

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 17, 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. Jay Lang (Superintendent), 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 read those questions or comments during our second public input session at the end of the meeting.”

The Chair announced the meeting is being reconvened after meeting in Executive Session earlier this evening.

**Consent Agenda**

1. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of November 3, 2020.**

**Ms. Newcomb motioned for The School Committee to accept the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of November 3, 2020. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with Mr. Moses abstaining.**

**Good News**

Dr. Hirsch announced that McCarthy’s Project 300 has begun. Perishable food items that you can donate may be placed in the boxes outside of McCarthy. The students appreciate the opportunity to participate and give back to their community. Sachi Badola of CHS is the winner of the virtual TAMI Awards October challenge for her musical theater solo of *What Baking Can Do* from the musical *Waitress*. CHS students collaborated with Billerica High School students on a voter registration drive with good results. Chelmsford has been selected by DESE to take part in their “Wellness Coaching Program” for free this year. The Wellness Advisory Committee, of which Ms. Santos is a member, will be provided with a coach to complete a wellness policy assessment, identify one to three wellness priorities and develop an action plan with evaluation methods.

## Public Comments

None.

## New Business

### 1. Appointment of Communications and Media Director: Christopher O'Donnell

Chris O'Donnell started about two weeks ago, and Dr. Lang is pleased to have him join the meeting tonight virtually. He shared his work experiences with the group and his hopes and plans for telling "the Chelmsford story" by sharing it and building relationships with media. He wants to highlight information on what is happening in the schools daily and share information on popular alumni. He wants to make the CPS website the "best news and information source" possible. Already, he has been working on social media to promote the schools. He looks forward to involving students in good public relations and communications, with the possibility of a future "public relations club" and create a one credit course on media and how to reach audiences. The new website is almost completely developed and should be fully operational by the beginning of January. Chris looks forward to his role in the district and to meeting people in person soon.

### 2. MCAS Administration 2020/21: Chelmsford High School

A memorandum on MCAS from Dr. Hirsch is included in tonight's agenda packet. MCAS testing did not take place last spring due to COVID. DESE is planning on MCAS being given this year in order evaluate competency for high school graduation. Any junior and seniors who have not taken MCAS will need to take the Legacy MCAS **in person** in January 2021. Sophomores will be taking the current math and ELA MCAS in the spring. Complete details are found in Dr. Hirsch's memorandum. Exact schedule information is forthcoming.

### 3. Proposed Human Resources Office Reorganization

Included in tonight's agenda packet is a memorandum from Cheryl Kirkpatrick, Director of Personnel and Professional Learning, detailing her proposal for reorganizing the HR office. She joined the meeting virtually to speak of the changes and the rationale involved. The work of her department involves the use and maintenance of numerous data systems and sharing these systems with other departments in the district. She believes her department requires a Systems Specialist to oversee efficient use of these systems and sharing of the data effectively with others in the district. She requests the creation of a Human Resource Coordinator. To do so she would like to allocate the resources in her department differently as per her memo. There will be no change to the payroll budget for the department. Since these are new positions, School Committee approval is required before they are posted.

**Mr. King motioned to approve the proposed staff reorganizations in the Human Resources office. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 3-2.**

### 4. Personnel Report: October 2020

No action required.

## 5. Proposed FY2022 Budget Calendar

Dr. Lang shared the proposed dates for budget meetings. Dr. Lang and staff will work on the budget starting after Thanksgiving and he will meet with Town Manager Cohen in January. At the School Committee meeting on February 2, 2021, he will give the budget overview and his recommendation. The meeting on February 23, 2021, will be a working budget meeting. It is not known yet if there will be additional revenues coming from either the state or federal government to help with pandemic related costs.

## 6. Prioritization of FY2022 Capital Plan Requests

Included in tonight's agenda packet is an update from Dr. Lang on the capital plan prioritization base on discussions at last month's meeting. The ones listed at the bottom are not priorities for FY22.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned that the School Committee vote at the regular school committee meeting of November 17, 2020, to submit the above referenced projects in priority order for consideration of funding in the FY22 to The Capital Planning Committee. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

## 7. Learning Model Update

Dr. Lang included a memorandum in tonight's agenda packet about guidance from DESE regarding moving to full in-school learning, if feasible. Right now, is not the time to bring back students to full in-person learning in Chelmsford. Agreements between staff and administration include a six-foot spacing between students. This distance is not possible in our buildings. Many families chose either the hybrid or remote learning model. Those who chose hybrid are comfortable with the six-foot distancing. Additionally, the restrictions on one student to a seat on the school busses makes transporting all students impossible. Dr. Lang assures families that the fully remote option will remain in place for this school year. Starting in the new year, the district may consider lengthening the school day back to the original number of hours prior to the pandemic. This would keep established cohorts in place. An additional full day may be added on alternating weeks. Conversations will have to be held with the unions and families and the COVID rate at the time will factor into these considerations. Dr. Lang will be sharing this information in this week's newsletter, to address families' anxieties.

Recently, building principals reached out to their families to see who would like to switch from their current learning model to the other (hybrid or remote). His memorandum details the numbers for each school. Most of these requests will be honored and will begin on November 30, 2020.

The athletic department at CHS is requesting a stipend position for an Assistant Athletic Director to help during the absence (unpaid) of the athletic secretary who is on leave. This would be helpful to Dan Hart if winter sports are approved and with the Fall 2 sports season starting this winter. Included in tonight's packet is a memorandum from Mr. Hart outlining the details of this request. Dr. Lang recommends approval of this request for this year only.

**Ms. Newcomb recommends the committee approve the creation of a seasonal stipend position for an assistant athletic director. Ms. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.**

## 8. 2020/21 Inclement Weather (Snow Day) Procedure

Dr. Lang would like the district to be able to use snow days or delayed opening days as fully remote days for this school year. In the event of power outages there will be no school. If there is a delay or a no

school day, families will receive an email and a phone call based on the primary contact information (usually between 5 and 5:30 a.m.). Additionally, the banner on the CPS website will also contain the information. Information on closure will also be on the local TV stations 4, 5, 7 and 25.

### **Liaisons**

Mr. Doherty met with the CHIPS PTO and they were planning school picture day for December 6<sup>th</sup>. Their “sock drive” is postponed until February. Ms. Newcomb met with the Association of Chelmsford Acapella. Their fundraising includes calendars which are coming out in December. They are competing in competitions remotely. There will be a virtual SEPAC meeting this Thursday and a Chelmsford Friends of Music meeting also virtually on Thursday. Ms. Santos shared that McCarthy Recycle Day which was held in collaboration with Center was a huge success! McCarthy’s PTO will meet December 2<sup>nd</sup> and Harrington met recently. Fundraising is going well. Byam and Harrington will be running a gift shop for curbside on December 5<sup>th</sup>. ELLPAC met November 5<sup>th</sup>. Bylaws are in place and the board is fully staffed. The Chair will attend Center Schools PTO tomorrow night. Mr. Moses added that Byam will meet tomorrow night.

### **Action/New Items**

The Chair and Dr. Lang are hoping to resume reports from schools and departments at regular meetings soon, even if it needs to be done virtually.

### **Public Comments**

None.

### **Adjournment (7:38 p.m.)**

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to adjourn general session and convene to executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation and not to return to open session. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Giglio*