

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Zoom Remote Meeting
March 23, 2021

PRESENT: Jessica Reilly - Chair
Leo Brehm -Vice Chair
Timothy Knight - Recording Secretary
Meghan Glenn - Financial Secretary
Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - Member at Large

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools
Michael LaFrancesca - Director of Finance and Operations
Andrea Moores - Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 4:26 pm after the Executive Session to discuss issues related to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. (Medfield Teachers' Association Units A & B)

Ms. Jessica Reilly stated that the School Committee voted to accept the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) pertaining to the return to full in-person learning with the Medfield Teachers' Association Executive Session, and that once the MOA was signed it would be uploaded to the district website.

A Roll Call was taken to open the meeting:

- Leo Brehm- yes
- Timothy Knight- yes
- Meghan Glenn -yes
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke -yes
- Jessica Reilly- yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Timothy Knight, seconded by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke to approve the meeting minutes from 1/12/21 and 1/28/21.

A Roll Call Vote was taken to approve the meeting minutes from 1/12/21 and 1/28/21.

- Leo Brehm- yes
- Timothy Knight- yes
- Meghan Glenn -yes
- Jessica Reilly- yes

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke lost her connection with the meeting at 4:28 pm and did not participate in the Roll Call Vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Timothy Knight, seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm to approve and retain the Executive Session minutes from 1/28/21, 2/9/21, 2/11/21, 2/22/21, and 2/26/21.

A Roll Call Vote was taken to approve and retain the Executive Session minutes from 1/28/21, 2/9/21, 2/11/21 2/22/21, and 2/26/21:

- Leo Brehm- yes

- Timothy Knight- yes
- Meghan Glenn -yes
- Jessica Reilly- yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke lost her connection with the meeting at 4:28 pm and did not participate in the Roll Call Vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Town Meeting Article 7 (Discussion/Vote) - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Ms. Jessica Reilly informed the committee that the Warrant Committee had recommended removing Article 7 from the warrant after the committee was presented with the proposal by Dr. Marsden and Mr. Michael LaFrancesca to close FY21 Budget deficit.

Dr. Marsden presented the plan and explained in detail the savings/reductions to the FY21 Budget that would eliminate the current deficit. Dr. Marsden explained that these savings are due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the hybrid learning model implemented in September of 2020. The school department will no longer require Article 7 to supplement the FY21 Budget.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke was able to reconnect to the meeting during Dr. Marsden's presentation.

After Dr. Marsden's presentation the meeting was opened up to the School Committee to share their feedback and ask any clarifying questions.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke asked if Article 7 wasn't withdrawn could the funds be used to offset COVID-19 expenses. Dr. Marsden said since the budget deficit was closed his assumption is that the Board of Selectman would not support the request.

Ms. Meghan Glenn wanted to know why the article was written to cover COVID related expenses when it was her understanding that the article was for the Town to release the FY21 Chapter 70 funds to the school department. Dr. Marsden stated that the article was written to cover the projected deficit at the time and the specific funds used to cover the deficit would be decided by the Town.

Mr. Leo Brehm shared his understanding that the FY21 Chapter 70 funds were held by the Town to be used in the future if needed to close a budget deficit as well as an addition to the Town's free cash credit rating purposes. Mr. Brehm stressed the importance of balancing the FY21 Budget as well as having the proposed budget approved for FY22.

Ms. Meghan Glenn agreed that it was important to have the proposed FY22 Budget approved but also expressed her frustration with the FY22 Budget being level funded. She shared her concern that the budget cuts made in FY21 will never be brought back if the district's budget continues to be level funded. She stated her belief that the FY21 Chapter 70 funds should be returned to the school department. Dr. Marsden reminded the committee that the Town allocated \$820,000 of CARES Act funds to the school department which they were not required to. Ms. Meghan Glenn also shared her concern that approximately \$200,000 was removed from the capital budget.

Dr. Marsden informed the committee that the Town of Medfield has historically spent more on the school department as required by net school spending. He stressed the importance of working with the Town to balance the FY21 budget and to secure the proposed FY22 budget. The proposed FY22 budget will allow the district to keep the current staff and programs and add an additional adjustment counselor position.

Ms. Jessica Reilly acknowledged Ms. Glenn's concerns and stated that in these unprecedented times it is important to be cognizant of the overall financial picture in the town along with understanding how the school department budget impacts the town.

Mr. Timothy Knight asked why Article 7 was written specifically for COVID-19 expenses and who is responsible for writing the article. Dr. Marsden informed Mr. Knight that the Board of Selectmen and Warrant Committee are responsible for warrant articles. Mr. Knight stated that he was in support of the proposed FY22 Budget, closing the FY21 Budget deficit but was not in support of the language written in Article 7.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke asked if the proposed FY22 Budget that was voted by the School Committee could be changed. Dr. Marsden explained that the Town has a balanced FY22 Budget for next year and the school department's proposed FY22 Budget is included. Ms. O'Shea Brooke acknowledged Ms. Glenn's frustrations but also stated the importance of working with the town to balance the FY21 Budget and secure the budget for FY22. Ms. O'Shea Brooke stated that she was grateful that next year's budget will keep current staff and add an additional school adjustment counselor for the district.

Mr. Leo Brehm asked for clarification on the reasons why the School Committee should vote to remove Article 7. Ms. Jessica Reilly explained that a vote would support the Warrant Committee's request to the Board of Selectmen to remove Article 7 from the Town Warrant.

The School Committee members engaged in a conversation pertaining to the relationship between the School Committee and the Town of Medfield as it relates to the budget process and fiscal responsibility. The committee also discussed the pros and cons of the potential vote to withdraw Article 7 from the Town Warrant and if it is essential for the School Committee to vote on the matter.

Ms. Jessica Reilly opened the meeting to public comment on Article 7:

There was no public comment at this time.

A motion was made by Mr. Leo Brehm, seconded by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke to withdraw Article 7 from the Town Warrant.

A Roll Call Vote was taken to withdraw Article 7 from the Town Warrant:

- Leo Brehm - yes
- Meghan Glenn-no
- Tim Knight - abstention
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - yes
- Jessica Reilly-yes

The motion passed with 3 yes votes, 1 no vote and 1 abstention.

Other items since posting on March 19, 2021- None

Next Meeting – April 1, 2021

A motion was made by Mr Leo Brehm, seconded by Mr. Timothy Knight to adjourn the meeting.

A Roll Call Vote was taken to adjourn the meeting:

- Leo Brehm - yes
- Tim Knight - yes
- Meghan Glenn-yes
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - yes
- Jessica Reilly-yes

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 pm.

Minutes Approved by School Committee: April 15, 2021

EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS

- DRAFT 1-12-2021 School Committee Minutes
- DRAFT 1-28-2021 School Committee Minutes
- 3/18/21 Memo to the School Committee and Warrant Committee
- Article 7 Language
- School Committee Meeting Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy55k-ySM94>

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary