

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

April 24, 2023

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson John Nunes at 5:30 p.m. in the Planning Board Meeting Room (Room 315) at the Dartmouth Town Hall. The Chair stated the meeting is streaming live on the Dartmouth Community Media YouTube channel and noted the meeting is being videotaped for future broadcast over DCTV Channels 9 and 18.

On a roll call the following members were present: Mrs. Amaral, Mr. Oliver, Ms. Coughlin, Dr. Jenkins and Mr. Nunes.

Also present: Mr. Kiely and Mrs. Genthner.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lauren Enoksen, Dartmouth resident, parent of Dartmouth School students, Social Studies Teacher and co-advisor of the National Honor Society at Dartmouth High School, made comments pertaining to collective bargaining.

Renee Vieira, Co-Presidents of the DEA, congratulated and welcomed the newly appointed Superintendent of Schools, Dr. June Saba-Maguire.

Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

Mr. Oliver announced that the newly appointed Superintendent, June Saba-Maguire, has officially signed with the District and is in attendance this evening.

Dr. Saba-Maguire spoke briefly thanking all parties who participated in the screening process and the site visit and concluded by expressing her appreciation to the School Committee and stated her commitment to Dartmouth.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to approve the Regular Session Minutes of April 10, 2023 as written. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the Executive Session Minutes of April 10, 2023 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until the matter for which they were intended is complete. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

FY24 Budget: Mrs. Amaral opened discussion and invited Mr. Kiely to speak on the FY24 Budget.

Mr. Kiely referred to information provided by the Town in preparation for tonight's joint session with the Select Board and Finance Committee and confirmed the Town's current proposal is to fund "us" at a 3.1% increase adding "we" remain at the \$588,000 deficit which we talked about previously.

Mr. Kiely offered ways to approach the deficit: collaborate with the Town to narrow the gap; go to Town Meeting to fight for it; cut the budget; utilize one-time sources of funding "to stem the gap."

Mr. Kiely stated if the boards express some interest at tonight's meeting to work on "this" I am and have been willing to do so and hope that this is the preferred option for the group; however, if it is not, we have some hard decisions to make moving forward some prior to our next meeting on May 15th including a reduction in staff should it be necessary.

Dr. Jenkins expressed her concerns about the option to use one-time sources of funding but would be open to discussing it if a plan was put in place such as an override adding we have to come to a compromise or we have to reduce.

Mr. Oliver agreed with Dr. Jenkins and commented that Mr. Kiely has done a great job managing our one-time revenue source of school choice but if we were to use one-time revenue source funding to fix this problem it will only grow exponentially next year; we need to make sure the Select Board and Finance Committee know where we are at and to make it clear that if we don't see movement this evening we will have no choice but to reduce.

Mr. Oliver asked Mr. Kiely what the Town's "certified free cash" is this past year.

Mr. Kiely responded over \$5 million.

Mr. Nunes agreed with Dr. Jenkins and Mr. Oliver and repeated his statement made at a previous meeting that he would provide the Town moderator with a motion to be made at Town Meeting to adjust our budget for approximately \$1 million if we do not get the budget that we need.

Mrs. Amaral agreed with her Committee members.

Mr. Kiely stated his concerns using one-time funds adding the only way he would be comfortable recommending this option would be if there was a long-term plan in place to address this issue more permanently.

Mr. Kiely provided figures for the past several years regarding the Town's free cash and local receipts and explained what these funds are used for and hoped they can be part of the discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Last Day of School for 2022-2023: Mr. Kiely stated the last day of school for the 2022-2023 school year will be June 14, 2023 noting this date accounts for the one school cancellation.

Mrs. Amaral called for a motion to deem June 14, 2023 as the last day of school.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to make June 14, 2023 the last day of school for 2022-2023 subject to change if necessary. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

2023 Sports Camp: Mr. Kiely sought the Committee's approval to run the 2023 summer sports camp reiterating information provided to the Committee in their meeting packets explaining what is being proposed noting the camp will run from June 19th through July 21, 2023.

Dr. Jenkins asked a question regarding enrollment and coaching expense.

Mr. Kiely noted volunteers are utilized adding he can provide more information; Mr. Kiely informed the Committee that an increase in fees was considered but not instituted to encourage more student participation.

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

Mrs. Amaral called for a motion to move forward with the Summer Sports Camp for 2023.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Coughlin to move forward with the Summer Sports camp for 2023. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Superintendent's Update: Mr. Kiely provided information and updates of events and activities happening throughout the district.

- May 4th through May 6th *Mamma Mia* is being performed at DHS
- Springs Sports are well underway; student participation was very strong this year
- Unofficial results of the Tiered Focus Monitoring Audit indicates the District needs to provide more support to the ELL program; an ELL position that was built into the FY24 budget.

Report of the Chair: The Chair did not have anything further to report.

Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

- Music Update
- Junior National Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held on Wednesday at DMS
- SEPAAC Update: Craft Fair Sunday, May 7th at DHS

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to adjourn at 6:13 p.m. to attend a Joint Session with the Select Board and Finance Committee and to return into Executive Session for an update on negotiations with union and non-union personnel. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

CALL TO ORDER of JOINT SESSION

The meeting was called to order by Select Board Chairperson David Tatelbaum at 6:30 p.m. in the Select Board Meeting Room (Room 304) at Dartmouth Town Hall with Select Board members as well as members of the Finance Committee and School Committee: all members of the School Committee were in attendance. Also present were James Kiely, Interim Superintendent of Schools and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Town Administrator Shawn MacInnes and Town Director of Budget & Finance/Treasurer Gary Carreiro.

Mr. MacInnes gave a presentation on the Town budget which included an overview of the Town's financial policies: a PowerPoint Presentation was provided.

Mr. MacInnes stated the Town is trying to incorporate a 3.1% increase for the Dartmouth Public Schools while noting the School Department is proposing a 4.4% budget increase.

Mr. MacInnes provided information charting the school department's budget requests since 2019 noting an annual average increase of 3.3% while the Town is trying to stay at 2.5%.

Mr. MacInnes referenced a presentation provided recently by Mr. Kiely regarding Dartmouth Public Schools per pupil spending which is below the State average (including teachers, insurance & benefits, administration, etcetera.)

Mr. MacInnes identified challenges for the school department budget beyond FY24 that need to be addressed: trend of annual budget increases; deficiency in net school spending, deficiency in per pupil spending, FY24 shortfall of \$588,508, structural deficit related to salary funding (ESSER funding ending FY25), incorporate funding for new FTEs.

Mr. MacInnes stated potential FY24 reductions from the Town budget including \$200,000 to the school Technology Annual Capital Allocation and proposed to place the \$200,000 into the operating budget to help sustain the school department's budget and staffing needs adding the Town can "realistically" commit approximately \$266,000 towards the school's budget "gap."

Mr. MacInnes stated budget reductions do not address the school's budget increase trends or the ESSER funding expiration; "we" have to have a realistic talk about an override.

Mr. MacInnes listed future challenges beyond the budget: capital expenditures including school replacements.

Mr. MacInnes concluded stating what needs to be addressed now is where "we" are at with the school's proposed budget versus the Town's proposed budget; where is the funding going to come from to provide "that" support and what are we going to do moving forward in FY25.

Dr. Jenkins, to provide context to the information provided in Mr. MacInnes' presentation as it pertained to the school department budget, commented on the post COVID environment in the schools and the greater needs of students and noted that the school department is legally mandated by the State to provide services that required new positions be added.

Select Board Member Shawn McDonald commented the State does not fund mandates adding the State needs to restructure its allocations particularly in light of mandates.

Finance Committee Chair Robert Gauvin made comments regarding the proposed FY24 school budget noting the increase in transportation.

Mr. Kiely responded to Mr. Gauvin's comment about the increase in transportation costs.

Mr. Tatelbaum acknowledged the explanation of why the school department's transportation budget has increased and commented that the Town needs to "accept the fact" of this increase.

Finance Committee member William Boles commented "you" are never going to solve this internally "we" have to do this at the State level and the State needs to address the formulas.

Mr. Kiely responded the State is well aware of the issue of school funding and enacted the largest increase in school funding in history a few years ago with the advent of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) and changed the formula in specific areas principally in Special Education adding the issue is, in the new formula, "we" are still not the ones getting the money.

Mr. Oliver stated we can all agree something needs to be done and explained why the school department's budget is, and should be, the largest Town department budget adding there are things that can be done to bring the School Department's proposed budget and the Town's proposed funding together; the question is what do we want to do as a Town.

Select Board Member Stanley Mickelson asked that a letter be sent to local state legislators inviting them to a future Select Board meeting to go over these concerns so they “can go back” and find out why “we” are not getting the money we need.

Finance Committee member Terri Hamm stated there are two liaisons from the Finance Committee to the School Department and since the beginning of the year we have attended budget planning meetings and whenever we have asked for information it has been provided in addition to the annual presentation that is given by the School Department adding the laws are not all State some are Federal and that change is a long term process and will not solve today’s problems adding “we” need more money and not just for the schools.

Mr. McDonald stated the \$266,000 Mr. MacInnes proposed “is a start” and provided comments regarding an override.

Dr. Jenkins responded getting the State “in here” or an override is not going to fix the problems we face in the “here and now” those are longer term solutions adding the effort to “move us forward” with the \$200,000 added to the operating budget is appreciated but then how do we fund technology.

Dr. Jenkins agreed “we” are all in this together but we have to be willing to pay for the services that we as a community enjoy.

Mr. Tatelbaum recognized the severe issues the Town faces and what the Town is willing to pay for in the short and long term and we have to put these issues “in place.”

Select Board member Heidi Silva-Brooks commented on the high cost of health insurance and other Town infrastructure issues.

Mr. Gauvin stated the Finance Committee concerns.

Mr. Oliver responded to comments made about matters that are the responsibility of the school committee adding if we cannot come to a decision soon the school department will be left no choice but to send out reduction in staff notices.

Mr. Nunes asked Mr. MacInnes if the numbers he used included the House Ways and Means numbers.

Mr. Carreiro explained the Governor’s budget was used.

Mr. Nunes asked about local receipts YTD versus what was budgeted.

Mr. Carreiro and Mr. MacInnes responded.

Finance Committee member Elizabeth Huidekoper made comments regarding the Town underfunding itself.

Mr. Tatelbaum in order to focus on the short-term issues proposed a meeting of between Mr. MacInnes and Mr. Kiely.

Mr. MacInnes suggested that he and Mr. Carreiro meet with Mr. Kiely again before the May 8th which is the date the Select Board has to vote on the warrant.

Mr. Tatelbaum asked the committees what “we” can do at Town meeting about long term solutions and that we walk out of this room with a commitment; the short term is up to Mr. MacInnes, Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Kiely.

Dr. Jenkins mentioned the budget review task force that was implemented in 2006.

Mr. MacInnes responded that Dr. Jenkins brings up a good point about non-traditional ways to collaborate.

Mr. Carreiro stated he feels he, Mr. MacInnes and Mr. Kiely can “get it” resolved” but suggested a commitment from the committees to form a committee to address what is going to happen in FY25 and beyond.

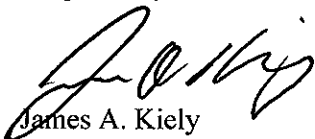
Mr. Tatelbaum stated members of the committees should forward specific ideas to solve the present issue to Mr. Carreiro and Mr. MacInnes within the next day or two.

Finance member John Sousa commended the decorum of the “silent protesters.”

Mr. Tatelbaum stated “we” have a commitment on the short term; the 3 committees will meet separately to come up with a specific plan(s), idea(s) or committee structure(s) to be ready once we “clear” Town meeting.

Mr. Oliver moved on behalf of the School Committee, Ms. Coughlin seconded, that we adjourn at 7:54 p.m. into Executive Session for an update on Union and Non-Union negotiations and not to reconvene. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously; 5-0: Mr. Nunes – Yes; Mrs. Amaral – Yes; Ms. Coughlin – Yes; Dr. Jenkins - Yes and Mr. Oliver – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Kiely
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

Agenda

Brief

Regular Session Minutes for April 10, 2023

Executive Session Minutes for April 10, 2023

Summer (2023) Sports Camp Proposal/Information

Joint Session – Documents

FY24 Operating Budget Documents