



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1856
December 6, 2022**

Members Present: Leo Lamontagne Lawrence Chairperson
Thomas Hatem Methuen Vice Chairperson
Marilyn Fitzgerald Andover Assistant Treasurer
Zoila Disla Lawrence
Vivian Marmol Lawrence
Francisco Surillo Methuen

Members Absent:

Others Present: John N. Lavoie Superintendent-Director
Susan Zielinski Principal
Melissa Martel Director of Finance
Gerry DiStefano Treasurer
Susan Lally District Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lamontagne called the meeting to order at 5:30PM
Roll Call by District Recorder: Ms. Fitzgerald (present), Ms. Disla (present), Mr. Hatem (present), Mr. Surillo (present), Ms. Marmol (present), Mr. Lamontagne (present).

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjust the agenda to move into Executive Session at 5:35PM
2ND: Mr. Surillo

Vote: Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Surillo Yes
Ms. Marmol Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald Yes
Ms. Disla Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
Mr. Lamontagne Yes
#18371 `

Enter Executive Session
Enter Open Session

2. MINUTES

a. Minutes from November 22, 2022

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the November 22, 2022 minutes as presented.

2ND: Ms. Marmol

Vote: Unanimous
#18373

3. FINANCE REPORT

a. Cash Balance Report

Mr. DiStefano read the Cash Balance report into the record.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the Cash Balance report as presented.

2ND: Ms. Disla

Vote: Unanimous

#18374

b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

No Discussion

c. Revolving Fund Report

No Discussion

d. Budget Report

No Discussion

4. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Donations

b. Articles

c. Public Participation

5. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. Busing Update

Supt. Lavoie reported that North Reading Transportation company is present at the District Committee's request. Mr. Tim Sheheen, V.P. of Operations introduced Mr. Peter Delani, Director of Customer Relations, Ms. Lisa Alterisio, V. P. responsible for the school district and Ms. Christine Valcourt who has been with NRT for over 30 years and is now responsible for technology. Principal Zielinski reported that we have been in communications but we still have a number of busses that are late in the afternoons. What has improved is that we have information that we can push out to families. Mr. Sheheen reported that he wishes he had a plan for 100% staffing. We do have drivers in the pipeline coming to the Merrimack Valley. This is a nationwide shortage. Specific to this district, we have raised our hourly rate 30%, offered 401k improvements where the company matches 6%, overtime, and floating holidays to encourage more drivers. We are still struggling to pull people into work. Ms. Fitzgerald reported that she feels that we are the only school in our surrounding area that the busing shortage is still not solved, Mr. Sheheen reported that we don't have a full set of drivers in Andover as well. We have outsourced with a third-party provider who provides four buses and we have tried to get them to Greater Lawrence. Supt. Lavoie and myself met with another company out of Lawrence and were told they would help however, we never heard from him again. Lawrence and Methuen are also not with a full set of drivers according to the scope of the contract. There is not a district in the Merrimack Valley that is at a full complement of drivers. Mr. Sheheen reported that after COVID we did not see the workforce come back like we expected it to. Mr. Sheheen reported that we are working with the state, dept. of labor and the Governor's office looking for help. We do have people in pipeline but I cannot promise you that I have a solution for GLTS. I brought three drivers on for GLTS and lost two. Flu and COVID is still impacting our operations. Mr. Sheheen reported that we received a ten million dollar grant for 25 Electric Buses. Mr. Surillo reported that you opened a facility in Lawrence in which you were going to partner with the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council to recruit non-English speaking people. That did not happen. We have students still here two hours after school. What can GLTS do to help. Mr. Delani reported that he can appreciate your frustration and

concerns and the impact it has on the District. As part of the new Lawrence Recruiting Center we just opened, we also onboarded an ESL instructor which will begin after the new year and it will be a trimester model throughout the year. We are advertising and we can have our area recruiting touch base with your HR Director for a monthly check-in. We are looking at conventional and non-conventional ways to recruit. My role is to help my company understand how schools work. If there are paraprofessionals, coaches or part-time workers that could be both a driver and work at the school that would help. There has been a lot of learning coming out of COVID. Principal Zielinski reported that we have around 300 athletes that do not take the afternoon bus home, therefore some of our buses are not full. Can we look into trying to maybe combine some of these buses to support our afternoon students? Mr. Sheheen reported yes. We are also adjusting your contract that is in place. We will credit a bus that is going to be late.

b. Admissions Report

c. New Programs' Update

Supt. Lavoie reported that the Department of Education should have a final decision on our new programs within the next few weeks. Our plan is to open up the Child care center in January. Ms. Fitzgerald asked if we have hired the teachers? Supt. Lavoie reported that we have and they are starting before the holidays. Ms. Disla wanted to clarify what they are doing if the center is not open? Supt. Lavoie reported that the Director of Child Care that was hired is working with the teachers on putting together all the documentation for the state, the handbook for staff with the regulations and are ordering all the equipment. The Director is here every day preparing for the opening. Supt. Lavoie reported that he will have more detail on the cost of child care at the next meeting.

6. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

8. NEW BUSINESS

No discussion

9. TABLED MATTERS

10. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

b. Leaves of Absence

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

e. Job Postings

- *MCAS Tutors for Winter/Spring MCAS Testing, Per CBA, 12/10/22-2/4/23, Annual Position*
- *Social Studies Teacher Long Term Sub, March, 2023-End of Year*

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve the job postings as submitted

2ND: Ms. Marmol

Vote: Unanimous

#18375

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

- Ongoing Projects

Supt. Lavoie reported that the Automotive Project is moving along much better.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Hatem moved to adjourn at 7:15PM.

2ND: Mr. Surillo


VOTE: Unanimous

#18376

Respectfully Submitted:

Minutes Reviewed:


Susan Lally
District Recorder


John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director