



**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES April 14, 2020**

<b>Meeting:</b>	School Committee
<b>Date:</b>	April 14, 2020
<b>Location:</b>	Webex
<b>Attendees:</b>	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Sarah Wolf Ken Warnock Caroline Weld Ann Cameron Eric Bourke Lukas Shan, Student Representative
<b>Absent:</b>	
<b>Guests:</b>	Jason Waldron, Facilities Manager. META Representatives, Jake Foster EES Playground Committee, Kompan Representative
<b>Recorded by:</b>	Gail Hunter

**AGENDA**

- A. Call to Order** – Ms. Erdmann called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
- B. Business Meeting Open Session**
  - 1) **Public Comment** – There was no public comment prior to the meeting.
  - 2) **Student Report** –

Lukas stated his entire classes are participating in zoom meetings for every subject. Faculty office hours through zoom have also increased and the number of hours he is studying has increased from 3 to 3.5 hours to an additional amount of time depending on the subject.

Mr. Warnock asked about third quarter grades. Lukas responded most students are in contact with their teachers and teachers are making information clear regarding grades. Mr. Warnock asked if Lukas had suggestions for doing things better. Lukas suggested Friday as a U Block day.

Ms. Erdmann asked about timing of posting assignments. Lukas stated teachers were on top of posting assignments. Ms. Cameron asked if anything was a surprise and was there anything that might be considered a silver lining. Lukas stated all assignments and classes are fine.

3) **Chairperson's Report** – Ms. Erdmann did not have a specific report this evening.

4) **Consent Agenda**

- Acceptance of Warrants –
- Minutes –

Approval of the Minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

*Ms. Cameron moved to accept the Consent Agenda, Ms. Weld seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Warnock, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Erdmann, Ms. Weld and Ms. Wolf voting yes.*

Ms. Cameron asked about repairs to MEMSHS roof, she specifically asked if the repair was a surprise and was there additional damage to the floor of the gymnasium. Mr. Waldron stated there were some leaks in the gymnasium roof that were being monitored for about a month. The holes were in the roof membrane what caused the holes is unclear. There was no significant damage to the roof or the gymnasium floor. Repairs have been made and the roof has been determined to be in excellent shape.

5) **Sub-Committee Reports**

- Elementary Facilities/MSBC (Caroline Weld/Ann Cameron) – Report

Ms. Cameron reported there was a School Building Committee meeting on Monday to review the impact of Covid-19 on the school building project. The Committee is reviewing delays in material deliveries and work force reductions. Ms. Cameron indicated there would be additional meetings in the coming weeks. Ms. Erdmann stated the Building Committee was reviewing available information daily and prior to recent delays the project had been progressing on time and on budget.

- Finance Committee (Ann Cameron/Shannon Erdmann) – Report

Ms. Erdmann reported the Budget Collaboration Group is a meeting of MERSD Superintendent, Finance Director and School Committee members with the Towns including members from the

Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and Town Administrators. During the most recent meeting Town budgets was on the top of the agenda. Mr. Federspiel, Town Administrator for Manchester reported Manchester's new goal for FY21 was to achieve a 0% tax increase for residents by cutting the originally proposed Town budget by \$660K. He requested the support of District by cutting \$150K from the proposed Manchester budget which would require the District cutting their proposed budget by \$230K.

Ms. Cameron indicated the spirit of the conversation was collaboration in a time of uncertainty. She noted the unknowns around the economy, Town revenues and the possibility of salary reductions that would likely impact the Towns. She indicated there were a lot of unhappy people facing tough decisions and no one can predict this year or the next. However, collaboration is going to be more critical moving forward and this is not where the Collaborative Group anticipated being at this time.

- Policy Committee (Eric Bourke/Rachel Fitzgibbon) – No Report
- Negotiation Team (Sarah Wolf/Ken Warnock) – Report

Ms. Wolf and Mr. Warnock met with META and presented the District's plan to work through April vacation. The union representatives discussed the overwhelming impact of home schooling on parents and teachers.

Mr. Warnock indicated the group had met for six to eight hours over the past week. The conclusion of the negotiations was April vacation week will include Monday and Tuesday off giving parents and teachers a long weekend and break from the current challenges of home schooling and come back to work on Wednesday through Friday. The June end of year date would be moved forward to account for the additional three days of work during the April vacation.

Mr. Warnock stated he wanted to thank the union representatives for helping him understand the impact on social emotional learning, family upheaval and for their willingness to work collaboratively.

*Ms. Wolf moved to amend the FY20 MERSD calendar to include April 22, 23 and 24 as school days, Mr. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members present voting to approve.*

Ms. Cameron wanted to thank teachers who were helping families in need by providing gift cards. Ms. Erdmann added the thanks and recognition of the School Committee.

## **6) Superintendent's Report –**

- School Closure: School Operations & Online Learning Update

Superintendent Beaudoin had a few quick updates:

- MCAS are officially cancelled.
- Returning to school on May 4, 2020 is likely not going to happen. The District is hoping to have time to get back at the end of June.
- April break will allow for Monday and Tuesday off.
- There is a possibility the District will need to realign the FY21 budget.
- School Choice and the 2020-2021 School Calendar will be addressed during May School Committee meetings.

## 7) Continued Business

- Essex Elementary Playground Replacement Update

Mr. Foster initiated the update on the EES Playground by stating the process had moved from January 2020 to today 3 months later. Mr. Foster thanked everyone engaged in the process Mr. Warnock, Mr. Urbas, Superintendent Beaudoin, and all Committee members. Mr. Foster indicated he was happy to have Kampon on board. He noted with help from community members over 250 Essex residents had engaged in the survey and with grass roots community participation the next phase will move forward.

Mr. Foster indicated the Kampon representative can speak to the elements of design for the playground focusing on flow of play equipment options, size, and uniqueness to meet the needs of the student body while supporting areas of active play with quiet areas.

Mr. Urbas thanked EES committee members and stated the Kompan representative was online with images of the proposed playground. The images included equipment on a poured in place base. The representative stated the poured in place base was approximately one half of the total cost of the playground. The representative discussed the need for fall zones to meet current safety standards and to be ADA compliant as mandated in current playground designs. He indicated the lead time for the main structure was longer and would require the approval of the School Committee to place the order.

Ms. Cameron stated the playground looks great and asked about the life span of the structure. The structure comes with a ten-year warranty and a free 2-year maintenance program. The annual maintenance includes power washing and assessment of the components. Kampon's representative indicated the proposed playground would be the first safe wooden playground installed in the Boston area in twenty-seven-years. Ms. Cameron stated the playground was beautiful and looked a lot like Eagle's Nest.

Mr. Foster stated the size of the playground was 6,800 square feet versus the original Eagle's Nest which was 8,000 square feet. Mr. Urbas pointed out the budget supported the square footage required for the number of students enrolled at Essex Elementary School.

Ms. Weld asked where the School Committee and District were in planning for possible Covid-19 budgets and does the EES playground line up against possible budget cuts. Mr. Warnock stated he supported the Capital spending for EES playground and Memorial School playgrounds.

Ms. Weld suggested pausing to see what cards the District is dealt. Ms. Cameron wondered what was at stake if the School Committee waits to decide.

Mr. Urbas stated the District will need to replace the playground at some point. The current proposal provides an excellent price for the proposed equipment. He acknowledged we do not know what is going to happen in the future. Capital reserves are utilized during difficult times. He believes the School Committee should keep the process moving and understands it is challenging to get something in this year.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated there is an interconnection with multiple projects and the operational budgets, Memorial School and where this project fits in. She understands the hesitancy of members.

*Ms. Weld moved to approve the EES Playground as presented with an eye toward value engineering not to exceed \$250K, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. [The motion was withdrawn.](#)*

*Ms. Cameron moved to approve a Purchase Order in the amount of \$300K, Ms. Fitzgibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Fitzgibbon, Ms. Cameron, Mr. Warnock, Ms. Wolf and Ms. Erdmann voting yes, Ms. Weld voted no, and Mr. Bourke abstained.*

- School Choice & FY21 Calendar Timeline

School Choice and FY21 Calendar Timeline will be discussed in May 2020 meetings.

- Budget Updates
  - FY20 Budget – Shutdown Management

Mr. Urbas stated the School Committee had agreed in keeping with the Governor's recommendation to maintain payroll active for support services and contracts agreed to under MA General Law. In an attempt to keep buses rolling and staff ready to go in the event schools reopened. Additionally, coaching stipends will be paid for work initiated in season. The stipends will be split according to contractual agreements for first stipend payment but not the second payment.

- FY21 Budget – Timeline/Shutdown Implications

Ms. Cameron stated talks with both Towns will continue. She asked Superintendent Beaudoin and Mr. Urbas to review the FY21 Budget and look at ways the District could identify \$230K. The School Committee will review recommendations the first week in May.

Mr. Warnock had no comment on the budget, however he wanted to recognize Superintendent Beaudoin and Mr. Urbas for the great job the District did moving into remote learning and preparing students for next year. He acknowledged they were doing multiple things at once and it is likely an overwhelming job.

Mr. Urbas asked the School Committee to approve the standard monthly invoices requesting a motion to approve the 1060 Vouchers.

*Mr. Warnock moved to approve the 1060 Vouchers, Ms. Cameron seconded the motion. The motion was approved with all members present voting yes.*

**8) School Committee Comment** – There was no additional School Committee comment this evening.

**9) Adjourn** –

*Ms. Cameron moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Weld seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*