



Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Continuing the Commitment to Excellence

Cohasset School Committee Meeting

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Zoom Video Call

Virtual Meeting – 143TV and Zoom

In Attendance:

Ellen Maher, Chairman

Jennifer Madden

Paul Kearney

Ashley Colleary

Craig MacLellan

Also, in Attendance:

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

Dr. Leslie Scollings, Assistant Superintendent

Michael MacMillan, Director of Finance & Operations

Steve Rotondi, CHS Athletic Director

Chairman Maher called the meeting to order at 7:04p.m. She 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. **Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Present, Ashley Colleary-Present, Ellen Maher-Present, Jennifer Madden, Present, Craig MacLellan-Present.**

Public Comment-None

Superintendent's Report-Student School Committee Representative-Update- Student

Representatives Margaret Curley, Madeline Grudinskas and Caroline Patterson gave an update. Ms. Patterson stated that she has been doing projects throughout the day. Teachers have been great with updating Google classroom and checking in with students daily. She has been keeping her work to a class per day to keep herself organized and on target with classwork. She mentioned that Mrs. Reardon has been hosting a SAT class every Thursday which she has been participating in. The class has met twice so far. She has been checking in with family and friends a lot more. She stated that Mrs. Norton has coordinated for the NHS to send messages, pictures and videos to senior citizens at Sunrise, who can't have visitors at this time and to also help continue student community service hours. Ms. Curley updated the committee on her daily workload – she started doing a class per day but found that with her AP classes there was too much work to complete in one day. Yesterday her homework consisted of writing a forty-five-minute essay to prepare for her AP Literature exam, reading a few chapters of a book, recording herself playing guitar for her band class and answering comprehension questions that went along with a video she had to watch for her Holocaust and Human Behavior class. Ms. Grudinskas gave an update on the Remote learning structure. She has structured her day around her Zoom classes and how she does her homework and says that it has been really helpful. She mentioned that she has been getting great feedback from other students. It has been working out well and is less crazy than the normal school day that goes from 7:30am to 2:00pm. She stated that she has more opportunities to read for pleasure, check in with family and help out more at home. She has also started learning sign language with her mother, which they have been wanting to start for some time. Ms. Patterson gave an update on the Superintendent's Student School Committee Meeting that was held on Tuesday, April 14, which consisted of two Seniors, one Junior, two Sophomores, a Freshman and an Eighth Grade Student. She stated it was great to hear the perspectives from students of other grade levels. During the hour long meeting the group discussed their anxieties regarding SATs, College, and asked the eighth-grade student what Zoom meetings are like for the younger grade levels? Students have reported liking the daily check-



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ins with their teachers and the structure that the meetings provide. Ms. Patterson did mention that in the first week many students had conflicting Zoom calls with Teachers, but that issue has been resolved. Coach Reardon, the Varsity Girls Lacrosse Coach has been doing Zoom workouts for the Team. Ms. Curley gave a Safe Harbor update which has been meeting on Zoom on Tuesday nights. They have been working on presentations for a couple of ongoing projects. The High School students are focusing on a presentation for the Aaron River Reservoir Cleanup Project which is focused on litter derived from substance abuse. The Middle School students are working on a Public Service Announcement to distribute resources to help teens quit tobacco use, this is being done to prepare for the flavor ban that will take effect in June. Ms. Curley wanted to inform parents of the nutmeg challenge. It is a trend that comes around every couple of years. She stated that if a person consumes a certain amount of nutmeg that they will experience some hallucinogenic effects that could potentially last anywhere from six to thirty hours that come with heart palpitations and flu like symptoms. Program Director, Nicole Balaschi mentioned to the Coalition that this was a trend when she was in High School and she witnessed several of her peers get rushed to the hospital due to ingesting too much of the substance. She mentioned that she doesn't believe that this is happening in Town but with increased boredom and social media interest this could become an issue for the youth in Town. Other at home DIY drugs that have been gaining popularity are inhalants from compressed air and whipped cream and sage, which contains a chemical that can be poisonous if consumed in large quantities. Ms. Curley stated that if parents are interested in getting more information about these household trends or want advice on how to prevent the use of these household items to subscribe to the Safe Harbor Newsletter and watch for a resource packet that will be coming out on how to handle dialogue with teens. Ms. Grudinkas gave an update on the Senior class. She posted on the Class Instagram page asking for feedback, questions and concerns from her fellow classmates. She said that all the Seniors are upset about Prom and Graduation and they would rather have these events be late than be done remotely. Some suggestions that she received were a senior sleepover or School walk-thru, Mini Senior Weekend which would include a Class night and Senior shirt BBQ, outdoor Prom with Food Trucks, Graduation at either the Music Circus or on the Common. The Seniors want closure and would like the ability to celebrate over the Summer. Students have also been wondering if with the Remote Learning will they still be getting out of School on May 27th and how will requirements be met for Graduation? Superintendent Dr. Sullivan mentioned that he will discuss the options from the students to Principle Scott. He thanked all the Student Representatives for their feedback. Chairman Maher thanked the Student Representatives for their insight, she loved how the presentation was structured as "A Day in the Life". She stated that the Committee will do whatever they can to support the efforts of Principle Scott and Superintendent Dr. Sullivan in having some kind of celebration for the Senior Class. Mr. MacLellan stated that every kid deserves a High school Graduation and a Senior Prom and that he along with the rest of the Committee will do whatever they can to make a live; in-person celebration happens. Mr. Kearney stated that he agrees and is in full support of a live Graduation for the Class of 2020. Mrs. Madden mentioned that it is so important to hear from the students regarding this situation and sees a commitment from Principle Scott and other leadership with thinking outside the box and having creative ideas for having these upcoming events. Mrs. Colleary agrees with the rest of the Committee regarding these events and also thanked Ms. Curley for highlighting the information from Safe Harbor and that it's relevant especially in difficult times like these that parents continue to be aware of these trends on social media.

Athletic Update – Cohasset Athletic Director/Boys' Varsity Lacrosse Couch Steve Rotondi gave an Athletic Update and review of Winters sports. The numbers were similar to last year except for a facility rental savings of \$10,000 which was related to the Boy's Hockey Team combining with Hull and creating the Co-Op which means Hull absorbed 50% of the facility fee. Next years budget projection remains the



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same due to the fact that the Co-Op was only approved for one year to start. Mr. Rotundi stated that there was a savings of \$4,000 for Swimming. The Swim Team will be looking for an Assistant Coach or more specifically a Diving Coach for next year's season. Chairman Maher stated that she is noticing a trend with user fees for the Winter Season and there is a steady decline in the average amount per athlete. Mr. Rotundi stated that there has been an uptick in families asking for financial assistance with a waiver or have yet to pay the user fee. He mentioned that he feels confident that many families will pay by the end of the year. Mr. Rotundi stated that Coaches are staying in touch regularly with their teams. The Girls Lacrosse Team has been doing online workouts. One of the teams is putting out fitness challenges and a virtual 5k. He mentioned that the Boy's Lacrosse Team is having alumni come back to give advice to the younger athletes. They have also met virtually as a league and talked about getting speakers to talk to the athletes about diversity. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated the Mr. Rotundi has been on the daily leadership calls and has been a great part of the team and has been a great help and guide throughout the school closure. Mr. MacLellan thanked Mr. Rotundi for all he has been doing. Chairman Maher asked if the schools open on May 4, 2020, what would the athletic schedule look like? Mr. Rotundi stated that it would be a league schedule, there are ten league games scheduled which start on May 4th and end on the second week of June.

Update on Remote Learning – Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated the Leadership Team has transitioned to a more in-depth and deeper learning model. They wanted to keep it unique and appropriate for each school building. He mentioned that they have received great feedback and that he is proud of the educators for keeping the social emotional needs of the students and families first and foremost. Dr. Scollins gave an update on the Remote Learning Guide for the schools. They wanted to keep it simple and created a guide with the whole child in mind. The guide offers asynchronous opportunities where students can work at their own pace and at a time that works for their schedule. There will be no grading and assignments will be given either credit or no credit. The guide consists of a Vision Statement for Remote Learning, Definition of Remote Learning, Learning Expectations, Lesson Delivery Models, Communications, Resources and Supports, and Specific Building Remote Learning Plans. The Osgood School's Learning Plan was structured as a menu where parents could pick and choose what works best for them. Deer Hill's plan is structured by grade level and that all the teachers and students are working and participating together as a group. The Middle School structured their plan where each subject has a specific day and is focused on project-based learning. Dr. Scollins stated that this has been a positive and collaborative approach. Lastly, the High School learning plan is structured so each day is a different period. She stated that this has been well received by the students. Students are receiving credit for completed assignments but there are no hard timelines on assignments to be turned in. Dr. Scollins mentioned that all the Teachers are aware of the social emotional needs of their students. They are checking in with their students, especially ones that they haven't heard from. Teachers and Guidance Counselors have worked on a plan to provide resources and support for students and their families. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated that the Leadership team has been meeting everyday to discuss remote learning and crisis planning. The committee had a lengthy discussion.

April Break Update – Superintendent Dr. Sullivan gave an update that with the approval of the Association the dates of April 21, 22, 23 & 24 will be considered school days, and the last day of school would be adjusted to June 18th, 2020. Dr. Sullivan stated that the Association felt good about this decision and that it was in the best interest of the students to continue with remote learning through the April Break. Chairman Maher mentioned that most of the School Districts that have responded to the MASC Listserv survey are doing the same thing as Cohasset and will be conducting remote learning through the April Break Week.



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Other Concerns/Updates During School Cancellation Period– Superintendent Dr. Sullivan gave an update that the food service delivery of grab & go breakfast and lunches has continued throughout the school closure. He stated that this service is available for all students who want or need a grab and go lunch. Students can purchase these by using their lunch card. He also mentioned that the schools are working with Emergency Management and the Town's Elder Affairs Department to serve the Town's senior population on Tuesday's, Wednesday's and Thursday's and it has been going very well. They are also receiving Meals on Wheels the other days of the week. Mr. MacMillan stated that they have been working really well with Elder Affairs and do anything they can to support their programs. Dr. Sullivan stated that with the help from they are also helping to provide the Town's First responders and Emergency Personnel with anything they need such as science equipment and googles to face shields. Cohasset High School Senior Noah Sullivan has been using the Deer Hill 3D printers to create face shields for the Fire Department. A Third Grade Student named Sophia has made over 30 masks for a local hospital. Dr. Sullivan stated that the schools have loaned to families almost sixty Chromebooks and feels good about the access. He mentioned that if a family needs a device, they can reach out to Dr. Scollins who can facilitate this request in a confidential manner. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the schools for anything. Dr. Sullivan stated that September 14th could be a possible day off of school, due to the rescheduling of the Boston Marathon. He has not heard any definitive answers on this as of yet. He gave an update on guidance that has been given regarding enrollment, remote learning feedback, budgets and MCAS. MCAS testing has been cancelled for grades three through ten.

Approval of warrant- Chairman Maher stated that she as the Warrant Officer, signed and approved the Warrant pursuant to the vote taken at the last School Committee Meeting.

Finance Monthly Update- Mr. MacMillan stated that at this point 64.46% of the budget has been spent, which is slightly more than where it was at this point last year. Compared to last year there is no area that has overspent. Invoices are still being payed for both February and March and he expects that the expenditure will dip in April due to schools being closed. Chairman Maher asked questions regarding the 12% increase for cleaning contracts, the unemployment rate being almost at 100%. She also mentioned that the expense line for all four buildings is up anywhere from three to eleven points except for Osgood. Mr. MacMillan stated that there has not been much change since last month regarding revolving funds and grants, there are still some negatives because they are waiting on money from the state. He stated he has reached out to the State regarding the Safer Schools Grant and they informed him that money is on the way. All other revolving funds are in good shape.

Bus Maintenance- There was a slight increase from last month in the transportation budget because of repairs that were not covered under the warranty. Chairman Maher asked about the status of the new minivan. Mr. MacMillan stated that they are still expecting for a June delivery date.

Gift– Mr. MacMillan stated that the schools have received a gift of \$18,000 from the PSO for hydration stations at the Middle/High School and Osgood including installation and filters and also for a new audio-visual component for the Deer Hill cafeteria. **Motion by Mrs. Madden to accept the generous gift of \$18,000 from the Cohasset PSO; Seconded by Mr. MacLellan. Roll Call Vote; Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.**

FY 21 Budget Discussion- Chairman Maher stated that on April 9th she along with Superintendent Dr. Sullivan, Town Manager Chris Senior, Finance Director Don Piatt, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen



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Kevin McCarthy and Director Finance and Operations Michael MacMillan had a meeting to discuss the FY20 and FY21 Town and School Budgets. The committee had a brief discussion

School Committee Comments and Communication– Mr. Kearney asked Mr. MacMillan about the Middle/School entrance project. Mr. MacMillan stated that since the schools are closed, they have not had any vendors in the building. He mentioned that if the closure is extended past May 4th, they will look into getting more construction projects done. Mr. Kearney mentioned that there is a Finance/Facility sub-committee meeting tomorrow and they will discuss this further. Mr. MacMillan stated that demolition of the Osgood Playground has taken place and they are hoping that the installation will begin next week. He also stated that the vendor is following the guidance from the State on safety precautions for his employees and protecting against COVID-19. Mrs. Colleary gave an update on the remote Diversity Meeting that was held this afternoon. She mentioned that the committee was going to participate in the 24th Annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace that benefits the Louis D. Brown Institute which helps individuals, families and communities affected by homicide. They can't have their walk this year but will be doing it virtually and people can make donations on their website. Mrs. Colleary mentioned that the committee also discussed that throughout this crisis will bring to light a lot of disparities and are hoping to have people join the committee and they are keeping a focus on these issues. Mr. MacLellan asked what the status was on the formation of the School Facility Committee. Chairman Maher stated that she sent a request for this topic to be put on an upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting. The request was acknowledged by both Chairman Kevin McCarthy and Chris Senior and they indicated they want to get it on an agenda but asked to wait a few weeks due COVID-19. Chairman Maher mentioned that she will wait a month and follow up again. Chairman Maher mentioned how very proud she is at how the entire town has been working together. Everyone has been very collaborative and supportive. Dr. Sullivan provided three UVA cabinets from the High School Science rooms to the Police and Fire Departments to help get the N95 masks cleaned properly for reuse. She hopes that kindness and collaboration continue after this crisis. Dr. Sullivan stated that he feels supported by both Chiefs, Chris Senior and the Public Health Nurse.

Approval of minutes–Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the minutes of 2/26/20 as amended, seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary- Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.

Follow up and updates- Mrs. Colleary asked if the committee has an interest in accepting applications for organizations that want to rent space to provide food to people. Chairman Maher stated that it could be a possibility and would want to reach out to the Town for guidance. The committee had a brief discussion.

Motion by Mr. MacLellan to adjourn at 9:45 p.m., Seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Documents Used at the Meeting

Athletic Update	B-1
Monthly Update	D-1
Bus Maintenance	D-2
Gift	D-3