



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

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Virtual Access available via Zoom and Facebook

In Attendance:

Craig MacLellan, Chairman
Ashley Colleary
Lance Dial
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
Ray Miscioscia, Transportation Director
Mercedes O'Neil, Superintendent Student Advisor Liaison

Call to Order and Roll Call - Chairman MacLellan called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roll Call: Ashley Colleary - Present, Lance Dial - Present, Lydia St. Onge - Present, Craig MacLellan - Present. Paul Kearney – Present at 6:37 p.m.

This meeting is being held virtually for the first time in a while, pursuant to Cohasset's Board of Health Department recommendations that boards hold their public meetings in a virtual format while we deal with the Omicron surge.

Public Comment –

David Martin, 158 Lamberts Lane - Following some very disturbing email communications with Craig MacLellan, could the school committee please explain the process involved with the decision to refuse to implement a temporary mask mandate at the high school in face of record COVID infection rates by the most infectious variant of this entire pandemic? This decision appears catastrophically out of touch and blind to the reality of the current local, national, and global situation. Can the committee confirm that this decision was made by the entire committee and could they also indicate what experiences and resources they employed which they feel allowed them to unilaterally ignore the recommendations of the Cohasset Board of Health?

Ashley Colleary and Lance Dial noted that this issue is not on the agenda and we have not met or deliberated since our prior decision. We didn't decide specifically - Mr. Martin would have been privy to those deliberations, which would have to take place in an open meeting. The school committee didn't refuse to implement a mask mandate. What we have not done is specifically revisit this item on an agenda and Ms. Colleary thinks that if there is an appetite for that, then that is a discussion that we can have. We are still within the recommendations and governance of DESE.

Mr. Martin followed up with a statement for the sake of the minutes, “can the committee acknowledge that they received a direct recommendation from the Board of Health to implement a short-term mandate within the last 48 hours?” Mr. MacLellan states that is inaccurate and we did not receive any such mandate from the Board of Health in Cohasset and Mr. MacLellan has been in touch with them



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throughout this entire thing, as has Dr. Sullivan. We had a recent discussion with the Board of Health as we've all continued to collaborate and monitor the situation, not only in the town, but also from the standpoint of our schools.

Jessica DeLorenzo, 132 Chief Justice Cushing Highway - Can you clarify that the school committee waived their policy and/or recognized DESE's advisement to waive attendance policies this school year, especially as it relates to loss of credit. It appears that not all teachers are aware that DESE did share this as part of the return to learn for the school year. The message has been to stay home if a student is sick or experiencing symptoms. So the message to students is confusing to some and I understand the need to track attendance, but the absences as it relates to no credit loss should be clear to students, staff, etc., if you do in fact support DESE's advisement.

Dr. Sullivan and Dr. Scollins can certainly talk to Principal Scott to get information out. Dr. Sullivan doesn't know where we stand with our communication, regarding loss of credit. There has been conversation, even today on the Commissioner's call, and Dr. Sullivan wants to make sure that we get it ironed out with Principal Scott and Dr. Scollins. Dr. Sullivan will follow up with Principal Scott and will get information out regarding where we stand with that.

Shaun Galvin, 143 Fort Hill St. - Will the Cohasset High School winter semi-formal dance take place as scheduled on Friday, January 21st at the town hall or at CHS?

Dr. Sullivan believes it will be moved out to the spring.

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Sullivan wished everyone a Happy New Year. He acknowledged the uptick in COVID over the holidays and acknowledged DESE and Commissioner Riley asking for KN95 masks and COVID tests to all staff who wished to use them. An update on the state mask mandate that currently extends through January 15 will be issued early next week. Also, thanks and appreciation was expressed to all administrators, staff, students and families.

Snow days – the commissioner has announced that extending remote days into snow days is not an option. If snow makes it unsafe to have school, a snow day will be used.

Student Activities – School Committee requested a report of student activity involvement out of concern that students may not be as involved as they want to be during this COVID era. The report showed that we have a wide variety of offerings with students involved in a range of activities, club, enrichment offerings. Clubs, sports and enrichment offerings for CHS, CMS, Deer Hill and Osgood were listed along with enrollment numbers.

Student Advisor Update – Mercedes O'Neil – Everyone is getting back into the swing of things. The atmosphere is a little off. Some students are out because of COVID. Even though it's not required, most students are wearing masks at school. Mercedes started the Spanish club and she connected with the Pulsera Project. People in Nicaragua make the bracelets and send them, and they are sold, and all of the money is sent back to the makers. Basketball won yesterday against Abington! A winter coat drive is happening at CHS. There is a box to collect coats through the end of January. All coats will be donated to people in need.

Next meeting, all three Student representatives will be present to discuss the strategic plan.



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Gifts – Cohasset Education Foundation presented a check for \$38,586 to fund grants at the Cohasset Schools.

Kristin Quinn, 219 Sohier Street – Comments as President of The Cohasset Education Foundation, she wants to say thank you to the teachers and administration that took the time to write these grants. Every grant followed our mission to fund academic excellence, especially given the environment. We very much appreciate the time put into these thoughtful grants for our students and look forward to the Spring grant recommendations. Thank you.

Vote to accept the CEF gift of \$38,586. Motion by Lance Dial, seconded by Ashley Colleary. Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary-Aye, Lance Dial-Aye, Paul Kearney-Aye, Lydia St. Onge-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Gift from Lueders Environmental, Inc. of \$50.

Motion by Ashley Colleary to accept the \$50 gift from Lueders Environmental, Inc., seconded by Lance Dial. Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary-Aye, Lance Dial-Aye, Paul Kearney-Aye, Lydia St. Onge-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Motion to move topics not reasonably anticipated to this portion of the meeting. Motion by Ashley Colleary, seconded by Lance Dial. Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary-Aye, Lance Dial-Aye, Paul Kearney-Aye, Lydia St. Onge-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours in advance of meeting - Transportation Director – Ray Miscioscia - here to discuss recent bus issues.

Currently we have 7 busses and 6 drivers, and we outsource our two METCO busses through Local Motion. Local Motion is not able to help with extra drivers.

A bus driver who is retiring has their last day on Thursday so on Friday, students on affected bus routes will have to be early for their stops and will arrive home late. Right now, we have 6 drivers and have 7 buses, and starting on **FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2022**, we are going to be down to 5 drivers. We're looking to try to acquire additional drivers, we've created incentives, we've posted it everywhere possible. We do have some leads, so we're hoping it's not a long-term situation, but Dr. Sullivan did send out a message within the last couple of hours to this community, really deliberately showing what we need to have happen over the next few weeks anyway. Dr. Sullivan shared the message he sent to the community.

Anyone who has a CDL – the district is offering a 6-hour day with benefits – looking for another bus driver.

Meaghan Barry, 11 Tad Lane – States she has no solution to the bus issue but as a Bus 3 parent, she wants to thank Ray for getting her kids to school safely each day. In addition, Ray gave all the elementary kids a stuffed animal right before the holiday break and she thought that was so generous and it really made her kids happy. Thank you to Ray and all the other bus drivers for going above and beyond each day.



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Alison Bryan, 44 Howe Road – Thank you for everything Ray, especially for what you do for Bus 3. Is there a way to seek volunteers or parents who are willing and able to drive their kids for now even if their eligible to ride the school bus? This wouldn't work for all families and maybe there aren't enough families to make for this to make a difference, but there may be families that are able to do this especially if there is a certain route in particular that would make a difference. It could save the hardship on someone who really needs the bus, if enough people could drive.

Special Education Update – Barbara Cerwonka – updated on Special Ed meetings for the month of December, 2021. We conducted 25 meetings. Out of those 25 meetings, 4 of them were initial evaluations, all at the elementary level. Three of those students became eligible for special education services, and one did not. The sources of those referrals 3 were from parents and 1 from the MTSS process. We conducted 6 re-evaluations in total during the month of December. Three of them were at the secondary level and three at the high school level. There was 1 independent evaluation that was reviewed, and we added some testing of our own to further flush that out a little bit. There were 14 annual reviews, 6 at the secondary level and 8 at the elementary level so even though we only really had three weeks during the month of December, we held 25 meetings across our district. Mrs. Cerwonka shared patterns identified in Special Ed surveys. In terms of compliance, though issues are discussed at meetings, families don't feel that they are. It has been suggested to team chairs that parents are understanding and following along in the meeting. Another area of need – parents feeling knowledgeable or involved in the IEP process, want to feel heard and feel like they know what to do to participate in the process.

MTSS Task Force was started prior to Mrs. Cerwonka but she has taken a look at the original group and opened up the invitation to the whole district so that new members have joined. There is more sharing, uniformity, transparency and comprehensiveness to what we do for children.

Half day PD days this year – professional development to ESPs has been a focus for Mrs. Cerwonka paying attention to our ESP's and what kind of professional development would really be beneficial to them in the roles and the very important services that they provide to our students and targeting something really specific ahead of time in advance for them so that they can feel like they're really benefiting from it and that they were thought about and planned for. This past month team chairs met with ESPs, and really went over the accommodations, the modifications, the behavior plans that students are on. They reviewed the importance of the ESP in providing that support and the generalization of those skills from a special education setting into a general education classroom. It was very, very helpful and nice to really be working very collectively and together on those things and have a place where, about midway through the year people could revitalize themselves, and ask those questions.

School Committee Comments and Communication-

Communications Subcommittee – we have been meeting and discussing how to make our web-based communication more effective. Will create a proposal for website updates and then the committee can approve it.

School Facilities Committee – had a meeting last night where it was established that there are 4 organizations that have responded to the RFP for school design and they have each submitted a proposal. They will be interviewed and then a finalist will be selected and approved, and the feasibility study will commence. At the same time a Statement of Interest is being put together to submit to the MSBA.



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Capital Facilities Committee – started a series of standing meeting re: school lunch & food services: a refrigerated vending machine has been acquired; For communication – school has acquired 4 TV screens with a 5th to come which will be placed in conspicuous areas that will guide students through their day and provide updates; Clarifying roles and responsibilities between school and DPW with response to school grounds; looking for some other miscellaneous improvements such as touchless faucets in the bathroom; bussing – where to keep busses. Is there a more permanent solution?

AEC - Electric Bus survey has been received by EnelX and is being processed, Mrs. St. Onge will bring updates to the committee when they are available.

Approval of Minutes - None

Executive Session – no reason to move into Executive Session.

Motion made by Ms. St. Onge, seconded Mr. Kearney to adjourn the January 5, 2022 school committee meeting. Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary-Aye, Lance Dial-Aye, Paul Kearney-Aye, Lydia St. Onge-Aye, Chairman Craig MacLellan-Aye.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM

Documents Used at the Meeting

Cohasset Public Schools School Activities - Dr. Sullivan

Gift from The Cohasset Education Foundation - Dr. Sullivan

Gift from Lueders Environmental, Inc. - Dr. Sullivan

Announcement of school bus shortage - Dr. Sullivan

Student Services - Special Education December 2021 Update - Mrs. Cerwonka