



## Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Empower Students to Improve Communities*

### Cohasset School Committee Meeting

#### **Student Services Forum Minutes**

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Zoom Video Call

Virtual Access via Zoom and Facebook

6:00 P.M.

#### **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

Lisa Farrell, Principal Elementary School

Torin Sweeney, Director for the Department of Comprehensive Physical Education and Fitness Wellness

**Call to Order and Roll Call** - Chairman, Craig MacLellan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. 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, Lance Dial-Present, Paul Kearney-Present, Lydia St. Onge-Present, Chairman Craig MacLellan-Present.**

**Public Comments** - None

**Superintendent's Report** - Welcome to a Mid-Summer School Committee Meeting. Not a tremendous number of updates because we are sort of mid-Summer and we just met recently to review our Strategic Plan. We have no new guidance from DESE. If and when and when we do, I will certainly let the school committee know immediately, and then follow very quickly with a notice to the staff and families. The Strategic Plan we do have is on the website and we were able to get that to the school community and will be following up very soon with information about how we'll be taking the show on the road and getting some input and having some discussions with it. Hopefully, that will happen! We have a guest here today. Torin Sweeney is our department chair for comprehensive physical fitness and wellness for grades K-12. Mr. Sweeney is a fabulous educator. Principal Farrell will be updating us on the summer learning program.

#### **Cohasset Education Foundation (CEF) Presentation of Gift for Project Adventure Grant**

Our first point of business is that we are very fortunate, as you all know, to have the Cohasset Education Foundation here in our district. They have funded so many innovative activities and programs in our schools, and once in a while, they're able to take care of something that we know will help our district for many years to come, and this in one of those grants. It's a very large grant that the Cohasset Education Foundation was good enough to fund and to think progressively towards funding. This project has been near and dear to Mr. Sweeney. It's something that since he came on as department chair, he has wanted. So, the fact that the CEF has made that tremendous fundraising effort and choose our project to be one to put forward this year is really exciting. We are scheduled to have install start on August 16, 2021 and hopefully finished by August 20, 2021. The only little thing that we kind of ran into is when the engineers



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from Project Adventure got to the school, even though they had many pictures that I had sent them, they were concerned with going up and around the window, up to the ceiling and up to the I beam area. They took a closer look at it, they decided that we would go wider instead of higher, so that in one way, it's better because it allows us to get three belays instead of two belays which allows us for more kids to be active at the same time. They are going to add a number of features on the wall that are things that kids can climb over, and around. The other features, the multi-swings are going to be put in the middle school area which are features that kids can use, and teachers can instruct from, giving kids all different types of challenges. The tension hand lines that work with those multi-swings are another piece. There's going to be a platform. He's adding a rope ladder to it as well. Training for the staff will hopefully be the last week in August. Thank you, thank you, to the CEF for getting this done this year.

The School Committee asks questions and makes comments regarding Mr. Sweeney's presentation.

Superintendent Sullivan turns meeting over to Chairman MacLellan for looking for approval for the fundraising sum of \$48,605.76 to build this Project Adventure Wall.

**Motion by Lance Dial, seconded by Lydia St. Onge to accept the CEF gift of \$48,605.76 for the building of the Adventure Wall.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary-Aye, Lance Dial-Aye, Paul Kearney-Aye, Lydia St. Onge-Aye, Chairman Craig MacLellan-Aye.**

#### **Summer Learning Program Update (Dr. Leslie Scollins)**

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan would like to address that Principal Lisa Farrell, principal of Osgood Elementary School. She and Assistant Superintendent Leslie Scollins are going to update on our Summer Learning Program. We've finished one session, and we're starting second session and excited to visit tomorrow. A quick update on where we are and how we're doing. Assistant Superintendent Leslie Scollins presents dashboard on Summer Learning Program 2021.

Principal Farrell has been the director of the program for our Summer Learning for this Summer, but this actually started with a grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. It was a summer vacation and school vacation learning grant. We had a jump start program for 2 weeks last year for grades K-5, and Principal Farrell was the director of that program. It ran with great success and we did a couple of weeks before school started in August, and we used teachers from outside of our district as well as inside who did ELA math and SEL with our students.

We were unable to run the school vacation program and there was not a lot of interest out there, so we felt we would use our money towards the summer learning program, so the department of education let us do that. We're running 4 weeks. Two weeks for each session, for ELA math, SEL and as Dr. Sullivan said, we've already completed one session and now we are clearly into our second session and we're finishing up our first week of that session tomorrow. There were about 158 registrations for the program, and 120 confirmed participation. The elementary program is 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. It's ELA, math and SEL for our students. The middle school program had different participation this term. For the first session, grades 9 & 10 were well attended. The students that signed up, actually came which was nice. This session here we had a couple of students in grades 10 & 11 that weren't able to participate, or it was difficult for them to get there. So, we opened it up to tutoring during that time. So, instead of having 2 1/2 hours or 3 hours of ELA and Math, Mr. Maher will meet one to one, or two to one with students and they will have ELA and Math at that time. It's more of a tutoring session for the older students which is little bit more comfortable for them. Assistant Superintendent Leslie Scollins comments that it really worked out well



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and at the high school level they are doing their summer reading and it's wonderful. Dr. Leslie Scollins presents a few pictures of students participating in the Summer Learning Program this Summer. Staff is about 50% Cohasset employees and then 50% outside of the district.

The grant has paid for about half of the program and the district is picking up the other half so this is what Dr. Sullivan really wanted it to be, open to everybody. So, we took everyone and really glad we did it. It's been a really nice program.

The committee thanks the presenters and has a brief discussion.

#### **Finance: Monthly Update (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Chairman MacLellan opens meeting to Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations for monthly update. Dr. Sullivan noted that this is the format that the school committee has requested. Hopefully, members will like it.

Capital Outlay Funds. Giving back to district is great. Going back to the Town

No outstanding Capital Outlay projects, good to hear.

Details on the Grant funds for FY21. Most grants are 1-2 years. Because of Covid, grants can extend to 3 years. Goal is to spend the money we get grants, pay for salaries. Revolving Accounts.

Susan Owen statement on extra expenses, but we're happy to close out, FY21 in a good place. Even though FY21 was a challenging year, expenditures that we had to do a lot of supplies and materials and you name it!

The committee thanks Mrs. Owen and has a brief discussion.

#### **School Facilities Committee**

Chairman MacLellan moves onto School Facilities Committee. Brief update, he has been in touch with select board, chairperson, Kerry Thompson who advised him that they will vote on their nominations at their first meeting in August. Heard from the town monitor that he anticipates finishing that process next week. That means we will have a quorum and that committee will be meeting in August.

#### **Reports from Sub-Committee and Liaisons (Policy & Standards, Budget Finance, Special Ed, PAC, Legislative Liaison)**

Ashley Colleary reports that the policy Sub-Committee met yesterday and discussed our policy with EBCFA, the mask policy. Our subcommittee would like to revisit that policy and we have received extensive feedback from our legal counsel and will include that in everyone's binder for next week's meeting. We are putting it on the agenda. We don't need to vote on this next week, if we feel like we want to have discussion, we can make next week a first read, but we would like to put that back on our agenda. We also plan to vote on the non-discrimination clause next week. That should be something that is explicitly put on the agenda. We'll have that vote next week.

I can say that Safe Harbor Coalition hosts an annual overdose awareness vigil each year on Cohasset Common and they'll be doing this again this year, on **August 31, 2021 at 6:45 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.** Safe Harbor sends out emails, and they also include in there a link to virtual exhibit called "Hidden In Plain Sight." Dr. Sullivan noted he has seen this, and actually had that as part of our safe schools night a couple of years ago, and it was so liked, and it's been here a couple of times, and was familiar with that from a



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previous job withheld. So, it's excellent! Ashley Colleary commented on how it's hard to get people who aren't necessarily interested in learning this to look at it, but now they have a virtual one, which is awesome! Maybe, it's worth talking to the principals about including it in their newsletters possibly! Will continue to remind people of that moving forward. Dr. Sullivan thinks this would be a great idea and actually it's too bad Mr. Sweeney wasn't still here, because he would be the one who certainly would be driving that, but we will absolutely mention that, and big fan of that program. Anything that raises that awareness, I'm all for that, awesome! Lance Dial has no updates on subcommittee until tomorrow. Special meeting with the financial facility subcommittee tomorrow, the agenda has been posted and Paul Kearney referenced that earlier on. So excited to get some work moving there.

Paul Kearney states it's good to see the playgrounds in use. Seeing the kids that are out there playing baseball, and the theater, had a great theater this week to kick off. It's nice to see the arts back too as well.

Lydia St. Onge gave an update about how schools can be involved/ included in a grant proposal by the AEC that could help subsidize the cost of roofs and advance the timeline on getting solar on school roofs. The AEC is continuing to look into the economics of electric buses. If the study provides a positive recommendation and path forward, we may look at seeking agreement from the town that we should convert to electric buses and submit a grant request to either the state, or as a part of the micro grid brick grant to cover the incremental cost of purchasing and maintaining electric school buses. Depending on the outcome of that, and if it makes sense, they would request a buy in for electric buses, and permission to request a grant for incremental cost. So, a lot of ifs, but interesting updates. The AEC is really a great source of many brilliant people who are looking into many grant opportunities that could possibly benefit the school and the environment.

**Approval of Minutes** - Chairman, MacLellan commented, our secretary, Lydia St. Onge has submitted to us the July 14, 2021 meeting. There was a reference made to Neil Armstrong and doesn't want it to be going down as misquoting a national treasure. Stated that it says that "this is our first step," as Neil Armstrong will put it. He did do some step, but it "was a giant leap," is what is the term used. This is our "first giant leap," instead of the word, "step." Lydia St. Onge will correct this in the minutes, from our July 14, 2021 school committee meeting.

**Motion to approve July 14, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted by Lydia St. Onge, with the one revision that we just discussed by Ashley Colleary, seconded by Lance Dial.**

**Roll call vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Lance Dial - Abstained, Paul Kearney - Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan - Aye.**

Chairman Craig MacLellan addresses question from a member in our community that is watching via streamed live.

Ms. Francine Lyons, 25 Fern Way - Good evening. She understands the school is anticipating replacing the turf-track this Fall and will likely mean all Fall sports games will be played away. She also understands if the funds were not approved in May at the annual town meeting, it is likely the turf and track would have continued to be used for this Fall by the sports teams. Why hasn't there been more consideration around timing of this work not impact our student athletes agree the work needs to be done, but timing needs to be planned better.

Chairman MacLellan noted to School Committee Members that Ms. Lyons in part of our Capital Budget Committee. In detail, and it was a project that was approved, but so sure that they were aware of the timing of our request and details surrounding the project. Dr. Sullivan would like to comment to Ms. Lyons



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question with additional insight to provide relative to this point. Obviously, the safety is paramount to everything we do. We want to make sure that when we possibly can't attend to it, and if we have any safety issues that we get right to it. We are moving to replace our turf and our track which will the work we're hoping will start this Summer. It will impact the Fall season for sure! We understand that we're not blind to the fact that you know we'll have some impact on our student athletes and our physical education classes. Having gone through this in a previous district and we've seen this happen in other districts here. It is part of the whether you have a turf or you have a field. Often fields can't be played on for a year, or even stepped on! If we had a natural field, it is sort of a casualty of doing a project like this, but we're very thankful to the CEF and approving it, and we're committed to getting this done as quickly as we possibly can, so that we don't impact other seasons and you know it will. Don't know if Ms. Owen our Director of Finance & Operations has any additional information. We have a project manager assigned to it and we are moving with some at this point to get this job underway. Chairman MacLellan would like to make a follow up comment to Ms. Lyons question. Stating that Ms. Lyons wants to make it clear that this is a question on her behalf and not Capital Budget Committee. The discussions during those meetings was to do the work during the Summer and not impact, or (minimize) work for Fall sports. Dr. Sullivan stated that we weren't able to do that! Chairman MacLellan receives another question from member of our community.

Mr. Seem, 4 Bancroft Road - What is the safety issue?

Dr. Sullivan answers, "There are a couple of safety issues." One is our track has bubbling and all kinds of issues that could result in tripping. Our field, although not at the point yet, where it's deemed unsafe, is getting there rapidly. We feel that if not attended to immediately, that there will be a tremendous safety hazard as well. So, we are very thankful to get the funding and as stated, it is really important that our students have the best, and safest facilities, whether it be a field, or a classroom and just as we attend anything that could pose a problem for them. We're excited to do that to create the best possible playing surfaces and running track, not only for our students, but for our town. That's what we're moving towards, but it is really, the safety issue. It's the track and the turf.

Chairman MacLellan addresses his point to question on safety issue. The point is we want the best possible facilities for our kids everywhere ideally, we would never want to impact or displace any other sports teams, but we're doing what we can in that regard. We're certainly not knowingly, subjecting our kids, which was a preventative maintenance issue, that is was preemptive measure, not something that is reactive to an already existing dangerous condition that you know can't be played on.

Mr. Seem chimes in with another question. Why wasn't it possible to do it during Summer of 2021? Chairman MacLellan answers was maybe that was answered in relation to Ms. Lyons question. Dr. Sullivan addresses answer to Mr. Seem. There was some, don't know, and asks if Susan Owen could talk more specifically about it, but we can't spend anything until July 1st of the next cycle. There were some situations that delayed, and a little bit of confusion, between what was going on with the town procurement, and our own school, our school in our building, our school finance department, and our ability to move it forward, but like stated, we are in late July here, and we're hoping to get this going as soon as we can in the Summer. It was going to impact the Fall season no matter what. The most we would have been able to offer would have been maybe a couple of weeks of playing on it. But we are hopeful that the process will move very quickly maybe, we don't know. We'll see what kind of timeline we get in the Fall.

Susan Owen states this should be going out to bid in the next two weeks. It will be advertised and ready to go! Ms. Lyons followed up with the statement, the rating of the field as she understands is under industry guidelines and does not approach the industry limit. Additionally, she was told it was very likely the field would have been used this Fall without approval of the funds. Dr. Sullivan reiterates, we want to take care



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of it as soon as we can. We don't want to let things go to their very, dangerous and we want to make sure that we're preemptive. We take care of them as soon as we can, and we'll receive that funding. We are going to move to take care of it to get the best facilities for our students for as long as we can possibly get them. Dr. Sullivan noted that the community deserves it, this is overdue and glad that we were able to do. From an operational standpoint. It was determined to do the track and the turf at the same time. It was supported by the town manager. It was a good move and we're doing that.

Dr. Sullivan understands that it is going to cause some problems for our student athletes and some of our students in Physical Education and he recognizes that. We are going to try to be sensitive and do what we can to provide good practice facilities. If we have to use other towns or we have to use our fields here and to provide the best possible actual contest and playing times and places for our students. These are the things that happen when you do a new construction. He wants everyone to know that, and that we are aware of that! We are going to be very sensitive to it. Try to work through it but do think it's very important that when we're given funding to attend to a safety issue that we do that as soon as we can. Appreciate there was a bit of delay here, but it doesn't mean that we should wait even longer to get it done because our students deserve better.

Chairman MacLellan has two other comments to address and will read them at the same time because they came in about the same time.

Viewer states this is a major disappointment and it feels like we are suffering from poor planning. Chairman MacLellan apologizes to comment.

Another comment read by Chairman MacLellan. Very excited too, and appreciate all the hard work at the school, but there must be a work around. Can the turf be supplemented with the infill for the next year?

Dr. Sullivan comments, right now, it's not our plan to delay this. It is our plan to move forward and get this done in the Fall.

Chairman MacLellan comments, it is a disappointment that it hasn't started yet. It's not really a result of poor planning. The plan was put into place, it was presented to Capital Budget. We obtained the funding and doesn't know how many municipal projects are completed with celebrity. The doors at Deer Hill took months and months and was there in November and talking to a vendor then we've heard other bid things, other projects, other solutions and then we decided on the same person that was already there in November, and that just got completed. It took nearly a year and that's just a vestibule. We just came out of a really tough year and there are a lot of things to be worried about. Everyone's doing the best they can, but you are right Mr. Seem. It is a disappointment if the kids are displaced in the Fall sports, especially after the year they just had! It is, and it's not something we want. None of these things are something we want, it's just unfortunate we know. Chairman MacLellan states, it's always disappointing to see any of the families disappointed about anything that we're trying to do here. Everyone's working toward the common goal and just at our last meeting in the town manager's office just last week, we were talking about this so that we can decide, what was the best way to proceed and we've got the project manager. We're working with them, so that we can try and accelerate the program. We're going to make sure that any bids, everyone know the time is of the essence. We're going to press that. From our understanding, it's about a four-week project once it gets started. Hopefully, it won't impact sports too, too much.

Ms. Lyons wants to add comment. Everyone appreciates things take longer, but relating it to the July 1st date, is not fair. It was approved on May 24th fiscal year and now being on July 21st. There should have been no expectation that money would be available by May 25th. But it seems we could have started knowing funds were approved and forthcoming.



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Mr. Seems states, it's a bit of an emotional subject for parents of rising seniors and certainly appreciates everyone's efforts. It's just news out of the blue.

**Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours in advance of meeting - None**

**No reason to move an executive session at this time.**

**Motion to adjourn by Lydia St. Onge to adjourn, seconded by Paul Kearney.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Lance Dial - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Craig MacLellan - Aye.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.**

#### **Documents presented at the meeting:**

- (1) Agenda of July 28, 2021 meeting
- (2) CEF grant & gift presented to Torin Sweeney
- (3) Summer Learning Program 2021 Presentation by Dr. Scollins & Principal Farrell.
- (4) New format summarized by Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations