



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

**School Committee Minutes**

Wednesday, 10/21/2020

Zoom Video Call

Virtual Meeting – 143TV/Zoom/Facebook

**In Attendance:**

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

**Also, in Attendance:**

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent  
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent  
Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations  
Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services

Chairman MacLellan called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He stated that 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 Vote: Ashley Colleary - Present, Paul Kearney - Present, Ellen Maher - Present, Lydia St. Onge - Present, Craig MacLellan-Present.**

**Public Comment-** None

**Superintendent's Report**

**Unsung Hero Recognition** - Superintendent Dr. Sullivan acknowledged the Bus Drivers, Cafeteria Staff and School Custodians for all of their hard work and dedication. He thanked them for their extra efforts, communication, flexibility, and problem solving during the pandemic. The Committee thanked them all for their hard work and dedication to the district. Michelle Parfumorse stated that the transportation system would not have been successful without the efforts of the bus drivers, the Laird family, who designed the bus routes, and Secretary Lisa Tokarz, who handles all the bus passes. Director of Food Services, Marilyn Haraden, thanked her team and town staff members in the Elder Affairs Department for working throughout the summer to ensure that meals were available, not only to students, but to the elderly population in Town.

**Student Advisory Update** - Ms. Caroline Patterson gave an overview of how the first few weeks of in-person learning has been for students. She mentioned that even though teachers are using Google Classroom, a lot of schoolwork is still being done by pen and paper. Students have been having some difficulties with uploading assignments for classes such as Math and Economics, which can become tedious when trying to upload pictures to submit assignments. She stated that teachers have been accommodating and understanding regarding this issue, which has been helpful. Ms. Patterson stated that the Student Council has put together a spirit month instead of just a week in the Middle/High School. Students are encouraged to dress up every Tuesday and Friday and wear pink every Wednesday for breast cancer awareness. Dr. Sullivan stated that a student focus group will be done on Friday and a survey has gone out to families to gather data and get feedback from the community. He also mentioned that leadership has been working with the Cohasset Teachers Association to send a survey out to staff members to gather feedback on in-person/remote learning. Chairman MacLellan asked Ms. Patterson how student morale has been? She stated that students have been in high spirits and have been going outside as much as possible during mask



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breaks to take advantage of the nice weather. She mentioned that students have enjoyed collaborating with different classes and grade levels over zoom, which is something that probably would not have happened if it were a regular school year. Superintendent Sullivan stated that the school community has seen their first two positive COVID-19 cases. He stated that there have not been any close contacts within the school buildings but reminded everyone of the importance of keeping open communication with the school regarding contact tracing protocols. Mrs. Maher asked what the protocol for contact tracing is? Dr. Sullivan stated that the protocol for families is to call the school nurse as well as their local public healthcare official for contact tracing and guidance on next steps.

Laura Soderberg, 16 Black Horse Lane – Can you highlight for the school community how we were successful in having no “close contacts” identified within the school body given the two student cases, who presumably are members of one of the cohorts, and in-person during two days per week. What were the critical factors explored, of course without giving specifics of the individuals involved? Dr. Sullivan went through the timelines of determining close contacts and the guidance that was given from the Department of Public Health. Mrs. Maher stated for clarification that the identification of the two individuals has not been made as to whether they were students or staff members.

Superintendent Sullivan stated that school sports have been going well and mentioned the social distancing protocols that are in place. He read through the protocols for attending school sporting events. Dr. Sullivan stated that there will be a drive through Trunk or Treat event at the Osgood School on October 28<sup>th</sup> and that Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition is hosting a Pumpkin Carving Contest on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Scollins updated the committee on the upcoming Cultural Competency workshops that will be held virtually over Zoom on October 30<sup>th</sup>. She stated that there will be four 50-minute sessions and seven guest speakers. Dr. Kalise Wornum will be the Keynote Speaker for the day. The topics that will be discussed during the workshop consist of the following: Mirrors and Windows Approach to Addressing Race and Racism; Code Switching: How Our Students Navigate Bicultural Environments; The Middle School Mindset – Discovering Who You Are in the Midst of Others; Special Education – Identifying and Supporting Students of Color; A Culturally Proficient Classroom: A Welcoming Environment; and Reflecting Upon Equity in Cohasset Public Schools. Dr. Scollins thanked Mrs. Gittens-Carle for gathering such an eclectic group of speakers and for all her hard work in organizing this much anticipated workshop.

**Director of Technology and Digital Learning Introduction** - Superintendent Dr. Sullivan introduced Ms. Lisa Radden as the Director of Technology and Digital Learning. He stated that Ms. Radden will collaborate with Chief Technology Officer Ron Menard and assist and support the District in all aspects of technology and digital learning. She is a Notre Dame Graduate and has a master’s degree in Instructional Technology from Harvard University. The Committee welcomed Mrs. Radden to the District.

**Strategic Plan Revision FY21** - Superintendent Dr. Sullivan gave an overview of the Strategic Plan development. He stated that they are currently in the final year of the 5-year Strategic Plan. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Scollins stated that invites for forums and surveys will be going out to families in November. The goal is to hear from all stakeholders while in the data collection phase. Dr. Sullivan went through the Strategic goals which are to recruit, retain, and develop exceptional teachers; ensure that all students are able to achieve appropriate growth in learning; promote the social and emotional well-being of students; strengthen the safety and security of schools; and create vehicles that strengthen relationships among critical educational stakeholders. He discussed the additions to the strategic goals for the final year



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of the plan, which include exploring a strategy to recruit a more diverse staff, develop supports for all students to minimize learning gaps as in-person learning increases, and formulate and meet as a Joint Management-Labor Committee. Chairman MacLellan stated that next Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, there will be a special School Committee Meeting to discuss the current learning model. He encourages everyone to participate and to attend virtually. Superintendent Sullivan stated that over 300 families have participated in the survey and that he looks forward to the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> to go over the collected data.

**Special Education Update** - Mrs. Cerwonka stated that Ms. Kaye Simpson has been hired as the new Elementary School Team Chair. She mentioned that another Family Forum will be held next Monday with Dr. Bonato and Dr. Golden as a six-week check-in from the last forum as requested. The committee asked questions regarding the challenges with co-teaching, remote learning, communication channels, how out-of-district students have been adapting and if the school psychologists are meeting testing deadlines. Mrs. Cerwonka stated that remote days are a challenge for all students and getting used to alternate forms of learning takes time and requires an adjustment period for all students. She stated that she has received very good feedback from the out of district placements. Staff have been communicating with families on a weekly basis and that all testing deadlines have been made on time and they are up to date.

**Finance- Monthly Budget Update** - Mrs. Owen gave an overview of the budget summary documents. She stated that the Utilities Fund was down compared to this time last year, which she believes is due the building being closed between the months of March and June. Mrs. Owen reviewed the grants and revolving accounts and stated that there is approximately \$1,000,000 remaining in grants. She stated that the district has received the full amount of the CARES grant from the State. Mrs. Owen discussed the vehicle maintenance log and stated that there was not any vehicle maintenance done from April through September due to the buses not being used. She reported that Skipper School has been a great success and she has been working with department heads on the upcoming FY22 budget. The committee had a lengthy discussion regarding ongoing school projects and potential capital requests. Mr. Kearney asked Mrs. Owen and Dr. Sullivan to schedule another building walk through for the entire school committee to evaluate the conditions of each building.

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

**Goals** - Mrs. Colleary stated that the School Committee is meeting on Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss School Committee Goals.

**Halloween/Trick-or-Treating** - Chairman MacLellan stated that he would like to vote on a formal recommendation to prohibit trick or treating in Cohasset this year given the COVID-19 pandemic. Mrs. Colleary agreed that Trick-or-Treating is risky in the current situation. The Committee had a lengthy discussion and answered several questions from the community regarding Trick-or-Treating. **Motion, by Mrs. St. Onge, to make a formal recommendation to the Cohasset Select Board to prohibit Trick-or-Treating for the 2020 Halloween Holiday and to supplement that formal recommendation with a clear communication to district stakeholders, Seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Ellen Maher - Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan - Aye.**

**New School Facilities Committee** - Chairman MacLellan updated that there have only been two applicants for this committee but that he is expecting at least two more applications to come through. He reminded the community of the reasoning behind the formation of this committee, which is to explore what the district's buildings need, whether that be repairs, renovations, or complete rebuilds.



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**Reports from Sub-Committee and Liaisons** - Mrs. Colleary stated that the Policy subcommittee met this week and discussed changes of policy DJE, they reviewed the harassment policy. The MASC reference manual does not align with the Cohasset School District Policy Manual. They will be meeting every other Monday to review the CPS policy binder. There are two upcoming Safe Harbor workshops. The first is a webinar on Relationships and Substances on October 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. The second is a webinar on Social Media Boundaries on November 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. More information is up on the Safe Harbor website including registration links. Mrs. Colleary mentioned that the Diversity Committee will have a meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup> at 11am. Mr. Kearney thanked Mrs. Cerwonka for meeting with SEPAC weekly and thanked Superintendent Sullivan and the Leadership team for getting the schools back up and running. Mrs. Maher thanked Mrs. Owen and Mrs. St. Onge for volunteering to be on the Solar RFP Bid Review Committee. Mrs. Maher asked about the mid-cycle evaluation for the Superintendent Goals and whether the subcommittee has met with Dr. Sullivan regarding his goals? Mrs. Maher volunteered to meet with Dr. Sullivan to discuss his goals to get the process started. Mrs. St. Onge stated that she and Mrs. Owen have joined the Solar RFP Review Committee, which met for the first time today. She stated that they will be reviewing bids as early as this Friday. She will be meeting with the Deer Hill School Council next Thursday and will be able to report on that at the next meeting. Chairman MacLellan stated that he had attended both the Deer Hill PSO and Osgood School Council meetings this week, which were the first meetings of the year.

**Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours in advance of meeting** - Mr. Kearney asked if the middle school students are getting as many mask breaks as the high school students. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated that there are organized mask breaks after lunch and intermittently throughout the day but will look into it and report back to the committee. Mr. Kearney asked about the lunch times and that his own son has mentioned that he is not hungry for lunch at 10:30 a.m. Superintendent Sullivan stated that he is aware of this challenge, but lunches have to be spread out due to limited space and social distancing guidelines.

Karen, Ledgewood Farm – will Solar Energy bids be for installing panels on roofs of buildings considered for replacement within the next five-year Facility Plan? Mrs. St. Onge stated that, at the last Annual Town Meeting, the Town voted to allow companies to include the roofs as an option when submitting bids.

Mrs. St. Onge mentioned how impressed she is with how well the teachers are dealing with conference season upon them and having to fit extra Zoom meetings into their schedules. She complimented them on their adaptability and willingness to make it work. She is also impressed with how well they know their students in just a short span of time.

**Motion, by Mrs. Colleary, to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Ellen Maher - Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan - Aye.**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:43pm.**

#### **Documents Used at the Meeting**

Strategic Plan Revision FY21 C-1

Monthly Budget E-1