



## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES August 20, 2019**

<b>Meeting:</b>	School Committee
<b>Date:</b>	August 20, 2019
<b>Location:</b>	MERMHS Library
<b>Attendees:</b>	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Ken Warnock Eric Bourke
<b>Absent:</b>	Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Ann Cameron Caroline Weld
<b>Guests:</b>	Scott Valentina, District Manager, Chartwells and Paula Graham, MERSD Food Service Manager, Larry Fleming, Accountant
<b>Recorded by:</b>	Gail Hunter

**A. Call to Order** – Ms. Erdmann called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

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

**2) Chairman's Report** – Ms. Erdmann stated she had attended the Athletic introductory meeting and Freshman Orientation.

**3) Consent Agenda** –

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Budget Transfers
- Out of State Travel
- Minutes

*Mr. Warnock moved to accept the Consent Agenda (stipulating there were no minutes to approve); Mr. Bourke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **4) Sub-Committee Reports – Subcommittee Organization FY 20**

Organization of subcommittees was postponed to the September 3, 2019 meeting, when the full Committee is available to discuss.

#### **5) Continued Business**

- School Committee 2019-2020 Goal Setting

School Committee Goal Setting was postponed to the September 3, 2019 meeting, when the full Committee is available to discuss.

- SRO Discussion – Continued

At last evening's MBTS Board of Selectmen's meeting there was no hesitation regarding the SRO position was the impression Ms. Erdmann received. Mr. Warnock stated the outstanding question was how the funding was going to be handled. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated if the Committee agreed the District would use General Funds and if necessary, Reserve Funds to cover the position.

The SRO position is necessary to assist the District with managing students, families and building relationships within the communities. The more the District wraps around students and families the better off we are all going to be.

Hiring is a collaborative process with the communities and could begin as early as September with the position posting according to the previously presented MOU. Hiring Committee would include two chiefs and District staff.

Mr. Warnock thought it was important to address concerns some parents had around Civil Rights of students. The SRO position is not a policing and enforcement position and that will be highlighted in information shared with the Communities.

Final discussion regarding the SRO will take place at the meeting on September 3, 2019.

- Memorial Building Project Update

Superintendent Beaudoin reported everything with Memorial School construction and readying for school opening is on schedule. Teachers are setting up their classrooms this week and Principal Willis is sending out updated arrival and departure maps to parents, the result of the most recent walkthrough with W.T. Rich. Principal Willis is also attempting to identify crossing guards for school year 2019-2020 and not having a lot of success. He hopes to start the year with 2 crossing guards in place and will continue to advertise hoping to attract additional candidates.

Ms. Erdmann asked about the invoice for GEO Tech regarding vibration monitoring. Mr. Urbas stated this was part of the W.T. Rich pre-construction survey process to be able to determine if neighboring properties were damaged during the construction process. Additionally, W.T. Rich is monitoring seismic activity related to construction and is able to report accurately seismic levels measured.

Mr. Warnock asked if there had been many noise complaints during the summer. Superintendent Beaudoin stated there had been a few (estimating 4) and they were handled without further issue. Mr. Urbas stated the District is well supported by the Project Team.

- Budget Update
  - FY 19 Budget Closeout and FY 20 Outlook

Mr. Urbas stated going into the Budget process for FY 20 it was anticipated it would be a tight year, specifically Personnel costs were the tightest ever projected. Moving forward Mr. Urbas anticipates providing the School Committee with monthly updates, in part thanks to the work of Mr. Fleming completed in the area of personnel reporting.

The primary areas of Budgetary concern are: Salaries, Health Insurance, Out-of-District Placements, Facilities and Travel. Health Insurance is doing slightly better than projected, however, the new HRA component calls for the District to spend up front and will require a new forecasting tool. The impact on the budget at this point is difficult to project.

FY 20 budget is completed in February. In the fall the budget is reviewed and updated with changes since February. Following this review the Committee is asked to approve budget transfers in the area the budget exceeds projections.

Out-of-District Placements are currently tracking to budget, however, there were new move ins and placements that did not fit in with current District programming and there maybe additional unanticipated costs in the Out-of-District Placement budget.

Although Dr. Collins is great at projecting the budgetary needs of her Department and forecasted effectively for FY 20 this year is challenging. It looks like the District will need to use in addition to the Circuit Breaker funds for FY 20 it will also need to use the Circuit Breaker funds for FY 21. Assuming Out-of-District placements exceed 125% over current costs the Department of Education has additional funding in the form of Extraordinary Relief which provides the School District with one-time assistance. This will likely impact the FY 21 budget.

Ms. Erdmann asked if the costs of Out-of-District placements were not as alarming as initially thought in June 2019. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the concerns ebb and flow. If a move in has a legitimate plan it is the District's responsibility to meet the needs of that plan. The needs will be closely monitored.

- Lunch Program Review & Fee Recommendation

Mr. Urbas introduced Mr. Valentina and Ms. Graham to the Committee and acknowledged their excellent work in managing the District's program with Chartwells. He stated Mr. Valentina is an outstanding partner, responsive to questions and concerns. Ms. Graham's management of the School Lunch Program has maintained a high level of service and great employee satisfaction as proven by the low employee turn-over. Additionally, Ms. Graham has reduced the unpaid meal balance for the District with her individual communication with parents.

The school lunch program has also benefitted from the support of Mr. Fleming who has updated programming to interface with the State to pre-identify students for free and reduced lunch. Parents will be notified if they qualify eliminating the need to apply and reducing the amount of paperwork in the District office.

#### Overview:

- Continued trend of improved financial performance, thanks to Chartwells: 3 straight years of financial improvements, FY 19 best year on record for student participation, and all-in cost management (small operating profit, excluding fringe), Minimal staff turnover, strong on-site supervision and Strict compliance with DESE guidelines for school nutrition/healthy foods.
- Request School Committee approval to transfer \$68K into Food Service Revolving Fund to close FY 19 operating deficit. Loss includes fringe, which was budgeted outside of revolving with other District employee benefits, during insourcing years. FY 19 all-in loss is \$19K less/better than FY 18; \$30K better than FY 17 and 50% improved from pre-Chartwells era.
- Request \$0.50 meal price adjustment for FY 20, last updated in FY 12: DESE review recommended increase to maintain compliance, currently below peer Districts, need to align with MERSD's 3-cycle for fee updates and diminishes need for continued subsidization of Food Service with funds that are better directed to educational program.

*Mr. Warnock moved to transfer from available funds \$68,444 to the Food Service Revolving Fund account; Mr. Bourke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Warnock moved to approve the proposed meal price adjustment of \$0.50; Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Wolf asked if the School Lunch Program had been able to use produce from the Green Team garden. Ms. Graham stated it had but the volume was limited. As a result, a large salad was made with a sign indicating made from the garden. This year the Team focused on fruit trees and there is some fruit but likely not enough. Memorial School also had a garden and the crop was harvested and displayed in the lunchroom. Ms. Graham is working with supervising teachers to coordinate their efforts with the Lunch Program.

- Non-META Employment Agreement Updates

Superintendent Beaudoin stated edits to the Support Personnel Benefits (Non-META Employees) are updates to work agreements in the Policy Manual. The updates reflect the new

agreements with META and carry through specifically to Support Personnel with regard to Health Insurance. Additional edits reflect previous agreements eliminating steps and providing an annual increase for Non-META employees of 2.5%.

- **Booster MOU**

The Memorandum of Understanding is to memorialize the one academic year trial agreement between the MERSD and the Manchester Essex Athletics Boosters (Boosters) regarding advertising on school premises.

Nature of Agreement: Boosters will rent space from MERSD for placing advertisements, and will pay MERSD a rental fee, as part of the MERSD Facility Rental process. Boosters will be responsible for securing and negotiating with advertisers. Advertising income will be collected by and become property of Boosters for its use. MERSD will charge rental fees on a per-sports-season basis (fall, winter and spring) for each advertisement placed.

Rental Fee: \$100 per fence section (between fence posts) per sports season. \$100 per gym wall section per season.

The District has the right to pre-approve the advertisements. Ms. Wolf asked for clarification regarding the Boosters charging a rental fee and up-charging advertisers. Ms. Erdmann clarified: all advertising dollars ultimately come back to the District with funds deposited in the Athletic Revolving Fund. Ms. Erdmann and Mr. Warnock indicated the Nature of Agreement language and the Rental Fee language needed to be the same.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the MOU would be polished, shared with the Boosters and reviewed at the next School Committee meeting.

## **6) Superintendent's Report –**

Superintendent Beaudoin provided a preliminary report on staff and enrollment indicating numbers were still shifting and she would provide final numbers at the next meeting.

The District added 23 new staff: 6 teachers retired, 8 teachers left or resigned and there was some shifting of staff within the schools. New staff orientation is scheduled for Thursday, August 22, 2019.

Enrollment is 1,390 with 159 new students: 93 Kindergarten, the District graduated 99 to 100 students Superintendent Beaudoin stated the District is replacing a class.

There were 19 new students in Memorial School, no new students in Essex, 3 in Middle School and 27 new students in the High School. At this time there are 494 students enrolled in the High School which is the largest number of students in the High School during Superintendent Beaudoin's tenure. Recap will be more accurate at September 3, 2019 meeting.

Teachers are back on Monday with orientation and meetings on Monday and Tuesday. The District will be ready for students on Wednesday morning, August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**7) School Committee Comment** – There was no additional School Committee comment.

**B. Adjourn**

*Mr. Warnock moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**School Committee Future Meetings:**

- September 3, 2019
- September 17, 2019