

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
March 9, 2023 - 7:00 pm
Medfield High School Library Media Center

PRESENT: Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - Chair
Timothy Knight - Vice Chair
Michelle Kirkby - Financial Secretary
Leo Brehm - Member at Large

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools
Michael LaFrancesca - Director of Finance and Operations
Andrea Moores - Secretary
Lily Keefe - Student Representative

NOT PRESENT: Jessica Reilly - Recording Secretary

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with a Roll Call:

- Timothy Knight - present
- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Leo Brehm - present
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - present

PUBLIC INPUT

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, shared an independent legal opinion pertaining to discussions from the last School Committee and School Building Committee (SBC) meetings about whether a non or not a non sitting School Committee member post election can continue on the SBC according to the by-law. The independent legal opinion stated that a School Committee member cannot remain and if a qualifying member's term expired and that member would not be eligible for the appointment. Ms. Potts said she reached out to Mark Cerel and he informed her that matters pertaining to the School Committee/School Department were outside his general scope of services and not under his purview.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of Minutes - Regular Session 2/13/2023
- Annual 8th Grade Trip to Washington DC
- Donations:
 - \$4761.00 from the Memorial PTO to the Memorial Gift Account for bus transportation for the Kindergarten field trip to the Acton Discovery Museum and for 1st grade's field trip to the Stonybrook Wildlife Sanctuary
 - \$21,789.15 from the MCPE to fund the following approved grants:
 - \$1989.16 to the Memorial Gift account for the A Windows into Diverse Book Characters: I can read all by myself Grant
 - 3000.00 to the Memorial Gift Account for the Wellness/PE Treasure Storage and Gaga Ball Pit Grant
 - \$3609.99 to the Memorial Gift Account for the Classroom Sensory Tools Lending Library Grant
 - \$5690.00 to the Wheelock Gift Account for the It's All About Books Grant
 - \$4500.00 to the Wheelock Gift Account for the Wellness Interactive Whiteboard Grant
 - \$3000.00 to the District Gift Account for the Mental Health Basket Grant

Prior to the vote, Blake Middle School Principal, Nat Vaughn, presented a quick overview of the 8th Grade Annual Trip to Washington, DC to the School Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Leo Brehm, seconded by Ms. Michelle Kirkby to approve the Consent Agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Initial Discussion Potential Bus Fees - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Instituting bus fees is a topic that the School Committee has revisited every couple of years. Dr. Marsden reminded the Committee that the law requires districts to transport all students in grades K-6 if they live beyond a mile and a half from school. However it is not required to transport students in grades 7 -12. Many districts implement bus fees and there are only a handful of districts in Metrowest that do not charge a fee. He explained implementing bus fees would help to close the budget gap. One of the major concerns with implementing bus fees is the increased traffic at the secondary level which is a valid concern for the District since the middle and high school are on the same campus.

Ms. Kirkby shared her concern that bus fees would be an additional cost for parents who pay for full day kindergarten. Ms. Kirby suggested surveying surrounding districts for comparison in regards to bus fees. Dr. Marsden and Mr. LaFrancesca explained that many schools surrounding Medfield have a neighborhood school structure where the majority of elementary students live within walking distance of the school they attend. Dr. Marsden explained that Holliston and Hopkinton would be used as a comparison because the structure of both districts are similar to Medfield.

Mr. Brehm was concerned about how less students potentially riding the buses would impact the schools which are already congested during drop off and pick up times.

Ms. Kirkby asked if there was a cost range per student. Mr. LaFrancesca stated that the average cost was between \$180 to \$400 per student and would recommend the median of that which is \$200.00. A cap per family would also be established.

The School Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for Dr. Marsden and Mr. LaFrancesca to move ahead with exploring the possibility of implementing bus fees in FY 2024. The information will be shared with the Committee at the April meeting.

School Committee Member Transitions - discussion led by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke

Ms. O'Shea Brooke explained that new School Committee member roles will be voted in at the April 13th meeting which is the first meeting after the Town election.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke shared a draft of the School Committee Member Onboarding document. She asked the Committee to review the document and bring feedback to the next meeting. Once this document is complete it will be posted to the School Committee webpage on medfield.net Dr. Marsden shared his feedback pertaining to the last bullet under the section: What types of topics are covered during SC meetings? The bullet states that the superintendent is responsible for recording the minutes of the executive session. Since this is the responsibility of the Recording Secretary not the Superintendent, Dr. Marsden recommended removing that statement from the last bullet of the document.

Other items since posting on March 7, 2023

There were none at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

FY24 Budget - Update - Dr. Jeffrey Marsden, Mr. Michael LaFrancesca, and Ms. Michelle Kirkby.

Dr. Marsden provided the latest update on the FY24 Budget to the Committee. He explained that there is still a gap for a balanced budget and the exact amount has not yet been disclosed. The next meeting with the Warrant Committee is scheduled for March 14th and he will have more budget information at the next School Committee meeting.

He informed the Committee that the Town was planning on a change to their insurance plan design for FY24 which would result in significant savings but it hasn't been successful in union negotiations.

Ms. Kirby explained that FTEs have increased but the increase is not specifically for teachers. The increase is due to the addition of mental health positions that support the mental health and social emotional needs of the students in the District. Dr. Marsden explained that the FTE breakdown by positions by year can be found on the school profile page on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

School Building Committee - Update - Dr. Jeffrey Marsden and Ms. Michelle Kirkby

Ms. Kirby updated the Committee on the March 2nd School Building Committee Meeting. The meeting included a tour of the Dale Street school and the School Building Committee did vote to support the Board of Selectmen and School Committee to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The SBC also discussed Ms. Kirkby's proposal to keep Jessica Reilly on the Committee after the Town election through the end of the school year. The majority of the SBC was onboard or indifferent to keeping Jessica Reilly on the board. One SBC member did not support the idea. Ms. Kirkby strongly supports keeping Ms. Reilly on the SBC if she agrees to do so. Mr. Brehm stated that School Committee continuity on the SBC is important. Ms. O'Shea Brooke will reach out to the school attorney regarding the by-law and bring that knowledge back to the Committee for further discussion at the March 23rd meeting.

The SBC is also looking for information from the School Committee. Ms. Kirkby reminded the Committee that their initial letter to the Board of Selectmen to kick off the process stated that the School Committee would look at grade configuration. Her suggestion was to hold a Workshop to discuss this before Anna Mae and Jess roll off the Committee. The Committee chose Thursday, March 16th at 9:00 am to hold the Workshop. The Workshop will focus on grade configuration, class size, student enrollment, and staff FTEs.

Dr. Marsden asked the Committee to vote to direct him to develop the Statement of Interest (SOI) for the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) which will be voted on at the March 23rd meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to direct the Superintendent to develop the Statement of Interest for the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

The motion passed unanimously.

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey - Follow Up - Dr. Jeffrey Marsden and Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke

Ms. O'Shea Brooke expressed her gratitude for all the work that has been done with the Adolescent Health Survey and feels that it is important to share this information with the Community at large. Ms. O'Shea Brooke has reached out to Mary Fitzgerald, Russ Becker, Kathy McDonald, and Dr. Marsden to solicit feedback and ideas for a Community Forum. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss, plan, and brainstorm ways to loop in the families of the younger children in the District. The goal is to hold this forum before the end of this school year.

Community Engagement and Communication - Update - Ms. Michelle Kirby and Mr. Timothy Knight.

Ms. Kirkby did not have any major updates for the Committee but stated that the upcoming Strategic Plan Focus Groups will be a great opportunity for engagement. Mr Knight agreed.

Strategic Plan Update - Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that the Central Office Team met with Teaching and Learning Alliance (TLA) consultants on March 7th and established dates for public forums and surveys. Usually TLA holds five focus groups but has agreed to do eight focus groups at no additional cost. The focus groups are as follows:

1. Leadership
2. Town Officials
3. SEPAC Board
4. School Committee
5. High School Students
6. Elementary Staff
7. Secondary Staff
8. Community/Parent/Guardian

As soon as the date is set for the Community/Parent/Guardian Focus Group it will be communicated in various ways to the Community. Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that ETA incorporates a Strategic Plan Steering Committee in their process. This Committee will consist of administrators, staff members, teachers, community members, and two School Committee members and meet five to six times beginning in April.

Ms. Kirkby asked when the plan would be ready to be presented to the School Committee. Dr. Marsden explained the time frame is between June 22 and July 1 of 2023. The plan will be formatted as a word document and sent to the graphic designer which will take about six weeks to complete. The goal is to present the completed strategic plan to the School Committee at the August meeting or first meeting in September.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked if the meetings would be hybrid. Dr Marsden stated that all the meetings are done in person.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked how the Steering Committee parents would be chosen. There will be four parents on the Committee and the plan is to reach out to parents who are already engaged in the District through PTO and Site Council.

Policy Update - Mr. Timothy Knight and Mr. Leo Brehm

Mr. Knight updated the Committee on the progress on the Policy Manual Project with MASC. He explained that the Policy Subcommittee is reviewing the Medfield Policy Manual in comparison with the MASC recommended policies. The Policy Subcommittee will bring the suggested revisions back to the Committee at the School Committee meeting and follow the established policy review process. Once the review process is complete the School Committee would vote to approve the policies "in-form". Each section will be approved "in-form" and when all sections have been voted "in-form" the School Committee will vote to rescind the current Policy Manual and replace it with the new Policy Manual. The goal is to present one section a month at a School Committee meeting which will kick-off the review process. Mr. Knight and Mr. Brehm are optimistic that with guidance from Jim Hardy they will be able to make significant progress. Mr. Knight informed the Committee that Section A should be ready for the March 23rd School Committee meeting.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Marsden updated the Committee on the Tri-County Superintendents Legislative Breakfast that was held on March 3rd and the Tri-County Superintendents Legislative Priorities for Fiscal Year 2024. Ms. O'Shea Brooke also attended and found the event to be highly successful.

Student Representative Lily Keefe updated the Committee on the Student Council Activities happening at the High School. Kindness Week is scheduled for the week of March 13th.

Dr. Marsden spoke about the winter athletic tournaments and the upcoming high school production of "Chicago".

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to adjourn the meeting
The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 pm.

EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS

- 3/9/2023 Meeting Narrative
- DRAFT 2/13/2023 School Committee Meeting Minutes
- 8th Grade Annual Washington DC Trip Letter to School Committee - 2023
- 8th Grade Annual Washington DC Trip - Fall 2022 Presentation
- Donations 3/9/2023
- DRAFT School Committee Onboarding Process
- Tri-County Superintendents Legislative Breakfast Presentation - March 3, 2023
- Tri-County Superintendents FY24 Legislative Priorities
- School Committee Meeting Video: [📺 School Committee Meeting \(03-09-2023\)](#)

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary

Minutes Approved by School Committee: March 24, 2023