MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

March 25, 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 11, 2024 as written. The motion passed: 4-0. Dr. Jenkins abstained.

As tonight is her last meeting, Mrs. Amaral and committee members took this time to recognize Dr. Shannon Jenkins for her years of service on the School Committee as well as her commitment to the school district and presented her with a certificate and small token of appreciation.

PUBLIC HEARING

FY25 Budget

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Coughlin to open the Public Hearing on the proposed FY25 Budget at 6:07 p.m. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

Mrs. Amaral invited those who wish to speak on the matter to come to forward.

Renee Vieira and Jody Parisi, Co-Presidents of the Dartmouth Educators Association, spoke of their concerns regarding the FY25 budget.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Dr. Jenkins to close the Public Hearing on the FY25 Budget at 6:13 p.m. The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

The Public Hearing on the proposed FY25 Budget was closed at 6:13 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment was offered on other matters on tonight's agenda.

***SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS* – Joseph DeMello Elementary School:** The Chair invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to introduce tonight's presenters.

Dr. Saba-Maguire remarked that the number of people at tonight's meeting to celebrate "our DeMello children" is heartening and invited the DeMello Principal to deliver tonight's *Spotlight* presentation.

Elizabeth Correia and Adam Hill, Principal and Assistant Principal of the Joseph DeMello Elementary School (DeMello) respectively, explained tonight's presentation would contain an overview of what is happening at the DeMello school as it relates to the tonight's *Spotlight* topic: connections.

With the use of a PowerPoint presentation and video Ms. Correia and Mr. Hill presented an overview of the various ways students and staff make "connections" at the DeMello School through *Read Alouds*, the *Family Wall* as well as connecting through different grade levels at Friday afternoon *STEM* challenges and during *Buddy Classes*.

Heather Noyes-Fredette, DeMello School occupational therapist, described the DeMello restructured recess games created with the assistance of a grant from the Dartmouth Education Foundation (DEF) and how it encouraged more students who wouldn't necessarily participate in games played during recess.

Mrs. Correia and Mr. Hill described the community connections made by the 4th and 5th Grade Student Councils.

Mrs. Correia spoke about how DeMello connects with "everyone" through the school newspaper *The DeMello Howler* named after the school mascot - a wolf - adding tonight's "connections" topic was inspired by the paper.

Mrs. Correia noted the *Howler* is staffed by 5th graders and advised by grade 5 teacher Jasmin Olean noting the electronic paper is published almost monthly.

Mrs. Correia invited members of the *Howler* staff and Mrs. Olean to the podium to share what they love about DeMello and why they thought it was important to start a school newspaper: Mackenzie Sylvia, Bella Julian, Liam Couto, Juniper Pogash, Ariane Santos, Emma Horgan, Ruby Mullane, and Samara Korejwa. Other members of the *Howler* staff are Tabitha Correia, Sophia Costa and Kylianna Imbeau.

Mrs. Olean explained how the newspaper is student driven.

Sophia Costa handed out copies of the *Howler* to Committee members.

A video was shared showing *Howler* student reporters interviewing students asking what they love about DeMello.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed FY25 Budget - Discussion: Mrs. Amaral stated she would be leaving the meeting after the budget discussion at which time she will turn over the gavel to Mr. Oliver.

Mrs. Amaral invited Dr. Saba-Maguire to introduce the matter of the proposed FY25 budget.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stressed the importance of the efforts of all the participants who continue to contribute to the budget process noting we are cognizant that every decision "we" make has a person on the other end of it and impacts student experiences then invited Mr. Kiely to highlight the District's budget recommendations.

Mr. Kiely stated "we" have presented the budget several times and will not go into great detail reporting we have cut the operating budget to 3% and will use more than $1.8 million dollars from school choice funds for FY25 to attempt to continue operating as "best we can" and stressed that this is a temporary measure and will not be available to us in the long term.

Mr. Kiely continued stating "we are spending our savings" that were accumulated during the pandemic and, as we continue the discussions, we will make sure that that is known to every board we "go before" so that "no one" is surprised when we come back next year or the year after and say we are entirely out of money and we need help.

Mr. Kiely reported, following the Committee's meeting on the 11th, he forwarded the proposed FY25 budget to the Town Administrator and the Town Director of Finance noting he heard back inquiring why we were "over" $13,000 which Mr. Kiely stated he let them know he did not want to cut another position or split a position between funding lines which may "muddy" the waters and figured the matter could be solved but that remains unknown.

Mr. Kiely stated "we" have been invited to a Finance Committee Meeting next Thursday at 4:00 p.m. at Town Hall and asked if any committee member would like to attend to please let me know in case we need to post for a meeting.

Mr. Nunes suggested we post the meeting.

Mr. Oliver asked about the purpose of the meeting.

Mr. Kiely responded he believes the purpose is the Finance Committee's review of our budget request adding they are aware the School Committee will not have voted on the budget at that time.

Mrs. Amaral left the meeting at approximately 7:05 p.m.

Dr. Jenkins stated the sense of urgency to prepare for an override.

Ms. Coughlin proposed starting a sub-committee now and work through the summer "where we figure out what the schools need and what the community wants them to be" and have time to present an override to Fall Town meeting.

Mr. Oliver asked about the Committee's ability to create a sub-committee to look into an override.

Mr. Kiely stated the budget sub-committee would be a vehicle for that work as long as the focus is not "campaigning" for an override as there are issues with that but, in terms of who we are and what we need, that could be part of the budget sub-committee or part of another group.

Dr. Saba-Maguire agreed we need to educate the public as to what we need even earlier than what was done this year.

Mr. Oliver commented "we need to mobilize parents"; we need "to get the word out" because we need their help asking the Town what it is going to do to support their schools.

NEW BUSINESS

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

-MCAS season is upon us; families please look out for messages being sent by the schools
-Elementary Literacy Curriculum Update
-PreK Registration Lottery Closed on March 15th adding the Director of Student Services will present at an April meeting
-Kindergarten Registration Update; district wide "Kindergarten Showcase" being held at Quinn School on May15th at 6:00 p.m.
-Entry Planning Update – Next month we will be reporting out on this phase and this Thursday we have our first district-wide strategic planning team meeting (the team includes parents, school leaders, teachers among others)
-DHSTV Media Class Trip to NBC studios in Boston (video shown)
-We met this morning with Police Chief Levesque, Lt. DaCosta and Sgt. Oliveira who work directly with our SROs (Officers DaCosta, David Tavares and Amanda Tavares) to discuss partnering with the police department to provide additional supports to our students.

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

-Band Update

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, April 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Jenkins moved, seconded by Mr. Nunes to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. into Executive Session for the purpose Union Personnel Matters and not to return to open session. On a roll call the motion passed unanimously; 4-0: Mr. Oliver – Yes; Ms. Coughlin; Dr. Jenkins – Yes and Mr. Nunes – Yes.

Respectfully submitted,

June Saba-Maguire

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

Open Session - Documents/Exhibits
Agenda
Brief
Regular Session Minutes for March 11, 2024
Spotlight on Kids (DeMello) – PPP/Video
DeMello School newspaper *Howler* (handed out at the meeting)