

Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting

March 24, 2020

Zoom Web Conference 12:00 PM

Zoom Conference Call-Meeting ID: 260 775 814

<https://zoom.us/j/260775814>

Members Present: Sarah Gold, Meagan Taylor, Jennifer Schaeffner
David Harris and Sarah Fox

Also: William, H. McAlduff Jr.-Interim Superintendent
Michelle Cresta-Director of Finance

I. Initial Business and Public Involvement

1. Call to Order

Ms. Gold called the meeting to order at 12:02pm

2. Commendations

Ms. Schaeffner mentioned that she felt everyone qualified for a commendation.

Ms. Gold stated she was thankful for the administration and for the way the staff has stepped up to the plate for the students during the time of closure.

3. Public Comment

Public comment was taken out of order to allow Student Representative, Dan Howells to speak first.

Ms. Erin Noonan thanked Superintendent McAlduff for his leadership and stated how wonderful principals have been during the closure. Ms. Noonan shared that it may be best to incorporate more hard copy materials for the lower level grades if the closure was extended sharing that doing all of the learning online was a lot for her children to experience.

4. Student representative – Dan Howells

- Mr. Howells shared that the progression of the Corona Virus and how it moved closer to Marblehead was discussed in his History Class. The discussion involved how the virus was impacting school and everyday life.
- Mr. Howells commended the teachers for doing a great job keeping students engaged and involved. It was shared that Zoom and Google classroom was being used to make sure students were not falling behind. Teachers were also readily available during office hours to answer questions regarding assignments.
- It was mentioned that school and community events were being canceled or postponed for the safety of students and faculty.

Ms. Fox asked Mr. Howells if “he felt that he was able to stay top of school and felt that he had all of the tools he needed to complete assignments?” Mr. Howells confirmed that the High School was already moving towards online technology for learning and that the teachers were doing a great job of providing work and timelines to complete it by.

Ms. Gold inquired how Mr. Howells younger sister was handling learning from home to which Mr. Howells shared that she was also utilizing Google Classroom and setting up times to speak with her teachers at the Middle School when she needed clarification on an assignment.

II. Consent Agenda and Action Items

1. Minutes

Ms. Gold asked if any of the committee members had any questions or clarifications regarding the minutes.

Ms. Schaeffner shared that she had asked that a copy of the two public comment statements from the meeting on January 23rd be included in the minutes and wanted to make sure they would be included

when the documents were posted to the website. The Superintendent's Assistant, Ms. Dimier confirmed that she had the documents and that they would be included with the website posting.

Ms. Schaeffner also mentioned following up with Ms. Dimier to watch the recording from January 23rd to clarify which email referenced in the minutes Ms. Schaeffner was requesting be made part of the record.

Ms. Gold confirmed with Ms. Schaeffner that she was comfortable moving forward with the vote to approve the minutes to which Schaeffner confirmed she was.

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 23, 2020 as well as January 31, 2020. The motion was moved by Ms. Fox and seconded by Ms. Schaeffner. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Ms. Schaeffner-yes
Mr. Harris-not present
Ms. Taylor-yes

The motion carries, 4-0.

III. Superintendent Report

1. School Closure Update

Superintendent McAlduff provided an update on the recent school closure sharing that since school had closed on March 13th that there had been a home learning plan implemented since Tuesday March 17th, technology devices had been signed out to families on Wednesday March 18th and that the last full day for staff was Thursday March 19th. He shared that all staff would begin working remotely and that custodians had already started a deep clean of each building. He further shared that one custodian each would be assigned to a building to perform daily safety building checks in the morning and afternoons.

It was also mentioned that the first positive case of Corona Virus in Marblehead had been announced and that all playgrounds and basketball courts would be closed for public use until further notice. Superintendent McAlduff also noted that per Governor Baker's orders as of March 23rd all non-essential business would close and a Stay at Home Advisory should be followed. He informed the committee that some personnel from the business office would be considered "essential" for the purposes of needing to pay bills and continuing to pay staff. It was explained that the days they worked would be staggered to limit the number of staff in the building and that rooms and high touch surfaces would be disinfected regularly.

Superintendent McAlduff shared that he has asked the Director of Student Services to work with a task force to create a longer term learning plan in anticipation for longer school closure. A discussion surrounding the use of technology for home learning took place. Concerns regarding consistency across all grades and the grading structure were mentioned. It was noted that the Massachusetts Superintendent's and other educational leaders were requesting remote learning guidance from the state and the commissioner should the closure be extended.

A brief conversation pertaining to budget implications occurred to which Superintendent McAlduff shared that there would not be many associated with the current closure period but that those things could change if the closure was extended. He further clarified that they would be staying informed about relief funding as things progressed.

Ms. Gold noted that Mr. Harris joined the meeting at 12:27pm.

IV. Finance Organizational Support

1. Schedule of Bills

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the schedule of bills totaling \$870,734.02. The motion was moved by Ms. Schaeffner and seconded by Ms. Taylor. A roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Mr. Harris-yes
Ms. Schaeffner-yes
The motion carries, 5-0 all in favor.

a. Discussion on Signing the Schedule of Bills

This item was taken out of order and the Director of Finance, Ms. Cresta provided her update on the monthly financial reporting first.

A discussion regarding the process for signing the schedule of bills during the school closure took place. Superintendent McAlduff shared that the recommendation to appoint a designated committee member would be agreed upon on a temporary basis and that the schedules would be added to the Dropbox for all committee members to review prior to voting the approval of such schedules. He further shared that the town and school policies for approving the payment of bills had been included in the packet shared with the committee.

Although no formal vote was taken, committee members agreed that including the invoices in the Dropbox with the schedules would make the voting process a bit smoother. Ms. Cresta confirmed that the invoices could be included with the schedules moving forward.

Ms. Gold made a motion to name Sarah Gold as primary and Sarah Fox as secondary to be designated to approve all bills, drafts, orders and payrolls not otherwise presented for approval at a posted meeting to the full committee; provided that if such approval takes place, a record of such approval shall be made available to the committee at the first meeting following such approval and that said record of approval be placed on the next meeting as an agenda item; further that Sarah Fox be designated as the “back-up” member if necessary.

The motion was moved by Ms. Schaeffner and seconded by Mr. Harris. A roll call vote was taken:
Ms. Gold-yes
Ms. Taylor-yes
Ms. Fox-yes
Ms. Schaeffner-yes
Mr. Harris-

The motion carries, 5-0 all in favor.

2. FY20 Monthly Financial Report

The Director of Finance, Ms. Cresta gave a monthly update on the year to date FY20 budget status report. She reported that no additional costs associated with the school closure needed to be taken into consideration thus far. She shared that the District had spent about 59% of their operating budget and noted the accounts where the District would continue to see short-falls such as in the Special Education Out of District Tuition and transportation costs and the utilities budget. She also shared that there could be a short-fall of around \$20k related to substitute costs if the District reopened during the second week of April. Ms. Cresta explained that certain accounts would see a surplus and that some of those accounts could be used to offset deficits in other areas. She noted that the final page of the memo she shared with the School Committee projected the expected deficits and the accounts that were planning on being used to offset them. It was reported that a projected surplus of \$1,642 was to be expected. The surplus of \$525,330 minus an expected shortfall of \$523,688 to equal \$1,642.

A brief conversation regarding receiving tuition-in payments and paying tuition out payments to other districts occurred. Ms. Cresta confirmed with Ms. Schaeffner that this was occurring through the period of closure provided students have fewer than 21 absences.

3. FY21 Capital – Final

Superintendent McAlduff discussed the memo he shared with the school committee which incorporated the items being recommended for inclusion in the School Committee’s FY21 Capital Plan. He shared that the estimates had been adjusted to reflect lower estimates than previously anticipated for the Capital Needs Assessment form a firm called On-site Insight. He also noted that once approved the plan would be forwarded to the Town Administrator and Finance Committee for further approval.

Ms. Gold made a motion to approve the FY21 Capital Plan as presented, and instruct the Superintendent to forward the approved plan to the Town Administrator and Finance Committee. The motion was moved by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Ms. Fox. A roll call vote was taken.

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

The motion carries, 5-0 all in favor

4. FY21 Draft Budget

a. PCO Financial Support

This item was taken out of order and Superintendent McAlduff gave an update on the FY21Draft Budget timeline first.

Superintendent McAlduff shared a slide showing the 2018-2019 financial support that has come from the PCO’s over the last two years and shared that the purpose of sharing the slides was in relation to underscoring the fact that the appropriations budget was not the total amount of money it takes to operate the District. He shared that much of the raised funds went to purchasing technology and supplies. He credited and thanked the parents of the community for the close to \$300k of funds that were raised in previous years.

b. Special Education – Out-of-District Tuition

Superintendent McAlduff shared that there were three Special Education adjustments that had been made to the budget tracking sheet since the March 5th meeting. 1) An O.O.D, out of district student would be returning to the High School for the 2020-2021SY reflecting a savings of \$57k 2) A Kindergarten Teacher who had been on leave would not returning and hiring a replacement would allow for a \$30k savings in salary 3) The District Special Education transportation plan had been adjusted to reflect a savings of \$45k down from the projected \$117k.

Superintendent McAlduff shared that lease purchasing two minivans to transport in town Special Education Students that required transportation within their IEP plans would provide a significant savings.

A conversation regarding final budget numbers to present to the Town took place and it was mentioned that another budget subcommittee meeting should be scheduled to go over the newest tracking adjustments.

c. Adjustments Since Last Presentation

This was shared as part of the Special Education update.

d. Timeline Update

Superintendent McAlduff shared that no final decision had been made at the town level as to whether or not the Town Meeting would be held on May 4th. He further shared that the Town was running behind and that the School Committee would not be meeting with the Finance Committee on March 30th as originally planned. It was suggested that the committee plan on scheduling their Budget Public Hearing virtually so there could be some flexibility to meet with the Finance Committee once they were ready to do so.

V. School Committee Communications and/or Discussion Items

1. Building Project Update

Mr. Harris shared that he had forwarded an email he had received from Leftfield providing an update of where the school building project currently was. He read highlighted points from the email received earlier that same day from Gilbane informing the committee of the additional strategies that have been put in place to ensure that the project continues to move forward. He noted that social distancing measures would need to be met, the number of individuals in small spaces would be limited and breaks would be staggered on site to limit the number of people together.

Mr. Harris shared that a Building Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday via Zoom and that the monthly report should be coming within about a week. He also confirmed that both the demolition and abatement permits should be in hand and that there should be no concerns regarding delays due to closure in those areas.

Ms. Schaeffner inquired whether or not there could be delays in the delivery of materials due to the Corona Virus. Mr. Harris confirmed that one of the RTA's , Recommendations to Award that was awarded to a company for the steel they would be using for the new building would be not be coming from China and that since it was US steel, no delay should be expected.

Mr. Harris shared that Gilbane would provide updates at the Thursday meeting and that once the Bell School buildings were torn down, more detailed reports would follow.

VI. Closing Business

1. New Business

A conversation regarding the logistics surrounding the Assistant Superintendent Search timeline and the transition plan for the incoming Superintendent Dr. John Buckey took place. It was shared that the timeline for hiring would be adjusted and that meetings would be held virtually as much as possible. It was mentioned that the originally scheduled days Dr. Buckey was expected to be in District would be rescheduled.

Ms. Schaeffner reminded the committee that there would most likely need to be a vote made regarding April vacation to which it was noted that the Education Association would need to be involved in that decision.

Ms. Gold asked the committee if anyone would like to make a motion to allow for public comment to which Ms. Fox agreed and Ms. Schaeffner seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

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

The motion passes, 5-0 all in favor.

Ms. Catherine Martin of 29 Westshore Drive thanked the task force for all of their hard work with remote learning during a tough time. Ms. Martin inquired if there would be a goal date in mind to share with the community information regarding remote learning during an extended closure. She also

inquired about an interface where the consolidation of online learning platforms could be more easily accessible from a central location so that there were not as many logins needed to access curriculum.

Superintendent McAlduff confirmed that there was no goal date yet and that the Leadership Team would be meeting tomorrow to discuss the logistics surrounding the group assigned to work on the remote learning plan. He also explained that the District had already heard feedback from parents regarding the number of logins associated with completing assignments and that the idea would be to develop a system similar to “one stop shopping” to create consistency, especially at the Kindergarten through third grade levels.

2. Adjournment

Ms. Gold adjourned the meeting at 2:56pm.

*Respectfully Submitted
Sarah Fox, Secretary
Marblehead School Committee*

Approved June 4, 2020