



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1860
March 7, 2023**

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
Cheryl Dennis District Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lamontagne called the meeting to order at 6:00PM
Roll Call by District Recorder: Ms. Fitzgerald (present), Ms. Disla (present), Mr. Hatem (present), Mr. Surillo (present), Ms. Marmol (present), Mr. Lamontagne (present).

2. MINUTES

Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the February 14, 2023 minutes as presented.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

Vote: Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Marmol Abstained
Ms. Fitzgerald Yes
Ms. Disla Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
Mr. Surillo Yes
Mr. Lamontagne Yes

#18428

3. FINANCE REPORT

a. Cash Balance Report

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

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve the Cash Balance report as presented.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18429

b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

No Discussion

c. Revolving Fund Report

No Discussion

d. Budget Report

No Discussion

e. FY 24 Budget Presentation

Ms. Martel presented the FY24 budget overview and provided all members with a printed version. The completed budget book will be presented at the next meeting. She reviewed some of the largest budget drivers which include the COLA's, adding positions, the three new programs-Aviation, Childcare and Programming, the large increase in the transportation contract, increases in health insurance as well as upgrades to the building. Foundation expense budget for FY24 is an increase of over 4 million dollars from the prior year. As our net school spending amount, we're required to spend that amount on educating students. Three million is going towards instructional costs, not just salaries. Ms. Martel reviewed non-foundation expenses which is a 1.5 million dollar increase. Chapter 70 funding allocation is based on enrollment. She went over specific enrollment increases/decreases by towns from FY23 to FY24. Touched on looking to the cities and towns to increase their contributions. 75% of our funding comes from the state. 16% comes from cities and towns and we're looking for an increase of 7% from them. 2% from transportation reimbursement.

Ms. Fitzgerald wanted to know what the additional 7% from cities and towns would be used for.

Ms. Martel answered that it funds our transportation costs. Ms. Fitzgerald questioned when the cities and towns would be notified of their anticipated increases. Ms. Martel expects that will occur when the budget is presented to the cities and towns. Ms. Fitzgerald suggested we not wait until May to ask for more money as the cities and towns are probably already working on their budgets. Ms. Martel stated the budget book will go out to the cities and towns right after it's brought before the next school committee meeting. Mr. Surillo requested that someone present the budget to Methuen, as residents claim no one from GLTS reports the budget to them. Ms. Martel confirmed they would.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the proposed FY24 Budget document as presented.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Chairman Lamontagne explained that a final vote would be taken after the detailed budget was presented at the next meeting.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18430

4. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. Concussion Policy

Superintendent Lavoie indicated everyone had the revised policy in their packets for review. Ms. Nari Melkonian, Athletic Trainer attended the meeting to answer questions the committee may have. Ms. Disla questioned what the revisions were made. Ms. Melkonian reported that there were no changes in Section 2 it was just cleaned up to make it easier to read and understand. Section 1 was newly created to put a concussion policy in place within the school during the school day for the teachers. We had a doctor and a nurse practitioner from our Lawrence Family Health Center help with the policy. Ms. Disla asked for Ms. Melkonian name and title which she provided. Ms. Disla requested more time to review it. Mr. Hatem asked if it was state language or ours. Ms. Melkonian reported it wasn't state language but adapted to our school. It does contain some state language but some was rewritten to read simpler for the average person. Mr. Hatem questioned if we should be concerned about possible legalities due to the changes. Ms. Melkonian went over the process they went through and said there were some concerns because the guidelines of the state that were written in 2010 but things have changed since then with regards to treatment but she can only do what the state calls for. Ms.

Fitzgerald questioned whether the teachers would be mandated to pass a concussion protocol. She feels it's a conflict to have it as a requirement in one area and not in another. Superintendent Lavoie said there is no policy in place for teachers to pass an exam in this area. He reiterated that it does align with state requirements. Ms. Fitzgerald questioned further the addition of Section 1 without a ruling from an attorney. Superintendent Lavoie said an attorney has not looked at it as a policy but if the committee wants certification of the staff, that could be required. Principal Zielinski added this could be added to the onboarding, training platform so every staff member and teacher would know the procedures, the first being to contact the nurse. Ms. Melkonian reported it is to make staff more aware of what to look for. Ms. Melkonian added that Return to Learn in the state guidelines covers what teachers are to monitor in students returning to academics. Mr. Surillo thanked her for the addition of Section 1 and feels the nurse and medical professionals should handle issues as opposed to teachers making a diagnosis. Chairman Lamontagne asked committee members to contact the administration with any questions prior to the next meeting to alleviate Ms. Melkonian having to return.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to table this matter until March 28, 2023.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18431

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjust the agenda to address the Little Reggies Handbook

2ND: Mr. Surillo

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18432

b. Little Reggies Handbook Approval

Superintendent Lavoie stated that the committee had received a copy of the finished handbook. We're looking to open the center next Monday, March 13, 2023. Looking for a vote from the committee so parents will have a copy of this in advance prior to enrolling their children. Superintendent Lavoie said that the Director, Brandi Carpenter, was here tonight to answer any questions.

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve the Little Reggies Handbook as presented.

2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald

Ms. Marmol wanted to know if this was modeled after another childcare agency. Ms. Carpenter said it was modeled after the Dept. of Early Education guidelines. Ms. Marmol asked if the fees and tuitions were modeled after state guidelines too. Ms. Carpenter said the late fees were common industry standards but could be changed. The tuition was created based on enrollment and staffing. Mr. Surillo mentioned that it was lower than most places and he thanked her for her work. Ms. Fitzgerald asked if they were voting on accepting this as a handbook as opposed to a policy. Chairman Lamontagne stated they were voting on it as a handbook. Ms. Fitzgerald questioned if we had a policy for our childcare center. Superintendent Lavoie said a policy has not been created yet but would be moving forward. Presently, the handbook itself needs to be in place for anyone enrolling their children into the program. Ms. Fitzgerald questioned if our attorneys had reviewed this.

Superintendent Lavoie said they hadn't yet but would be doing so. Superintendent Lavoie reiterated that the opening would be Monday, March 13, 2023, and an open house was scheduled for the staff on Thursday, March 9, 2023, from 2:15 to 3:30 which committee members were welcomed to attend. Mr. Hatem asked if there were any early applicants. Ms. Carpenter stated that based on an "interest list" she'd been maintaining, we'd be fully enrolled for September with 80% anticipated enrollment in April. Mr. Hatem questioned exactly how many were presently signed up. Ms. Carpenter said there were none as she hadn't had a start date. She'll now be contacting the individuals on the "interest list" to sign up for the start date. Superintendent Lavoie clarified that we've been without a start date until we passed a state inspection. They were here and are requiring a fence in the playground area and a dishwasher in the infant room. Both of these items will be taken care of tomorrow and they'll be back Thursday. We expect to pass at that time which provides us with the opening date of

Monday, the 13th. Mr. Hatem questioned if any faculty would be excluded because they live outside Massachusetts. Ms. Carpenter responded no.

Vote: Unanimously Approved
#18433

c. Marketing Strategies

Superintendent Lavoie asked to table this to allow for discussions with the Principal to develop strategies. We're putting a committee together to assist us. Once that study is completed he'll bring it to the committee.

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve to table the marketing strategies.

2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald

Vote: Unanimously Approved
#18434

d. Professional Development

Superintendent Lavoie presented slides and reviewed what was discussed at the professional development day last week. Half of the time was spent on discussing student success plans for failing students which the teachers had been asked to develop. The other half was spent on Superintendent Lavoie's strategic plan. The slides outlined the goal of education and how to motivate students and how the teachers could support students going forward. Poor grades shouldn't stand forever. Grades can be upgraded based on a student's increased, improved learning of the material. There was a lot of input from the teachers regarding some of their preconceptions and how teachers felt about students failing. Teachers had time to respond and ask questions. Ms. Disla questioned allowing uninterested students to continue attending the school and whether we're simply going to pass them. Superintendent Lavoie stressed that students are not automatically passed, they have to earn their grades. He went on to emphasize the administrations responsibility to guide, assist and motivate students to want to learn. Once accepted at the school, the law doesn't allow us to expel or turn students away. We want every single student to succeed regardless of their challenges. We're a family and we cannot quit on a single one of them.

e. Update on New Programs

Superintendent Lavoie updated the committee on the three new programs: Aviation, Childcare and Programming. Part B is due to the Dept. of Education on Friday. We're in good shape in meeting the required standards. FAA met with us today regarding the necessary criteria to be certified. Confident all three programs will pass Part B. The space will need to be viewed next which should occur sometime in May. Ms. Marmol requested an update on the hangar space and mentioned she'd been contacted by the director at the airport about some concerns. Superintendent Lavoie said we've made an offer on the one for sale and has asked to be put on the March agenda of the Commission at the airport which needs to approve our purchase of the hangar. He has turned it over to our attorney to advise us on state laws and regulations regarding the purchase and he's waiting to hear back from him. The manager of the airport asked him to check with the individual interested in partnering with us to build a hangar and he has not returned several calls he'd made. Once given the go ahead from our attorney, he'll continue to pursue the purchase of the hangar available for sale. Mr. Hatem wanted confirmation that the failure of the purchase would not affect existing shops in the building if this needs to be brought in to the school. Superintendent Lavoie said no, it will not. We're also building a hangar at the school which the architecture is drawing up plans for. We don't need the hangar at the airport for another year but want to take advantage of the opportunity to purchase one now because a 3000 sq. foot hangar for \$300,000 is a reasonable cost. Ms. Disla asked for details of the programming and its policies. Superintendent Lavoie said all three programs won't start until September. The Childcare Center opening now is specifically as a service for our teachers, not for educational purposes. Everything will be different in September when it will open as an Early Childcare Educational Program – a totally different handbook, different policy and regulations and must be approved by the Dept. of Ed. We have space for our 9th grade programming. The Programming advisory is meeting tonight, the curriculum is written and ready, the standards are completed and ready to go. A licensed

instructor has applied for the posted position. We have an applicant for the Childcare and Aviation instructor positions. All three programs look good to open in September.

f. Supt. Evaluation Timeline-Strategic Plan

Superintendent Lavoie stated his intention is to present an update on his progress with developing a 5-year strategic plan. Ms. Fitzgerald questioned how many people were involved in the strategic plan. Superintendent Lavoie said hundreds would be involved before it's completed. The starting point and foundation begin with our mission statement, school vision and core values. He provided a detailed outline of where we are today and where we want to be five years from now in nine focus areas, each requiring a lot of research and work. Slides were presented on each of the focus areas. Went over what has occurred thus far and outlined the work going forward throughout the next few months including a discussion on it at our legislative breakfast on March 24th and a workshop with the committee itself on April 11th to gain their feedback and input. He'll present the strategic plan to school the school committee for a vote.

g. Enrollment Process after Acceptance

Superintendent Lavoie acknowledged documents provided tonight to the committee by the Director of Guidance and Admission relative to procedures once students have been accepted. Ms. Disla said she would like the director to be present. Superintendent Lavoie said he asked her to come to the next meeting to allow them time to review the documents. Ms. Disla questioned the ten days they're allowed to respond – she wanted clarification on the actual date missing from the letters. Principal Zielinski said that all letters would be dated once the date they're actually going out has been determined.

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve to table this matter.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18435

h. Admissions Report

Chairman Lamontagne stated that the reports were in the members' packets.

i. March/April Calendars

Chairman Lamontagne stated that the reports were in the members' packets.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Donations

None

b. Articles

None

c. Public Participation

None

6. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve Section B: BDG-School Attorney.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

Vote: Unanimously Approved
#18436

8. NEW BUSINESS

No discussion

9. TABLED MATTERS

10. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

b. Leaves of Absence

- Social Studies Instructor, Parental Leave, Effective February 27, 2023-June 20, 2023

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

- Ms. Kally Lachapel, PT Medical Secretary/Office Assistant, Effective February 14, 2023
- Mr. Alex Torres, LTS for Social Studies, Effective February 14, 2023

e. Job Postings

- Athletic Rental Security/Field Maintenance: will work during the evening to ensure the fields are only used by organizations that have authorization to be utilizing the facility, as well as, maintain/upkeep property and assist rental organizations. Monday-Friday, 5:30-9:30pm (4 hours per day), 20 hours/week, \$40/hour, Annual Position.
- *Guidance Admissions Specialist (One Year Position), To provide administrative support to the Admissions & Guidance Department with primary responsibility for the admissions and enrollment process, Per CBA, Effective April 1, 2023-April 1, 2024, Replacement Position.*

Superintendent Lavoie stated that the Athletic Rental Security/Field Maintenance posting is an annual position. Maintains the fields during rentals and inspects them after each rental. Rental parties are responsible for any damages and are charged accordingly if necessary. The Guidance and Admissions Specialist provides administrative support. This is a replacement position.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the job postings as presented.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Mr. Surillo questioned if the Athletic Position was a new position to which Superintendent Lavoie stated no, it was an annual position that is posted every year in the spring and in the fall.

Ms. Marmol said her understanding was we already had someone doing this. Wanted clarification, it's season as opposed to annual and that's why it's posted? Superintendent Lavoie answered we're required to post every season in case someone else is interested. Ms. Fitzgerald asked if it is presently unfilled as someone had just left? Superintendent Lavoie said this is actually a different position. Ms. Fitzgerald asked if it will be an in-house position? Superintendent Lavoie answered yes.

Vote: Unanimously Approved
##18437

- *Math Instructor, Teacher's CBA, Effective August 2023, Replacement Position.*
- *Environmental Science Instructor, Teacher's CBA, Effective SY23/24, New Position (See Attached)*
- *HVAC Instructor (2), Posting for two teachers currently on waivers, Annual Positions*

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the job postings as presented.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

Vote: Unanimously Approved
#18438

- *Electrical Instructor (20, Posting for two teachers currently on waivers, Annual Positions*
- *Plumbing Instructor (2), Posting for two teachers currently on waivers, Annual Positions*
- *Horticulture Instructor (2), Posting for two teachers currently on waivers, Annual Positions*

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the job postings as presented.

2ND: Ms. Marmol

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18439

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to enter in to Executive Session at 7:35PM

2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald

Vote: Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Hatem	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes
Ms. Marmol	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes

#18440

Enter Executive Session

Enter Open Session

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to accept the cafeteria workers contract.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#18444

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn at 7:49PM.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

VOTE: Unanimous Approved

#18445

Respectfully Submitted:



Cheryl Dennis
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director