

Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting
Thursday February 01, 2024
7:01PM

Members Present: Sarah Fox, Brian Ota, Jennifer Schaeffner , Alison Taylor

Also Present: Dr. Theresa McGuinness-Interim Superintendent, Michelle Cresta-Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Julia Ferreira-Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

I. Initial Business

a. Call to Order

Ms. Schaeffner called the meeting to order at 7:01PM

b. Commendations

- Alison Taylor commends our Teachers
 - They are amazing and show up for our students regardless of the turmoil that is occurring within the District
- Sarah Fox commends the METCO PCO
 - The turnout was almost 20% of the District's METCO parents

c. Public Comment

- Mary McCariston-46 Pinecliff Drive
 - Mary started by stating that she noticed that the Director of Finance and Operations position was posted 3 days ago
 - Mary asks if the job for an Interim or permanent Superintendent has been posted
 - She states that "the committee needs to learn to engage with their critics"

d. Student Representative-Kat Piper

- Midterms ran from 01/23-01/26
- Sophomores had a presentation about the "After Dark" program at Essex Tech which partners with Students from Construction, Craft Labor, Health Assisting and Sustainable Horticulture
- Senior project applications are now able to be submitted
- MHS Acapella is preparing for their ICHSA Competition
- Peer Mentor Program is hosting information sessions for next year
- The Freshman class of 2027 is partnering with Stowaway Sweets for a Valentines Day Fundraiser
- Juniors are holding their annual auction which is one of the most important fundraising events for the class
- Senior Show was last Sunday 01/28

II. District Updates-Dr. Theresa McGuinness

- District Offices have moved back to Widger Rd.
- MHS has a new Assistant Principal starting Monday 02/05
 - Frank Kowalski comes to us from Swampscott High School
- We have posted the position of Director of Finance and Operations
 - Julia Ferreira will be running the Search Committee

- Interviews for the Interim Director of Student Services were held today 02/01 with Brian Ota
 - Next step is an interview with Dr. McGuinness
 - A posting will be made shortly for a permanent Director of Student Services
- Dr. McGuinness shares a letter regarding an incident that occurred at the Veterans Middle School this week
 - The incident involved the drawing of a symbol of hate on the wall in the Library
- Dr. McGuinness reads a letter written by Principal Matt Fox to the community regarding the incident
- Jennifer, Alison and Brian would like to thank Dr. McGuinness and Principal Fox for their leadership during this situation and for the statements they made to the community

Sarah Fox makes a motion for the School Committee to co-sign the letter with Dr. McGuinness

Moved by Sarah Fox, Seconded by Ms. Schaeffner

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner -All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

- School Calendar 2024-2025
 - Julia Ferreira presents a draft of the 2024/2025 School Year Calendar
 - The MEA will be providing input on this draft prior to bringing it back to the School Committee for final approval at the next School Committee Meeting
 - FY25 Budget Status Update-Dr. McGuinness and Michelle Cresta
 - There will be a “Finance Forum” that will include the Town, School and the Community on 02/27
 - This will be a chance for the community to get their questions answered surrounding the budget
 - Michelle Cresta shares an updated presentation on the three presented budgets
 - Level Services-No New Changes
 - Updated Estimate \$47,935,000
 - Needs Based
 - Level Services plus specially identified needs
 - Reduced Services Budgets
 - Close or equal to the current funding level
 - Opened up for Discussion
 - Brian Ota requests more information in regard to the basis for the budget and any potential cuts that may come up
 - He requests a projection of the student population for school years 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27 and a staffing breakdown
 - Sarah Fox asks if our Transportation costs are included in the current budget projections and about our tuition increases and if that data was included

III. Consent Action and Agenda Items

a. Schedule of Bills (vote)

Motion to approve the identified schedule of bills totaling \$762,430.73

Moved by Ms. Taylor, Seconded by Ms. Fox

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

b. Approval of Minutes (vote)

Motion to approve the minutes as presented for 11/16/2023

Moved by Mr. Ota, Seconded by Ms. Taylor

Opened for Discussion

- Sarah Fox points out a few edits that she will work with Allison to make before posting them

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0 with the requested edits

IV. School Committee Communication and Discussion Items

a. Marblehead High School Turf Replacement-Piper Field MHS (vote)

- Athletic Director Greg Ceglarski is joined by two members of the Marblehead Boosters, Muffy Paquette and Meg Budzinski (Civil Engineer)
- Meg discusses the current condition of Piper Field and what needs to be replaced
- Meg goes through the “Project Scope” as well as the cost associated with making the replacements needed
- Muffy discusses the funding we currently have and how much is needed to complete the project
 - \$792,193 has been raised towards the cost of the replacement
 - \$161,807 is still needed to complete the project
- The intent is to go out to bid in the end of February to get the bids back by the third or fourth week of March
- The project would then begin after school finishes up in mid-June to be completed by mid August
- Opened up to the School Committee for questions
 - Sarah Fox would like to go to the town with the Marblehead Boosters to request the additional funds needed to complete the project
 - Sarah asks how confident they are in the timeline presented with the start date of the Fall sports season
 - Sustainable Marblehead requested that we not use a Turf
 - Research has been done on the safety of the turf versus the natural field and it shows that you can not get the same level of safety on a natural field as you can on a turf
 - Sarah asks if there is a more sustainable Turf option and a rough cost that may be associated with that option
 - Jennifer Schaeffner cites an additional question from Sustainable Marblehead regarding the Turf’s “Off Gassing”
 - Meg cites an EPA study into the rubber infill and during that study they “didn’t find anything of concern”
 - Meg states that she does feel comfortable recommending sand and rubber

- The presentation is attached to these minutes

Motion to approve the boosters to fundraise for the replacement of the turf at Piper Field

Moved by Ms. Fox, Seconded by Mr. Ota

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

b. Marblehead High School Overnight Field Trip Approvals (Greece and DECA Club) (vote)

- Jennifer Billings and Rebecca Blomberg – Greece
 - Rebecca proposes an English Department trip during April Vacation of 2025 to Greece
 - The students will read an Ancient Greek Tragedy and then be able to visit the locations from the play while learning about Ancient Greek Culture
 - The trip will be offered to Grades 10-12

Motion to approve the Marblehead High School trip to Greece for April of 2025

Moved by Ms. Taylor, Seconded by Mr. Ota

Opened for Discussion

- Sarah Fox asks how the students would be eligible to attend the trip as well as what would happen should a 9th grader request to attend
 - Ms. Billings clarifies that it is the current 9th graders, or rising 10th graders, that will be able to attend the trip
 - The current 8th graders, or rising 9th graders will not have the option to attend
 - The students will read the text and they will be able to discuss it during Magic Block with the students would are interested in going on the trip
- Jennifer Schaeffner requests a more detailed breakdown of the trip
 - Specifically the price point of \$4200 per student
 - It may become exclusionary for those students who are unable to afford it
 - Ms. Blomberg references the opportunities that they have for fundraising and financial aid
 - They are working with EF Tours which provides each student with their own fundraising page for the trip
 - The Students are able to break the payments down into monthly payments over the course of a year
 - EF also offers scholarships to students
 - Sarah Fox points out the differences in laws in other countries specifically referencing drinking age as an example and asks what they are doing to mitigate this liability
 - The Students sign a “Behavior Contract” as well as the Town “Release of liability” prior to the trip
 - They will also be held to the rules of the Marblehead High School Handbook while on the trip

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

- DECA Club - Ms. Skalaban
 - Ms. Skalaban oversees the DECA Club (International Business Club)
 - Students from the Club will be moving on to the DECA Career Conference and Competition in Boston
 - The Conference will take place between 03/07/24 and 03/09/24
 - 30 Students are competing this year

Motion to approve the DECA overnight field trip for the dates of 03/07/24-03/09/24

Moved by Mr. Ota Seconded by Ms. Taylor

Opened for Discussion

- Sarah Fox asks what assistance is available to students if they can't afford to attend
- Alison Taylor asks about the sleeping arrangements during overnight trips

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

c. Marblehead High School Program of Studies Changes (vote)

- This agenda item has been postponed to a future School Committee Meeting

d. Director of Finance and Operations Position Approval (vote)

- Dr. McGuinness recommends position title change from “Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations” to “Director of Finance and Operations”
- Due to Michelle’s additional licensures the position was modified to an Assistant Superintendent Position
 - Michelle points out that we will likely be able to attract more candidates for the position if it is changed back to a “Director” role
- Alison asks where the additional roles Michelle was taking on as the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and finance will be delegated if we are modifying the role to a Director role
- Sarah Fox asks who will be overseeing the roles of Director of Facilities and Transportation and HR when we change the role
 - Michelle states that the HR Manager will report directly to the Superintendent and Facilities and Transportation will still report to the Director of Operations and Finance
- Sarah asks why if the HR is a manager position it would not fall under the Director of Finance and Operations
- Dr. McGuinness answers that she would also like to turn the HR Manager position into an HR Director position who then would report directly to the Superintendent

Motion to approve the position title of the Director of Finance and Operations

Moved by Mr. Ota Seconded by Ms. Taylor

Opened for Discussion

- Sarah Fox asks what the Salary range will be so they are able to include it in the vote
- Michelle recommends a range of \$120,000-\$150,000

The motion is amended to include approving the Director and Finance Operations position with an associated Salary Range of \$120,000-\$150,000

Moved by Ms. Taylor Seconded by Ms. Fox

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

e. School Committee Vacancy Update

- Sarah Fox shared that the Selectman voted a little over a week ago to accept the proposal to ask for submittals
- The School Committee has put out a press release
- All Submittals are due by 3:00PM Monday
- They have received 3 submittals so far
- Interviews will be held at Abbott Hall on 02/07/24 a 6:00PM

f. Superintendent Search Process Discussion (vote)

- The School Committee needs to determine which members will sit on the screening committee

Alison Taylor asks for a motion to have Jen Schaeffner and Brian Ota be the School Committee representatives for the Superintendent Search

This motion is not seconded

- Sarah Fox reiterates the policy discussed at the last school committee meeting that states that the School Committee Chair makes the recommendation to them be approved by the Committee
- Sarah Fox recommends that the members should be the School Committee Chair and Vice Chair which is subject to the approval of the School Committee

Sarah Fox asks for a motion to approve the recommendation by the Chair

- Sarah Fox references the portion of the policy that states if they are unable to get a second they will need to wait until they have a fifth member of the School Committee

Seconded by Ms. Schaeffner

Opened up for Discussion

Ms. Fox, Ms. Schaeffner-Yes

Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota-No

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion does not pass 2-2

g. Subcommittee and Liaison Updates and discussion

- Brian Ota-Safety Committee
 - Brian attended the Superintendent Safety Committee Meeting and it went well
- Sarah Fox-METCO PCO
 - Sarah and Jen attended
 - Caja Johnson, METCO Director, was “exited to come to school today knowing that she finally had engagement from the School Committee
 - The Flag Policy was discussed
- Jennifer Schaeffner-Policy Subcommittee
 - There will be a meeting tomorrow to debrief on the meeting that was had with the students at MHS regarding the Flag and Banner Policy
- Sarah Fox-Director of Finance and Operations Interview Committee
 - Julia Ferreira will be leading the search for the Director of Finance and Operations
 - The Committee is set to convene 02/17/24
 - Sarah Fox would like a representative from Finance and a Representative from Budget to be on the committee and two School Committee members

V. Closing Business

a. New Business-School Committee Announcements and Requests

- Brian Ota asks what is the status of the Special Education RFP
 - Michelle Cresta will be presenting the draft to the School Committee in the next week
- Sarah asks what is the status of the Special Education independent investigation
 - The final report will be completed prior to February Vacation

b. Correspondence

- None

c. Adjournment

Jennifer Schaeffner asks for a motion to adjourn

Moved by Mr. Ota Seconded by Ms. Taylor

Ms. Fox, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Ota and Ms. Schaeffner, All Yes

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passes 4-0

Meeting is adjourned at 9:21PM by Ms. Schaeffner

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison McMahan, Secretary
Marblehead School Committee