

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
November 17, 2022

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm after an Executive Session to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. (November 10, 2022 Two Open Meeting Law Complaints by Chris McCue Potts)

PUBLIC INPUT

There was none at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Medfield Public Schools Strategic Plan - presented by Dr. Scott Borstel, Director of Innovations in School Leadership, Teaching and Learning Alliance

The District is partnering with the Teaching and Learning Alliance to develop the next Strategic Plan. Dr. Borstel, the Director of Innovations in School Leadership, gave a presentation to the Committee on the process for the District's strategic plan development which will begin in the spring of 2023. The presentation covered the following phases of the strategic plan process:

- The Teaching and Learning Alliance Team
 - Dr. Scott Borstel - Director of Teaching and Learning Alliance
 - Dr. Gary Maestas - former Superintendent - Plymouth and Hingham Public Schools
 - Dr. Pam Gould - former Superintendent - Sandwich Public Schools
 - Zeff Gianetti, M.Ed. - former Superintendent - Mansfield Public Schools
- The Process:
 - Phase 1: Building the Foundation
 - Phase 2: Building the Plan
 - Phase 3: Implementing the Pla
- The Timeline:
 - Phase 1: April 2023
 - Phase 2: April - June 2023
 - Phase 3: June 2023
- Reviewed a sample of a strategic plan

The Committee had the following feedback and questions for Dr. Borstel after his presentation:

Mr. Leo Brehm inquired about the quick timeline for the strategic plan. Dr. Borstel explained that they have completed plans in a shorter time and there is value in doing so because the information remains fresh for the Strategic Planning Committee.

Mr. Timothy Knight wanted clarification on the community's role in the process. Dr. Borstel explained that during Phase 1 the collection of data comes from both external and internal sources via surveys, open forums, and the Strategic Planning Committee will have community representation.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke shared her experience from the development of the last strategic plan and shared that open forums provided an environment for rich community engagement and discussion. Dr. Borstel explained that the focus groups are where the most information is learned.

Ms. Jessica Reilly asked if remote options are available for focus groups. Dr. Borstel shared that his team has experience with both totally remote and hybrid focus groups. He explained that the hybrid version is challenging and would recommend either in-person or remote but are open to work with the District to accommodate its needs. The goal is to get good data, and they will work with the District to accomplish that goal.

Ms. Jessica Reilly asked how the new elementary school project could potentially impact the development of the strategic plan. Dr. Borstel explained that the data analysis in Phase 2 is structured to bring issues to the top of the list which become goals. If there is one goal that continually rises to the top there may be cross over actions and initiatives embedded in more than one goal.

Policy Subcommittee Appointment - presented by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke

The Committee will resume the policy manual project with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and needs to establish a subcommittee to work on this project. Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked for a Policy Subcommittee nomination.

A motion was made by Ms. Jessica Reilly, seconded by Ms. Kirkby, to nominate Mr. Leo Brehm to the Policy Subcommittee.

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair to sign the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) draft audit report with a final total facilities grant amount of \$397,806 - presented by Mr. Michael LaFrancesca

Mr. Lafrancesca provided an overview of the audit report. He explained that the MSBA has finished their audit of the Dale Street Project; once the audit is reviewed and signed off by all required parties, the MSBA will release the last portion of their project reimbursement to the town, at which point the project will be closed.

Other items since posting on November 15, 2022

There were none at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

New Elementary School Project - School Committee School Building Committee Representatives - Development of interview questions/finalize candidates interview - presented by Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke

Ms. O'Shea Brooke stated that at the Committee's November 15th Workshop, the following candidates were selected to be interviewed for School Committee representatives on the new School Building Committee (SBC):

- Patrick Duffy
- Meredith Chamberland
- Robert Worth
- Lauren Platco
- Anthony Papantonis

She further explained that Anthony Papantonis had been appointed to the SBC by the Board of Selectmen at its last meeting. Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked the Committee for feedback on Meredith Chamberland as one of their selected candidates. Dr. Chamberland comprehensively filled out the online application, but did not submit a separate letter of interest or resume as part of her application.

Ms. Kirkby stated that submitting a letter of interest and resume was not a stated requirement of the application and if it were a requirement it should have been embedded into the online application. There wasn't any language stating that the application would be null and void without the letter of interest and resume.

Mr. Timothy Knight stated that the application provided enough information to choose an applicant and agreed that there was no requirement for the letter of intent and resume. Mr. Leo Brehm was in agreement with Mr. Knight.

Ms. Jessica Reilly stated that there are four strong candidates and felt that Dr. Chamberland has excellent qualifications and longtime volunteer experience with the schools.

Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke explained that the Board of Selectmen has an established practice to receive a letter of intent and resume but her focus was on the application process modeled after the Longmeadow schools. She expressed her gratitude for the good pool of applicants and will move forward with the Committee's selections.

Ms. Kirkby questioned what the Committee would gain by interviewing the candidates since there are only two spots left to fill since the Board of Selectmen and Town Moderator have made their appointments. She stated that in her opinion the new SBC is missing educational expertise that both Mr. Worth and Dr. Chamberland could bring to round out the Committee and meet the educational criteria that is needed.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke explained the intention was for the School Committee to have an application process that included an interview. Ms. O'Shea Brooke stressed the importance of the Committee's responsibility to put forth two strong candidates and an interview provides the Committee with an opportunity to gain more in-depth information on each candidate.

Ms. Reilly shared that she appreciated hearing Ms. Kirkby's point that educational experience for the School Committee SBC representatives is important.

Mr. Leo Brehm also concurred that having representatives to focus on the educational components of the project is important especially if the Town will not be working with MBSA.

Mr. Timothy Knight stated that it is his responsibility to put the best team together and an interview process provides an opportunity to dive deeper into each candidate.

Ms O'Shea Brooke asked the Committee to select their top three questions from the proposed interview questions. The proposed interview questions were included in the School Committee meeting materials prior to the meeting. The Committee's shared their selections are as follows:

- Tim Knight: Question number 7, 9, 3
- Jessica Reilly: Question number 6, 9
- Michelle Kirkby : Question 1, 4, 7
- Leo Brehm: Question 1, 6, 9
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke: 1, 6, 2

Ms. Reilly made the recommendation to rework question number 9 to be more outward facing. Ms. Kirkby shared a recommendation to revise question number 1. Mr. Brehm liked the suggested revision to question number 1 as suggested by Ms. Kirkby. The Committee agreed to the revised question 1, 6 and 9 with a revision to be more outward facing as the final interview questions along with a two minute closing statement from the applicant as part of the SBC interviews.

Community Engagement and Communication Updates - presented by Mr.Tim Knight and Ms. Michelle Kirkby

Ms. Kirby reported that the social media communication has been going well and the feedback she has received to date has been positive. The first informal forum has been scheduled for December 3, 2022 between 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. in the conference room at the Medfield Public Library. A Google form for sign-ups will go out after Thanksgiving. Ms. O'Shea Brooke made a request that the forum information and sign-up form also be sent out via the Medfield Patch and the Hometown Weekly.

Ms. Kirkby asked if guidelines would be shared with Committee members for their participation at PTO meetings. Mr. Knight explained that the School Committee's participation in the PTO meetings is for the Committee to learn about how the PTO's operate and make connections. Committee members will report back to the Committee in May/June to report what they have learned.

Letter of Intent - Solar Power Purchase Agreement - Update - presented by the Town of Medfield Climate Action Plan (TOMCAP) Representatives Hilli Passas and Paul Fechtelkotter

TOMCAP Representatives Dr. Hilli Passas and Mr. Paul Fechtelkotter gave a presentation and were available to answer questions from the Committee on the Letter of Intent for the Solar Power Purchase Agreement. Mr. Byron Woodman from Solect Energy was also in attendance. The Energy Committee would like the School Committee to vote to accept the Letter of Intent at the next scheduled School Committee meeting. Dr. Passas explained that a signed letter of intent will allow the Energy Committee and Board of Selectmen to move forward with planning.

The presentation covered the following topics:

- Medfield's Net Zero 2050 Goal/Massachusetts Net Zero 2050 Goal
- Medfield Energy Committee recommended municipal solar projects
- Why install solar at the schools?
 - Schools have custody over the largest buildings and areas that can be use for solar

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Off-set energy use in schools
- Save money and stabilize future expenses
- Create a visible reminder that the schools intend to be part of a climate solution
- Help counteract climate anxiety and improve mental health in children of every age
- Medfield Energy Committee recommends canopies as the best solar project to implement
- Medfield Energy Committee led community education on solar timeline
- The Way Forward - Next Steps - Timeline December 2022 - Summer 2024
- Medfield Energy Committee recommends signing the Letter of Intent to:
 - Allow the Town & District to secure a position within the Eversource INTERCONNECTION queue
 - Secure a spot in the current SMART block
 - Allow SOLECT to start design and planning
 - Allow time for the MEC to educate the public about this project

Signing the Letter of Intent does not lock the District into a commitment, and there will be an opportunity in the spring for the School Committee to confirm moving forward.

The Committee had the following feedback and questions for the Energy Committee:

Ms. Kirkby asked for clarification on the difference between using the model presented versus the town/school purchasing solar panels. It was explained that the upfront infrastructure costs would be prohibitive.

Ms.Reilly expressed her concerns about increased energy costs that could potentially impact the schools operating budget. She reported that this project appeared to mitigate those costs, but that she was concerned that the visual impact of canopies might cause Community members some concern about aesthetics and town culture without outreach to stakeholders and citizens by the Energy Committee. She wanted to know how these projects would be presented to gain community support.

Dr. Marsden stated that during the Dale Street School building project it was expected that Purchase Plan Agreement (PPA) would be a better option than purchasing outright because systems may become outdated whereas in a PPA the owner is required to upgrade the system technology and inquired if this was in fact the case. Mr. Bryon Woodman stated that some of the technology will need to be upgraded and the systems do require maintenance. Solect Energy has a Services Group that monitors all of their projects online and is alerted if issues occur. This group is currently managing 600 projects in Massachusetts. If the Town owned the system a service agreement would be needed to maintain the system.

Dr. Marsden asked for clarification on what the cost savings would be per year from installing solar canopies at the High School. It was explained that the cost savings in the first year would be smaller and grow over time with the assumption that electricity rates will also increase over time. The savings vary depending on the actual electricity market rate.

Mr. Brehm inquired if there are any other benefits of having the canopies physically on the campus. Mr. Woodman explained that the canopies give protection from the weather, rain, snow, shade, and can also be used as a learning environment.

Mr. Knight inquired if there was anything outside of the service contract that needed to be addressed. Mr. Woodman stated that most things fall under the service contract.

Ms. O'Shea Brooke asked for clarification on what happens if the Letter of Intent is signed by the School Committee. Dr. Passas explained that the Energy Committee would take the lead on chaperoning the project and would be responsible for public/community outreach. Dr. Passas shared a potential timeline for public outreach and Committee members shared their feedback Dr. Marsden asked if there would be a reduction in parking spots due to the addition of solar canopies. Mr. Woodman stated that they are not anticipating losing any parking spaces. The only potential small reduction could be where the vertical canopy posts are placed. At the High School the placement of posts would be where the lawn meets the pavement, so a significant reduction of parking spaces is not anticipated.

Dr. Marden asked if a visual rendering of the project would be available for people to see how it actually will look on the site. As the project moves forward and due diligence, is complete the full engineering rendering will be available.

Mr. Knight asked for additional clarification and validation on the assumed cost savings.

Dr. Marsden asked for a list of locations where there are completed solar projects for the School Committee to see.

Medfield School Committee Policy - Informational - Medfield Public Schools Existing Policy BEDH - Public Participation at School Committee Meetings, Draft Proposed BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings, and Draft Proposed BEDH-E - Guidelines for Public Comment - presented by Mr. Timothy Knight

Mr. Knight informed the Committee that the suggested policies included in the packet are informational items for review. The Committee and public can take a look at these proposed policies before they are brought to the December 8th meeting for a 1st reading and discussion. A 2nd reading and vote would take place at a subsequent meeting.

Ms. Kirkby explained that there is a pending decision with the Town of Southborough which is likely to be decided in early 2023. It is anticipated that this decision will dictate how public comment will be structured and run for all public meetings.

Mr. Knight noted that Jim Hardy from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees will be attending the December 8th meeting to discuss several topics and the revitalization of the digitization of the Medfield Public School Policy Manual.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that Superintendents received a memo from the Operational Services Division that estimates the rate of inflation. Typically the inflation rate is between two and three percent and the memo predicted a fourteen percent increase in social service programs for FY2024. This is approximately a \$200,000 increase for Medfield. Dr. Marsden and Mr. LaFrancesca are working on the budget. The first draft of the budget will be presented at the December 8th meeting. He informed the Committee to expect an increase in Special Education due to this increased rate of inflation.

Dr. Marsden also informed the Committee that at the December meeting he will ask the Committee to approve a handbook revision which is a result of a change to MGL Chapter 71 Section 37H ¾ which is the suspension provision in the law. The Leadership Team participated in a training session with School Attorney Andrew Waugh on this change. He also explained that the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) had not yet developed a regulation even though the law is already in place. Dr. Marsden expects to get the regulations from DESE before winter break. All of the teachers and staff have been notified of the change and once the Committee approves the change to the handbook, families will be notified.

Dr. Marsden also included the ACCEPT 2021-2022 Annual Report in the meeting materials for the Committee's review


Next Meeting – December 8, 2022

A motion was made by Ms. Reilly, seconded Ms. Kirkby to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 pm.

EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS

- 11/17/2022 Meeting Narrative
- Teaching and Learning Alliance Presentation to the School Committee 11/17/22
- Memo - Strategic Plan Quotes
- MSBA Dale Street School Draft Audit Report Acceptance-Non-Acceptance Form
- Potential New SBC Candidate Questions for School Committee Appointments
- Letter of Intent for Solar Power Purchase Agreement
- TOMCAP Presentation to the School Committee 11/17/2022
- Medfield Public School Solar Summary Table
- DRAFT Proposed Policy BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings 11/17/2022
- DRAFT Proposed Policy BEDH-E - Guidelines for Public Comment 11/17/2022
- Existing Medfield Public School Policy BEDH - Public Participation at School Committee Meetings
- ACCEPT Annual Report 2021-2022
- School Committee Meeting Video:  School Committee Meeting (11/17/22)

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary

Minutes Approved by School Committee: December 8, 2022