

CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
All Members Attended Remotely by Logging on to
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May 19, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Mr. John Moses (Vice Chair), 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).

Call to Order

6:06 p.m.

Chair Opening Statement

The meeting is taking place using GoToMeeting.com electronic platform. All are attending the meeting remotely. The meeting is being televised and recorded by Chelmsford Telemedia. Community members are encouraged to watch and submit comments via email to Dr. Lang or Mr. King. The comments will be read during the "Public Comments" portions of the meeting agenda.

Consent Agenda

1. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of May 5, 2020**

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the regular School Committee meeting minutes for May 5, 2020. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch stated that a lot of sharing is going on and wonderful activities for the students have been occurring. Dr. Lang does share a lot of good news in his weekly newsletter.

Public Comments

Ms. Newcomb believes that questions she has received will be answered when Dr. Lang provides his update on school closure. Ms. Santos agreed.

New Business

1. **Update on the Status of the Chelmsford Public Schools Closure**

Dr. Lang shared that the district continues to do well. There are only about 3 ½ weeks left in this school year. Monday is Memorial Day, so it is a school holiday. June will arrive, and it will be time to start wrapping things up. He is happy about how well remote learning has gone and is thankful for the many people who made this happen. He is looking forward to receiving additional guidelines from Governor Baker relative to the schools and the end-of-year. Dr. Lang met with the high school staff who will also meet with some students and class advisors. The last day of classes for seniors is this Friday. Next week they will be dropping off books. More information for seniors will be in the packet coming out this Friday.

Dr. Lang will be meeting with day care staff to discuss summer plans, but he is still awaiting guidance from the State and the Dept. of Education moving forward. It is his hope that special education services will be able to take place in person this summer as well. He hopes to have more information concerning summer by the end of the week. Staff were allowed to return to the schools this past week to pick up whatever they may need to continue through the closing of schools and to close-up class rooms so summer cleaning may start Tuesday, May 26th. Students (middle and high school) were also allowed to come to the buildings to pick up their personal belongings. Visits were staggered by the school administrators to maintain social distancing. At the elementary level the teachers packed up the students' personal belongings, so the parents need only to drive to the front of the school to collect them. Dr. Lang will be putting together working groups to discuss how remote learning went and what improvements could be made to remote learning if it were to happen again. Also, teams will be convened to look at what re-entry to the buildings might look like at the end of the summer. In addition, a member from the Merrimack Valley is part of the State's Commission looking at summer programs and re-entry to the buildings at the end of summer. Findings of these groups will start to be shared with the districts in early June. Early in June a parent survey will take place to solicit feedback. Work has already begun on the South Row roofing project with the expectation that the entire project will be completed by July 4th.

Ms. Newcomb asked about how IEPs will be updated and asked if local off-site summer programs would be taking place. Dr. Lang responded that a lot of those details will be a part of the Governor's phases two and three reopening plan. It is uncertain when the State will proceed to phase two. Decisions will be made in the coming weeks based on the data on Covid 19. Regarding IEP compliance for in person services that is also up to the State. Regarding transitions (elementary to middle and middle to high school), which could not be handled in person this year, planning is proceeding to address these students' needs remotely. Information on this will be sent out from the principals in the next weekly newsletter. It is possible transitions will be pushed to August, with the hope that they may take place in the schools. The CHS mentoring program will be helpful to the incoming freshman. Conversations are ongoing between middle and CHS staff regarding students who require additional support ongoing. Dr. Lang believes the focus now should be on the ending of the school year and all that that entails. After that the focus groups (made up of staff from all learning levels and all positions in the District) will dig deeply into what worked in remote learning, where improvements need to be made and what professional development is needed to support future learning whether in-school or remotely. Ms. Santos has been receiving questions from elementary parents about expectations for middle school. She would like to see this addressed before summer recess begins.

2. Recognition of LGBTQ Pride Month – June 2020

Mr. Moses motioned that the School Committee recognize June 2020 as LGBTQ month in the Chelmsford Public Schools. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

3. Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public Schools

While working with The Chair on formulating this motion, Dr. Lang wanted to share his thanks to Ms. Johnson-Collins, Ms. Antolini, and all the hard-working food service staff who continuously provide meals for our students and their families. In just the last couple of months, over 27,000 meals have been produced!

Mr. Moses motioned to approve The School Committee motion in support of increased Federal support in stimulus funding for public K through 12 education. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

4. Recommended One-time FY2020 Budget Expenditures

A memorandum supporting these expenditures are found in tonight's agenda packet. Dr. Lang reviewed these items for The Committee. These are one-time purchases and do not reflect any ongoing financial commitment. There was a lot of discussion about technology purchases and how best to proceed with so much uncertainty about the closure of schools and reopening plans. To fully appreciate the discussion on these expenditures, please view tonight's meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia/YouTube.

5. Recommended FY2020 Budget Transfers

Ms. Johnson-Collins shared the data on the proposed budget transfers and walked The Committee through them.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the FY2020 local operating budget transfers totaling \$1,065,264 for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. This budget transfer is shifting from fourteen DESE categories that are favorable to four DESE categories where the items should be purchased. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

6. FY2020 Refunds and Unearned Revenue Forecast

Ms. Johnson-Collins spoke in detail about her memorandum included in tonight's agenda packet. Dr. Lang provided additional information to clarify for The Committee. There will be additional details provided in June.

7. Discussion on FY2021 Budget Process

There will be a Tri-Board meeting this Thursday to discuss items related to the fiscal 2021 budget. Dr. Lang shared that he feels it will be important to hold Town Meeting this spring. He realizes that some changes may need to be made as the FY2021 year progresses, but the budget was created with the best information currently available. Town Manager, Cohen and his staff have investigated potential decreases in State aid and municipal funding. At Thursday night's meeting, discussion will address how to deal with a shortfall if it does happen by using the Stabilization Fund. Dr. Lang supports Town Manager Cohen's request of a \$1.3 million budget decrease for FY21 for the schools. He and Ms. Johnson-Collins have also discussed that decrease in transportation costs and money coming from the Federal Cares Act may help to compensate for decreases. The budget packet shared with The Committee today does address the \$1.3 million budgetary decrease. Additional budget discussion will take place at The Committee's meeting on June 2, 2020.

8. Personnel Report: April 2020

No action required tonight. Dr. Lang is hopeful that this year's District Retirees will be honored with a celebration in the fall.

Action/New Items

Ms. Newcomb shared there will be a Council of Schools meeting tomorrow night. Thursday night The Chelmsford Friends of Music will meet. She enjoyed attending the South Row virtual PTO meeting! Additionally, she attended a Town Hall meeting on the mental health consequences of the COVID 19 virus which was attended by many social workers. Ms. Santos attended the Harrington PTO meeting and they discussed planning a future community event. They thanked their teachers for all their support to students and parents as well. The Chair had asked the Town Clerk what the procedure would be this year after the June 2nd election and is looking forward to hearing back from her so that a reorganizational meeting can be scheduled for The Committee.

Public Comments

Hanna Barker emailed during tonight's meeting and she is looking forward to the upcoming group discussions. She would like to see parents included in these working groups and would like surveys to include students from all levels. She is grateful PPE needs are being addressed for the return to school. She has questions concerning students wearing masks and is wondering about enough facilities in the schools for hand washing.

Adjournment

Mr. Moses motioned to adjourn tonight's meeting at 8:03 p.m. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio*