



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
OPEN MEETING MINUTES  
REORGANIZATION MEETING #1897  
April 1, 2025**

**Members Present:** Thomas Hatem                      Methuen                      Chairperson  
                                 Zoila Disla                      Lawrence  
                                 Annemarie Faris                      Andover  
                                 Bradley Jones                      Methuen  
                                 Julio Mejia                      Lawrence  
                                 Edinson Mercedes                      Lawrence  
                                 William Tarbox                      North Andover

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** John N. Lavoie                      Superintendent-Director  
                                 Brenda Richardson                      Assistant Superintendent  
                                 Susan Lally                      District Recorder

---

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hatem called the meeting to order at 5:45PM.

Chairman Hatem requested an item to be added to the agenda for Out of State Travel Requests (2).

**MOTION:** Ms. Faris moved to add "Out of State Travel Requests" (2) to the agenda for approval.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18935

**2. REORGANIZATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chairman Hatem reported that we are here tonight for the reorganization meeting that according to our bylaws needs to be done on April 1, 2025.

*a.) District Recorder*

**MOTION:** Ms. Faris moved to appoint Cheryl Dennis as District Recorder

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Mejia

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18936

*b.) Assistant Clerk*

**MOTION:** Mr. Jones moved to appoint Susan Lally as Assistant Clerk

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18937

*c.) Clerk*

**MOTION:** Mr. Jones moved to appoint Superintendent Lavoie as Clerk

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18938

*d.) Assistant Treasurer*

Chairman Hatem asked for nominees for Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Tarbox serves in this roll currently.

**MOTION:** Mr. Jones moved to nominate Mr. Tarbox for Assistant Treasurer.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Mejia

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18939

*e.) Vice Chairman*

Chairman Hatem asked for nominees for the Vice Chairperson, Mr. Mejia serves in this roll currently.

**MOTION:** Ms. Jones moved to nominate Mr. Mejia for Vice Chairperson

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Faris

**VOTE:** Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla        N

Mr. Jones        Y

Mr. Mejia        Y

Mr. Mercedes N

Mr. Tarbox       Y

Ms. Faris        Y

Mr. Hatem        Y

5, yes', 2 no's

Motion Carries

#18940

*f.) Chairperson*

Chairman Hatem asked for nominees for the Chairperson, Mr. Hatem serves in this roll currently.

**MOTION:** Ms. Faris moved to nominate Mr. Hatem for Chairperson

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla        Y

Mr. Jones        Y

Mr. Mejia        Y

Mr. Mercedes N

Mr. Tarbox       Y

Ms. Faris        Y

Mr. Hatem        Y

6 yes', 1 no

Motion Carries

#18941

*g.) Seating Chart*

No seating was changed.

### 3. SCHOOL UNIFORM DISCUSSION

Supt. Lavoie reported that there are pictures in the packet that will show an example of what a uniform could like. Ms. Faris wanted to revisit the vote on school uniforms from a previous meeting. I am all for students taking pride in themselves and having good self-esteem, as long as they are appropriately dressed, I am ok with the school policy in place. In the interest of continuity and learning I am moving to rescind the vote as previously passed on January 21, 2025 requiring students to wear a uniform.

**MOTION:** Ms. Faris moved to rescind the vote as previously passed on January 21, 2025 requiring students to wear a uniform and to enforce what is already in place in the student handbook.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mercedes N

Mr. Tarbox Y

Ms. Faris Y

Ms. Disla N

Ms. Disla stopped the roll call to express her opinion regarding this vote. She reported that this is not right and this should not have been brought up in this meeting which is for reorganization. She additionally asked why this meeting is not being recorded. We came here for one reason to look at examples of uniforms, not to rescind any votes. Chairman Hatem reported that this item was on the agenda. Ms. Disla reported this discussion on uniforms was agreed to look at samples only. Voting on this right now is wrong and that the motion should not be carried out at this meeting. Ms. Faris reported that she would like to continue with her motion. It should be handled like any other motion, it either passes or it does not. Mr. Mercedes reported that we were suppose to agree on the clothing, not make a motion on whether there will be uniforms or not. We had already discussed this several meetings ago and it was unanimously voted to move forward with uniforms. Chairman Hatem reported that he can carry this motion over to the next meeting. Supt. Lavoie reported this discussion and vote is appropriate because it was on the agenda, as long as the chairman agrees and it has been posted. Mr. Mercedes reported that this meeting should be recorded. Chairman Hatem reported that it is being recorded, just not live streamed. Typically, we do not live stream these types of meetings. Mr. Mejia reported that we are in a conference room that is not accessible to the public and because this meeting is not streaming, no one knows this meeting is happening. Supt. Lavoie reported that this discussion can postponed until the next meeting. Ms. Faris reported that last year's reorganization meeting, which was her first meeting as a member was in this room. There were other topics on the agenda, such as the Student Opportunity Act. I think I am within my rights to try to rescind the uniform vote. Ms. Disla reported that she still believes that this meeting was only to look at samples. Supt. Lavoie reported that any member has a right to any motion. To clarify, this motion is just to rescind the uniform vote and keep what we have in place. Ms. Disla reported that we had the school lawyer at a previous meeting who reported it is difficult to tell students what to do with dress because they have rights to express themselves, making it hard to enforce what we have in place. That is why we decided to go with the uniform. We need to be more openminded on what the committee needs to do. The agenda must say we are going to rescind the vote. Today is not the right time. Let's do things right. Mr. Jones reported that he brought dress code up last year because a parent asked him about students and teachers dress codes. I have always liked uniforms. What I didn't realize is that Freshman and Sophomores have split days and can't be changing in the middle of the day. Ms. Disla reported it will be easier to control the switching of the uniforms, then inappropriate clothes. Uniforms just make sense and we are not giving it enough attention. Ms. Faris reported that we voted unanimously for uniforms, but it wasn't clear. I thought I was voting on a committee to be formed of teachers, parents, students and administrators. That kind of committee would be necessary. Chairman Hatem reported that the original policy was created by administrators, teachers, students and parents. in which he was a member of that committee. They all had input. Ms. Faris reported that she does not believe uniforms will work, given she has worked in the discipline office for 28 years. The makeup of the school having shops, academics, freshman and sophomores makes it difficult. By the time students are juniors and seniors, the attire improves. What I am looking for is no exposure, writing or ripped stuff. That is in the handbook.

If we do enforce uniforms and a student doesn't come in with a uniform, what would be the consequence? We have four people in the discipline office and 2000 students. Most parents are not home and can't bring in the uniform, therefore penalizing the student and school because the learning will go down. I don't honestly think that a uniform will work at this school. We didn't think it through and I don't believe it is necessary. I once again want to make the motion to rescind my vote. I made a mistake.

**VOTE:** Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mejia Abstain

Mr. Mercedes No

Mr. Tarbox Yes

Ms. Faris Yes

Ms. Disla No

Mr. Jones Yes

Mr. Hatem Yes

3 yes', 2 no's', 1 abstain

Motion Carries

#18942

Mr. Mercedes expressed his disappointment by the vote because we all voted yes for uniforms. We all represent our communities and this decision should be in the best interest for our students. We are here to represent our towns and cities that elected us to do the best for our communities. I don't believe that requiring to wear a uniform is going to be worse than wearing whatever you want. We haven't been able to control this in years. We are wasting hours of our time here on something that was already decided. It will be easier to control 2,000 orange shirts than whatever they have on. I feel that this has been a waste of my time. Parents in my community find it difficult to dress their students up, such as when I was a student here. I lived through that and I wished I had a uniform. Chairman Hatem reported that he had a similar situation when he attended high school here and said you are not alone. Mr. Mercedes reported that it is very disappointing however, it is everyone's right. We need to all work together and all be united in the best interest of the students. We need to teach the students how to dress for school and work. In their own time, they can express themselves.

#### **4. OUT OF STATE TRAVEL**

Supt. Lavoie explained the reason for adding these two out of state travel forms for approval at this meeting. It will allow them to get better rates for hotel and airfare.

**MOTION:** Ms. Faris moved to approve Supt. Lavoie to travel to Washington DC on May 14-16, 2025 to attend the Third District Day in Washington, DC, Estimated Cost: \$1,398.00

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18943

Chairman Hatem reported that Melissa Martel and Janice Ayala Technology will attend a conference on Ivisions previously known as Budget Sense. Supt. Lavoie explained that the software can be utilized in so many other ways and would like them to attend the workshop which is in San Antonio, TX.

**MOTION:** Mr. Jones moved to approve Melissa Martel and Janice Ayala to attend Tyler Connect 2025 Event, May 11-14, 2025, San Antonio, Texas, Estimated Cost for both: \$7,367.00.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18944

## 5. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** Mr. Mejia moved to adjourn at 6:30

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Tarbox

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18945

Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Lally  
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie  
Superintendent-Director