

**Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting
Thursday March 18, 2021
7:00pm**

Zoom Recording ID 984 3632 5753 & Password 016661

<https://zoom.us/j/98436325753?pwd=V1Nqc3lJM01wREwrYUFTcEp1QlVUZz09>

Members Present: Sarah Gold, Meagan Taylor, Sarah Fox, Emily Barron

Also: John J. Buckey, Superintendent
Nan Murphy, Assistant Superintendent
Michelle Cresta, Director of Finance
Matt Fox, Veterans Middle School Principal
Amanda Rivers, School Nurse
Greg Ceglarski, Athletics Director
Dr. Jessica Benedetto, Presenter

I. Initial Business and Public Involvement

1. Call to Order
Ms. Gold called the meeting to order at 7:03 and it was noted that Mr. Harris would not be attending the meeting.
2. Commendations
 - a. Building based commendations-Veterans Middle School Principal, Matt Fox
 - Nurse, Andrea Wigoski was commended for tracking over 200 self-reported COVID cases
 - Students, Leslie Dexter and Jared Kaplowitch were recognized for scheduling up to 30 vaccination appointments
 - The volunteers in the cornerstone leadership program were acknowledged for all of the events they have coordinated over the year
 - b. School Committee Commendations
 - Ms. Gold commended the students for wearing their masks and following procedure
3. Student Representative – Dan Howells
 - Football won their first game of the season against Beverly last Saturday
 - School Social Worker, Mr. Eid-Reiner has been holding zooms to reflect on the year
 - Jewel Tones came in 2nd in their virtual international quarter final competition and will move onto the next round
 - A food drive will be held the entire month of March
 - A scheduling change will happen on April 5th and the students are excited to see their friends once the cohorts come together
4. Public Comment
Catherine Martin asked that the packets for the meetings get posted earlier than a few minutes before the meeting so that community members have access to the information earlier. She also requested that more transparency surrounding fundraising be shared prior to fundraising beginning.

II. Consent Agenda and Action Items

1. Minutes:
February 4, 2021
Ms. Fox noted that a parents name was incorrectly spelled. She also mentioned that the minutes should reflect her concern regarding what she felt was a discrepancy with the pool testing guidance from the state with what Ms. Rivers presented. She requested that both Ms. Martin and Ms. Gold's statements be added to the record of the minutes.

Ms. Gold made a motion to accept the minutes from February 4, 2021 with the addition of comments made by Sarah Fox. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed, 4-0.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Barron-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Fox-yes

III. Superintendent Report

1. Transportation Presentation-Dr. Jessica Benedetto

Dr. Buckey commended Dr. Benedetto for her work in proposing a transportation plan and welcomed her to present her vision noting that it did have a fee associated with the plan that the school committee should consider.

Dr. Benedetto recommended beginning a bus pilot program in a neighborhood to bus students in all grades that would expand bussing throughout the town. She informed the committee that the pilot program could begin at the new Brown School. Her plan included busing routes and options for students outside of the 2 mile radius and an option for students to pay for a bus pass for those that live within the 2mile radius which could help support the costs of maintaining school vehicles. Dr. Benedetto also noted the Safe Routes to School walking safety audit and its findings.

2. Pool Testing Update-Amanda Rivers and Greg Ceglarski

Dr. Buckey shared an update on pool testing sharing data points on the number of tests completed, the size of the pools and what percentage of the pools consisted of staff participants. Some information on the athletics pool testing was included. Dr. Buckey also informed the committee that a decision to extend the program beyond the April 18th date had not been confirmed yet as more guidance would need to be shared regarding the long-term costs.

3. In-Person Instruction Update

Superintendent Buckey shared that K-6th students started back at five days a week as of last Monday and things have been going well. It was shared that transportation concerns due to the combining of cohorts was brought up and that drop off and pick up plans were being reassessed.

Assistant Superintendent, Nan Murphy informed the committee that she would like to propose a full day of learning for Kindergarten students that would be non-fee based for the rest of the year. She further shared that morning hours would be spent on content while the afternoons would be spent outside experiencing curriculum focused on a more hands on approach.

Dr. Buckey explained that the team continues to plan for the April 5th in person return and that distancing guidelines and the best plan for eating lunch together was being evaluated.

A conversation about the impact of the case spread due to lessening distancing guidelines took place.

4. Kindergarten-8th Grade Math Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent Murphy shared that the math committee met earlier that day further sharing that members were not only meeting with vendors to choose and select evidence based curriculum but to also model it for other educators. Superintendent Murphy shared that a final presentation is scheduled for Thursday. She informed the committee, unlike the other presentations, the curriculum being presented on Thursday did include an assessment component. It was explained that the committee budgeted a number for a new math curriculum taking all of the presentations into consideration since a decision regarding which curriculum to use had not been made as of yet.

The committee asked clarifying questions related to budgeting, the curriculum spanning two buildings and the professional development training that would be provided.

IV. Finance Organizational Support

1. Schedule of Bills

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the identified schedule of bills totaling \$217,757.74. The motion was moved by Ms. Fox and seconded by Ms. Barron. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes

Ms. Barron-yes
Ms. Fox-yes

The motion passes, 4-0.

2. Student Opportunity Act Budget Plan

Assistant Superintendent, Nan Murphy explained that the sum of the funding from the Student Opportunity Act totaled \$90,690 of which \$70,690 would be allocated for a Math Interventionist, \$10k would be allocated toward professional development for the MTSS-multi-tiered system support and the final \$10k used for a summer literacy program.

Concerns were raised about one time funding for recurring positions.

Ms. Gold asked for a motion to approve the outlined plan for expenditure of the \$90,690 from the student Opportunity Act. The motion was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Ms. Barron. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Barron-yes
Ms. Fox-yes

The motion passes, 4-0.

3. FY22 Budget Update

Ms. Cresta shared a budget tracking sheet noting the FY21 budget, the budget categories, and one time funding that would need to be added to the FY22 budget. She included the budgeting for the new Brown School and also shared the area in which there were budget decreases. It was noted that there was around \$286k to spend before hitting the target budget number. Ms. Cresta shared the budget requests in order of priority that the leadership team determined together a few weeks prior. Ms. Cresta informed the committee that the anticipated budget was projected to be \$42,501,122.

Ms. Taylor noted the many variables to consider before finalizing a budget number reminding the community that the school would continue to work with the Town to address any adjustments in funding.

Ms. Fox clarified that there would be an \$800k + budget deficit pending approval of all listed priorities to which Ms. Cresta confirmed.

Ms. Fox recommended the process for the public hearing be confirmed ahead of time.

A conversation about developing a Strategic Plan took place. It was shared that the plan since the summer retreat was to begin a Strategic Plan at the start of the Spring given the circumstances surrounding COVID.

V. School Committee Communications and/or Discussion Items

1. Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) MCAS Discussion

Ms. Gold discussed the option to join a petition to waive participation in MCAS testing to which Assistant Superintendent, Nan Murphy responded that the ability to determine where learning deficits may lie would be difficult without assessment data. She explained that the assessment data is used for staff to inform classroom instruction for the next school year. Ms. Murphy did acknowledge the complexities involved with administering the testing during the current learning environment where more time on in person learning could be lost due to the testing schedules that would be implemented. The benefits and implications with administering testing were discussed. Although no formal vote was taken, it was decided that Ms. Gold would send a letter to the state representatives in support of the petition.

2. Review of Policies

a. BEDH-Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

Ms. Gold suggested removing number 6 and adding the last sentence of number 6, the sentence that reads, “under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members” into number 3. She explained that it was discussed with an MASC representative how public comment functions confirming that public comment was not a time for dialogue, debate or discussion amongst community members but that the committee could address questions as deemed appropriate. Ms. Gold noted the addition of the sentence addressing questions “deemed appropriate by the chair” to number 8 of policy BEDH.

Ms. Fox requested that the phrase “or by majority vote of the committee” be added to number 8 in reference to answering questions deemed appropriate to respond to.

3. Subcommittee and Liaison Updates

- Facilities is awaiting an assessment and will meet as soon as a report is available to review. Ms. Gold voiced her concern with the facilities subcommittee not meeting regularly.
- Metco students have returned to full day in-person learning
- Friends of METCO will be fundraiser for the Tyrone Bumper Scholarship
- Through METCO Inc, Marblehead applied to the RIDES program which stands for reimagining and integrating diversity and equity in schools. The program will go through November and a plan will be created.

4. Building Project Update

Ms. Gold shared that Mr. Harris shared that Marblehead Electric completed their work for underground power to the new school.

Ms. Fox also shared the mural was approved along with the landscape budget.

VI.

Closing Business

1. New Business
2. none
3. Correspondence

Ms. Gold noted the two pieces of correspondence pertaining to the petition to support students and a letter from community member, Kate Thomson writing in support of allocating budgeting for a communications position.

4. Public Comment

Erin Noonan thanked the committee for splitting public comment and the efforts to respond to community members concerns regarding public comment. She also spoke in favor of adding a learning loss discussion to a future agenda item.

Catherine Martin spoke about the focus and role of facilities subcommittee members.

Jennifer Brennan thanked Ms. Gold for discussing the potential increase of cases as a direct impact of lessening social distancing as quarantining could impact a lot of families.

5. Adjournment

Ms. Gold adjourned the meeting at 10:01pm.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Dimier, Secretary
Marblehead School Committee*

Approved August 3, 2021

