

Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting
Thursday September 3, 2020 7:00pm
Zoom Conference Call-

<https://zoom.us/j/95957873153?pwd=SGZTS2dGYlZhWmpXTU15NVF4aVFRUT09>

Meeting ID: 959 5787 3153

Password: 691515

OR Dial In (415) 762-9988 and follow the prompts

Members Present: Sarah Gold, Meagan Taylor, Emily Barron, David Harris
and Sarah Fox

Also: Dr. John J. Buckey-Superintendent
Nan Murphy-Assistant Superintendent

I. Initial Business/Public:

a. Call to Order

Ms. Gold called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

b. Commendations

Ms. Taylor welcomed all the teachers back and thanked them for a great for a great first day on Monday.

Ms. Fox thanked all of the teachers for the extra time put in during the summer months to collaborate with administrators to get schools opened safely.

Mr. Harris thanked Cindy from the Building Committee for all of her public outreach work for the signing of the final steel beam for the new elementary school. He also recognized Gilbane and Leftfield for their support to make the signing happen.

c. Public Comment

No public comment

d. Student Representative-Dan Howells

Ms. Gold noted that Mr. Howells would join the next school committee meeting scheduled for the meeting on the 17th.

II. Consent/Action Items:

a. Minutes: 5/7/2020, 5/21/2020 & 5/27/2020

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the minutes from May 7, 2020, May 21, 2020 and May 27, 2020. The motion was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Harris. Ms. Taylor mentioned that she noticed a few typos that she would email to the Superintendent's Assistant for correction. Ms. Fox also noted that a roll call vote from the meeting on the 21st was missing and should also be corrected. Pending the mentioned corrections, a roll call vote was taken and the motion carried, 5-0 all in favor.

Ms. Gold-yes

Ms. Taylor-yes

Ms. Barron-yes

Ms. Fox-yes

Mr. Harris-yes

III. Superintendent Report:

a. Reentry Update

1. Facilities

Superintendent Buckey shared that the site assessment and remediation firm Fuss and O'Neill had recently inspected all of the school buildings for air quality. He reported that there were no outstanding concerns with the ability for air to be adequately circulated throughout the buildings which would have prevented welcoming staff back in to the buildings by September 14th. He further shared that air purifiers would be added to interior rooms with no windows

and that all MERV 13 filters would be inspected monthly. Superintendent Buckey thanked Facilities Director, Todd Bloodgood for the additional weekend hours he and members of his custodial staff worked to get everything accomplished to welcome back staff.

2. Teaching and Learning

Superintendent Buckey introduced Assistant Superintendent, Nan Murphy thanking her for all of her focused work on Teaching and Learning and developing two weeks of staff lead professional development. Superintendent Murphy shared that welcoming back everyone has been an exiting time and a warm and welcoming experience. She explained that the professional development focused on three key areas of 1) strengthening and expanding the usage of instructional technology 2) ensuring the physical and social emotional health and wellness of staff, students and families 3) implementing key initiatives to enhance classroom instruction and student experiences. Superintendent Murphy explained that new learning platforms were introduced and that staffs were provided the options of joining the professional development sessions based on their comfort level of 1) beginner 2) intermediate or 3) advanced. She further shared that a new learning platform by the name of Seesaw was introduced for grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade mentioning that it was similar to Google Classroom yet more developmentally appropriate for lower grade levels. It was also noted that Screencastify would also be available in district along with Clever which served as a hub to help organize various logins and passwords. She also explained that Aimsweb had been expanded to the plus version and could now be utilized for grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. It was also noted that twelve new teachers recently joined the district and that teacher Sally Shevory would be serving as the mentor coordinator for the district.

School committee members thanked Superintendent Murphy for the amount of work she has been able to accomplish in such a short amount of time to which Mr. Harris jokingly mentioned that it seemed like Nan had already been working for Marblehead for years.

b. Northeastern Conference NEC Fall (1) Sports Decision

Principal Bauer and Athletic Director Greg Ceglarski updated the committee regarding the possibility of a fall sports season. It was shared that the MIAA and DESE had come up with recommended sports guidelines and a flex season which would take place between winter and spring. It was also explained that season timelines were being modified and sport specific recommendations were shared that would change the dynamic of the games in an effort to keep athletes competing as safely as possible. It was also mentioned that out of the twelve surrounding and competing school districts that five were ineligible to compete due to being in the COVID red zone and five more were remote needing school committee approval to compete which proposed questions regarding which regional towns Marblehead could play against. Mr. Ceglarski reported that face coverings would need to be worn at all times by athletes, coaches and officials. He also noted that temperatures would be checked daily and that a symptoms checklist would need to be filled out every day by every athlete and at every game. It was further noted that there would be no locker room usage and that bags would need to be disinfected before and after practice. Conversations took place that discussed the option of intramurals within district, how a condensed season may affect sports scholarships, transportation concerns and associated costs and the process for handling COVID color zone shifts within season.

Ms. Gold made a motion to “ask Greg and Dan to continue to talk with the NEC principals and athletic directors to see if there is a pathway forward to a modified fall 1 sports season.” The motion was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Harris. Ms. Barron recommended adding the date to the motion to which Ms. Gold amended the motion to reflect an October 2nd start date to the season. The amended motion was seconded by Ms. Taylor. A roll call vote to amend the language of the original motion was taken.

Ms. Gold-yes

Ms. Taylor-yes

Ms. Barron-yes

Ms. Fox-yes

Mr. Harris-yes

After there was no further discussion, a roll call vote to pass the amended motion was taken and the motion carried, 5-0 all in favor.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Barron-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Mr. Harris-yes

c. Veteran's School Nurse Appointment

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the hire of Andrea Wigozki as the Veterans School Nurse. The motion was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Ms. Barron. A roll call vote was taken

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Barron-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Mr. Harris yes

d. Approval of Handbooks

Prior to voting the approval of the 2020-2021 school year handbooks, Ms. Gold noted that the elementary changes did not include the addition of the district mask policy. Ms. Fox also confirmed that language pertaining to remote behavior expectations should be stated in all handbooks. A discussion regarding the high school attendance policy expectations took place and it was decided that it may best to hold off on voting the handbooks until the next September meeting.

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve tabling the handbooks which was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Ms. Barron. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried, 5-0 all in favor.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
MS. Barron-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Mr. Harris-yes

IV. Finance Organization Support:

a. Schedule of Bills

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the identified schedule of bills totaling \$2, 626,734.23. The motion was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Harris. Ms. Fox inquired about dates from the last fiscal year to which Ms. Cresta explained were due to encumbrance funds and were approved by the town. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried, 5-0 all in favor.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Barron-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Mr. Harris-yes

b. FY 20 Close Out Report

Ms. Cresta gave an update on the FY20 year-end close out sharing that the general fund expenditures totaled \$39,473,33 out of an operating budget of \$39,624,425 for the year. She also informed the committee that there was an encumbrance carry over for outstanding invoices in the amount of \$85,248. In addition to this \$65,744 was returned to the town as unspent funds. Ms. Cresta further explained that the figures were an end result of adjustments made to cover the deficits in the School Lunch Fund and the Kindergarten and Preschool Tuition Revolving Fund. It was also noted that Special Education Out of District tuition was prepaid in the amount of \$200,000k and that early ordering of items such as the Foss Science Kits allowed for

capital needs funding to be funded through the FY21 budget. It was also mentioned which revolving fund balances for a combined total of \$584,035 would be carried over into FY21 budget.

c. Covid Related Expenditures Update

Ms. Cresta provided an update on Covid related expenditures sharing that estimated expenditures currently totaled \$1,875,750. She noted that the costs included costs paid, committed to and anticipated costs to come. Ms. Cresta also informed the committee that two grants awarded to the school department in the amount of \$96,612 and \$653,175 were part of the CARES Act funding and that a line item in the amount of \$168,699 had been added to the FY21 operating budget to cover additional COVID related costs. It was noted that a portion of the Town's CARES Act and FEMA funding could also be utilized based on need should the school district reach the anticipated \$962,264 funding allocation. Ms. Cresta explained that an estimated COVID related expenditures shortfall of \$150K could be charged to the COVID related line item in the operating budget but that it could not be covered by CARES Act funding. It was also reported that the FY21 budget had been updated to reflect the change in kindergarten revenue. Ms. Cresta informed the committee that budget adjustments due to staff turnover and the furloughing of cafeteria workers had been considered and that additional unexpected saving related to staff salaries had been shifted from the salary revolving fund to the operating budget which would help cover shortfall costs. She noted that any remaining shortfall would be covered by utilizing the funds set aside for unanticipated expenses in the COVID line item which was created at the end of FY20.

The school committee asked a series of questions related to projected expenses for hiring a cleaning service, handling technology concerns and the funds needed to order additional personal protective equipment.

V. SC Communications/Discussion

a. Resolution Discussion

This discussion was tabled as it was noted that the discussion would require a vote which was mistakenly left off the agenda.

Ms. Fox requested that the resolution be posted on the www.backtogethermhd website to which Ms. Gold confirmed that it would be.

b. School Advisory Council Discussion

Ms. Barron informed the committee that she had met with Superintendent Buckey to come up with alternatives to having school committee members on the individual School Advisory Councils. Ms. Barron provided examples of alternative ways to remain visible within the community while also remaining involved with the schools, parents and families. She shared ideas recommending regularly scheduled building walkthroughs with the school committee members and having two school committee members rotate attending faculty or parent council meetings.

A discussion regarding how the new approaches may put the school committee members in an even more impactful position took place. Ms. Fox and Ms. Taylor shared that they have enjoyed taking part in the SAC's but would be open to alternate options. Although no formal vote was taken, it was decided that a calendar could be created and brought back to the committee for review.

c. Subcommittee Updates

Ms. Gold shared that there would be a policy meeting scheduled the following morning for an in-person meeting at Widger Rd. She also shared that the Attorney General's office had been consulted and that all attendees would be required to wear masks and social distance. Ms. Gold also noted that a larger conference room space at Widger had also been booked as a backup option should a larger space be necessary.

d. School Building Project Update

Mr. Harris shared a video of the topping off ceremony at the new elementary school that MHTV had compiled. He mentioned that he was excited to share the video of the beam signing and how the overall project was moving forward.

VI. Closing Business:

a. New Business

Ms. Gold read a prepared statement focusing on the recently approved memorandum of agreement.

"I want to take a moment to point out that the negotiations that have gotten us to this point, where we will be voting on an MOA next week, have been the very definition of bargaining in good faith. Dr. Buckey has represented the School Committee well in every meeting I have been privy to. As our superintendent, he is charged with assisting the Committee in reaching sound judgements, and in this matter, Dr. Buckey has acted as the communicator of the Committee with the Union. We are now at the point where we will soon have the opportunity to discuss this as a public body.

I ask all of us to remember that we are members of a committee and we carry out committee decisions once they are made. That applies to the current MOA we have in place, as well as to the one we hope to vote next week. Our authority as individuals is to represent the Committee and the schools in a way that promotes interest and support. When negotiations with the Union happen in a climate of mutual trust and understanding, that goal is much more easily met. As I have said all along as we have faced challenges due to Covid, if we can continue to work together, we will succeed.

At this point in time, with a superintendent who we can trust, it is in everyone's best interest for us to be aligned with Dr. Buckey since we have charged him with meeting with the Union. This doesn't mean that we can't ask questions and have a lively discussion when it is time for us to vote on the MOA. We are tasked with this duty as individual members of the Committee. However, we need to remember that none of us should be eroding the process by engaging in any kind of direct dealing with any members of the union. This undermines our employees' belief in the union's ability to represent them, as they are entitled to by statute, and in our ability to maintain our primary responsibility to the children of the District. It also erodes the credibility of Dr. Buckey as the superintendent, and I know none of us want to do that. Direct dealing can be tempting and is a slippery slope, in a small community where we know each other, however, it is always a violation of the law. We can communicate accurate information to employees but we may not bypass the union and deal directly with employees. We need to remember to refer complaints to the administrative chain of command. If we can follow these general guidelines, we will be certain to end up with an MOA that is collaborative and provides the best possible opportunities for the young people in our community."

Prior to adjourning the meeting, the committee agreed that they would meet on the following Thursday the 10th at 6:30pm to vote the next memorandum of agreement.

b. Adjournment

Ms. Gold adjourned the meeting at 9:46pm.

*Respectfully Submitted
Sarah Fox, Secretary
Marblehead School Committee*

Approved October 29, 2020