



**Cohasset Public Schools**  
143 Pond Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025  
*Continuing the Commitment to Excellence*  
**Cohasset School Committee Meeting**

**School Committee Minutes**

Wednesday, 5/19/2021

Zoom Video Call

Virtual Meeting – 143TV/Zoom/Facebook

**In Attendance:**

Craig MacLellan, Chairman  
Ashley Colleary  
Lydia St. Onge  
Ellen Maher  
Paul Kearney

**Also, in Attendance:**

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent  
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent  
Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations  
Lisa Radden, Director of Technology & Digital Learning  
Brian Scott, CHS Principal  
John Mills, CMS Principal  
Erin Ryan, CMS Teacher  
Eileen Weisslinger, CMS Teacher  
Jenna Giulio, Student Representative

Chairman MacLellan called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He stated the meeting is being held remotely under the Town's Declaration of Emergency. All votes will be taken by roll call vote. This meeting is being live streamed on Cohasset 143TV and Facebook. **Roll Call: Ashley Colleary - Present, Paul Kearney - Present, Ellen Maher - Present, Lydia St. Onge - Present, Craig MacLellan - Present.**

**Public Comment - None**

**Superintendent's report** - Dr. Scollins updated the committee on the New Teachers Celebration. We finally got to celebrate our new teachers with a nice spread in the courtyard at the High school. A gathering included new teachers and their mentors. It was great to cheer them on and celebrate their work this year.

We are in the midst of MCAS. Dr. Scollins expressed an extra special thank you for all of the work IT, teachers, administrators, and ESPs have done this year so that we are ready for MCAS. Some families have opted into virtual MCAS, most students are taking it at school.

Dr. Sullivan offered thanks and congratulations to Dr. Scollins on the new teachers and mentor program. He noted that he is really proud that we don't have high turnover in part because of the relationships teachers have with mentors.

Jenna Giulio presented a student advisor report. This week at CHS has been so busy for seniors. There is lots of excitement at school. It is exciting to take masks off outside and breath the fresh air. Everyone is so appreciative of it. Environmental class has been transforming the courtyard by the library and it's looking beautiful. AP exams wrapped up. The exams were at Osgood. Some classes met at Milliken and walked over together in the morning. Some teachers brought donuts to eat before the test. Be on the lookout for Juneteenth events and Diversity Club projects on the common on June 19th to celebrate Emancipation Day



## Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Continuing the Commitment to Excellence*

### **Cohasset School Committee Meeting**

and diversity. A Juneteenth project is being developed to bring to younger kids at Deer Hill and Osgood on June 18. CHS students will make a PowerPoint about what Juneteenth is so teachers can share with kids prior to June 18th and then CHS students will set up outside crafts and will read aloud at the elementary schools to help the younger kids really understand the importance of diversity.

Dr. Sullivan expressed thanks to Mrs. Farrell and the Osgood school for hosting the CHS kids and he thanked the students for being respectful while going back to elementary for AP tests.

**Spotlight on Learning** - CMS students and teachers joined the Committee to present a spotlight on learning featuring Minecraft and social studies at CMS - John Mills, Ms. Weisslinger, Ms. Erin Ryan, student representatives from 6th and 7th grade.

Principal John Mills introduced the spotlight on learning. 6th grade Social Studies teacher, Ms. Weisslinger joined us from her classroom at CMS with 4 students. The kids are Minecraft experts and Ms. Weisslinger learned so much from the students while using Minecraft Education Edition to study Egypt. Thanks to Lisa Radden who arranged a meeting with the Minecraft people at Microsoft to get Minecraft Education set up for the CMS classes! Ms. Weisslinger expressed a huge debt of gratitude to Dan Kelly and Kyle Hannon who were instrumental in allowing us to pursue this. They were hands on with tech needs every step of the way. Minecraft is an immersive 3D game-based learning platform that promotes creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, collaboration. Worlds consist of selected biomes and the class selected desert for their study of Egypt. The students were grouped, they planned, prototyped and built their part of the Egyptian world. Sometimes they had to go across groups. Students created an NPC (non-player character) to tell the story in writing. Once they finished their world, they used screen castoff to record their world and their narration and showed their film with their voiceover in class. Watching all of the recordings gave class a complete overview of their study of Egypt.

Students reported that they really enjoyed project. It was their favorite all time school project in part because it was graded like a test, but it wasn't a test. In order to build a world in Minecraft, you have to understand it and take the time to build It brought a lot of creativity to the study of Egypt and let the students immerse themselves in a world. It is a lot less stressful to build a world than to take a test and it felt like they learned more and will remember it! This allows everybody to be engaged even if you're not artistic and it's fun to teach the teacher! Ms. Erin Ryan had a similar experience in 7th grade. They used Minecraft as an option for the Geo Civ 2 project on Greco Persian Wars. In the past they'd make a 3D project. Many kids opted in to using Minecraft for the project. What impressed her most about this interactive tool is how student driven it is!

It encourages kids to be creative, take chances, make mistakes and be in control of their learning. When the kids are working in Minecraft there is real content being discussed and great strategies being used. The final products and the presentations were great. The students presented to peers and took us on tours in class. The class learned new tools and they learned new content.

Adrian Saiz, a student in Ms. Ryan's class said Minecraft was a way to do school but a lot more fun. There is lots of creative freedom. It is very easy to get on the game and to build within the game. It is really accessible, and it makes group project less crowded. Now you can space out but be in the same place at the same time.



## **Cohasset Public Schools**

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Continuing the Commitment to Excellence*

### **Cohasset School Committee Meeting**

Principal Mills gave thanks to Erin and Eileen for coming out tonight and modeling exploring new options and taking risks, adopted a constructivist approach.

#### **Middle School and High School Update - 6 weeks into Full Time Model**

Principal Mills, CMS - Everyone came back on April 5. What we've been doing since the beginning of the year had a lot of built in strengths. Our cohort A and B classes were almost equally sized so we could keep schedules and keep kids together. Classroom size made it so everyone could come back and maintain social distance. We had established systems by April. We maintained the systems and it was second nature. A challenge we faced was, what to do with lunches? We worked with faculty and modified the schedule and added a third lunch to accommodate kids safely for lunch. This allowed for a little more structured academic time for mask breaks, SEL, remediation. An unforeseen challenge has been getting kids in and to class on time. We are enforcing the tardy policy and communicating with parents to get on top of that. My advice is to take the bus so you can get to school on time.

Principal Scott, CHS - The return back has been good. There is a different energy with everyone back in building. Returning to full time we took a measured risk that was thoughtfully done. The two weeks until adding lunch lined up with faculty vaccines. We've stayed true to our process. Coming up, students do not have to wear masks at prom but will have to wear masks on busses between pictures and prom. Students won't need to wear masks at graduation and attendees won't be required to wear masks. After seniors finish the school year, there will be field days and team building with kids in grades 9, 10, 11, who will still be at school.

Mrs. Maher asked about the extra furniture and supplies purchased as a result of COVID. There are 7 trailers storing furniture and supplies from Osgood, Deer Hill, CMS and CHS. The process of going through the trailers will happen soon. The town procurement office would like to auction off some of the unwanted items and reap the financial benefits of this situation. We will continue to use many of the things we've bought, new desks will replace old desks, and we will throw away material that isn't useful anymore.

**Kindergarten Tuition** - We've heard kindergarten families' concerns about tuition, but we know that we also need to cover expenses. Mrs. Owen reached out to our contact person who is handling the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) Grant to ask if we can we offset tuition fees with ESSER grant money. We don't know when ESSER III funds will be disbursed but we can utilize them to give back a portion of a refund of the tuitions.

Mrs. Colleary - Do we know what that translates to per family? Mrs. Owen explained - We can't spend the whole amount on tuition refunds. We have to put a portion toward mental health, closing learning gaps. 110 families paid full tuition. A \$500 refund to families would fit into our budget.

Mr. Kearney - hopes that K will be free in the future, 86% of communities in the state cover full day K

Mrs. Maher - ESSER III is grant potentially forthcoming. A balance in ESSER II grant money exists. Has it all been earmarked? Can any of it be postponed until ESSER 3 comes through? Mrs. Owen explained that an amendment can be written to reallocate grant funds.



## Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Continuing the Commitment to Excellence*

### **Cohasset School Committee Meeting**

Jenna Cunningham - Hill Street - Why was \$1000 mentioned before and now its \$500 and may be voted down? Mr. MacLellan - When this was discussed earlier, he had broken down by per day cost of K. It was acknowledged that not everyone may be happy with that but it's what we are able to do at this point.

The motion to authorize the business manager and superintendent to refund \$500 per full time K student if and when ESSER III grant comes through passed unanimously.

**Finance report** - Mrs. Owen provided multiple documents for comparison - school budget summary for 19 - 20 and 20 - 21.

Last year at this time we were at 73% and now we're in that ballpark. When looking at the summary budget to actual the key areas of concern are special education, transportation and tuitions due to out of district placement and settlements. In the past we have bought ahead tuitions and this year we will not be. Some accounts are underspent which will hopefully balance us by the end of the year. Last week Mrs. Owen put in a dummy purchase order with remaining payrolls and that leaves us with about 1 million unencumbered funding to cover end of year expenses. Sp. Ed. Stabilization fund is at its maximum and we could approach select board to transfer to cover unexpected expenses.

Mrs. Maher - Under Dr. Scollins's expenses, she hasn't spent anything. Are there invoices for PD or other curriculum programs coming?

Dr. Scollins explained that we received ESSER money and PD fell under the criteria for grant so we used that to pay for PD. Not as many teachers are taking as many courses right now. Dr. Scollins wants to use money for math PD, literacy. We got a remote learning grant and another that covered summer learning program.

Mrs. Owen presented an overview of all Grant money for this year. The first 5 grants are COVID related. The money has to be spent on things other than salaries. Revolving accounts update — after school program in negative - but town accountant has to do transfers of funding and turnover and that will be back in the positive. Kindergarten is down to \$55,000 and we have \$80,000 left to pay in salaries. Transportation revolving may be needed to offset negative number in school budget for school transportation.

Mrs. Maher - Capital Budget did not give funding for painting and cove base in CHS lobbies by gym and cafeteria

Mrs. Owen replied - Nick in facilities will take care of it out of facilities and not capital

School lunch has been subsidized all year and will be free next year as well.

Business office will be accepting payments through my school bucks.

Route finder plus is new software for that will be used to plan bus routes. It exports info out of Aspen so that routes will stay up to date.

myrec.com is being used for facility use requests. There is one online calendar and users can't book until they pay the fee!



## **Cohasset Public Schools**

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Continuing the Commitment to Excellence*

### **Cohasset School Committee Meeting**

Facilities has been working for a few years on redoing our lighting - changing all fluorescent lights to LED in common areas. We will see savings in our electric bill as a result of this switch.

The road behind Deer Hill by emergency management has been widened there will be a handicapped parking spot put in there.

#### **School Committee Comments and Communication -**

##### **Subcommittee updates:**

Review of Policy Recommendations for changes in section I of CPS Policy manual unanimously accepted.

##### **Liaison Reports:**

Mr. Kearney - attended SEPAC meeting this week, reached out to elderly affairs regarding free pass to sporting events

Mrs. Maher will distribute the annual report from the PEB committee.

Town Meeting is Monday night 6pm at Music Circus and there is space at the front for Town Board members, a lot on the warrant for us; town making deposit into sped stabilization fund

Mrs. St. Onge - attended DH school council - asked Dr. Sullivan when school handbooks will be reviewed. Handbooks will be presented over the summer and we will come back in the fall to do the school improvement plan to align with district strategic plan.

Mr. MacLellan - announced that SC approved one year roll over in executive session and it has been ratified by CTA as well, bargaining for the next contract will start in the fall. Mr. MacLellan also attended a SEPAC coffee and had the opportunity to meet and speak with many families. Superintendent evaluation paperwork was sent out to all members of the School Committee. All SC members need to fill out the forms and submit to chairman by June 1. The goal is to discuss evaluations at the June 16 meeting.

**Meeting Minutes Approval** - The committee voted to approve one set of meeting minutes.

**Topics Not Reasonable Anticipated Within 48 Hours of Meeting** - Mask Policy revisions due to recent update in recommendations from DESE. Policy EBCFA language amended. School Committee unanimously voted to accept revisions.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.