

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**All Members Attended Remotely by Logging on to**  
**GoToMeeting.com**  
**March 27, 2020**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Mr. John Moses (Vice Chair) (arrived at 1:23), Ms. Maria Santos (Secretary), Mr. Jeffrey Doherty and Ms. Donna Newcomb. Attendance taken by roll call.

**Also present:** Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent), Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent) and Ms. Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business and Finance) (arrived at 1:43)

**Call to Order**

1:05 p.m.

**Chair Opening Statement**

The Chair stated that this online meeting will be recorded and posted on the Chelmsford Public Schools' website. It will also be recorded by Chelmsford Telemedia. The public is welcome to make comments by contacting either Dr. Lang or Chairman King via email. He shared that the regular meeting, which had been scheduled at central office for March 24, 2020, was cancelled due to the governor's request for residents to stay at home. Future meetings will be conducted in this format.

**Consent Agenda**

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

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the minutes of the school committee of March 3, 2020. Ms. Santos seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 4-0.**

**Public Comments**

Ms. Newcomb received concerns from parents concerning: grading; grade advancement; AP classes; SATs; and juniors who will be entering their senior year in the fall.

Ms. Santos received emails and texts about many of the same issues mentioned by Ms. Newcomb. Also, concerns about returning to school too soon and what will be done for this year's senior class.

Chairman King heard from CHS students wanting to know about the status of term three grades; would they be able to communicate with teachers and classmates through Zoom; would they be able to get all materials needed for their coursework; would summer work be necessary and would they be able to meet with guidance regarding next year's course selections. A parent wanted to know if it is possible to access the schools to pick up materials. Hana Barker wanted everyone to know that The Council of Chelmsford Schools and the Table of Plenty would be accepting food donations on Wednesdays from 9:00 until noon at the back door of Harrington School. Non-perishable foods, cleaning supplies and gift certificates to local restaurants will be accepted to support families who are in need. Also, the Chelmsford Food Pantry accepts donations on Thursdays from 10:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and again from 6:45 until 7:45 p.m. Food may be picked up on Wednesdays from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.; Thursdays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.; and Fridays from 6:30 until 8:00 p.m. Since as many as one-fifth of Chelmsford students receive free or reduced lunch

there is a need for donations for these families. All donations are greatly appreciated. Ms. Barker concluded by saying “thank you and stay safe at home”. The Chair has also heard concerns about special education services. Laurie McCarron of SEPAC expressed thanks to the teachers who have been reaching out with creative home-schooling ideas. She is appreciative of the school committee, staff and administration and Amy Reese for all her help for students with IEPs. Allie Barnes, also of SEPAC, would like a statement made on updates for the special education curriculum website. Another parent wants to know if iReady has closed-captioning for students for students with hearing challenges. A CHS parent is worried about AP and SAT exams and wanted to know if the Dual Enrollment courses would continue. Dr. Lang said the topics of the emails he received have already been expressed.

Any email questions received during this online meeting will be addressed during the second “Public Comments” time later in this meeting.

## **New Business**

### **1. Update on the Status of the Chelmsford Public School Closure**

Dr. Lang stated that, at the last meeting, it was unclear whether school would resume on April 6<sup>th</sup>, later in April, or, possibly, not at all this school year. Governor Baker has now extended school closure until May 4, 2020. The district’s plan going forward will be able to cover the additional week of online learning. If it turns out that school will not return by June, there will be more issues to be discussed, especially at the high school level, including graduation, prom and different senior activities.

Dr. Hirsch and Dr. Lang will be sending a communication to families to update them on district planning, staff guidance, and moving forward through the next month of distance-learning. The State Department of Education was in touch with the districts yesterday with guidance and will defer a lot of the decision making to each school district. The Merrimack Valley Superintendents’ Group will be meeting by telephone this afternoon and will put out a statement.

Last week the focus was on health and safety. A lot of time was spent on providing programs to feed those in need. The food service staff has done a great job feeding students and families. The CHS program serves about 200 meals per day. Pickup time can be as early as 4:00 p.m. The district website provides information on this program. The District has teamed up with The Table of Plenty to provide food needed by families to cover weekends. The Chair shared details of how this program works earlier in tonight’s meeting. The bus company has been contracted to deliver weekend food to the homes. This will continue while schools are closed.

Starting with week two of school closure, Dr. Hirsch and the curriculum coordinators put together documents addressing learning expectations. This past Monday and Tuesday staff who needed to pick up teaching supplies were able to come to the schools. Starting Wednesday remote meetings were held for schools, departments and grade levels. Teachers also reached out to their students this past week and will continue to do so. Professional development was offered to staff to help with using the Google Classroom and other technologies going forward. Staff also checked with families to determine their needs during this time. Laptops were provided to students who did not have technology available at home. School nurses and guidance counselors have also assisted in identifying families with specific needs.

This coming week, arrangements will be made for families to pick up learning materials from their schools, including Chromebooks, textbooks, musical instruments etc. Teachers will continue to update students on expectations, schedules, turn around times on school work, upcoming activities and discuss what learning will look like during the next six weeks. Dr. Lang is thankful to the unions for being so supportive during this time. All staff have been remarkable and willing to do whatever has been asked of them.

Ms. Newcomb shared that parents would like to have more frequent communication from the superintendent and the District, even if it just to state that no significant changes have happened. She also stated that SEPAC, with the help of Jen Melanson, will be holding a round table to discuss the needs of caretakers and would like to include experts on the Social Emotional and Learning needs of our students and their families. Information will be forthcoming on how to access and use the free internet service from Comcast. Dr. Lang responded that he has already let families know that he will be sending out weekly updates. Schools and individual educators will also be in touch with families. He is pleased about the proposed round table and wants to be sure the school side is involved with the Town. He will directly contact Lorraine Wilson and Amy Reese concerning this endeavor. Information on Comcast is being shared by the District. Those eligible are mostly the students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Ms. Santos shared concerns from a parent about “real” assignments that count. This parent also expressed gratitude for all that has been done thus far. Dr. Lang responded that remote learning cannot replicate in-school instruction. The staff are working on what curriculum will be covered in the next several weeks and what that learning will look like. Many staff used Google Classroom with their students throughout this school year, so the transition to remote learning is easier for them. Documents on expectations will be shared as they evolve. Ms. Santos enjoyed the online yoga class shared by the physical education teachers!

Dr. Hirsch shared that many teachers are already reaching out and working on the 1:1 initiative. This past week staff were able to pick up needed materials from the schools and multiple workshops were offered on Google Classroom and G Suite. The platform the District is using is Google Classroom and teachers are putting all lessons and activities there. G Suite is part of the Google product and students may be directed there when they logon to the “Classroom”. Using Google Classroom and G Suite will keep our students safe online. Starting on March 30<sup>th</sup> the lessons and activities will be launched, and feedback will be solicited on an ongoing basis. Teachers, departments and schools will use this feedback to improve distance learning. Mr. Silver and the technology department will also work on getting Chrome Books to those students who still need them. Teachers are putting as much work online as possible so that students do not need to come to the schools to retrieve textbooks. AP exams will be offered to students who will be given a choice of dates for the exam. AP learning and what will be included in the AP testing will end with what was covered through March. There has not been an update on SATs. Dual Enrollment classes will continue to be offered. Course selections for next year at CHS have already taken place. There are only a few students whose choices were not completed. Guidance counselors will contact those students.

## **2. Recommended FY20 Budget Transfers**

Ms. Johnson-Collins reviewed the memorandum she included in tonight’s packet to provide details on her requested budget transfers.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the FY2020 local operating budget transfers in the amount of \$46,882.50 to the accounts listed for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.**

## **3. Personnel Report: February 2020**

No action required.

## Reports

### 1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Newcomb shared that SEPAC thanks the District for a terrific job communicating with families. SEPAC's website has good ideas to support all students during online learning. The Chelmsford Senior Center thanks the District's food service employees for help with Meals on Wheels. School PTOs will be unable to hold many of their spring fund raisers due to the cancellation of school activities. Dr. Lang has reached out to our representatives and is hoping for Federal and State reimbursement to help support the many efforts the District is doing to provide food for our needy families. Dr. Lang expressed gratitude to our school nurses who are assisting the Town.

Town elections are scheduled to be held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and Town Meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2020. The next regular School Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

## Adjournment

**Mr. Moses motioned to adjourn today's meeting at 2:25 p.m. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Giglio*