



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

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Zoom Video Call

Virtual Meeting – 143TV and Zoom

In Attendance:

Ellen Maher, Chairman
Jennifer Madden
Paul Kearney
Craig MacLellan
Ashley Colleary

Also, in Attendance:

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent
Dr. Leslie Scollings, Assistant Superintendent
Mary Buchanan, Director of Student Services
Michael MacMillan, Director of Finance & Operations

Chairman Maher called the meeting to order at 7:05p.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 Madeline Grudinskas, Caroline Patterson and Margaret Curley gave an update. Ms. Grudinskas stated that all the students are trying to stay home as best they can and are trying to figure out what is going on. She said the communication from the teachers has been great and that she has received many resources to help with her continued learning. She stated that they have already had several Zoom meetings with different teachers, and it has been great to see her classmates through this platform, she believes that starting next week, they will be working more in depth, which she is excited for. Ms. Patterson stated that on April 6th there will be a push to start remote learning for students to be as consistent as possible and getting everyone connected. She says that it has been a scary time, and no one has any answers. Students have a different outlook on their education because of this pandemic, they miss their routines and going to school each day. Ms. Curley stated that her AP Economic teacher Mr. Welch has created a blog for students to post articles and ask questions since the pandemic has so many economic implications. She appreciates the way the administration has been handling the outcome from the pandemic. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan asked how are each of you attending to those social emotional needs? Ms. Grudinskas stated she has been doing a lot of reading both for school and for pleasure, taking walks around the community with her dog and family. Ms. Patterson stated she has been using social media in a more positive way and has found time for cleaning. Margaret has spent time embroidering and knitting; safe harbor-virtual meeting. MIAA has set a tentative start date for spring sports. Athletics is a portion of school environment.

Mr. Kearney states that his children are also adjusting well and it's great to hear that people seem to be adjusting and getting to enjoy more time with family members. Ms. Colleary thanks the student representatives for all the input and for attending the meeting. Ms. Madden is grateful that the student



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representatives discussed how they feel and are dealing with everything during this time. Mr. MacLellan thanked the girls for their great presentation and for having a positive mindset during this difficult time. He also wanted to thank Mr. Welch for the setup of the economics blog that provided a real-world approach to learning for his students.

Educator Spotlight Update- Alesia Gittens-Carle Director of the Metco Program for the Cohasset Public Schools gave an update to the Committee regarding the CPS Professional Development Day. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated that Mrs. Gittens-Carle's drive to help the district progress in Cultural Proficiency has been very prominent this year. It is unfortunate the CPS Professional Development Day had to be postponed due to the pandemic. The day was structured as: The Importance of Cultural Proficiency and it was developed to highlight different aspects of culture, through the eyes of the student. She hosted a Book Club which included fifteen staff members from the Middle/High School where they read two books; *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates and *White Fragility* by Robin D'Angelo. Chairman Maher asked how the Metco students are dealing with school being out and if they have been connecting with their fellow classmates. Mrs. Gittens-Carle stated that the students have been connecting to classmates using social media and the Zoom platform. Mrs. Colleary stated she was devastated that she could not participate in the Professional Development Day because of school closing due to the pandemic. Mrs. Gittens-Carle is so happy with the energy and enthusiasm that the leadership team currently has. Mrs. Madden stated that these are really important conversations. She asked if the same speakers will be able to attend when the Professional Development is rescheduled. Ms. Gittens-Carle said that she has everyone signed on for the new date as long as there are no other setbacks. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated that Ms. Gittens-Carle does a wonderful job and not only provides support for the teaching staff but also for the leadership team as well.

Faculty Hiring Update- Superintendent Dr. Sullivan is happy to introduce Susan Owen, the finalist for the Director of Finance/Operations position. Ms. Owens's brings twenty years of experience working in finance for Public Schools and comes very highly recommended. Ms. Owens previously worked for the Sharon Public School District.

Motion by Ms. Colleary to appoint Susan Owen as the Director of Finance/Operations, Seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Special Education Update- Director of Student Services Mary Buchanan updated the committee on the Special Education guidance that has been received from the State. She has had several meetings with Russell Johnson a Lead Associate that handles Special Education Services through the State as well a Legal counsel from Stoneman, Chandler & Miller. Ms. Buchanan states that her team has started to reach out to parents and starting Monday April 6th Special Education Services will begin. She is still waiting for guidance in regard to what should be covered in time for minutes for the Service Delivery Grid. She reached out to staff and has a meeting set up for next week with SEPAC. Ms. Buchanan states that Special Education will be an area that is impacted greatly by the school closures because the students that are serviced are most vulnerable and are subject to the most serious regression educationally. It is an area of great concern for Cohasset as well as all students in Massachusetts and across the country. Mrs. Madden asked if the Commissioner has given any guidance on how services such as Occupational Therapy can be done virtually. Ms. Buchanan stated that the department of Education as well as legal counsel provided guidance on how Occupational Therapy can be provided virtually through Teleservices without additional guidance. Speech and Language services require a 10-hour course in order to provide



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virtual services. The school Adjustment Counselors have been instructed by the State that they will not be providing teleservices but will be providing social emotional support. The school physical therapists have been working on different services that they can provide through teleservices. A lot of this has been based on the confidential nature of special education and if specific services are being offered, they should be able to be provided remotely. Mr. MacLellan asked what has been done to date for services that have/will be provided? Ms. Buchanan stated that the district has not been required to provide remote/virtual services until the remote learning goes into effect which will happen next week. She also mentioned that remote learning and virtual services will never be the same as the one on one direct learning experiences that the students receive from special educators. Chairman Maher stated that this might be an opportunity for the schools to look at the budget and how we can better accommodate special education students in a remote learning environment.

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Update- Assistant Superintendent Scollins updated the committee that a remote learning plan which will foster deeper learning opportunities is being worked on and will be rolled out next week. Each building will have their own remote learning plan that makes sense for their teachers, principals and most of all the students. The enthusiasm and creativity from the principals and teachers has been amazing. The plans will offer more structure and organized asynchronous opportunities where the students can do the work when they can. Dr. Scollins stated that none of this could ever replace a real classroom experience for the students but it will help provide a deeper learning opportunity during this time. Mrs. Madden asked if there will be follow up if students don't participate? Does attendance count? What if there are families or students that are sick? Dr. Scollins stated that there has been a discussion regarding communication and how to account for all students. She mentioned that teachers have been reaching out, sending emails and making phone calls but there will be students that teachers cannot get ahold of. If/when this happens, the Building Principals and Guidance Counselors will then step in and attempt to contact those families to make sure that they are okay and to see if they need any assistance. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated that they are not expecting the parents to be their child's teacher and that the remote work that will be given will be at the child's independent learning level. Dr. Scollins stated that the remote learning plan will be a workshop type model where there is a short mini lesson that is robust and that teachers can explain and engage the students in what the outcome will be and then have time to practice the skill and share and reflect by writing something, doing a flip grid or a blog to show what they learning product. It will be more of a project-based learning structure. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan says that the work will be given a credit or no credit assessment for assignments with feedback on skills. Dr. Scollins mentions that there will not be a hard deadline date for assignments. When assignments are completed and submitted the student will receive the credit. Mr. Kearney asked what the staff is doing on the education and communication of the virus to the students? Dr. Scollins stated that the Nurses have been creating resources for staff and students. She also met with Department Heads about utilizing this as a prompt and making it a real-world experience that is project based for the students. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated that this type of learning will foster critical thinking for students.

Approval of Warrant- Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve Warrant 20-18S, seconded by Mrs. Colleary. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Chairman Maher stated that the Town has accelerated their submission of the Warrant by a day and it is now processed on Wednesday's during the day, which puts the School Warrant and payment of invoices one week in arrears.



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Motion by Mr. MacLellan to appoint the Chairman of the School Committee as the Committee's Designee to sign the Warrant on their behalf, seconded by Mrs. Madden Craig. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary- Aye, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Gift- Mr. MacMillan stated that the schools have received two gifts; one from the Cohasset Education Foundation for \$26,250 to fund six different projects. Chairman Maher stated that one of the projects was the presentation on Cultural Competency that was given earlier in the meeting. **Motion by Mr. MacLellan to accept the donation from the Cohasset Education Foundation for \$26,250, seconded by Mrs. Madden. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.** The second gift is two hardcopies of the book *India Unveiled* written by Author Robert Arnett and donated by Mr. and Mrs. Ram and Mithlesh Gupta of Carlisle, MA. **Motion by Mr. Kearney to accept the donation of two hardcopies of the book *India Unveiled* by Robert Arnett, seconded by Mr. MacLellan. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.**

Monthly Update- Mr. MacMillan reported the expenditures are at 56.97% in the budget so far. Everything is on track for the year. He expects to be behind in the next couple of months compared to last year's budget April because we are saving due to the school closures. Chairman Maher states that the FY21 budget is still intact. The Board of Selectman approved Town Meeting to be moved to June 22, 2020. Mr. MacMillan stated that all the revolving funds are looking healthy.

Bus Maintenance- Mr. MacMillan reports that there hasn't been much of a change in the expenditures. The Department focused on sanitizing the vehicles and buying hand sanitizer and other cleaners. Mrs. Madden asked if there will be a general fund for cleaning supplies? Mr. MacMillan says that because of the situation, the schools may get reimbursed from the state for the money used for cleaning supplies.

School Committee Comments and Communications-Graduation and of Program Studies

Adjustment- Motion by Mr. MacLellan to authorize Principle Scott to amend the program of studies and Graduation requirements to accommodate current learning due to the Coronavirus pandemic, seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.

Reports from Sub-Committee and Liaisons- Chairman Maher stated that there have been no Sub-Committee meetings since the start of the Coronavirus but in order to have a remote meeting using the Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime platforms, the meeting has to be posted using the same language on the top of the Agenda. Mr. Kearney inquired as to the status of the RFP for legal counsel and Chairman Maher stated it is still on the to do list.

Approval of minutes-Motion by Mrs. Madden to approve the minutes of 1/8/20, seconded by Mr. MacLellan. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary-Aye, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.

Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing on 3/4/20, Seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary- Abstained, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.



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Motion by Mr. Kearney to approve the minutes of 3/4/20, Seconded by Mr. MacLellan. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Ashley Colleary- Abstained, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.

Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the minutes of 3/13/20, seconded by Mrs. Madden. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney- Aye, Ashley Colleary- Aye, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.

Follow-up and Updates-Topics not reasonably anticipated – Superintendent Sullivan mentioned that there is a local decision that needs to be made regarding April Vacation and whether or not the students will work thru April break. This decision will have to be impact bargained. The committee had a brief discussion. **Motion by Mr. MacLellan to have remote learning occur during the four days of 4/21/20, 4/22/20,4/23/20, 4/24/20 pending successful negotiations with the CTA, seconded, by Mrs. Madden. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney- Aye, Ashley Colleary- Aye, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.**

Chairman Maher asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:54 pm for Exemption #3-To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining-CTA. Motion moved by Mr. Kearney and seconded by Mr. MacLellan. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney- Aye, Ashley Colleary- Aye, Ellen Maher- Aye, Jennifer Madden- Aye, Craig MacLellan- Aye.

The Committee exited Executive Session at 10:22 pm. Motion to adjourn Open Session at 10:23 pm by Mr. MacLellan, 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

Educator Spotlight	B-1
Gift	D-1
Monthly Update	D-2
Bus Maintenance	D-3