



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES March 5, 2019

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	March 5, 2019
Location:	MERMHS Learning Commons
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Co-Chairperson Ken Warnock Ann Cameron Sarah Wolf Caroline Weld Julie Riordan
Absent:	
Guests:	Spencer Meek, Student Representative
Recorded by:	Gail Hunter

A. Call to Order – Ms. Erdmann called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Business Meeting Open Session

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

2) **Student Report** –

Mr. Meek informed the Committee he had taken an on-line Spanish 1 course through Middlebury. He enjoyed the structure of the program and thought like independent study it was a great learning experience.

Ms. Riordan asked about students taking additional language courses other than French or Spanish on-line, Spencer knew of a friend who had taken Dutch on line. Superintendent Beaudoin stated a student had taken Mandarin and Ms. Riordan thought a student had taken an Arabic course. The course catalogue indicates on-line courses are budget sensitive. There is no District policy regarding on-line courses.

Spencer believes on-line courses should be offered and encouraged for students to expand their learning experience. He is currently taking an Ed Ex course and thinks its great.

Ms. Cameron asked if he had a resume? Spencer replied he has a scientific resume he created for his internship. Ms. Cameron believes its important for students to understand how to pull all of their skills and experiences at MEHS into a comprehensive resume.

Ms. Erdmann asked Spencer how it felt coming back after vacation? Spencer enjoyed his vacation and spoke about school spirit around the end of basketball season for both the boys' and girls' teams. He appreciated the t-shirts provided by the Boosters and attendance at both games was high. Spencer also mentioned the Drama Club's production of *Big Love* he said it was really interesting, it was a great opportunity for the production to be seen by students and it was really cool.

3) Chairman's Report – The Chairman did not have a report this evening.

4) Consent Agenda –

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes 2/5/2019

Ms. Erdmann asked about Green Street Power invoice – Mr. Urbas replied Green Street Power is the energy company the District partnered with. Green Street owns the equipment (solar panels) and bills us like National Grid will bill for electricity.

Ms. Erdmann also asked about the Water Filtration costs. Mr. Urbas stated the costs support bubblers which were originally a generous contribution. The filtration system plugs into the buildings plumbing and filters water to the bubblers. The bubblers encourage kids to drink more water, save on disposable cups and a generally are a positive for the District.

Ms. Cameron stated Essex has award winning water and the District does not need to pay to filter water in Essex.

Ms. Cameron asked additional questions about on-line learning charges and how many students were participating in on-line courses? Additionally, she asked if the District has thought any more about encouraging students to take on-line classes? Questions will be discussed and answered later.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passes with Ms. Fitzgibbon abstained.

Ms. Weld moved to approve the Minutes of January 29, 2019, Ms. Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5) Sub-Committee Reports

a) Elementary Facilities/MSBC (Ms. Weld and Ms. Cameron)

Ms. Weld stated the Committee had met on Tuesday, 2/26/2019 and are still in the Design Development phase of the project working on the first Early Release Package which covers site setup, preparation and demolition. Early Release Package costs are estimated at \$2M or 5% of the total budget.

Ms. Weld went on to state the Building Committee Sub-Committees are busy working on planning and zoning to acquire necessary permits. The first community meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2019, 42 Abutter Letters have been sent out in preparation for the Abutters Meeting.

The Committee is communicating with all involved parties and Ms. Weld feels it is under control.

b) Finance Sub-Committee (Ms. Cameron and Ms. Erdmann)

Finance Committee has a collaboration meeting scheduled for March 15, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. to touch base following up on discussions with Essex and for further clarity.

c) Policy Sub-Committee (Mr. Warnock and Ms. Fitzgibbon)

The Policy Sub-Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, March 11, 2019. Ms. Erdmann asked if the Merrowvista trip was taking place this year? It is taking place this year.

d) Negotiation Team (Ms. Wolf and Ms. Riordan)

According to Ms. Wolf negotiation were active.

6) Continued Business

- Memorial School Building Project
Vote to enter into Project Funding Agreement with MSBA

Details of the agreement have been approved by District Counsel and were forwarded to Committee members prior to this evening's meeting. Superintendent Beaudoin stated if there were any questions the Committee could discuss the questions prior to the vote. There were no questions regarding the Project Funding Agreement.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the Project Funding Agreement with MSBA, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Preliminary School Choice Projections

Superintendent Beaudoin stated there were 128 applications for School Choice this year. 55 applications for grades K-5 with 10 students likely to be accepted. No students will be accepted into the MS/HS (grades 6-12). Historically 9th grade is second only to Kindergarten for popularity of applications, but the MS/HS is an area the District is working to find efficiencies to manage high class numbers and will not be adding students.

In accepting School Choice students, the District aims to fill the slots of graduating students. There are 10 slots to fill for school year 2019-2020. Memorial and Essex Elementary Schools will be accepting 10 students. Superintendent Beaudoin will study enrollment numbers in detail through March and into July. In April the lottery will be pulled, however, families will not be informed in which school their child will be enrolled until July 2019. Allowing time for new enrollments to be processed and final evaluation of openings in the Elementary Schools to be determined.

Ms. Riordan asked about how Superintendent Beaudoin felt about placing children in Memorial School while phasing and construction is going on. Superintendent Beaudoin stated if parents had been following the project, they would be aware children will be in a new facility as early as 2021. Children are accepted into School Choice and will remain the Elementary School they are enrolled in.

- FY 20 Calendar

The Committee reviewed the DRAFT 2019-2020 District Calendar. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the blacked-out sections represented early release dates and those dates are to-be-determined.

There are two questions for the Committee to consider this evening. 1) The first 2 days before Labor Day in 2018 were extremely hot and due to the excessive heat both days were half days. Many teachers felt this created an ease for students acclimating and believe it would be good to begin the school year with 2 half days. 2) Holiday Break – both Christmas and New Year Day are on Wednesdays this year should there be a two-week closure?

The Committee did not support the addition of two half days. Last year the half days were due to excessive heat and that could happen again at any point during September 2019. Additionally, families may not return for 2 half days. Ms. Cameron expressed concern for child care issues for some families. Mr. Warnock thought it impacted flexibility for adding half days due to other related weather issues, like hurricanes.

The Committee took a straw poll and unanimously agreed to keep two full days prior to Labor Day.

The Committee unanimously agreed to a two-week break Holiday Break.

7) Superintendent's Report –

Superintendent Beaudoin's report this evening addresses the fun stuff:

- ✓ The girls' and boys' basketball teams did a great job.
- ✓ The swim team qualified for State finals taking place on Friday, March 8, 2019
- ✓ Indoor track team broke lots of records
- ✓ *Big Love* was amazing
- ✓ Robotics Club finished in the top 10
- ✓ Literacy Assessment is underway
- ✓ At the March 19th meeting Principal Puglisi will attend to update the Committee on the search for a new Athletic Director and Dean
- ✓ May 21, 2019 Special Ed Review

Legal Costs: Ms. Cameron asked Superintendent Beaudoin and Mr. Urbas to speak to the District's legal costs indicating that in the notes Superintendent Beaudoin had forwarded to the Committee the legal costs totaled \$26K less than half of last year and down from previous years.

Last year's legal expenses were inflated due to Freedom of Information Requests. Mr. Urbas stated the District's legal expenses are steady and under budget.

Ms. Erdmann indicated the late start discussion for today was cancelled, however, she remains interested in learning from other Districts how they processed their discussions.

Ms. Fitzgibbon would like to add the ADL discussion regarding expanding to the Lower Grades on the next agenda.

Meetings:

March 13, 2019, 7:00 p.m. General Community Meeting to inform the public about the School Building Project.

March 27, 2019, 7:00 p.m. Invitation event for neighbors to take them through the process and address their concerns.

May 8, 2019, 7:00 p.m. Discuss phasing and plans for occupancy during construction.

C. Executive Session

The School Committee Business Meeting concluded and will not reconvene this evening.

Mr. Warnock moved the Committee to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiation strategy and pending litigation, Ms. Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote: Ms. Erdmann, Ms. Fitzgibbon, Mr. Warnock, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Weld, Ms. Wolf and Ms. Reardon – all yes.

School Committee Next Meeting – March 19, 2019 – MERMHS Learning Commons