

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

February 12, 2024

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. The Chair announced the meeting is being recorded for future broadcast over DCTV.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment as offered.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

A student representative report was not provided.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the Regular Session Minutes of January 22, 2024 as written. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to approve the Executive Session Minutes of January 22, 2024 as written with the stipulation that the minutes be held until the matters under consideration are complete. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to approve the Regular Session Minutes of January 29, 2024 as written. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Saba-Maguire recommended the following requests to compete for the Committee's review and consent.

- DHS – WGI World Championships – DHS Indoor Percussion (April 2024)
- DHS – WGI World Championships – DHS Varsity Winter
- DHS – Student Council M.A.S.C. Annual Spring Conference (March 2024)

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to approve all three consent agenda items presented. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Mr. Oliver asked if this is the first time students will be participating in the M.A.S.C. event.

Ryan Shea, Dartmouth High School Principal, responded he believes this is the first time students will be participating.

OLD BUSINESS

FY25 Budget - Update: Mrs. Amaral invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to speak on the matter.

Dr. Saba-Maguire prefaced the update by commenting that although it is important to remain cautiously optimistic, it needs to be acknowledged that our budget will be impacted by the decrease in local aid then turned the update over to Mr. Kiely.

Mr. Kiely stated the district is working to identify areas to consider in order present a reduced budget from the original 6 percent to 3 percent at the March 11th school committee meeting.

Mr. Kiely stated we have to reduce the budget by \$1.5 million adding we know school choice funds will “play a role” in that reduction but we need to “pay attention” to a variety of factors in terms of bridging the gap.

Mr. Kiely noted proposed dates in the budget process: March 25th public hearing and April 8th the Committee’s vote on the budget.

Mr. Oliver asked if it is known the number of “FTEs” to be cut.

Mr. Kiely responded we will have a presentation at the next meeting with all the details noting it has been necessary to “change gears” during the budget process and we continue to work with the schools to identify areas.

Mr. Kiely added that school choice will be utilized to bridge the “gap” but it is not the only thing we are going to propose.

Mr. Nunes stated the \$1.5 million “gap” was voted to be funded by school choice; what has changed.

Mr. Kiely responded that is correct and explained why the district will be presenting a revised proposed FY25 Budget.

Mr. Oliver asked for a budget sub-committee meeting to be scheduled prior to the March 11th meeting.

Dr. Saba-Maguire and Mr. Kiely agreed.

Dr. Jenkins voiced her concerns about the implications of proposing a revised a budget in light of the original request.

Mr. Nunes asked about crossing guards at the middle school.

Dr. Saba-Maguire responded “we” met with the Police Chief who explained the police department is having difficulty filling traffic director positions; The District will lose the traffic director who works outside of the middle and Quinn schools because that person has found a new position.

Dr. Saba-Maguire added we are working with the middle and Quinn school administrative teams to make sure we have a plan in place to mitigate the loss of the traffic director.

Mr. Kiely stated the position is not a police officer but a traffic supervisor and noted the district had 4 at one time; the District’s last supervisor will be leaving at the end of the week.

Long Term Capital Planning – Further Discussion: Mrs. Amaral invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to speak on the matter.

Dr. Saba-Maguire provided comments before asking Mr. Kiely to further address the matter.

Mr. Kiely highlighted items in a PowerPoint presentation that was provided in the meeting packet.

Mr. Kiely indicated long term capital planning has been going on since 2016; the difference, at this time, is the Town is prepared to “publish” some sort of plan and “our” role is to provide them some guidance as to our priorities and projects that need to be on the Town’s “radar.”

Mr. Kiely stressed the need to be flexible when considering long term capital planning.

Mr. Kiely reiterated the district’s long-term capital “goals.”

Mr. Kiely briefly reviewed Options A, B and C which were initially proposed at a previous meeting as well as what the options mean when considering new information from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

Mr. Kiely reviewed “next steps” stating the thing we need to do is to figure out some priority in order to provide information and guidance to the long-term capital improvement planning committee.

Mr. Kiely stated his hope, this evening, is that the Committee would come to some consensus that he would be able to relay to the long-term capital planning committee which is trying to put a plan in place.

Mr. Oliver explained why he feels the middle school building should be the first priority.

Dr. Jenkins agreed and noted her concerns about what the Town priorities currently are.

Mr. Kiely noted that the Town water and sewerage projects are pressing projects but added he believes the committee recognizes the school department’s projects are pressing as well.

Mr. Kiely added the long term planning committee has begun the process of what taking on capital projects will mean to the taxpayer and stated he believes the Town has the ability to undertake multiple projects.

Dr. Jenkins relayed further concerns including the “politics” of it and the need to convince the voters of our priorities.

Mr. Kiely acknowledged the concerns and reiterated the need to remain flexible.

Mr. Nunes asked about timelines specifically about the high school roof.

Mr. Kiely stated we have to extend the life of the high school roof and reported that a survey was done recently and there are challenges to face and the roof will not likely be replaced for several years but a statement of interest will be submitted to the MSBA at the allowed time.

Mr. Nunes agreed with Mr. Oliver and Dr. Jenkins stating he “likes” Option A.

Ms. Coughlin agreed the middle school should be first noting the open space near the school would make it easier and asked if it is conceivable to construct two elementary schools at the same time.

Mr. Kiely responded noting the District owns land behind the DeMello and Potter schools adding a Dartmouth parent, Mr. Nathan Silva, who has a great deal of experience with school construction, reached out offering his assistance providing cost estimates based on our options including escalation costs over timelines which was thorough and very helpful when considering what these projects would mean to the tax payer.

Mr. Nunes asked if MSBA still has model school program.

Mr. Kiely stated they do and that MSBA is pushing energy efficient project noting “we” would be eligible for around 50% reimbursement from MSBA and, if a model school is built, you will receive additional reimbursement; Mr. Kiely stated a model school is a “canned” design which can be tweaked to meet a district’s needs.

Dr. Jenkins asked if anyone has thought about doing one capital override for capital improvements projects instead of having to go to the voters repeatedly.

Mr. Kiely stated he will share this with the “group” we are meeting tomorrow.

Mrs. Amaral agreed with her colleagues and asked if there is any opportunity to phase out the Cushman School.

Mr. Kiely explained some of the options illustrate closing the Cushman school.

Mrs. Amaral asked if an official vote is necessary or is our consensus is necessary.

Mr. Kiely stated, at this time, you would not be voting a specific project adding he believes he has enough information to go back to “them.”

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Saba-Maguire provided information and updates of events and activities happening throughout the District.

-School Cancellation for tomorrow

-Chronic absenteeism Update - the Board did not approve the Commissioner's recommendation; Meaning, absenteeism will not take on increased weight in our accountability standards moving forward; we are concerned about student absenteeism and are working to find out what is keeping students out of school and how to address the issues.

-Curriculum Resource Update: Dr. Saba-Maguire asked Catherine Pavao, Director of Teaching and Learning/Elementary Level to speak on the matter.

With slides provided to Committee members in the meeting packet, Ms. Pavao provided a brief overview of the District's curriculum cycle review including what it is as well as data about elementary level student performance in literacy.

Ms. Pavao spoke specifically about the work the district is doing in ELA including the way students are assessed.

Mrs. Amaral asked what the parent reaction has been to receiving notification that their child is not meeting the "level."

Mrs. Pavao responded explaining the new DESE 30-day notification requirement and how the district is implementing the same by including a plan to help address a student's specific needs.

-Entry Planning Update - District Strategic Planning: Dr. Saba-Maguire asked Ross Thibault, Director of Teaching/Secondary Level to speak on the matter.

Dr. Saba-Maguire reminded the Committee about the partnership with Teaching and Learning Alliance that will be facilitating "this" process inviting Committee members to be part of the process.

With slides provided to Committee members in the meeting packet, Mr. Thibault provided a brief overview of "next steps" regarding the District's strategic planning process entitled *Portrait of a Learner* noting it has been an inclusive process requesting input from all stakeholders to guide the strategic planning team.

Mr. Thibault provided a list of individuals who currently make up the District Strategic Learning team noting past members and stated the District is looking to expand the make-up of the team to include Town Board and Committee members and others.

Mr. Thibault stated over the course of the spring and fall "we" will put together a plan for the School Committee's approval which will specifically address how "we" will move the plan "from poster to practice" once approval is received the Teaching and Learning Alliance will produce a professionally designed, print ready strategic plan for the next 5 years that will drive the work in this district.

Mr. Thibault stated the Teaching and Learning Alliance will facilitate “focus groups” to bring greater input to the process noting a *Superintendent’s Family Forum* will be held on March 6th in the high school auditorium starting at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Saba-Maguire added “we” are not jumping into strategic planning without first reporting out to the school committee and the public what our “entry findings” since they will inform the strategic planning process.

Mr. Thibault reported middle and high school students will be meeting with representatives from Teaching and Learning Alliance this week to collect stakeholder input adding more meetings will take place after the winter vacation.

Ms. Coughlin asked how the forum is being advertised.

Dr. Saba-Maguire responded through our weekly electronic backpack as well as call through ParentSquare and we will be counting on *Dartmouth Week* to get the word to the community.

- Early Childhood Director Posting Update - early to mid-March
- Student Accomplishment Update: including the Girls’ Basketball team’s first league Championship; String Concert (Grades 6 through the high school) held at the high school; student contributors to *Dartmouth Week*.

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

- Athletics Update
- Music Events Update
- Review of *Naming Facilities and Subsections of Facilities Policy*

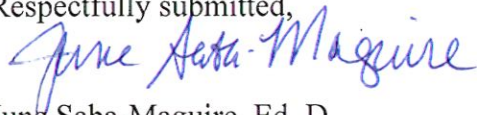
Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

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, March 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to adjourn at 7:54 p.m. from Open Session. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



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

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits

Agenda

Brief

Regular and Executive Session Minutes for January 22, 2024

Regular Session Minutes for January 29, 2024

Consent Agenda – DHS WGI World Championship – DHS Indoor Percussion Team

Consent Agenda – DHS WGI World Championship – DHS Varsity Winter Guard
Consent Agenda – DHS Student Council M.A.S.C. Annual Spring Conference
Long Term Capital Planning Update
Information – District Curriculum Cycle Review
Information - District Strategic Planning Process