



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OPEN SESSION MINUTES January 23, 2018

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	January 23, 2018
Location:	MERMHS Library
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Ann Cameron, Chairman Julie Riordan, Co-Chairman Shannon Erdmann Caroline Weld Sarah Wolf Rachel Fitzgibbon Ken Warnock
Absent:	
Guests:	Summer Burroughs Paul Murphy, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director
Recorded by:	Gail Hunter

A. Call to Order

Ms. Cameron called the School Committee Business Meeting Open Session to order at 6:00 p.m. Cape Ann TV recorded the meeting.

B. Business Meeting Open Session

- 1) **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- 2) **Student Report:**

Summer Burroughs presented the student report:

- Ms. Burroughs reported several students felt DECA was the best class taken in High School. Mr. Martino works with the participants and the group made it to the second round of competition.
- No More mid-terms recognized as a great move by students. All teachers had quarter end tests which students were happy with and thought were easier to prepare for. The freshmen were relieved not to be facing mid-terms. Ms. Riordan asked if the students missed the short days which were part of the mid-term testing period, not so much stated Ms. Burroughs.
- Ms. Cameron asked if there was an event in the school to showcase the scope of elective classes and additional programs available for students. Ms. Burroughs thought it would be helpful to hold such an event and suggested seniors visit underclasses to talk about their experiences in elective classes and programs. Ms. Erdmann thought a heads up for the students would help with making better decisions and choices ahead of time. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated that the school would work to get the word out to students on electives and additional programs.
- Ms. Burroughs informed the Committee she had made her college choice and would be attending University of Colorado Boulder with a major in psychology and minor in international affairs. The Committee congratulated Ms. Burroughs.

3) **Chairman's Report:** There was no report this evening.

4) **Consent Agenda:**

- Acceptance of Warrants: Vouchers 1037-1040
- Minutes: 1/9/18
- Trip Approval – Athletics Travel Spring 2018: Travel was approved; parents and guardians will pay all expenses, there will be no team fundraising.

Ms. Wolf moved to approve the Warrants, Minutes and Trips, Ms. Weld seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Warnock abstaining, he was not present on 1/9/18.

5) **Sub-Committee Reports:**

Elementary Facilities (Ms. Weld and Ms. Cameron) Report and Update on Preferred Schematic Design Process:

- The Building Committee approved Construction Manager at Risk as the building supervisory model. The choice was between CM at Risk or Design Bid Build – the Committee choose CM at Risk for the following reasons: with this model the Manager owns the project, is committed to a delivery date and price. CM at Risk is a qualifications-based approach while Design Bid Build is a bid approach and by law, according to Mr. Urbas, the project would go to the lowest bidder. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated this model's goal is to maintain a reputation

for tight management and efficiency, she believes CM at Risk is more of an advocacy model and a better choice for the new Memorial School.

Community Meeting, January 31, 2018 – 9:00 a.m. morning meeting, Committee members participating with Ms. Weld: Ms. Riordan and Ms. Fitzgibbon. 7:00 p.m. evening meeting, Committee members participating with Mr. Oldeman: Mr. Warnock and Ms. Erdmann.

Building Options to be Presented to MSBA: Renovate, Renovate Add On and 3 choices for a New Build. The Committee viewed options as projected.

Renovation Option does not meet the needs of the program. There are critical flaws in the existing building and costs to renovate would likely be as high as a new build.

Renovation Add On like the Renovation Option the Renovation Add On will not meet the complete needs of the program and bringing the building up to code would require an extensive and expensive seismic renovation. Additionally, there is no space to develop queuing for drop off. That said, there are strengths to the current building: separate and dedicated parking behind the building, a separate entrance for community events (i.e. voting) that take place during the school day and a proposed second floor wing is open and spacious.

New Builds:

1. All new build options will require phasing during construction, amount and duration of phasing differs for each option.
2. All new build options require use of modular buildings and modular buildings are a non-reimbursable MSBA expense. Additionally, they are expensive.
3. All new build options provide a loop for drop off and pick up.
4. All new build options are multi storied buildings.
5. Estimated costs for the new build options are comparable for each of the three choices.
6. Additional play areas and fields will be part of the landscape.
7. Green space, open air, views to the wetlands, gymnasiums, auditoriums and cafeterias are recommended for new builds. Some of these recommended spaces are in combination.
8. All new build options meet the requirements of the program.
9. New builds will provide separate entrances and parking for community events like voting.
10. New builds will have vestibules with a clear sight line to the front door of the building.
11. New builds are named: Piano, Hub and Hook and will be available to view at the community meetings scheduled for January 31, 2018.
12. An MSBA requirement for new builds – buildings provide the community with the ability to add on to meet future needs as required.

Finance Committee (Ann Cameron and Shannon Erdmann) – No Report, meeting next Tuesday.

Communication/Policy Committee (Rachel Fitzgibbon/Ken Warnock) Report – Review of Fundraising Policy

Article in the *Cricket* “Rising Health Care Costs the Persistent Problem” the article speaks to the significant budget challenges due to increases in health care costs over the past two years. The article further outlines the steps being taken to address the challenges and historically what has been done. Additionally, the article lists upcoming meetings. Superintendent Beaudoin will distribute a copy of the article to Committee members. Mr. Warnock added the article focuses on current challenges not future issues.

A copy of the Manchester Essex Regional School District Fundraising Policy was provided for the Committee. A brief discussion followed with Superintendent Beaudoin pointing out there is a grey area between Fundraising and Donations. Donations go through the Principals and funds are distributed equally, this is a Title IX issue. The reason for the policy is to maintain equity and balance in a compliance driven environment.

The current policy came about because some organizations were following the rules and others were not. MERSD assumes the liability for all extracurricular activities and the policy needed to be clearly defined. It is not a policy specifically for athletics it is school wide: debate, journalism, DECA all programs. All fundraising goes through the Principals and the protocols need to be followed. There is a separate Donations Policy, Superintendent Beaudoin will provide.

Ms. Riordan asked if the Committee would be interested in hearing questions from the Athletic Task Force. All questions from the Task Force will be reviewed by the Committee.

Negotiation Team (Sarah Wolf/Julie Riordan) – Report

Full day training on Friday, January 26, 2018.

6) Superintendent’s Report

Athletic Philosophy:

Provide Ms. Riordan with the general direction she is tasked with as a representative of the School Committee. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated, School Committee members are representatives of the community and will help define the philosophy and community expectations for MERSD Athletic Program.

Ms. Cameron suggested the Committee identify separate programs for Middle School and High School – a clean break between the programs. As suggested by Ms. O’Neil the consultant who evaluated the Athletics Program, committee members agreed.

Ms. Wolf asked, is the Task Force for High School? And questioned if the Middle School should have its own Task Force. Ms. Weld and Ms. Fitzgibbon indicated the Task Force is made up of 18 members. Members are high school parents, parents of younger children and members of the community who do not currently have children enrolled in MERSD.

Superintendent Beaudoin suggested clarification for the discussion:

1. There is no Middle School Athletic Program. It is an arm of the High School program and students filled teams in the High School to field a team. MERSD does run a Middle School soccer division.
2. Take Middle School out of High School, how will we pay for a robust intramural program for Middle School? MAC, Parks and Recreation and the Y are options.
3. Constituents expectations of sports teams in Towns and the role these teams play in preparing children for High School sports teams.

Ms. Cameron restated Committee's position for the Task Force: The School Committee has an interest in separating Middle School and High School athletic programs.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion covering a wide range of topics: whole child, core values, coaching for coaches, rules, options for Middle School, after school activities, school spirit, Middle School identity, dedicated Athletic Director, cut no-cut teams, MIAA, feeder program for High School, waivers for younger players to play with High School teams and more.

The conclusion of the conversation was the importance for Middle Schoolers to have a Middle School experience. Superintendent Beaudoin would like for Principal Maino to be part of the conversation and perhaps put together a group to talk about the future of Middle School sports.

Ms. Cameron asked Ms. Riordan if she had what she needed. Ms. Riordan indicated she would report to the Committee what is discussed at Task Force meetings. She is looking forward to working collaboratively with the Task Force and predicts the work will help to reshape the MERSD athletic program.

Superintendent Beaudoin pointed out, if the School Committee philosophically believes that it is not advantageous to have Middle School students playing competitive sports, then there should be no waivers. These are difficult decisions and will need to be fully discussed. The best person to be having discussions with about Middle Schoolers is Principal Maino, she is the resource for these conversations.

Continue Superintendent's Report:

- Moving Forward on Ruler and Core Values
- Music program was great.
- High School Athletic Task Force meets 2/1/2018.
- SRO – Safety meetings on board with need for an SRO. The leadership team is in support of having a School Resource Officer. The position needs to be staffed with the right person, experienced with working with adolescents.

Budget Updates:

Projected Retirements	\$350K
Reduction left	(\$550K)
Reserves Back Up	\$200K
Retiree Health Offset	\$50K
Health Care	<u>\$75K</u>
Total	\$325K
	(\$225K)

Full Day K on Wed. \$8K, Eliminate Late Buses \$25K, Solar Savings \$10K, Essex Green Community \$10K, HS Student Activity Fee \$20K, Retirement Replacement Offset \$5K, Summer Work All Dept. \$60K, Hiring Cap \$30K.

Total (for above) \$168K

Shortfall (\$57K)

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the gap of (\$57K) does not account for potential new hires to cover Special Education needs and the need to address enrollment bubble at the High School with additional new hires. The following are additional considerations to address the shortfall and potential increase in spending.

1. Classroom reduction in the elementary school reducing the number of classes to 2 sections.
2. Programs not core requirements – K6 Elementary Foreign Language program is an example.
3. Role of reserves – should this be considered? Superintendent is hesitant to use reserves for new hires.
4. Additional areas to cut include AP classes, Arts, Music and specialty courses at the Middle and Elementary schools. However, deep cuts may result in the District not meeting contractual obligations.
5. Decisions do not need to be made until March.
6. These decisions are never easy, there is no upside to the proposed cuts. The District is plugging a hole not advancing anything.

These steps buy the District time and stop the bleeding; however, the problem needs to be fully explored in negotiations with the teacher's union. This is a Health Care issue. The District has no

choice but to provide health care for the employees. There has been no out of control speeding the problem is part of a national health crisis.

Ms. Cameron asked if it would be possible to ask the Towns for help to get through this year. The question remained open.

The Committee reviewed per student costs and teacher's salaries. MERSD is close to the state average for both while maintaining top tier performance by District students.

An outstanding question posed by MBTS Finance Committee member, Mr. Weld, regarding mandated costs incurred annually by the District. Initial estimates indicate that the mandated costs for the District are 72% to 75% of the total budget.

7) New Business – Mr. Urbas update

Solar Panels need to be installed by March 31, 2018. Installation will take 4 weeks. Work will be taking place during school hours. Principals are aware and the company doing the installation will work with minimal impact, however, they will be visible. All employees have been through the CORI process.

Town of Essex has included Essex Elementary School in their Green Grant program and will be contributing \$215K to 3 projects at the school. Immediately saving the District \$10K.

8) Continued Business – covered in Superintendents Report

9) Adjournment

Ms. Erdmann moved to adjourn, Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hunter