of our youngest learners - K through 2 returning, but making suggestions and bringing up great points in areas of concern, to ensure the return of all of our students would be successful.

Mr. Medeiros stated the students and families have done an outstanding job in following all of the routines and procedures that have been put in place to make sure the students and staff is safe.

Mr. Medeiros noted any students who wanted to return back to school from the K-2 remote learning platform, had the opportunity to do so at this time as well and noted that any student who wanted to continue with remote learning for the remainder of the school year, would be able to do so.

Mr. Medeiros stated the following:

- Currently in Grade 3 there are 67 students enrolled in three (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classrooms.
- Currently in Grade 4 there are 56 students enrolled in three (3) 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Classrooms.
- Currently in Grade 5 there are 70 students enrolled in three (3) 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Classrooms.
- Currently in Grade 6 there are 62 students enrolled in three (3) 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Classrooms.

Mr. Medeiros stated there is strict guidance as to social distancing while children are eating, and noted in addition to the cafeteria being used for lunch, the gymnasium has also been set-up for our students to utilize for lunch.

Mr. Medeiros stated since the playgrounds have been re-opened, students are able to place their personal belongings on “dots” located on the pavement that Mr. Ouellette painted, noting each class has their own row of dots, to once again ensure safety protocols.

Mr. Medeiros stated the “Outdoor Classroom” is being utilized, and in addition to the benches/desks for the students, they now have a weatherproof cabinet with a whiteboard inside of it, as well as additional shelving on the bottom for teacher’s supplies.

Mr. Medeiros provided additional information as follows:

- Grades K-2 student desks, with the exception of Mrs. Bradley’s class, remain at 6 feet apart so those students may continue to eat breakfast and snack in their classrooms
- Grade 3-6 students, as well as Mrs. Bradley’s students, go to the cafeteria for breakfast. Once these students get dropped off at school (either by parent drop-off or from the bus) they go directly to the cafeteria for breakfast. Grade 3-6 snack is taking place outside at our fresh air/mask break spaces or in the cafeteria during inclement weather days.
- The arrival and dismissal routine has been smooth since our pivot to full in-person noting the addition of the new PE blacktop area has limited the number of vehicles waiting on Pine Street to a small number or no vehicles at all.
- A “thank you” to the Rochester Police Department for their assistance and presence at RMS during the first few days of implementing this new arrival and dismissal route, as well as our families for their continued support of these changes.
- All lunch/recess shifts are running smoothly and efficiently with a few minor adjustments in time to limit traffic flow and overcrowding in the hallways.
- The Specialists continue to provide instruction in the content area via carts and also utilizing outdoor spaces throughout the campus.

Mr. Medeiros extended a “thank you” to Amaral Bus Company for adjusting the bus route times a little, allowing students in Grades 3-6, as well as Mrs. Bradley’s classroom, time to have breakfast in the morning in the cafeteria.

Ms. Hartley extended a “thank you” to Mr. Medeiros and Mr. West for taking care of all of the details in order to have a terrific student return run so smoothly. Ms. Hartley stated she went to school on Monday afternoon to see how things were going regarding the afternoon dismissal and was pleased to note that cars quickly moved efficiently and carefully into the driveway and it took ten minutes or less for all of it to take place.

Ms. Fernandes extended her gratitude and stated although we do not get to see all of the daily ins/outs, the school committee is very grateful for the efficiency and detailed-oriented decisions that have been made.

Mr. Medeiros noted that not only the School Committee, but the Re-Opening Committee and staff in general – going all the way back to the beginning of the year during the first 10 days of Professional Development in preparing for this new adventure – there was awesome collaboration. Mr. Medeiros stated he feels as though the staff is comfortable with bringing up suggestions, giving feedback and commenting on everything going on, and it truly has been an all “hands on deck” experience for all of us including the families and students.

Ms. Rounseville extended a “thank you” to everyone and noted that she is often dropping off/picking up students and stated it is so nice to see the students happy, smiling and getting back into a routine.

Questions by School Committee Members:

Ms. Rounseville:

- How many students are still remote?
- Could we get an update on class sizes?
- With the new guidelines from the CDC in terms of social distancing, how does that affect contact tracing when we do have a case?

Response by Mr. Medeiros:

We currently have 34 students in our remote platform, and are happy that we are still able to offer that learning model; we had 10 students return back to school from the remote learning model; and, we had two (2) home-schooled students return back to school full in-person.

Mr. Medeiros will provide to the School Committee members an update on class sizes.

Mr. Medeiros stated the following regarding contact tracing:

- Classrooms that desks are 6 feet apart – he feels those classrooms are in good shape
- Classrooms where student desks are less than 6 feet apart – if there were to be a case, the students whose desks are located in front, in back, as well as the two desks on either side of the student in question – those parents/guardians would be contacted by Mrs. Murphy
- Amaral Bus Company has been outstanding, and they continue to keep seating charts, which would allow us to figure out any close contact on the bus – again, it would be the student in front, in back as well as the student in the seat to the side of the student in question – those parents/guardians would be contacted by Mrs. Murphy
- During recess time, staff is outstanding in making sure students are constantly moving around and keeping space in between one another – and since the guidance speaks to “close contact” as being next to someone within 6 feet for 15 minutes – it is unlikely that a close contact would happen during recess, since the entire amount of recess time is approximately 15 minutes
- Mr. West has made sure that any game that is played outside does not allow students to be within 6 feet of each other for more than 15 minutes at a time
- Since our cameras have been updated, we have the ability to access footage during recess time if we thought there was ever a concern regarding a close contact during that time

Mr. Medeiros extended a huge “thank you” to Mrs. Murphy stating she comes to school every day with a smile on her face and keeps Mr. West and he updated on any new guidance from the CDC regarding close contact guidelines, etc. Mr. Medeiros stated Mrs. Murphy is kind and compassionate to any family she has to contact regarding any concerns relating to contact tracing, or any medical related conversations in general.

Mr. Nelson stated this is the direction we all wanted to move in throughout the school year and noted from the start of this in August, our main goal was to have as many students in the building as possible, while recognizing that many families and students may be in a different place - we continued working with those families as well. Mr. Nelson stated we have stayed true to our core principles in our re-opening plan.

### C. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement

#### Recommendation:

That the School Committee approve the Memorandum of Agreement

MOTION: by Chairperson Sharon Hartley, to approve the Memorandum of Agreement  
SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes  
SECONDED: Robin Rounseville  
IN FAVOR: 4:0  
OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Roll Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes –Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan- Yes

D. READS Appointment

Recommendation:

That the School Committee appoint a representative to the READS Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2021-2022 School Year

MOTION: by Chairperson Sharon Hartley, to appoint Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, to serve as the Rochester School District's representative on the Board of Directors of READS Collaborative, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 4E as amended by Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2012 for the 2021/2022 school year

SO MOVED: Robin Rounseville

SECONDED: Kate Duggan

IN FAVOR: 4:0

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Roll Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes –Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan- Yes

E. School Calendar Discussion

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review and discuss the 2021-2022 school calendar.

Michael S. Nelson – Superintendent:

*“Tonight we are sharing the first draft of the 2021-2022 school calendar with this committee. It has been shared with the leadership team, who will share it with their school council for feedback, and we have also shared it with the associations for initial thoughts. We are not seeking a vote tonight, but instead a review and discussion of the draft calendar. It is important to remember that the school calendar will ultimately be voted on by the Joint School Committee later this school year.”*

August:

26 New Teacher Orientation  
30 All staff and new staff returns for orientation  
31 Official Opening Day – All Schools for students/staff

September:

3 No school in anticipation of the Labor Day weekend  
6 No school – Labor Day  
22 Recommending Professional Development – early release all schools

October:

11 No School – Columbus Day  
21 & 22 Early dismissal for Parent Conferences in Matt/Roch and Marion grades K-6

November:

11 No School – Veteran’s Day  
12 First full day of Professional Development for teachers and staff members  
24-26 Thanksgiving break

December:

23 Early Dismissal  
24-31 School Vacation

January:

3 Students return back to school  
17 No School – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
18 Second and final full Professional Development Day for teachers and staff members

February:

9 Early Dismissal for Professional Development  
21 No School – President’s Day  
22-25 School Vacation

March:

9 Early Dismissal for Professional Development  
24&25 Early Release for Parent Conferences for Mattapoisett only K-6 per the current contract of the Teacher’s Association

April:

15-22 School Vacation

May:

30 No School – Memorial Day

June:

1 Last Early Dismissal for Professional Development  
16\* With no snow or inclement weather – this would be the last day of school  
\*Note: the 185<sup>th</sup> day would be June 24 should we need to add on 5 days due to inclement weather  
20 No School – Juneteenth

Chairperson Hartley asked the school committee members if they had any questions/comments – there were none

Mr. Nelson stated at this point he would bring back feedback to the Joint School Committee to recommend taking formal action to set the FY21/22 school calendar, based on what we know right now. Mr. Nelson stated one of the questions that has been brought up is whether or not we would continue to have the latitude/flexibility to have remote “snow days/inclement weather days” – and noted at this point, Commissioner Riley has not made a decision.

#### F. Equity & Inclusion Survey Discussion

##### Recommendation:

That the School Committee hear a presentation from Administration and also have a discussion Michael S. Nelson – Superintendent:

*“We have been discussing at all of our school committee meetings the Anti-Racism Sub Committee’s work that has been completed this school year. This group has been extremely active throughout the year and have met regularly to discuss our sub-committee’s structure, goals, and action plan moving forward. We have started working with outside consultants to tap into their expertise and bring community events to our families. One of the goals has been to solicit student voice regarding equity and inclusion in our schools. Recently, we completed a grade 6 through high school survey of our students to gain greater insight into the equity and inclusion*

*culture of our school buildings. Our administration has begun unpacking the results, most recently taking part in a training offered by our survey vendor – “Panorama” - to best understand how to analysis our results and plan for next steps. Tonight, Mr. Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services – will present the key findings of our survey to all of you with the support of Principal Medeiros. It is truly exciting to have student data to drive our current work and our future action.”*

Mr. Davidson stated we were lucky to have had the opportunity to work with Panorama over the last few months and had the opportunity to survey our students – grades 6 through 12 – in the month of February. Mr. Davidson stated we have established a “working group”, which Kate Duggan is a part of, to go through the data from each of our school districts.

Mr. Davidson stated the following:

The survey was broken down into three sections – each section had 8 to 10 questions, which each student participated in and results from some of the questions are being presented tonight. The answers were compared to the national averages and the percentage is based upon favorable responses - there were 59 Grade 6 students who participated in the survey.

#### Section 1: Cultural Awareness and Action

- There were 59 responses – RMS was at 51% compared to schools across the country, which is near the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile on this topic

Question:

How comfortable are you sharing your thoughts about race-related topics with other students at your school? – 46% responded favorably

Question:

At your school, how often are you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics? – 61% responded favorably at RMS; Old Rochester Regional District as a whole response: 68%

#### Section 2: Diversity and Inclusion

- There were 59 responses – RMS was at 60% compared to schools across the country, which is near the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on this topic

Question:

How fairly do adults at your school treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures? – 93% responded favorably

Question:

At your school, how often do students from different races, ethnicities or cultures hang out with each other? – 63% responded favorably at RMS; Old Rochester Regional District as a whole response: 63%

#### Section 3: Sense of Belonging

- There were 59 responses – RMS was at 62% compared to schools across the country, which is near the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile on this topic

Question:

Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school? – 78% responded favorably

Question:

How much do you matter to others at this school? – 78% responded favorably at RMS; Old Rochester Regional District as a whole response: 55%

Mr. Davidson shared with the school committee an open-ended question that students in Grade 6 at Rochester Memorial was able to respond to – these were some of the responses that were received:

Question:

What is the most important thing your school can keep doing to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures?

Student Responses:

- Do some events where people come to the school and talk about it.
- The most important thing my school can keep doing to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures is to keep treating everyone the same way.
- In my school, we have a lot of awareness about how the different races are unique and special in all of their own ways and I think that they should continue to speak to us about that.
- The most important thing my school can do to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures is to speak about it more and educate people that may not be familiar with the topic.

Mr. Medeiros stated he and Mr. West attended a Panorama Training, which enabled them to sift through this data and really be able to provide “takeaways” for Rochester Memorial School to work on and they shared this information with the Cultural Proficiency Team as well:

- Create opportunities for exposure to and understanding of cultures through the curriculum
- Provide opportunities for students, staff and stakeholders to have meaningful conversations and focus groups

Mr. Davidson shared the Old Rochester Regional School District’s “takeaways” as follows:

- Create opportunities for exposure to and understanding of cultures through the curriculum
- Create focus groups for students to provide opportunities for follow-up discussions
- Create opportunities for students to have conversations and share thoughts about race-related topics with each other

Chairperson Hartley asked the school committee members if they had any questions/comments regarding the presentation – there were none.

Ms. Hartley extended a “thank you” to Mr. Medeiros, Mr. West and Mr. Davidson for their honesty and their willingness to continue this work and noted it is very important.

Mr. Nelson stated we talked a lot about how important this work is throughout last years’ school committee meetings and throughout the summer and noted all of the school committees were very clear on the commitment we want to make, not only for this year, but moving forward.

Mr. Nelson stated establishing Anti-Racism Committees in all four of the school districts was such an important step and noted he is very proud of the work that has been done, in terms of the amounts of meetings that have been held and the ambitious goals we are making. Mr. Nelson stated sometimes data can be scary and one of the comments he made at one of the most recent meetings is that it almost made people more motivated to want to work even faster.

Mr. Nelson stated the students are ready - they told us very clearly they want to have these conversations – we are doing it in small pockets – and they want to have these conversations regularly.

## **V. New Business**

Rochester Capital Planning Committee Review:

By: David Arancio – Chairperson

Overview:

- The committee was formed by town meeting approximately 10 years ago
- The current committee was organized by the Board of Selectman in 2019
- There are currently five (5) members that serve on the committee
  - ❖ 2 appointed by the Board of Selectman
  - ❖ 2 appointed by the Finance Committee
  - ❖ 1 appointed by the Planning Board

Note: The Planning Committee is still looking for a fifth member. If anyone is interested, please reach out to the Planning Committee

- The mission of the committee is to review capital requests of committees, departments and boards for the Town of Rochester – the committee then makes recommendations to the town at Town Meeting

Process: (which is very similar to the budget process)

- A memorandum is issued to all departments, committees and boards by the Town Administrator in November/December
- Vendor quotes must be attached to each request
- The board meets to review all requests and their associated priorities (in other words – mark each request in order as to the priority in which you would like the item to be presented)
- The committee then reviews available funding in the Capital Improvement Fund
- All voted recommendations are forwarded to the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee for consideration
- The Capital Planning Committee Chairman presents the recommendations to the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee, which allows for both Boards to ask any questions/concerns they may have
- Once the article is presented at Town Meeting, the Capital Planning Committee’s Chairman or Vice Chairman will make a similar presentation at Town Meeting and address any questions/concerns at that time

Mr. Arancio stated the following items were funded for Rochester Memorial School in FY20 and FY21:

|  |           |                 |
|--|-----------|-----------------|
| • FY20 – Go Math Curriculum                          | \$        | 30,773          |
| • FY21 – 2 <sup>ND</sup> phase of technology upgrade | \$        | 26,776          |
| • FY21 – HVAC Unit Replacement                       | \$        | 16,800          |
| <b>TOTAL FOR FY20 and FY21 without Surveillance:</b> | <b>\$</b> | <b>74,349</b>   |
| <br>   |           |                 |
| • <b>FY20 – Video Surveillance Upgrade</b>           | <b>\$</b> | <b>86,817 *</b> |
| (if not funded by the Capital Improvement Fund)      |           |                 |
| <b>TOTAL FOR FY20 AND FY21:</b>                      | <b>\$</b> | <b>161,166</b>  |

Mr. Arancio stated the following items are being considered for FY22:

|   |           |                |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| • FY22 – Replacement of 2015 Laptops/Devices                        | \$        | 15,480         |
| • FY22 – Replace Building Alarm System                              | \$        | 12,550         |
| • FY22 – Install irrigation system at multipurpose/playground Field | \$        | 38,500         |
| <b>TOTAL FOR FY22:</b>  | <b>\$</b> | <b>66,530</b>  |
| <br>  |           |                |
| <b>TOTAL FOR FY20, FY21 and FY22</b>                                |           |                |
| (If approved without Surveillance Upgrade)                          | <b>\$</b> | <b>140,879</b> |

**TOTAL INCLUDING SURVEILLANCE UPGRADE: \$ 227,696**

(Note: adding \*\$86,817 to \$140,879)

Mr. Arancio stated the Committee has voted for the above 3 items to be recommended to be funded to the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee, and they will also make the same recommendation at Town Meeting.

Mr. Arancio stated the process speaks volumes, in that there are a lot of checks and balances between all of the Boards and Committees that look at all of the recommendations and finally make a decision for items to go before Town Meeting for the final approval of funding.

Mr. Arancio stated the Town is absolutely maximizing our dollar in everyway we can, and thanked the school committee for letting him share a little bit of what the Capital Planning Committee does, as well as the role of that Committee.

Chairperson Hartley extended a “thank you” to Mr. Arancio for taking the time to present this evening, and stated this is very exciting news and it is wonderful to have an additional item to the Agenda that brings us such good news and great information. Ms. Hartley thanked Mr. Nelson and Gene Jones as well to have this information available to the committee and community this evening.

Mr. Nelson extended a “thank you” to Mr. Arancio, stating that he appreciates his partnership and their communication regarding how Rochester is managing their Capital Planning and truly appreciates the recommendations they will be making to the Board of Selectman and to the Finance Committee in these upcoming weeks.

## 1. Financial Report

### Recommendation:

That the School Committee hear a report from Mr. Barber

Mr. Barber presented a memo as of April 7, 2021 indicating the Rochester Memorial School currently has \$222,869 available of the general funds appropriated in the 2021 Fiscal Year. Mr. Barber stated we are able to identify how our funds are currently encumbered and expended and out of the \$6,609,831 appropriated to the District, including Special Bristol Aggie assessment, 81.01% is directly assigned and is spent/encumbered to student instruction.

Mr. Barber stated at present, we are not able to fully encumber funds and we still have some operational costs that we need to be mindful of.

Mr. Barber presented the Facilities Director’s Report by Gene Jones dated April 2021 as follows:

- Set up classrooms and common areas for “in-person learning”
- Open playgrounds per DESE and CDC recommendations
- 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
- Nurse and student services issued required additional safety PPE
- Conducted routine maintenance on all facility systems

Mr. Barber presented the Food Service Director’s Report by Jill Henesey dated April 2021 as follows:

- Meal counts are starting to increase
- The month of March has gone up a little bit from last March – 34% (when school closed abruptly). The return of grades K-2 this March has increased the count to 38%
- Having full in-person (Grades K-6) return – we are looking forward to having more students take advantage of the meals being offered

Mr. Barber stated normally on school vacation, we do not have food distribution, however, this April vacation we are going to have a food distribution, and therefore have opened up the registration for families to be able to sign up this weekend and pick up the meals on Tuesday of the vacation week between 4:30 and 5:30pm in front of the Old Rochester Regional High School.

Mr. Barber also noted that from this point going forward, meals will be distributed on Tuesday evenings from 4:30 to 5:30 throughout the rest of the school year, at the Old Rochester Regional High School.

### **CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

Ms. Hartley stated the following:

The official guidelines from the State of Massachusetts have just been released today regarding Dyslexia and further discussions will take place regarding Dyslexia at the next meeting in May.

Ms. Hartley would like the following questions to be answered at the next meeting:

- What do we already have in place at Rochester Memorial?
- If we have important items already accomplished, what is left for us to consider, and the direct work that we need to take a look at?

Ms. Fernandes has requested a copy of the guidelines be sent to all of the school committee members – Mr. Nelson will follow-up on that request.

Mr. Nelson stated Mr. Davidson and Dr. Pearson-Campbell have spent time already reviewing the draft document, and now that we have received the final Dyslexia Guidance from the State of Massachusetts, they will “unpack” the document, highlight important information, and share it with the administrators, staff members and school committee members.

Mr. Nelson stated his questions are: What are we already doing and where do we need to go?

Mr. Nelson stated we will discuss our action plan, which will lead us to a place to update our literacy plan, not only for Rochester Memorial, but for all of the elementary schools in the Tri-town.

### **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

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

- Dr. Pearson-Campbell extended a “thank you” to Principal Medeiros and Assistant Principal West in supporting the planning of the March 22 Professional Development half-day. Educators and administrators were able to prepare to pivot back to full in-person learning where they reviewed safety protocols, lesson planning, priority standards, and the teachers/staff was able to prepare their individual classrooms.
- The Office of Teaching & Learning reviewed results from parents, students, and teachers’ surveys to support the creation of the districtwide Professional Development Plan. We are reviewing the results and looking past the Pandemic and what Professional Development for our educational settings would look like. I am naming it “Charting our Course.” The Professional Development Plan will be focused on serving the needs of our educators, students, and families to support lifelong learners in the classroom and building the capacity for educators and support staff.

- The Office of Teaching & Learning is preparing for the ELL Audit. I will be working with Ms. Dranchak in reviewing all materials to be submitted by June 1st. There is a total of 10 indicators to support the four districts. DESE will be reviewing our Curriculum and Professional Development to build an inclusive classroom supporting English Language Learners and students with disabilities. As part of the review, DESE is requesting Professional Development to support teacher's licensure - 15 PDP's in both ELL and students with disabilities.
- The recent Panorama data supported the importance of having student voices. There will be student voices from our JHS and HS, facilitated by Eugene Hamilton on April 12 and April 26, at which time he will discuss footprints on social media and student safety.
- Our mentor and mentees have two more meetings. At the first of the two meetings, they will be finalizing their online portfolio where they will demonstrate what they have learned this year. This is the first time the mentees have created and will be sharing their interactive site. At the last meeting, they will have time to share their sites and we will celebrate their first year in Rochester.
- In May, the Office of Teaching & Learning will share the district Professional Development Plan, to support hands-on learning and other instructional plans (dyslexia/literacy) to address learning for next year and beyond.

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

- The transition meeting with staff from Rochester Memorial School and the Jr. High School is scheduled to take place on April 13, which is a tradition that has taken place for many years allowing the Grade 6 teachers to correspond with the JHS staff for the upcoming Grade 6 students to the Jr. High School.

### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:**

Mr. Medeiros reported the following:

- Thanked Mr. & Mrs. O'Connell for their donation to the "Outdoor Classroom", and extended a "thank you" to Mrs. Smith for arranging the white board cabinet to be made and delivered, which has truly enhanced the outdoor learning space.
- On April 28, an email will be sent out to all incoming kindergarten families regarding the meet and greet schedule taking place in early June. Incoming kindergarten students will participate in screening activities outside at our K playground area and they will end the session with a mini bus ride through town.
- Mr. West and Medeiros shared the results from the Panorama survey that our Grade 6 students participated in regarding Equity and Inclusion – and we are working on action steps to address areas of concern that were identified in this survey.
- Spring MCAS is being finalized for our Grade 3-5 classes and we are still awaiting guidance from DESE regarding MCAS testing dates for Grade 6 students.

## **VIII. School Committee**

### **B. Committee Reports**

#### **1. Budget Subcommittee**

Chairperson Hartley stated the following:

The FY22 Budget is complete and thanked everyone for their participation.

#### **2. ORR District School Committee**

Mr. Nelson stated the meeting took place on March 24, 2021 virtually and the following was discussed:

- FY22 Budget was approved

Mr. Nelson extended a “thank you” to the Town Administration for all of their support regarding the process of the FY22 Budget

- Reviewed the Draft FY22 School Calendar
- Reviewing the senior’s class events
- Continued planning for the April 27, 2021 pivot

### 3. SMEC

Anne Fernandes stated the following:

The OPEB meeting was held on March 30, 2021 and the following was discussed:

- Other Post-Employment Benefits
- Barbara G Howard, CTFA, Vice President, Relationship Manager and Brian Callow, CFA, Vice President, Portfolio Manager from Rockland Trust Investment Management Group presented SMEC’s current financial holdings including:
  1. OPEB Planning Steps
  2. Fund Allocation and Performance
  3. Investment Process
  4. Portfolio Holdings

The SMEC meeting was held on March 30, 2021 and the following was discussed:

- Minutes of January 20, 2021 were approved, as submitted
- Staff Appointments and Reductions were reviewed, and placed on file, as presented
- Operating Spending Plan and Revenue Update was approved, as submitted
- The Board approved a classroom lease increase
- The Board approved salary scale and COLA increases
- The Board approved the extension of its current SMEC COVID quarantine policy until April 30, 2021
- The Board received and accepted DESE’s responses to the FY Audit ( SMEC met all requirements) and its Annual Report (SMEC met all requirements)
- The Board authorized the Executive Director and the Director of Finance to review any potential property proposals to benefit SMEC’s expansion needs
- The Board approved the renewal of the Fairhaven’s Tripp School Lease
- The Board authorized the Executive Director and the Director of Finance to speak with the appropriate representatives from Fairhaven re: discussion regarding the potential lease of the Rogers School addition
- The Board voted to approve adding Juneteenth to the 2021/2022 school calendar
- Next meeting is Tuesday - May 11, 2021

### 4. READS

Mr. Nelson stated a meeting was held on March 11, 2021 and reported the following:

- Approved the most recent Meeting Minutes
- Superintendents heard updates from the Special Education Administrators/Program Directors of READS Collaborative

There were discussions on Action Items:

- Heard a review on the FY22 Budget update
- Took action on needed amendments for the FY21 Budget
- Discussed COVID-19 expenditure update from the Executive Director’s point of view
- Heard an update on the impact on referrals and enrollments in light of COVID-19 that READS is navigating
- Looked at some changes in the Policy Manual

- Made the decision to support the disposition of surplus property
- Made a new policy for their upcoming Program Coordinated Review with the Department of Education
- Reviewed a couple of job descriptions
- The Director made a couple of recommendations regarding new hires
- Accepted some resignations of staff members

#### 5. Tri-town Foundation

Robin Rounseville stated the next meeting is scheduled to take place on April 13.

- Grant applications are due April 9
- Michelle Roy has expressed interest in joining the Board – and she will be attending our next meeting on April 13

#### 6. Early Childhood Council

Kate Duggan stated they last met on March 23, 2021 and reported the following:

- Discussed the 2021 Kindergarten Transition Plan
  - In early June there will be in-person, outdoor meet and greet events at each school
- Discussed [Framework for Family Engagement](#) from MA Department of Education which provides communities a framework with which to plan family engagement policy, program and practices that build the capacity of both families and practitioners around meaningful partnerships that contribute to child/youth success.
- The Department of Early Education and Care has a new Strategic Action Plan and has launched an [Engagement Portal](#) to share EEC's initiatives with the public. You can also participate in surveys to shape how those initiatives unfold and discover engagement opportunities to guide the next phase of plan implementation.
- The next Early Childhood Council Meeting will be May 18, 2021

#### 7. Policy Sub-Committee

Kate Duggan stated there has not been a meeting since January 25, 2021.

#### 8. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee

Kate Duggan stated two meetings have been held and provided the following information:

##### **Date of Meeting: 3/9/21**

- Reviewed and discussed Panorama Survey results. Survey was taken by students in grades 6-12 in early February
- We engaged in an Equity Pause activity in which we reflected on the progress of the subcommittee

##### **Date of Meeting: 4/6/21**

- Discussed the results from the Equity Pause activity from the March meeting
- Reviewed the Student Role in Hiring Process and Hiring Practices overall, including Interview Questions
- There will be a discussion later this month on a guide from The New Teacher Project, and next month's meeting will feature a discussion of holidays with an eye towards inclusivity
- We continue to have students and members of the community attend which is always welcomed!
- The next meeting is scheduled to take place on May 4, 2021

#### C. School Committee Re-Organization

Recommendation:

That the School Committee discuss the appointed seat on the Old Rochester Regional School Committee

Chairperson Hartley stated this item on the Agenda will be moved to the May meeting

### **VIII. School Committee**

#### **IX. Future Business**

##### **A. Timeline**

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – May 6, 2021 @ 6:30pm; held: to be determined

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – April 29, 2021 @ 6:30pm; held remote through Zoom

##### **B. Future Agenda Items:**

- Budget Approval (public hearings) (April)
- School Committee Reorganization (May/June – depending on election date)
- School Choice Public Hearing (May)
- Administrator Contracts (May)
- Approval of new School Council goals (June)

#### **X. Open Comments**

Superintendent Nelson stated through Mr. Jones and Mr. Barber, a 30x60 tent was ordered and received for Rochester Memorial School and we are in the process of applying for permits through the town with hope to have it installed over April vacation pending approval. Mr. Nelson stated the purpose of the tent is to be able to hold mask breaks if there is challenging weather, as well as other small functions for Rochester Memorial School.

Mr. Medeiros stated the tent will be placed on the soccer fields.

#### **XI. Information Items**

##### **LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING**

Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2021

FY22 Budget slideshow presentation by Howard Barber

Full In-Person slideshow presentation by Derek Medeiros

Capital Planning slideshow presentation by David Arancio

Draft FY22 School Calendar

Panorama Equity & Inclusion Survey slideshow presentation by Craig Davidson

Financial Report – April 7, 2021

Facilities Director Report – April, 2021

Food Service Director Report – April, 2021

Principal's Report – April 8, 2021

Meeting of the Regular Rochester School Committee meeting ended at 9:02pm

**MOTION:** by Sharon Hartley to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Rochester School Committee at 9:02pm

**SO MOVED:** Robin Rounseville

**SECONDED:** Kate Duggan

**IN FAVOR:** 4:0

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Roll Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Bailey, Recording Secretary