



## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES February 6, 2018**

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| <b>Meeting:</b>     | School Committee   |
| <b>Date:</b>        | February 6, 2018   |
| <b>Location:</b>    | MERHS Library  |
| <b>Attendees:</b>   | Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent<br>Avi Urbas, Director of Finance<br>Ann Cameron, Chairman<br>Julie Riordan, Co-Chairman<br>Shannon Erdmann<br>Sarah Wolf<br>Rachel Fitzgibbon |
| <b>Absent:</b>      | Caroline Weld<br>Ken Warnock   |
| <b>Guests:</b>      | Summer Burroughs, Student<br>Mr. Creighton, Chairman, MBTS Fin Com   |
| <b>Recorded by:</b> | Gail Hunter  |

#### **A. Call to Order**

Ms. Cameron called the School Committee Business Meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

#### **B. Business Meeting Open Session**

1) **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

2) **Student Report** – Ms. Burroughs spoke a little about Black History Month and the lack of student awareness of the month. Ms. Burroughs mentioned that Ms. Brown, a history teacher, presents for 5 minutes at the beginning of her Freshman classes information about the accomplishments of a prominent Black American. At the end of the month students have a significant amount of new information on contributions by Black Americans.

Ms. Cameron researched first Black History Month – the first Black History Week the precursor to Black History Month was created in 1926 in the United States, when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week in February to be “Negro History Week”.

Ms. Burroughs went onto say things were quiet around school and the student body was calm. Committee thanked Ms. Burroughs who declined an invitation to remain for the meeting to go home and complete her homework.

### **3) Chairman’s Report**

Ms. Cameron mentioned she attended the Learn and Lunch Conference where the topic discussed was Social and Emotional Learning. It was an Educational Technology Conference and information discussed focused on personalized learning utilizing technology and integrating computer time into the learning process. Ms. Cameron indicated there was a focus on machine learning and Artificial Intelligence.

Superintendent Beaudoin pointed out that just this week there have been several articles addressing addiction to screen time and social media and the impact it is having on the learning process. She went onto say that computers are tools to do your work and not a substitute for a personal coach or teacher.

Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the commercialization of education brings in new tools that impact social emotional and interpersonal skills. She further stated, in response to Ms. Erdmann’s question on individual learning styles, I.E.P.’s for all students entering sixth grade would be ideal. There is simply no way to achieve that objective or provide the coaching support needed as follow up.

Ms. Cameron also informed the Committee there was a person from MIT present who has developed a free Micro-Masters Program, which is an online program free for the first year and depending on the individual’s performance they are accepted into the program for continuation. The program is so well recognized that rejected students are being accepted into other institutions for continuation of their master’s degree.

The person who developed Micro-Masters Program also spoke about the individual’s ability to focus and then process new information. He stated a person could fully focus for 8-9 minutes before needing time to process. Superintendent Beaudoin interjected it used to be 15 minutes. Recollection and develop the brain’s ability to recall was also discussed.

### **4) Consent Agenda:**

- Minutes: 1/30/18
- Acceptance of Warrants

*Ms. Wolf moved to approve the Minutes, Ms. Fitzgibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **5) Sub-Committee Reports:**

### **Elementary Facilities** (Ms. Weld and Ms. Cameron)

The Committee has selected N-3, the HUB. There was consensus for this new build option among Committee Members (Building and School). The public also gravitated to this design. The vote to approve PSR will take place next Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at a joint School Committee/Building Committee Meeting.

The Committee had a brief discussion about the lack of a dedicated auditorium. It was pointed out that Essex Elementary does not have a dedicated auditorium yet still manages to have performance space and an enrichment schedule. Superintendent Beaudoin thought it important to have a raised stage for performances with storage for chairs under the stage. These discussions will be further reviewed with the school building architects.

An additional brief discussion for Committee Members was around Pre-K. There are 4 classes allocated for Pre-K in the new Memorial School Build. Ms. Cameron indicated she would like to defer this discussion until March 2018, discussion was deferred.

### **Finance Committee** (Ms. Cameron and Ms. Erdmann)

Ms. Erdmann reported that she met with the Finance Committee on January 30, 2018. There were lots of questions with the focus on labor contract and health insurance. Mr. Creighton indicated he would vote to approve the new budget.

Ms. Erdmann and Mr. Urbas met with Mr. Pratt, a Member of the Finance Committee with experience negotiating health insurance contracts. Mr. Pratt was assured that Mr. Urbas had reviewed and considered all possible options for the District.

### **Communication/Policy Committee** (Ms. Fitzgibbon/Mr. Warnock)

Sub-Committee is meeting next Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 12:30 p.m.

### **Negotiation Team** (Ms. Wolf/Ms. Riordan)

Meeting to schedule meetings going forward was scheduled for tomorrow but Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> is an early release day and the meeting will be cancelled. Members of the negotiating team have agreed to IBB and will be utilizing the facilitator. Setting meeting dates will be a challenge – Superintendent Beaudoin proposed using the 2 early release dates as negotiating dates from Noon to 8:00 p.m.

### **Athletic Task Force** (Ms. Riordan)

Ms. Riordan reported the first meeting of the Task Force was good. It is a very interesting group of people. In the first meeting the group reviewed goals laid out by Ms. O'Neil, athletic consultant and defined priorities. Mr. Urbas will be at the next meeting to review the Athletic Budget and finances.

## **6) Superintendent's Report –**

Task Force on ELA and Literacy has been set up by Ms. De Roche. This is a follow up to the EDCO Report, Ms. De Roche identified some inconsistencies with delivery of our ELA Program. It was thought initially that we could change from the current pull out model to an in-class co-teaching model. Goal of the Task Force is to establish consistency and documentation of the K-8 Literacy Curriculum. Task Force hopes to complete their work and roll out in fall of 2019.

Understanding our Differences, a unit for students to begin to understand disabilities and what it means to live a life with a disability, very positive.

*Gloucester Times* has developed a feature article on 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy.

MERSD will be featured in a promo for YMCA partners and collaborators. Looking at opportunities to hold a literacy camp and music camp for this summer. The program will take place in Essex.

## **7) New Business**

## **8) Continued Business –**

- FY 19 Budget
  1. Update and Continued Discussion of Options

According to Superintendent Beaudoin we're in the same place we were in last week.

Phase I – Defining the budget as a Balanced Budget. That stated the School Committee will decide to approve the Balanced Budget and forward to the Towns.

Superintendent Beaudoin indicated we are chipping away at a \$950K deficit. There are 4 areas targeted: Staff, Revised Assumptions, Services and Fess and Utility Savings.

The \$25.2M budget is a 3.29% increase: Manchester's allocation is 3.65% and Essex' allocation is 2.65%. Manchester has already stated the 3.65% is stressing their model anything added beyond this point will likely put MBTS over their model. Ms. Cameron indicated the budget goal is to stay within the levy limit.

Committee Members were concerned about making changes after the Town Budget Approvals. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated following the Towns approval changes to the budget are for the District to manage within the allocated funds provided by the Towns.

Phase II – Anticipated remaining needs to support programs is \$275K. There are three areas targeted: Programs, Staffing Reductions and Restructuring.

High School will require .6 Science, .6 Math, 1.0 Humanities and 1.0 Bridge Counselor. Middle School .4 Dean of Students and 1.0 Reading Tutor.

As difficult as it may be to consider MERSD may not be able to sustain the Bridge Program. Although the Bridge Program helps returning students with a learning center, counseling and independent services, the program can be absorbed into the existing Special Education Program.

The Role of Reserves was discussed. Mr. Urbas stated reserves are for emergencies, one-time investments and strategic support. He went on to state that current needs are recurring and will require funding through 2022. The District built the current reserves through School Choice, Special Education and Conservative Health Care estimates.

In the future health care surplus is unlikely, capacity for accepting school choice students is declining and declining revenues and increased expenditures will diminish reserves quickly while the Memorial School liability increases costs. Current reserves are \$2.2M with special education possibly decreasing the amount by \$200K and the Memorial School funding is unknown.

Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the Balanced Budget Proposal does not support the first three School Committee Goals.

## 2. Approval Vote for Submission to Towns

*Motion to approve the Balance Budget presented to the Towns of \$25.2M representing a 3.29% increase in the MERSD budget was made by Ms. Wolf and seconded by Ms. Erdmann. The motion passed 5-0.*

*Motion to approve Capital Budget of \$2,108,338.00 and \$2,093,065.00 was made by Ms. Erdmann and seconded by Ms. Wolf. The motion passed 5-0.*

- School Choice 2018-2019

There are currently 64 students enrolled through School Choice with 12 graduating. It is unknown at this point if the schools will be able to accommodate an additional 12 School Choice students.

## D. Adjourn

*Ms. Wolf moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Erdmann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hunter