

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
April 13, 2023 - 7:00 pm
Medfield High School Library Media Center

PRESENT: Timothy Knight - Chair
Michelle Kirkby - Vice Chair
Leo Brehm - Recording Secretary
Will Horne - Financial Secretary
Kristin Simonini - 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

REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES

Dr. Jeffrey Marsden called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and asked for a School Committee Chair nomination.

Mr. Leo Brehm made a motion to nominate Mr. Timothy Knight as School Committee Chair, seconded by Ms. Michelle Kirkby.

Mr. Will Horne made a motion to nominate himself as School Committee Chair, seconded by Ms. Kristin Simonini.

A vote on the motion to nominate Mr. Timothy Knight for School Committee Chair was taken.

Votes: Yes-3 Abstain-2

The motion passed.

Mr. Timothy Knight welcomed the new School Committee members and thanked them for their willingness to serve. Mr. Knight asked for a School Committee Vice-Chair nomination.

Mr. Leo Brehm made a motion to nominate Ms. Michelle Kirkby as School Committee Vice-Chair, seconded by Ms. Michelle Kirkby.

Mr. Will Horne made a motion to nominate himself as School Committee Vice-Chair, seconded by Ms. Kristin Simonini.

A Roll Call vote was taken to appoint Ms. Michelle Kirkby as School Committee Vice-Chair:

- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Leo Brehm - yes
- Kristin Simonini - abstain
- Will Horne - abstain
- Timothy Knight - yes

Votes: Yes-3 Abstain-2

The motion passed.

Mr. Knight asked for a School Committee Financial Secretary nomination.

Mr. Leo Brehm nominated Ms. Kristin Simonini as School Committee Financial Secretary.

Ms. Kristin Simonini nominated Mr. Will Horne as School Committee Financial Secretary, seconded by Ms. Michelle Kirkby.

A Roll Call vote was taken to appoint Mr. Will Horne as School Committee Financial Secretary:

- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Leo Brehm - yes
- Kristin Simonini - yes
- Will Horne - yes
- Timothy Knight - yes

The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, shared her comments pertaining to the strategic plan process with the Committee and that session held at Dale Street for the community was phenomenal. She requested that the draft of the Strategic Plan be made available to the public well in advance of the meeting in which it will be discussed. She noted that the draft of the previous strategic plan was shared with the Community in advance and proved to be beneficial.

Mike Pastore, 6 Liberty Road (via Zoom), provided his feedback to the Committee on Warrant Article 28-Citizen's Petition. He stated that he would be voting in opposition at the Annual Town Meeting. His belief is that the proposed 30 day timeline in the petition of when the hearing is scheduled versus being held is unclear. He was also concerned that 25 registered voters would be enough to set the process in motion and it's unclear if those 25 voters are committed to attend the hearing requested. If not, it could result in a hearing for a handful of people. Mr. Pastore stated his hope that the School Committee would oppose this citizen's petition and that it would not pass at the Annual Town Meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. La Francesca provided an explanation about the Medfield High School Student Activity Adjustment Journal and Blake Middle School Discontinued Student Activity Account Transfer to the Committee.

Approval of Minutes – Workshop 3/17/2023 and Regular Meeting 3/23/2023

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to approve the School Committee Workshop minutes from 3/17/2023 and the Regular Meeting minutes from 3/23/2023.

Votes: Yes-3 Abstain-2

The motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to approve the following remaining items in the Consent Agenda:

- Medfield High School Student Activity Adjustment Journal
- Blake Middle School Discontinued Student Activity Account Transfer
- Donations:
 - \$2000.00 from the Schoenfeld Family to the MHS Gift Account to support the Boys/Girls Track Program

- \$500.00 from Gail Duffy to the MHS Gift Account for the Renaissance Scholarship
- \$1430.000 from the Wheelock PTO to the Wheelock Gift Account for the field trip to the Natick Community Organic Farm
- \$1000.00 from Jordan's Furniture to the Blake Intramural Account. This donation is a result of Blake Middle School student Michael McCarthy's Coat Drive fundraiser.

The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Student Advisory - presented by Student Representatives

The following students were in attendance and presented their grade level updates with the Committee:

- Gabby Curl - Class of 2023
- Catherine Bannister - Class of 2024
- Sophie Shield - Class of 2025
- Tess Baacke - Class of 2026

Ms. Kirkby congratulated the Medfield High School Girls Field Hockey team for winning the MIAA sportsmanship award.

Mr. Horne asked Tess Baacke to speak to her previous feedback pertaining to student perspective on the C1/C2 courses at the high school. Tess shared that some students are concerned about the pacing of a class that may have a combination of C1 and C2. Dr. Marsden explained that the instruction of these courses will be differentiated to meet the needs of all students.

Ms. Simonini asked if students are experiencing the transition in high school differently based on their 8th grade cluster. Tess replied that she hadn't noticed that impact on the transition to high school but some of the students have shared concerns about not knowing what study techniques work best for them.

School Committee Representatives (2) to Strategic Plan Steering Committee – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden.

Dr. Marsden explained that two School Committee representatives are needed to join parents, students, and school leadership on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. There will be six three hour meetings that will run from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm beginning at the end of April. Four School Committee members expressed interest to join the Committee. The School Committee agreed that Ms. Kirkby and Mr. Horne would represent the School Committee on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Dr. Marsden gave a brief update on the stakeholder meetings that have taken place to date. Teaching Learning Alliance has reported that the meetings to date have been well attended and great feedback has been received. Dr. Marsden explained the teacher sessions were held during their scheduled faculty meetings which allowed all teachers an opportunity to participate. He also reported 775 surveys have been completed and submitted to date.

School Building Committee Member Appointment – Vote – presented by Mr. Knight and Dr. Jeffrey Marsden.

A new School Building Committee (SBC) School Committee Representative needs to be selected to replace Jessica Reilly who is no longer a committee member. Mr. Knight asked for a nomination.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to appoint Ms. Kristin Simonini to the School Building Committee.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kirby shared that at the last School Building Committee (SBC) meeting all members received an informational packet from the School Committee and questions regarding the information will be answered at the next meeting or two depending on how many questions there are. The next SBC meeting is scheduled for April 27th.

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that the Statement of Interest has been submitted to the Massachusetts Building Authority.

Discussion of Citizen's Petition – presented by Mr. Timothy Knight

Mr. Knight gave the Committee an overview of the Citizen's Petition - Article 28 which is on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The citizen's petition would require public hearings by the School Committee in the event that a citizen obtained 25 or more signatures on a specific topic. The Warrant Committee had asked that one or two School Committee members attend their April 25th meeting to share the School Committee's opinion on the citizen's petition. The School Committee engaged in a discussion and each member weighed in on the petition. All of the Committee members were opposed to the petition as written. Mr. Knight and Mr. Brehm will attend the Warrant Committee Meeting on April 25th.

Mr. Leo Brehm left the meeting at 7:54 pm.

Other items since posting on April 11, 2023.

There were none at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Bus Fees – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden and Mr. Michael LaFrancesca

Dr. Marsden presented a rough bus fees revenue projection if implemented in the 2024-2025 school year. This is an initial information request made by the School Committee. Additional research will need to be done if the Committee continues to pursue bus fees as a potential revenue generator.

Ms. Simonini asked Dr. Marsden why bus fees were being entertained. Dr. Marsden explained that this discussion comes up every year during the budget process. If budget reductions are warranted, bus fees are a one way to generate revenue and offset transportation costs. Ms. Simonini asked which surrounding communities have bus fees. Dr. Marsden explained that all of them do except Medway and Dover Sherborn. Dover Sherborn cannot charge fees because they are a regional school district. Dr. Marsden explained bus fee revenue generated would offset bus transportation costs.

Ms. Kirby asked if there would be administrative costs to implement bus fees. Administrative costs would be incurred but the exact cost cannot be determined until additional research is complete.

Mr. Horne shared his concern that it may be hard to fully understand how many families would actually use the bus if fees were required, especially since more families are working at home post pandemic. Dr. Marsden explained that the district's school structure adds to the complexity of instituting bus fees depending on where students reside. Mr. Horne asked when the School Committee would need to vote on this for the 2024 -2025 school year. Dr. Marsden explained that a decision would need to be made by next December/January for the following school year in order to add it to the budget projections and have ample time to notify families. He also explained that bus fees would not apply to students who receive

free and reduced lunch or for students who pay for tuition for full day kindergarten tuition. The Committee asked Dr. Marsden to do additional research to help determine whether instituting bus fees for 2024-2025 would be beneficial. Ridership, parent feedback, administrative costs, and fee structures will be included.

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

Dr. Marsden reported that there were no changes to the budget and the Warrant Committee will be taking the budget to the Annual Town Meeting. He also shared that he had received positive feedback on the FY24 Budget mailer sent to all families in Medfield.

Community Engagement and Communication – Update – presented by Mr. Timothy Knight and Ms. Michelle Kirkby.

There were no major updates to report. Mr. Knight explained to the new members that each Committee member was assigned to a school PTO. The Dale Street School and Memorial need a member to replace Ms. O’Shea Brooke and Ms. Reilly who are no longer on the Committee. Ms. Simonini will be assigned to Dale Street and Mr. Horne will be assigned to Memorial.

Mr. Horne asked if the School Committee informal conversations would continue. The Committee was in agreement that it would be beneficial to continue in order to provide opportunities for the Community to give feedback.

Strategic Plan - Update

This was discussed as part of the earlier agenda item - School Committee Representatives (2) to Strategic Plan Steering Committee.

Policy Update - presented by Mr. Timothy Knight

Mr. Knight explained the Committee’s policy review process and the MASC Policy Project process for the new members. He asked the new Committee members to review Policy Manual Section A and Section B for the next meeting.

- Policy Manual Section A and Section B - 1st Reading (**tabled**)
- Policy Manual Section C and Section D - Informational - These policies were not discussed because Mr. Knight hasn’t received these sections from MASC.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Marsden presented the following items to the Committee:

- ACCEPT FY23 Quarter 3 Report
- NESDEC Spring Enrollment Projections
- Emergency Repair Request - Fire Alarm System Replacement at Medfield High School - This is the letter that Mr. LaFrancesca submitted on behalf of the District to the division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to request a waiver not to go through the bid process in order to fix the fire alarm system at the high school sooner rather than later which has been requested by the Medfield Chief. The Select Board has approved this waiver. Ms. Simonini asked if there was a company lined up to do the work. If the District is allowed to bypass the bid process the vendor that the District has a relationship with and has worked in all of the schools will be used.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (Agenda Out of Order)

- School Choice Hearing - Dr. Marsden explained the public hearing requirement for School Choice for new members. Ms. Simonini asked for additional information about School Choice in preparation for the next meeting.
- School Start Times - Dr. Marsden stated that the concept was discussed prior to the pandemic but not beyond that.

INFORMATION ITEMS (Continued)

Dr. Marsden reminded the Committee of the Community Conversation on Mental Health and Substance Use among Medfield Students. The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Data will be presented and discussed. This event will be held on Monday, May 8th at the Memorial School starting at 6:30 pm.

Student Representative, Lily Keefe, informed the Committee that the 8th Annual Putting for Patients will be held on April 30th from 12:00 to 3:00 pm at the Medfield High School Turf Field. She explained her Senior project to the Committee which is digitizing all of the cross country and track records on a website.

Ms. Kristin Simonini made a request to solicit feedback from Medfield families who are making the choice to go private school via a survey to provide the Committee information on why families are choosing to send their children to private school. In addition, she requested the percentage of students who are attending private school from surrounding districts for comparison. It would be beneficial for the Committee to have accurate information to help dispel inaccurate information that is out in the Community.

Mr. Horne asked for some clarification regarding Open Meeting Law pertaining to speaking with Committee members. Ms. Kirkby provided clarification. The new members have received the School Committee onboarding packet. Mr. Horne and Ms. Simonini is scheduled to take the MASC Charting the Course course.

A motion was made Ms. Kirkby, seconded Ms. Simonini adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next Meeting - May 1, 2023 - meeting prior to Annual Town Meeting

EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS

- DRAFT 3/17/2023 School Committee Workshop Minutes
- DRAFT 3/23/2023 School Committee Meeting Minutes
- Medfield High School Student Activity Account Adjustment Journal
- Blake Middle School Discontinued Student Activity Account Transfer
- Donations 4/13/2023
- Projected Bus Fee Revenue 4/12/2023
- Opinion Letter - Citizens Petition for Annual Town Meeting - 4/13/2023
- Policy Manual Section A V2 - 3/9/23
- Policy Manual Section B V2 - 2/14/23

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary

Minutes Approved by School Committee: May 13, 2023