

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
March 24, 2022

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

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

The meeting was called to order after an 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), and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for non-union personnel or contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Superintendent).

The Chair asked for a Roll Call to begin the meeting

- Timothy Knight - present
- Meghan Glenn - present
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke -present
- Leo Brehm -present

The Regular Meeting began at 7:08 pm.

Ms. Jessica Reilly was present at the time of the Roll Call but did not state present during the Roll Call.

PUBLIC INPUT(on matters not on the agenda)

There was no public comment at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Timothy Knight, seconded by Ms. Meghan Glenn to approve and retain the Executive Session minutes from 2/10/2022, 2/24/2022 and 3/10/2022.

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Timothy Knight, seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from 2/10/2022 and 3/10/2022.

The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

DECA International Finals Trip - Atlanta, GA – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that Medfield High School Students will be competing in the DECA International finals scheduled for April 22 -26 which will be held in Atlanta, GA. He informed the Committee that 170,000 students from 3200 schools nationwide participate in DECA. This year Medfield High School students were chosen to participate in the national final; he explained that this is an

incredible achievement and opportunity for our students. Dr. Marsden asked the Committee to approve this event for our high school students.

A motion was made by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke, seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm to approve the DECA International Finals Trip to Atlanta, GA for Medfield High School students.

The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Contract – potential vote – presented by Ms. Jessica Reilly

Ms. Jessica Reilly began the discussion by stating that being a Superintendent is one of those jobs that does not end and at any point during the span of time that one holds this position the life of a town and its children never fully shuts down and neither does the Superintendent's. As the School Committee Chair during a pandemic, Ms. Reilly explained that she witnessed first hand the 60 to 80 hour weeks with no days off that Dr. Marsden and his team, with little guidance or a guarantee of funding to get our students back into school, while still maintaining progress on the new school project. In January 2022 the Committee agreed to begin a conversation with Dr. Marsden about his future goals within Medfield. School Committees and Superintendents recognize the importance of looking at not only the immediate or short term needs of the district but also at the long term and the time it takes for initiatives to be fully implemented. Stability, recognized relationships and influence at the state level are becoming increasingly difficult to find. In Ms. Reilly's opinion, Dr. Marsden's sixteen years of experience as a Superintendent and the leadership positions that come with that length of experience has allowed Medfield, a small school district, to be heard with outsized influence. Ms. Reilly reminded the Committee that US Representative Jake Auchincloss came to Medfield to see first hand how Dr. Marsden allocated federal grant funds in innovative ways to keep students in school. In addition, 50 districts across the state opened schools with Superintendents who either did not have experience as a Superintendent or were new to that district. She explained that many surrounding districts have experienced failed superintendent searches that are costly and time consuming and something that Medfield will not need to do because we have an experienced superintendent in place. Ms. Reilly stated that she will vote to approve the extension of Dr. Marsden's contract.

Ms. Reilly stated that she and Mr. Brehm were elected to negotiate with Dr. Marsden and as a result of Executive Sessions the Committee understands what has been negotiated. She explained that Dr. Marsden will have the same contract with the same terms for an extension of three years and run through June 30, 2027. The only specific change to the contract is that a longevity bonus has been added starting at year ten, which aligns specifically with the teacher's contract.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke stated that Ms. Reilly's statement was beautifully done. She acknowledged that the past years have been difficult and that Dr. Marsden has risen to the occasion and then some. Stability of leadership is important to Ms. O'Shea Brooke and is grateful that Dr. Marsden wants to stay and continue his work in Medfield.

Ms. Meghan Glenn agreed with Ms. O'Shea Brooke's comments. She stated that stability and strong leadership is important and Dr. Marsden's leadership has been unwavering, and the District is lucky to have him. She also stated that in her opinion the contract was fair and reasonable, and in line with the teacher's compensation as it pertains to longevity. Ms. Glenn also stated that for the 10 years she has lived

in Medfield she has witnessed the many positive changes Dr. Marsden has brought to the District and knows that there is more he wants to do. She looks forward to the work that lies ahead.

Mr. Timothy Knight stated that he is in full support of Dr. Marsden. The work that he has done, understanding what motivates him and the work that he wants to continue to do in the District has reinforced Mr. Knight's support for Dr. Marsden to continue as the Superintendent in Medfield. He also stated that stability is important and he is comfortable with the contract that has been negotiated.

Mr. Leo Brehm stated that he was in full agreement with Ms. Jessica Reilly. He stated that a good school district is reliant on stability and consistency of leadership. He continued by saying that he has witnessed numerous situations throughout his career where districts have not valued that aspect. Throughout Dr. Marsden's tenure he has continued to lead and evolve the fabric of the District. An example of this is his success of bridging the gap between teachers and parents on the standard based reporting at the Blake Middle School. Mr. Brehm again stressed the importance of consistency of leadership and supported the extension of Dr. Marsden's contract.

Ms. Jessica Reilly opened the meeting to public comment on the Superintendent's Contract.

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, stated that she had seven or eight points in regards to the decision to extend Dr. Marsden's contract and made the following claims:

- Ms. Potts claimed that Massachusetts General Law places a legal limit on superintendent contracts of six years and that Mr. Leo Brehm expressed to her and others in 2019 that he was against the extension of Dr. Marsden's contract at that time because it was too early and because of the legal limit.
- Ms. Potts claimed that in 2018 the School Committee did not hold the Superintendent accountable for not holding listening sessions before the feasibility study began.
- Ms. Potts claimed that a newly elected school committee member was told by the Superintendent that they can pick the teacher they want for their child.
- Ms. Potts claimed that there have been serious complaints made about the district at the federal, state and local level.
- Ms. Potts claimed that there is not a small pool of candidates for districts looking to hire a superintendent and that there are plenty of applicants for those positions.
- Ms. Potts claimed that the Superintendent has gone behind the School Committee and has had forms signed that have not been duly approved or notarized by the Committee.
- Ms. Potts claimed that teacher retention is a problem because of a toxic culture caused by bullying from the top down and she has brought these claims to the Committee over the past eight years when she has experienced the bullying herself and the Committee has not addressed the issue.
- Ms. Potts claimed that Ms. Meghan Glenn left a document behind at Warrant Committee that had written notes on the document made by Ms. Glenn being left out of budget subcommittee meetings.

Ms. Jessica Reilly informed Ms. Potts that her time for public comment had expired and she no longer had the floor. Ms. Reilly asked Ms. Potts to clarify her claim about the document left after a Warrant Committee meeting by Ms. Glenn on behalf of Ms. Glenn.

Mr. Leo Brehm stated that the Committee should not respond to these arbitrary comments made by Ms. Potts. Mr. Timothy Knight wanted to express that the extension of Dr. Marsden's contract is in fact within legal limits. Mr. Leo Brehm reiterated again that the Committee would not be responding to the comments made by Ms. Potts.

A motion was made by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke, seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm to extend Dr. Marsden's contract with the Medfield School Committee as presented through 2027. The contract will have the same compensation terms beginning on July 1, 2022 and including a longevity bonus through the end of his contract.

A Roll Call vote was taken to approve the extension of Dr. Marsden's contract as presented through 2027

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Marsden thanked the Committee for their continued support and said that he is looking forward to keep moving the District forward and working with a great team to get things done.

Designation of Records Access Officers – vote – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that he would like to transfer the District's Records Access Officer (RAO) responsibility to Mr. Michael LaFrancesca. Dr. Marsden explained that he would be the back-up RAO for the District. He asked the Committee to vote to appoint Mr. Michael LaFrancesca as the new RAO for the District.

Mr. Leo Brehm inquired about the fees associated with a public records requests. Dr. Marsden explained that the district uses a rate of \$25.00 per hour. Mr. Brehm acknowledged that time required to respond to public records does impact the personnel and their other responsibilities. He also requested a future agenda item to discuss the legal, financial and personnel impacts of public records requests and open meeting law complaints to the District.

Ms. Jessica Reilly opened the meeting to public comment on the Designation of Records Access Officers.

There was no public comment at this time.

A motion was made by Ms. Meghan Glenn, seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm to appoint Mr. Michael LaFrancesca as the Records Access Officer for the District and for Dr. Marsden to be the assistant to the Records Access Officer.

The motion passed unanimously.

Other items since posting on March 22, 2022- None

OLD BUSINESS

DESE COVID -19 Guidance – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that there has been a small uptick of cases at the Dale Street School and he is staying in touch with DESE and the Town Public Health Nurse. At this time there is no additional guidance or information from DESE regarding COVID-19. Dr. Marsden reported that the home testing kits are still being distributed and the District continues to conduct our pooled testing program. He explained that there was a positive pool at the Dale Street School for ten students and this was the first positive pool at Dale Street in nine weeks. These cases have to be linked to an outside event. Dr. Marsden also informed the Committee that the number of participants in the District’s pooled testing has dropped considerably. He informed the Committee that many other districts have stopped their pooled testing programs but Medfield will continue with pooled testing through April vacation and then evaluate going forward.

Ms. Jessica Reilly opened the meeting to public comment on the DESE COVID-19 Guidance.

There was none at that time.

FY23 Budget Update – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that the anticipated original budget reduction recommendation by the Warrant Committee was \$217,000, but has now been adjusted to \$200,000. The revised FY23 budget request for the Medfield Public Schools is now \$39,506,948. Dr. Marsden explained that the additional 2.2 FTEs for Math and Guidance are still funded & contractual obligations will be met within this final budget number. Out-of-district tuition burdens on the FY 23 budget will be mitigated by using Circuit breaker funds to prepay some portion of tuitions, and the .20 position allocated to the ESSER III Grant will now be part of the operating budget to better ensure permanency. Dr. Marsden asked the Committee to approve the revised FY 23 School Committee budget request to the town.

Ms. Jessica Reilly opened the meeting to public comment on the FY23 Budget Update.

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, reiterated that when the School Committee votes to establish subcommittees that the Budget Subcommittee actually has the opportunity to meet to talk with the Superintendent and Finance Director so that decisions are not made without School Committee input. She stated that the budget belongs to the School Committee not the Superintendent and to leave out the Budget Subcommittee on recommendations for reductions at any point in time in the budgeting process is wrong and a disservice to our children.

A motion was made by Mr. Timothy Knight, seconded by Ms. Anna Mae O’Shea Brooke to amend the Medfield School Committee Fiscal Year 2023 School Budget total to \$39,506,948.

The motion passed unanimously.

Elementary School Project Listening Session April 7th/Additional School Committee Meeting April 14th - presented by Ms. Jessica Reilly

The Committee has previously discussed holding the Elementary School Project Listening Session with the Board of Selectmen. This Listening Session will focus on future expectations, future needs and wants from the community for a new elementary school project. The Committee offered the date of April 7th to the Board of Selectmen which they agreed to. The listening session will take the place of the Committee’s

scheduled meeting on April 7th. Ms. Reilly Suggested that the Committee reschedule the April 7th regular meeting to April 14, 2022.

A motion was made by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke, seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm, to hold the Elementary Listening Session with the Board of Selectmen on April 7, 2022 and to schedule an additional meeting on April 14, 2022.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Brehm requested that Dr. Marsden and Mr. LaFrancesca bring prospective proposals to address the current space deficiencies in the District and how it relates to the education of the special education students in the district. Mr. Brehm expressed his concern with the lack of action by the Town to meet the needs of the District's learners and the Committee needs to come up with a plan to address this. He continued by stating that the reality is that the Town is not equipped to pay for a new building and the School Committee is charged with providing the space that is needed to conduct education for the students in Medfield. The space issues at Dale Street cannot wait for a new elementary school to be built.

Ms. Jessica Reilly stated that Mr. Brehm's points are valid but the expectations for the Listening Session will solely be an opportunity for the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen to listen to the Community about a new elementary school project. Ms. Jessica Reilly suggested that a separate conversation focused on the current space issues in the District can be added as an agenda item to the April 14 School Committee meeting.

Mr. Leo Brehm lost his remote connection to the meeting at approximately 8:13 pm.

Donations – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden asked the Committee to approve the following donations:

- \$1206.00 to the Young Audiences of MA for their upcoming program "Eyewitness to a Revolution" at the Wheelock School.
- \$180.00 to the Memorial Gift Account from the Memorial PTO to apply to the bus transportation costs for the Kindergarten and 1st Grade field trips this spring.

A motion was made by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke, seconded by Ms. Meghan Glenn to approve the donations as presented by Dr. Marsden.

The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

School Rankings Presentation – presented by Ms. Christine Power

Ms. Christine Power was in attendance and gave a presentation to the School Committee on the Medfield Public Schools School Rankings in US News and World Report and Boston Magazine, in response to feedback from community members citing concerns about reports of falling rankings. The presentation covered the following:

- Methodology Differences between US News and Boston Magazine
 - Data Sources
 - Weighting

- Other Factors to determine rankings
- Boston Magazine Rankings 2010-2021 - metrics used to determine rankings & variations year to year in methodology
- US News Rankings 2020-2021 - metrics used to determine the rankings & variations year to year in methodology
- General trendline over 10 years is neutral despite wide scatter year to year on both lists .
- Ongoing Steps- Supporting Growth in Targeted Areas

Dr. Marsden explained that the purpose of Dr. Power’s presentation was to informally clear up some of the confusions surrounding Massachusetts school rankings and to shed light on how the rankings are determined. He stated that the information used within school rankings is important; rankings may contribute to additional investigation into practices & adjustments, but they should not drive what the District does every day.

Dr. Marsden reminded the Committee that the next day was DLD (Design your Learning Day). The DLD Team has worked very hard to put together a great professional development day for the faculty. This year 75 presenters from outside districts will share their talents.

Ms. Reilly, Ms. O’Shea Brooke, and Mr. Knight shared their thoughts about Ms. Glenn’s tenure as a School Committee member and thanked her for her service and contributions to the Committee and the Medfield community.

Ms. Glenn thanked the Committee for their comment and stated that being a member of the School Committee was an unbelievably positive experience. Ms. Glenn encouraged people to vote at the Town election on Monday, March 28, 2022.

Ms. Anna Mae O’Shea Brooke expressed her enthusiasm about all the student activities that have come back since the start of the pandemic. She informed the Committee that the Medfield Coalition for Suicide Prevent is preparing for Mental Health Awareness Week.

Ms. Jessica Reilly announced that the Student Council is stuffing easter eggs as a fundraiser. Families can order pre-stuffed eggs for their easter eggs/baskets. On Monday, April 4, a representative from META, which is a multi-service eating disorder association will speak about healthy eating versus disordered eating and how to identify it and get help.

Mr. Timothy Knight encouraged the Committee to read an article in Boston Magazine about youth sports.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS(anticipated schedule)

- Health Advisory Update
- Policy Manual Updates (Ongoing)
- School Choice Public Forum (May 19)

Next Meetings – Elementary School Listening Session - April 7, 2022
 Regular Meeting - April 14, 2022

A motion was made by Ms. Meghan Glenn, seconded by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS

- SC Meeting Narrative 3/24/2022
- DRAFT 2/10/2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- DRAFT 3/10/2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- DECA International Finals - Atlanta, GA
- FY23 Budget Revised
- Donations 3/10/2022
- MPS School Rankings Presentation 3/10/2022
- School Committee Meeting Video:  School Committee (03-10-2022)

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary

Minutes Approved by School Committee: April 14, 2022