

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

April 26, 2021

The warrants for bills payable were reviewed and signed by the School Committee.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chris Oliver at 5:30 p.m. and was held remotely via Zoom Technology. The Chair stated the meeting is streaming live on the DHS Media YouTube channel and noted the meeting was being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV. The Chair advised viewers that comments can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org to be read during Public Comment.

On a roll call the following members were present: Chris Oliver, Shannon Jenkins, Kathleen Amaral, Mary Waite and John Nunes.

Also present: Dr. Gifford, Mr. Kiely and Mrs. Genthner.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Oliver stated public comments can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org.

No public comments were received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the Regular Session Minutes of April 5, 2021. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student Representative Morgan Melo provided an update of recent activities and events happening at the high school.

Miss Melo noted the following activities taking place at Dartmouth High Schools:

- 130 sophomore students took PSATs earlier this month.
- DHS student artists have work displayed at the New Bedford Art Museum: Gaby Arruda, Mia Carter, Julia Gilchrist.
- Daily Senior *Shout Outs* are ongoing on the DHS Instagram and Twitter accounts.
- Spring Sports have begun.
- MCAS sessions and AP testing will begin in the next few weeks.

ORGANIZATION OF COMMITTEE

Appointment of Chair:

Dr. Gifford, serving in her capacity as School Committee Secretary, sought nominations for the position of School Committee Chair.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite, to nominate Dr. Shannon Jenkins to serve as School Committee Chair. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Dr. Jenkins accepted the nomination of Chair of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Dr. Gifford declared that Dr. Jenkins is now the Chair of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Appointment of Vice Chair:

Dr. Jenkins sought nominations for the position of School Committee Vice-Chair.

Mrs. Amaral moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver, to nominate Mary Waite to the position of School Committee Vice-Chair. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Mrs. Waite accepted the nomination of Vice-Chair of the Dartmouth School Committee.

Appointment of Secretary:

Dr. Jenkins sought nominations for the position of Secretary to the School Committee.

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to appoint Dr. Bonny L. Gifford to the position of Secretary to the School Committee. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Dr. Gifford accepted the nomination of Secretary to the School Committee.

Chairperson Comments:

Dr. Jenkins thanked the Committee for supporting and commented she is looking forward to working with everyone this year.

School Committee Assignments:

Dartmouth Education Foundation	Mrs. Waite
Southern MA Educational Collaborative	Mr. Oliver
MA Association of School Committees	Mr. Nunes
Negotiations Representative	Mr. Nunes & Mrs. Amaral (back-up)
Policy Sub-Committee	Mrs. Amaral & Mary Waite
Technology Committee	Mr. Oliver
Fields & Facilities Committee	Mr. Nunes & Mrs. Amaral
Budget Committee	Mrs. Amaral & Dr. Jenkins

Equality and Diversity Committee
Town Charter Committee

(Mr. Nunes back-up)
Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Amaral
Mrs. Waite and Heidi Brooks

School Assignments:

The Committee agreed to continue its current practice not to assign individual members a school and that members will actively engage with and be informed about all schools.

NEW BUSINESS

2021 Sports Camp: Mr. Kiely sought the Committee's approval to run the 2021 summer sports camp referring to information provided to the Committee explaining what is being proposed noting dates have not been finalized.

Mrs. Amaral asked that students participating in the extended school year program have an opportunity to sign up for summer sports camp

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to approve the 2021 Summer Sports Camp. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Revisions to the Handbook: Dr. Gifford sought the Committee's approval for revisions to the student handbook.

Dr. Gifford referred to information provided to the Committee in their meeting packet regarding the matter and explained the proposed three changes.

Dr. Jenkins asked for clarification that these are changes to the common student handbook and that the high school has its own supplement.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve revisions to the student handbook. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford invited Ross Thibault, DHS Principal, to provide an update on the high school's return to full in-person learning.

Mr. Thibault provided a PowerPoint presentation explaining the work being done to prepare faculty, students and the high school facility to transition to full in-person learning.

Mr. Thibault focused on learning models (full in-person or fully remote - Edgenuity) and health and safety protocols to accommodate 3 feet of physical distancing noting physical distancing will remain at 6 feet during lunch periods.

Mr. Thibault reported that the high school has reached out to the families of the 164 students who are learning through Edgenuity to find out how many would choose to return to full in-person learning; approximately 10-12 families have indicated they would return to full in-person learning.

Mr. Thibault added that students in Edgenuity who return to the high school under full in-person learning will remain in Edgenuity courses and not be placed in DHS courses.

Mr. Thibault explained that students who are uncomfortable returning to full in-person learning will be able to enroll in Edgenuity and “will have their courses customized to be appropriate for the time remaining in the school year.”

Mr. Thibault reviewed various classroom scenarios to accommodate more students and reduced spacing.

Mr. Thibault reviewed logistics regarding morning arrivals, afternoon dismissals, lunch schedules and passing time.

Mr. Nunes asked how physical education classes will be run and will locker rooms be utilized.

Mr. Thibault responded he would get back to Mr. Nunes.

Mrs. Waite asked what the procedure will be to confirm student absences due to illness.

Mr. Thibault responded the nurse’s office will follow up with students who are absent.

Mrs. Waite asked how lunch areas will be used.

Mr. Thibault explained how the dining areas will be used.

Dr. Jenkins asked Mr. Thibault if he would be available to return at 7:30 p.m. when the Committee hopes to reconvene into open session.

Mr. Thibault stated he would be available.

At 6:23 p.m., Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to adjourn from open session for the purpose of convening into an open joint session with the Select Board and Finance Committee to reconvene into open session. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mrs. Waite – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Minutes of the Joint Session April 26, 2021

At 6:30 p.m. the Joint Session of the Select Board and Finance and School Committees was opened by Frank Gracie, Chair of the Select Board, who took a roll call of Select Board members in attendance: Stanley Mickelson, John Haran, Shawn McDonald, and David Tatelbaum.

The Select Board reorganized its Committee.

Shawn McDonald, newly elected Chair of the Select Board, asked the Chair of the Finance and School Committees to introduce respective members in attendance.

Shannon Jenkins, Chair of the School Committee, called the School Committee meeting to order with a roll call: Mrs. Amaral, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Nunes and Vice Chair Mrs. Waite.

Dr. Jenkins noted that Superintendent Dr. Bonny Gifford and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Mr. James Kiely and recording secretary Mrs. Genthner were in attendance.

Teresa Hamm, Chair of the Finance Committee, called the Finance Committee Meeting to order with a roll call: Vice Chair Gloria Bancroft, Brian O'Hare, Jeffrey Raymon, Adam Silva, William Bowles, Robert Gauvin, Beppie Huidekoper and Janine Simmons.

Also in attendance were Shawn MacInnes, Town Administrator, and Greg Barnes, Town Treasurer.

Mr. McDonald explained the meeting agenda starting with the annual Town Warrant review followed by the budget and the capital budget.

Ms. Hamm read from prepared notes and indicated that the Finance Committee's final review process will not be finished until May 6th.

Ms. Hamm stated that the Finance Committee is wary of making recommendations for short term spending on the Town warrant when we are not aware of long term plans that the Town will be facing.

Ms. Hamm stated the Finance Committee recommends the Select Board consider a long term planning process that would mitigate the effect on the Town's tax levy and services.

Dr. Gifford stated during its budget planning season the School Department was very aware of the potential in funding reduction and planned accordingly.

Dr. Gifford added that the School District's greatest concern at this time is the social emotional issues of students and staff.

Dr. Gifford thanked the Town for its continued support.

Town Administrator Shawn MacInnes offered comments on what department heads were able to accomplish during the past year that enabled the Town to prepare a balanced budget for FY22.

Mr. MacInnes noted that the budget includes 3 new positions requested by the School Department.

Town Treasurer Greg Barnes confirmed the Town has a balanced budget.

Mr. Barnes focused his comments on the capital plan in the amount of \$8,583,362.

Mr. Barnes commented that the Town funded the schools for the following items: technology, HVAC upgrades, flooring replacements, grease trap replacements, parking lot repaving, DHS auditorium AV lighting; interior and exterior painting.

Mr. Barnes stated there is a plan, not included on the capital plan, to install digital controls for school HVAC systems which will use COVID funds received in April 2020 since those funds can be used for HVAC related to COVID.

Mr. Barnes added FY22 will be the last year of debt service on Dartmouth high school noting the Town will receive SBA reimbursement through 2023; the Town received a ruling from the State in the amount of \$1.7 million which would go to reduce what had to be debt excluded but as of 2023 "it" goes in as general revenue.

Mr. Barnes commented on the American Recovery monies the Town may receive at a minimum of \$3.3 million up to \$10 million; these funds must be used by 2024 adding guidelines are not known at this time.

Mr. McDonald asked Ms. Hamm to send a copy of her letter read at this evening's meeting to Mr. MacInnes, Town Administrator, for further consideration.

Mr. McDonald directed the meeting to budget matters relative to the Finance and School Committees.

Mr. McDonald asked about school transportation.

Dr. Jenkins asked that the joint session be directed to the school department budget so that that Committee could return to its Open Session.

Mr. McDonald asked for information regarding the school's budget development.

Dr. Jenkins stated the school committee had its hearing and voted on the FY22 budget.

Mr. Kiely responded that Federal funding and grants have allowed the school district to do as well as it has during the pandemic reporting approximately \$2 million dollars has been spent on pandemic related expenses.

Mr. Kiely stressed the need to address learning loss over the past year as well as social emotional needs which will take an additional amount of resources above what the school budget proposes; we hope to address these important additional needs through grant funding.

Mr. Kiely addressed the question of transportation noting that as the schools return to full in person learning noting that more students are taking school transportation and hopes the trend continues.

Dr. Jenkins reminded the Board of the school district's building needs referring to the Facilities Master Plan and to get information about this need out to the community for support.

Mr. McDonald acknowledged the school district's building needs.

Mr. Tatelbaum commented that the Board needs to collaborate with the Finance Committee on a regular basis throughout the year in order to benefit from their advisory role and to make better decisions as well as with the school department's participation.

Mr. McDonald asked the Finance Committee for a synopsis as to what it has been "looking at" and its goals for the town.

Ms. Hamm responded that the Finance Committee has not completed its budget process; Ms. Hamm would like to hear other people's thoughts about meeting more often as well as reiterating

her concern about a lack of planning and the Committee's request for more information about short and long term goals.

Mr. McDonald responded indicating changes in town processes.

Dr. Jenkins responded to the request for additional joint meetings noting she would not be inclined to agree that the school committee should not be involved in more joint meetings as most topics of discussion are not under its purview.

Mr. MacInnes commented that working collaboratively by using services interdepartmentally would be fiscally beneficial to the Town.

John Nunes, School Committee member, provided comments referring to the School Department's Facilities Master Plan.

Mr. McDonald ended the joint meeting at 7:35 p.m. and asked to meet with the School Committee in six months.

End of Joint Session Minutes for April 26 2021

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to reconvene into open session. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Mr. Oliver – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, and Mr. Nunes – Yes. Mrs. Waite rejoined the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Continuation of Superintendent's Update: Mr. Thibault continued the high school's plans for returning to full in-person learning.

Mr. Thibault addressed Mr. Nunes question posed earlier regarding the use of locker rooms at the high school.

Mr. Oliver asked if DESE has changed the requirements for close contact reporting in the schools and has the district had any positive cases since returning from April vacation.

Dr. Gifford stated there was one reported from an elementary school.

Dr. Jenkins asked how the school will combat students/parents who falsely claim "quarantine" reasons in order to remain in the hybrid model.

Mr. Thibault responded the high school nurse's office has been working diligently with the Town's Board of Health however close contact tracing does rely on the honor system and it is expected and hoped that people will do the right thing.

Mr. Oliver asked about the logistics as it concerns passing time in the hallways; will more staff be monitoring during this time.

Mr. Thibault responded that the high school will remain vigilant as we have been during the year; there are security monitors in the halls and teachers are at their classroom doors but we do not want to put more people in the halls during passing time adding students have been very good following directions.

Mr. Oliver asked about mandated vaccinations for students.

Dr. Gifford stated she has not heard anything from the State about mandating vaccinations.

Dr. Jenkins commented on mental health statistics and her concern for what is or isn't being done for students related to the effects of the pandemic on students' mental health including holding students "harmless."

Mr. Thibault agreed with Dr. Jenkins comments about students' social and emotional health and assured the Committee that systems are in place for students and their parents who are not inclined or comfortable or knowing that they can approach the school for assistance.

Dr. Jenkins asked what is being done about grades for classes that students withdrew from.

Mr. Thibault stated that it depends on when the student withdrew per State requirements.

The Committee thanked Mr. Thibault for his presentation.

Report of the Chair: The Chair had nothing further to report.

Mr. Nunes asked if there are warrants to sign.

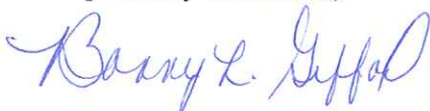
Mr. Kiely stated there is one ready and will be available at the School Administration Building.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Media Center on Monday, May 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.; the public will not be granted physical access to this meeting but will continue to have access to meetings via live stream at the DHS Media YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/dhstvmedia>.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:07 p.m. in order to provide an update with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel and non-union personnel and not to return in to Open Session. On a roll call vote the motion passed: 5-0. Dr. Jenkins – Yes; Dr. Jenkins – Yea, Mrs. Waite – Yes, Mrs. Amaral – Yes, Mr. Oliver - Yes and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent