

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

August 26, 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 Chris Oliver at 5:30 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: Chris Oliver, Elizabeth Coughlin, Mary Beckwith, Kathleen Amaral and John Nunes.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment was offered.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Ms. Beckwith to approve the Executive Session Minutes of July 22, 2024 as written, with the stipulation that they be held until the matters under consideration are completed. The motion passed unanimously: 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Preliminary FY26 Budget – Update on Budget Discussions: Dr. Saba-Maguire reminded the Committee that this matter will continue to be placed on meeting agenda as we go through the budget process this year.

Mr. Kiely reported on the Budget Sub-committee held on August 5th noting he will be preparing a “few things” based on discussions: a level service budget that reflects what currently exists based on our funding in FY25 adding he will incorporate the strategic plan including the key initiatives making sure we can fund the action steps necessary to accomplish those initiatives as well as incorporate budget information about recent “cuts” so that we can understand the impact of those costs with the hope that we can restore some of those cuts as well as historic information about cuts through the years for consideration.

Mr. Kiely stated the next budget sub-committee meeting is September 30th adding he hopes to accomplish a very preliminary FY26 budget by the end of September noting it is of great

importance to start early so that the Committee can begin considering our options to move forward.

Mr. Oliver made comments pertaining to the Committee deciding, by September or early October, on whether to pursue an override or utilize reserve funds and that we should continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Coughlin explained her understanding of the Committee's past discussions on utilizing reserve funds including school choice and what to keep in a reserve fund adding she feels the Committee should make its decision soon adding she feels "we" are not prepared for the community to be ready to decide on an override and we should wait another year because we do have the funds to cover it and suggested a deadline of the next meeting to make the decision.

Mr. Oliver agreed that at the next meeting the Committee should formally decide whether to utilize school choice funds to subsidize the FY26 operating budget.

Mr. Nunes commented we should wait for Mr. Kiely's preliminary budget before deciding on utilizing reserve funds.

Mr. Oliver asked, from the District's standpoint, if there is any urgency for the Committee to make a commitment on utilizing reserve funds before or after you "put together" a preliminary FY26 budget.

Mr. Kiely responded, from his perspective, if the Committee's desire was to not use the reserves then the decision should be made soon.

Mr. Kiely stated that if the Town was to consider an override they would need to start their planning soon.

NEW BUSINESS

Highlights of the District Strategic Plan: Dr. Saba-Maguire provided highlights of the strategic plan noting it was shared with staff at today's Convocation and explained the district "dashboard" including the strategic focus areas and the District's mission and vision.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated a more detailed plan will be provided to the Committee before it is presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Oliver asked how the District will inform families of the plan.

Dr. Saba-Maguire stated this came up during planning meetings noting community forums will be held and we will speak more about this when we present the full plan.

Mr. Oliver asked that invitations to the meeting when the full plan is presented be sent to the Select Board and Finance Committee.

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

Dr. Saba-Maguire invited Ross Thibault and Katie Pavao, Directors of Teaching and Learning/Secondary and Elementary Levels respectively, to speak about summer programming.

Dr. Thibault described the summer program offerings including credit recovery, extended school year, enrichment programs and athletic camps which serviced well over 200 students in the academic programming alone.

Mrs. Pavao reported the District ran a four-week summer academic program for students K thru 5 which focused on reinforcing grade level skills noting 105 students participated.

Mrs. Pavao reported the District wrote and received a grant through ESSER to run a 1-week Acceleration Academy for students Kindergarten through 10th grade focusing on targeted skills in math and literacy noting 175 students participated.

Mrs. Pavao and Dr. Thibault reported new literacy instructional materials are being piloted during the 2024-2025 reminding the Committee that these materials were vetted by staff during the 2023-2024 school year.

Mrs. Pavao added high quality instructional materials will be addressed in the strategic plan.

Dr. Thibault reported on curriculum related pilots at the middle and high schools specifically for science, world language and math.

Mrs. Pavao and Dr. Thibault provided information on Project Time, the new hire mentoring program, noting the new hires will be introduced at the next meeting.

Dr. Saba-Maguire clarified that the resources the District vetted to see if it will work for our District were first vetted by the Department of Education.

Mrs. Pavao stated the District has a curriculum adoption policy; teachers are using rubrics to make sure materials are free of bias, for example.

- Kindergarten Enrollment Update; numbers are aligned with NESDEC projections
- HR Update
- Climate & Culture
- Convocation Update

Report of the Chair: The Chair reported the following.

-Mr. Oliver stated a School Committee Workshop has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 17th at 5:30 p.m. to be held at the School Administration Building. Mr. Oliver reiterated a purpose of the workshop is goal setting and that M.A.S.C. will be facilitating.

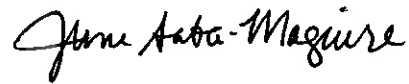
Other Matters that may not have been anticipated at the time of Agenda posting:

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: The next regular session of the School Committee will take place in the Library Media Center at Dartmouth High School and via live stream at www.youtube.com/dhstvmedia on Monday, September 9, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Nunes moved, seconded by Mrs. Amaral to adjourn from Open Session at 6:54 p.m. 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 July 22, 2024

Slide with Highlights of the District Strategic Plan