

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
October 20, 2020
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Ms. Donna Newcomb (Vice Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Secretary), Mr. John Moses and Ms. Maria Santos

Also present: Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent) and Ms. Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business and Finance).

Call to Order

6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Opening Statement

“Tonight’s meeting is being live-streamed by Chelmsford Telemedia and posted to the CPS website for interested community members to access and watch. Although we are not allowing for in-person public participation, interested community members are encouraged to submit their names and addresses to Superintendent Lang if they would like to participate remotely under the public input portion of our meeting. During our public input session anyone who has joined us through the *gotomeeting* platform and expressed interest in making a comment will be recognized by the Superintendent and allowed to speak with The Committee. If anyone watching this meeting live has questions or comments to share they are encouraged to email one of us during the meeting. We will try to read those questions or comments during our second public input session at the end of the meeting.”

The Chair welcomed all and previewed the meeting’s agenda. Superintendent Lang is not present tonight, but Assistant Superintendent Hirsch will assume his role in tonight’s meeting.

Consent Agenda

1. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of October 6, 2020.**

Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of October 6, 2020. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that the District received, for the second year in a row, a Certificate of Recognition attesting to the District’s preparedness using the ALICE protocol for safety. Last week 66 new CHS students were inducted in to the English Honor Society. The ceremony was conducted virtually, and it was “wonderful”! CHS was awarded the Innovation 21 Pathways Grant. The two paths which will be the focus of this are information technology as well as business and finance. The grant will help with planning and professional development. These pathways align with Middlesex Community College so participating students will be able to earn college credits.

Public Comment

None.

New Business

1. Fall Reopening Discussion and Updates – Verbal

a. Food Services/School Nutrition Program

Ms. Johnson-Collins shared that breakfast and lunches will be free for the entire school year through the USDA. 1350 breakfasts and lunches are being served daily.

b. Student Transportation Program

Since updating transportation to K to 8 over one mile and adding the CHS 12 shuttle bus runs, the total is 926 students in K – 8 according to Ms. Johnson-Collins. This is day two of the CHS shuttle and so far, 60 students have participated. This will be monitored as the hybrid model increases.

c. Learning Model Transitions

(Will be discussed under New Business item number 2 later in the meeting.)

d. Elementary, Middle and High School Staff Focus Groups

Dr. Hirsch shared that Ms. Santos and Mr. Doherty represent The Committee as these meetings. Participants can discuss what is working and what is not, in addition to asking questions. Dr. Lang, Dr. Hirsch and the Committee representatives then discuss the suggestions made and common themes. More support was requested, and, in response, the district plans to hire more paraprofessionals. Ms. Santos said that more feedback will be provided from parents and students for the staff. The staff are pressuring themselves to perform and positive feedback will be welcome. Dr. Hirsch shared that needed equipment will also be purchased (i.e. microphones). Mr. Doherty stressed the added degree of planning required to teach in the hybrid and remote models. Staff are working together and sharing to facilitate adjustment to the new learning models. Staff are thrilled to be back with their students and colleagues! Ms. Santos shared that the challenges are different for elementary, middle and high school staff. She was also impressed with how much work was done by the staff during the summer. Dr. Hirsch stated that staff are doing “an amazing job in a terrible situation”. She shared that the TIS in each building have prepared a collection of videos to assist and train staff for technology. Additionally, they provide hands-on support for all staff in their buildings. Dr. Hirsch said that future Focus Group meetings will be scheduled. The Committee expressed gratitude to all staff for the success of the school year thus far.

2. Discussion and Timeline for Future Adjustments to Learning Models – Verbal

Dr. Hirsch spoke about options for families wishing to change the learning model they selected for the beginning of the school year. Data will be gathered from each school to determine the numbers who wish to switch learning models. The end of the term would be the best time for a switch for middle and high school students (November). For elementary the end of the trimester would work best (December). The administration is also investigating extending the hybrid model to a full school day and the effect that would have on the schedule and on in-school lunches. More information will be shared at future meetings.

a. Use of Community Level Data to Guide Learning Model Decision-making

Although, Chelmsford has been in the “red” regarding COVID numbers for two weeks, public health has shared that the outbreaks are in other facilities **not** in the public schools. For that reason, the District and Public Health will work together to monitor this and decide concerning the district’s need to shift from hybrid to the fully remote learning model when needed.

b. Review and Refinement of Positive COVID Case Protocols

District protocols regarding COVID continue to be monitored closely, especially with flu season approaching. Thus far the protocols are working, keeping safety first. Dr. Hirsch stated that the “Dashboard” will be put up on the current website and will be switched over when the new website becomes active. The information is also published in the weekly newsletter.

3. MASC Resolutions – Fall 2020 Membership Meeting

The 10 recommended MASC are included in tonight’s packet and read in their entirety during the meeting by Ms. Newcomb.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution #1 MCAS and High Stakes Testing. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution 2 COVID-19 State Funding. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution 3 School Committee Anti-Racism Resolution. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution 4 Lowering the Voting Age for Municipal Elections. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution 5 Supporting Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for K-12 Education. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution 6 Retention of Medicaid Revenue. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve Resolution 7 Attempts by US DOE to Direct Funding to Private Schools. Motion carries 4-0-1 with Mr. King abstaining.

Mr. Moses motioned to support Resolution 8 Membership of a School Committee on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to support Resolution 9 Providing Equity for Sexual Orientation - LGBTQ+ Students, Teachers and Staff. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Moses motioned to support Resolution 10 Relative to the Monitoring of Attendance of Students During the Pandemic. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion fails 0-5.

4. 2020/2021 School Committee and Superintendent Goals

The Chair shared that the goals will focus on short term for this school year due to the pandemic. Full details and actions steps are included in tonight's packet. The Chair summarized the goals for The Committee. The Committee would like time to consider the goals and would like to discuss them at the next meeting when Dr. Lang is present. Ms. Santos would like a review of the goals as the school year progresses. Committee members should send suggestions to The Chair.

5. FY21 Financial Report – 1st Quarterly (July – September 2020)

Ms. Johnson-Collins included the first FY21 financial report in tonight's packet. She reviewed the information for The Committee and provided additional explanations. So far, the findings are favorable, although Ms. Johnson-Collins cautions that is only September.

6. Request to Convert Three (3) Part-Time Computer Repair Technicians to One (1) Full-time Position

Dr. Hirsch spoke about this request received as a memorandum from Bill Silver, Director of Technology, and included in tonight's agenda packet.

Ms. Newcomb recommends the School Committee reallocate the salary budgeted for three part-time computer technicians to fund one full-time computer technician in the amount of \$46,800. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

7. FY21 Recommended Budget Transfers

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum outlining the requested transfer in the agenda packet.

Ms. Newcomb recommended the School Committee approve the FY2020 local operating budget transfer for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

8. Discussion on FY22 Capital Planning

Dr. Lang prepared a memorandum included in tonight's agenda packet with recommendations for capital planning projects to be reviewed tonight. The Capital Committee will be meeting the end of November. The Committee is tasked with prioritizing the projects. The Chair is asking The Committee to come to the next meeting prepared to make recommendations for these capital projects.

9. Memo – Personnel Report: September 2020

No action required tonight.

Liaisons

Mr. Doherty met with CHIPS last week and they scheduled their virtual open house for November 12th, 6:30-7:15 p.m. There will also be a basket raffle that night. He also attended the Alumni Association meeting. In May they gave out \$57,650 to this year's graduates and CHS alumni. The Hall of Fame dinner will be held in March 2021, for inducting the class of 2020.

Ms. Santos attended the Harrington PTO meeting. They are planning collaborations with Byam and CHIPS this year. They are planning a pumpkin carving event. McCarthy will be holding a recycle day on November 7th, which will be held in the parking lot of Central Office from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Ms. Newcomb met with ACA (the acapella group) last week. News will be forthcoming on fund raising events for this group.

Mr. Moses attended the Parker PTO meeting. "Pizza and Pumpkins" will be held on October 25th.

The Chair shared that Center School will be having their "Trunk or Treat" basket raffle on October 31st. He will also attend The Chelmsford Council of Schools meeting tomorrow night.

Action/New Items

Ms. Newcomb shared that there will be a Christmas tree treasure hunt held on the site of each school this year.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (7:58 p.m.)

Ms. Newcomb motioned to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio*