

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

November 6, 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 Kathleen Amaral at 6:00 p.m. in the Dartmouth High School Library Media Center.

On a roll call the following members were present: Kathleen Amaral, Mr. Oliver, Elizabeth Coughlin, John Nunes and Shannon Jenkins.

Also present: Dr. Saba-Maguire, Mr. Kiely and Ms. Genthner.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Megan Pogash, Dartmouth resident and parent of Dartmouth students, and Juniper Pogash, a fifth-grade student at the DeMello School, provided comments about the District's use of single-use products and sustainability.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to approve the Regular Session Minutes of October 16, 2023 as written. The motion passed: 4-0. Mr. Oliver abstained.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to approve the Executive Session Minutes of October 16, 2023 as written with the stipulation that the minutes be held until such time the matters for which the meeting was held are complete. The motion passed: 4-0. Mr. Oliver abstained.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

A Student Representative report was not provided.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Amaral proposed addressing the following **New Business** item at this time.

Dartmouth Members of the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High (GNBRVTHS) School Committee and the Superintendent of GNBRVTHS: Dr. Saba-Maguire welcomed Cynthia Marland and Michael Shea, Dartmouth members of the GNBRVTHS School Committee, and Michael Watson, Superintendent of GNBRVTHS.

Mr. Watson referenced matters addressed in an information packet provided to the Superintendent's office by Mr. Shea which was included in tonight's meeting packet; said information included GNBRVTHS School Committee minutes and capital infrastructure information per the Dartmouth School Committee's request as well as admissions data.

Mr. Watson highlighted recent improvements made to the vocational school as well as student community projects.

Mr. Shea spoke about the importance of maintaining a working relationship and continue open communication between the Dartmouth and GNBRVTHS School Committees; Mr. Shea provided information how ESSER funds were expended at GNBRVTHS.

Dr. Marland highlighted Dartmouth community projects GNBRVTHS students were or are involved in including the following; District 3 building on Hixbridge Road, the Lloyd Center and the Maria Connor Center for Active Living (fka the Dartmouth Council on Aging.)

The Committee thanked Dr. Marland, Mr. Watson and Mr. Shea for their attendance and for their responsiveness.

Mr. Watson noted tours of the vocational schools could be scheduled for interested Dartmouth School Committee members.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Saba-Maguire recommended the following requests to the Committee for its consideration.

- **DMS Unified Sports Fundraising Request**

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the DMS Unified Sports Fundraising requests, as submitted. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Dr. Jenkins reiterated her request for an accounting of funds raised and expended.

OLD BUSINESS

Long-Term Capital Improvement Planning – Further Discussion: Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Mr. Kiely to address the matter.

Mr. Kiely reviewed information provided at a recent school committee meeting highlighting the District's needs concerning its aging school facilities including recommendations from the SMMA 2017 Facilities Master Plan.

Mr. Kiely reported two Fields and Facilities sub-committee meetings where recently held to discuss the likelihood of Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) funding a Dartmouth project, the Town's ability to "operate" in a long-term fashion and to consider some "possibilities."

Mr. Kiely commented that the Town's Long-Term Capital Planning group has been very encouraging noting he has been a part of three meetings stating the focus has been looking at the

Town's "capacity" to borrow and what it would mean to the Town to undertake a series of projects adding the Town has a great deal of "capacity" for borrowing.

Mr. Kiely commented he was encouraged by the MSBA's announcement that it was reopening its Accelerated Repair Program adding he will be attending an MSBA seminar on November 14th.

Mr. Kiely reviewed the District's long-term capital planning "Goals" moving forward.

Dr. Jenkins asked if the barrier to early childhood education is cost or space.

Dr. Saba-Maguire responded it is both and explained about creating partnerships with the District and community providers.

Mr. Kiely repeated the long-term capital improvement plan option provided at the aforementioned meeting as well as proposing additional options and provided benefits and drawbacks for the options.

Mr. Oliver asked about MSBA's control over projects.

Mr. Kiely commented about what he believes MSBA will and will not fund.

Ms. Coughlin asked what the cost difference would be to the tax payer per each option.

Dr. Jenkins stated Option B was her least favorite option and she could not support a plan that puts the middle school last adding she agrees with Ms. Coughlin that the Committee needs to know cost estimates in order to make decisions.

Mr. Oliver asked that a survey be sent to the community on the options and agreed that estimates are necessary and would like to see the "actuals" on the debt exclusion.

Mr. Kiely stated the Long-Term Capital Planning group is waiting for "us" to provide the scenarios "we" are considering so that they can see what the impact would look like on the average home value.

Dr. Jenkins suggested "we" rank the options in order to be prepared to be flexible.

Mr. Kiely stated he would be happy to have a member of this Committee attend the Long-Term Capital Planning group meetings with him adding the next meeting is November 15th.

Dr. Jenkins suggested a town survey to rank not only school department capital projects but other town needs.

Mr. Kiely stated he could bring that suggestion up at the next meeting of the "group."

Ms. Amaral about the difference in cost in building a new middle school versus a new high school.

Mr. Kiely responded some of the cost difference is based on the programming that is offered.

Ms. Amaral asked about the time line for a new building.

Mr. Kiely stated the best-case scenario would be 4 years before a building could be constructed.

Mr. Kiely reminded the Committee that the Memorial Stadium project has not been completed as well as other general building maintenance (HVAC, fire safety etc.)

Mr. Kiely indicated *Next Steps* and stated he would bring back what was discussed this evening particularly community awareness and involvement to the Long-Term Capital Planning group as well as to the Fields and Facilities Sub-committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Ross Thibault, Director of Teaching and Learning/Secondary Level, to present information about the District's recent MCAS results.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated "overall" we are pleased with MCAS scores as they move back in the direction of what can be called "pre-pandemic levels" noting there is still work to do adding MCAS is only one measure of student achievement albeit an important one.

Mr. Thibault referred to the PowerPoint presentation provided to Committee members' in the meeting packet.

Mr. Thibault provided a brief overview of what MCAS is, who takes MCAS and why it matters.

Mr. Thibault reviewed Dartmouth's MCAS results and stated the impact of the COVID pandemic on learning loss and advised that MCAS results need to be viewed in the context of that reality; for example, Mr. Thibault noted younger students just entering the testing "window" entered kindergarten during the "hybrid" year.

Mr. Thibault offered Dartmouth as well as statewide trends and provided information comparing Dartmouth results with its Department of Education DART (District Analysis and Review Tool) cohort as well as comparing Dartmouth's results with other Bristol County school districts.

Mr. Thibault explained what the District is doing to address learning loss and accelerate learning including the implementation of an updated District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) to ensure students receive necessary supports to access grade level material.

Ms. Coughlin asked what the hurdles might be for continuing with the additional learning opportunities; will our funding concerns keep our students from moving forward in the future.

Mr. Thibault responded that now is not the time to "turn away" from funding the school department budget.

Dr. Saba-Maguire commented that these are on-going conversations the District is having with the Town.

Dr. Jenkins expressed her concerns about science MCAS results.

Mr. Thibault responded.

Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Catherine Pavao, Director of Teaching & Learning/Elementary Level, to provide information in response to Dr. Jenkins' statements.

Ms. Pavao addressed elementary science curriculum and its relation to future MCAS success.

Ms. Amaral asked about data.

Mr. Thibault responded that the Department of Education has volumes of data that is published.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated the District is examining that data by sub-group.

Mr. Oliver asked if the District is internally benchmarking students in science.

Mr. Thibault stated we are benchmarking students at the high school level.

Dr. Saba-Maguire provided information and updates of events and activities happening throughout the district:

- Personnel Update
- Update on Building Relationships with the goal to create a Superintendent's "PAC"
- Newcomer Family Update: 26 students have joined the District
- Comments on Homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Law and the impact on the District; next meeting we plan to have a presentation on the McKinney-Vento Act
- Update on District student achievements

Report of the Chair:

- Update on SEPAC; next meeting is November 9th at Cushman at 6:30 p.m.
- Dr. Jenkins asked that the topic of sustainability be placed on a future meeting agenda
- Update on Music Events
- Update on Fall Sports

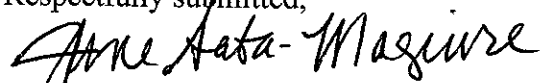
Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

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, November 20, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to adjourn at 8:27 p.m. into Executive Session for further discussion of non-instructional contracted services and not return to open session. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously; 5-0: Mrs. Amaral – Yes; Mr. Oliver – Yes; Ms. Coughlin – Yes; Mr. Nunes – Yes and Dr. Jenkins – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,



June Saba-Maguire, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

Agenda

Brief

Regular and Executive Session Minutes for September 16, 2023

GNBRVTHS School Committee – Capital Infrastructure and Executive Session Minutes

Consent Agenda – DMS Unified Arts 2023-2024 Fundraising Request

Long Term Capital Planning PPP

MCAS Results PPP