

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

January 11, 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 6:30 p.m. and was held in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center; the public was not allowed to physically access the meeting. The Chair stated the meeting is streaming live on the DHS Media YouTube channel and noted the meeting is being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV. The Chair informed viewers that public comments can be emailed to the recording secretary at kathleengenthner@dartmouthschools.org to be read during Public Comment.

Present were the following members: Mr. Oliver, Dr. Jenkins, Mrs. Amaral, Mrs. Waite and Mr. 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. Waite to approve the Regular Session Minutes of December 21, 2020. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

FY22-FY26 Capital Improvement Plan (Draft): Mr. Kiely, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, referred the Committee to the draft FY22-FY26 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which was provided in their meeting packets.

Mr. Kiely provided a brief explanation of the process for the CIP which begins with the School Committee's approval.

Mr. Kiely briefly highlighted the priorities for year 1 of the CIP (FY22) as well as providing the reasoning behind his decisions.

Mr. Kiely thanked the Town for its financial assistance particularly during the pandemic and as it concerns HVAC systems.

Mr. Kiely explained that the “annual” technology hardware request does not come from “free cash” but from the operating budget; Mr. Kiely added that Mr. Barnes, Town Treasurer, has “built in” this item.

Mr. Kiely stated the furniture request granted last year but decided not to act on it due to the pandemic; furniture has been placed in storage containers and this article is to address any needs including cafeteria tables.

Mr. Kiely stated the high school auditorium AV and lighting systems were requested previously but not funded and it is a need that deserves to be addressed.

Mr. Kiely explained the vehicle replacement request; noting he will be looking at fuel efficient vehicles.

Dr. Jenkins asked about the unchanging technology replacement request.

Dr. Jenkins asked that alternative seating be integrated when replacing classroom furniture.

Mr. Kiely agreed \$200,000 may not be sufficient as technology becomes more widely utilized; Mr. Kiely added the Town was instrumental during the past year providing monies to the District from its C.A.R.E.S. act funding for technology purposes.

Dr. Jenkins asked if there are any grants for fuel efficient vehicles.

Mr. Kiely commented that the District has benefited from previous and current Town “green” grants.

Mr. Oliver asked what is in the operational budget for technology; is it less than what is proposed in the CIP.

Mr. Kiely stated that it is less than what is in the CIP.

Mr. Nunes stated he is in agreement with the requests as presented in the draft CIP.

Mr. Oliver asked about the stadium.

Mr. Kiely stated we are in a “hold” pattern; the stadium will not be worked on this summer.

Mr. Oliver asked if the funds approved by Town Meeting would be sufficient once the project resumes.

Mr. Kiely stated there is some risk however there is risk if we went out to bid now due to inflated building material costs and availability.

Mr. Oliver asked about the high school gym floor.

Mr. Kiely responded it is worn but is still in general good condition; it is not on the 5 year plan.

Dr. Jenkins asked about the high school tennis courts.

Mr. Kiely stated athletic facilities need to be addressed.

Dr. Jenkins brought up the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) and asked what our “plan” is for replacing schools.

Dr. Jenkins asked that once we get back to “normal” this matter needs to be brought back to the conversation particularly on the Town side; Dr. Jenkins recommended a “place holder” in our CIP.

Mr. Oliver agreed and may be in the fall or after COVID resume discussions on the matter.

Mr. Nunes asked for a “ball park” figure to replace one of our elementary schools.

Mr. Kiely stated an approximate figure would be around \$50 million however it would vary greatly on the project and location; Mr. Kiely noted the FMP included recommendations or options for major renovations and additions to existing buildings as well as constructing new facilities.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Capital Improvement Plan for FY22-26, as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Approval of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Plan: Dr. Gifford presented the District’s Student Opportunity Act (SOA) plan seeking the Committee’s approval.

Dr. Gifford stated the SOA plan is an effort in compliance with DESE; when the Act was passed the intent was to provide school districts with additional funding however, since COVID, this is unlikely.

Dr. Gifford mentioned the SOA focuses on the initiatives which continue to be implemented at the high school: project based/personalized learning and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum as well as professional development.

Mr. Oliver asked about MCAS mandates.

Dr. Gifford stated there has been no official word yet.

Mr. Oliver asked that MCAS be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Waite to approve the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Plan, as presented. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Proposed 2021-2022 School Year Calendar: Dr. Gifford presented the proposed 2021-2022 school calendar for the Committee’s approval.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to approve the Dartmouth Public Schools calendar for academic year 2021-2022. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) Extension: Mr. Oliver stated he spoke with Dr. Gifford and asked her to provide an update on FFCRA and the extension of benefits.

Dr. Gifford gave a brief synopsis of leave benefits provided under FFCRA which expired at the end of December 2020.

Dr. Gifford stated the Act was renewed, in part, by Congress giving discretion to public and private employers whether to continue offering leave benefits to employees.

Dr. Gifford explained her reasons for extending the leave to DPS employees through the end of January 2021 with a potential for continuing it even longer.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Gifford provided the following:

- Athletics are suspended for the week and will restart on January 19th.
- A teacher was hired to fill the vacancy in the PATHs program at the Quinn School; the new hire will start on January 25th.
- Thank you to Jeanne Sheridan for the continued success of the food service meal box program.
- The Town will begin implementing their vaccine clinics.
- Pool testing is not something the district is looking at after conversation on the topic with the Town's Board of Health Director.

Dr. Jenkins made comments about her concern for all students particularly at the high school level given the difficulties to maintain physical distance and recommended that the high school remain in the remote learning model adding that students with high needs and those of an age that cannot stay home alone and are able to be kept more physically distant at school be able to return to in person learning.

Dr. Gifford agreed.

Mr. Oliver commented that we need to look at how we "roll back" in to school.

Mr. Oliver mentioned a meeting with the Chris Michaud, the Town's Board of Health Director, for Wednesday.

Dr. Gifford stated the meeting has not been scheduled yet adding Mr. Michaud and his staff are busy coordinating the vaccine clinics.

Mr. Oliver asked Dr. Gifford to comment on the decision to have high needs students as well as role model students return to in person learning.

Dr. Gifford explained the reasoning behind having those students return to in person learning.

Mrs. Amaral asked that other students with learning needs be included in the in person learning group.

Dr. Gifford stated conversations are taking place with the Pupil Support Services Administrator, Principals and Special Education lead teachers about students who may need additional support and what to do to meet those needs.

Dr. Gifford added that the middle school offers tutoring to students who are enrolled in TECCA.

Mrs. Waite asked if we can give students the option to remain in remote model if they do not feel safe when the District returns to the hybrid model.

Dr. Gifford stated we are trying not to allow this as it creates another learning model which adds to an already complicated teaching environment.

Dr. Jenkins suggested a communication go out to parents providing the option if you are no longer comfortable in hybrid to go to the virtual model providing a deadline in which to make the decision.

Dr. Gifford stated January 25th is the end of the semester.

Report of the Chair: The Chair read a prepared statement concerning a discussion at the last School Committee meeting around the community member appointment to the Equality and Diversity Committee as it pertained to comments made by Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Waite about Christopher Pereira who submitted a letter of interest to be appointed to that committee.

Mr. Oliver stated Mr. Pereira did contact him and that Mr. Pereira sent a letter to the entire School Committee demanding an apology.

Mr. Oliver went on record making the public aware that Mr. Pereira and he had a telephone conversation wherein Mr. Pereira denied the statements made by Dr. Jenkins and Mrs. Waite and found them to be offensive.

Dr. Jenkins responded to Mr. Oliver's statement.

Mrs. Waite responded to Mr. Oliver's statement.

Mr. Nunes wished Dartmouth high school students good luck at this week's DECA competition.

Mr. Nunes asked for minutes from the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee.

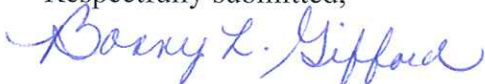
Mr. Oliver stated he would email Dr. Marland and Mike Shea; Dartmouth Committee members.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place at the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center on Monday, January 25, 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. Amaral to adjourn from Open Session at 8:10 p.m. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonny L. Gifford, Ed. D.
Superintendent