

CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
July 7, 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.

Chair Opening Statement

With tonight's meeting we are returning to in-person meetings with the five Committee members and three administrators. We are practicing "social distancing". The public is encouraged to submit comments by directly emailing Dr. Lang and Chairman King during the meeting.

A moment of silence was observed due to the loss of staff and students from the Chelmsford School Community.

Consent Agenda

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of June 16, 2020**

Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of June 16, 2020. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that the new literacy program materials have arrived and are sorted and will be distributed to staff soon. All goes well so far this summer and preparations are underway for the beginning of the new school year.

Student Representatives

Sudeep reported back on ideas requested by Ms. Newcomb at the last meeting. He and Katrina would like to dedicate a whole week in February (which is Black History Month) focused on Black History for all history classes and grades at CHS. Additionally, PRIDE block should focus on equality. The Learning Commons should make available all materials on Black History during the month. More education and awareness are important and needed going forward. Ms. Newcomb expressed her thanks to the Student Representatives.

Public Comments

Committee members will share these comments during the appropriate time during the meeting.

New Business

1. School Nutrition Program: Year in Review

A PowerPoint Presentation prepared by Nancy Antolini, Director of School Nutrition, providing an overview of the CPS breakfast and lunch programs operated this past school year is shared in tonight's agenda packet and she will join us through *gotomeeting.com* tonight. Ms. Antolini thanked everyone for all the support shown during the COVID19 pandemic. The entire slide show and her comments will be shared on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube. In the months of March, April, May, and June, students and families with food insecurity were serviced by the Nutrition program. She also shared her proposals for the upcoming school year. Ms. Antolini is proud to announce that she has been elected Vice President of The School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts and will serve in that role for the next four years. Dr. Lang shared that food service costs will not be increasing for the coming school year. He again thanked Ms. Antolini and her staff for the outstanding work done from March through June. Ms. Santos expressed deep gratitude for the nutrition team for stepping up during a frightening time for our families! Ms. Johnson-Collins also spoke of potential sources of food reimbursement that might be available if schools are being opened remotely. The Committee expressed gratitude to Ms. Antolini and her team!

2. 2019/20 CPS Year in Review

Dr. Lang's memorandum shared in tonight's agenda packet addresses the highlights of this past school year which included unprecedented challenges.

The highlights for the 2019/20 CPS year include:

- FY2019 Massachusetts DESE Financial Audit
- FY2020 Budget Administration
- 1:1 Technology Initiative
- FY2021 Budget Presentation and Review
- Ratification of the Chelmsford Professional Support Personnel Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Ratification of the Chelmsford Teachers and Nurses Contract
- Ratification of the Chelmsford Building Custodians Contract
- Chapter 70 and Legislative Funding Analysis
- Elementary Literacy and Reading Program Adoption
- CPS Strategic Planning: 2020 and Beyond
- Extended School Closure: Remote Learning

Dr. Lang spoke of these highlights, while expressing gratitude to all who helped to make these happen.

3. 2019/20 Superintendent's Evaluation Process

Dr. Lang's memorandum is included in tonight's agenda packet. Tomorrow he will email out the evaluation forms to The Committee. They should be completed and returned to The Chair and Dr. Lang by July 21, 2020. The evaluations will be combined and put on the agenda for the next meeting. Ms. Santos asked where the review of last year's evaluation may be found. Dr. Lang stated it is on the District's website as a link.

4. Recommended FY2020 Budget Transfers

Ms. Johnson-Collins reviewed the included memorandum with The Committee prior to asking for action on the transfers.

Ms. Newcomb motioned the School Committee vote to approve an FY2020 local operating budget transfer up to \$ 1,300,000 from the Transportation category to the Prepaid Tuitions account. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Newcomb motioned for the School Committee vote to approve an expenditure transfer of \$ 6,880.95 from the food service revolving fund to the FY20 local operating budget. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

5. Chelmsford INTERFACE Activity Report: December 2019 – May 2020

Sue Rosa, Manager of Health Care Services for Chelmsford, shared a memorandum and data for the past six months. Dr. Lang shared that Chelmsford showed an increase in referrals during COVID19, which shows that the services are needed and being used. Most services are sought for anxiety and depression. Costs for these services are split between The Town, The Board of Health and the School District equally.

6. 2020/21 School Committee Liaison Assignments

The Chair shared that there were few changes. Mr. Moses has been assigned to Parker Middle School PTO and Mr. King has been assigned to the Chelmsford Council of Schools. This will be posted online tomorrow for all the groups to see.

7. School Committee Draft Letter to State Delegation

This draft of this letter was created by Mr. King and Ms. Newcomb because The Committee was disappointed in the lack of response from the delegates to several resolutions forwarded to them by The Committee. The one delegate who did respond was Congresswoman Trahan. Topics included PPE equipment as well as equity and the promotion of equity and diversity in education. The Committee supports the draft and the letter will be sent out tomorrow.

8. Parent Survey Results: Remote Learning

Dr. Lang created a Power Point detailing the results of the survey conducted for parents. Additionally, there were over 2,000 comments which will be collated and shared at the next meeting. The completed slide show is in tonight's agenda packet and may be viewed on Chelmsford Telemedia/YouTube. 1,730 responses were received in total, which is a good number. The parents' responses represented 2,968 students. The information gathered has informed plans going forward to September.

9. Return-to-School Planning

Dr. Lang shared that the plan for September is still being formulated. Guidance from The State was received and is being incorporated into the plan for Chelmsford. Conversations are ongoing with the Commissioner of Education for clarity purposes. More guidance is expected near the end of July. The District has groups focusing on full return to school, hybrid models and remote models. Other groups are

concentrating on bus issues, sanitation and cleaning, health issues and food service. Still another group is focusing on SPED and ELL. Finally, there will be a communications group. All groups will be meeting next week. An email to parents is going out tomorrow to allow parents to become members of the planning groups. Completed plans for all three options (full return, hybrid, remote) will be presented by the end of July. The first two weeks of August administrators and Committee members will host sessions to share the plans so far. By the middle of August, with more guidance from The State on health trends, it may be possible to lock in the model for the opening of school and then prepare for that fully. Meetings will be held with DOE and the teachers' union in the next few days. By the end of next week, Dr. Lang will send out a communication updating the community of the status to date of reopening plans.

10. Updates

a. Diversity and Equity: Meeting with Recent CHS Alumni

A group has been formed and will meet with Dr. Lang tomorrow evening. He will share information at the next School Committee meeting on July 28, 2020. This group will continue to meet throughout the year to share their experiences and provide recommendations.

Both Ms. Newcomb and Ms. Santos look forward to continuing updates from this group including educational changes and trainings. They would like to see this on the agenda for future meetings to allow The Committee to take a position on the changes that are proposed. They will also reach out to MASC to ask for workshops on diversity and equity at the fall meeting in November.

b. CPS Website Redesign

A sketch out design called "wire frames" was shared by the contractor last week and Dr. Lang will share this information with the working group. More feedback will be given by the end July. A fall launch of the new website is expected.

c. 2020/21 Student Transportation Registration

Ms. Johnson-Collins shared that as of today 1,291 registered to ride the bus. Last year at this time 2,251 registrations were received. Everyone must register each year even if they do not need to pay the bus fee.

d. 2020/21 Staff Hiring

Dr. Lang shared that hiring is going well. There are only three or four professional positions that are not yet filled for the fall. For the meeting on July 28th a report will be shared on the hiring status.

Reports

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos attended the Economic Development Council meeting and shared updates. Chelmsford Telemedia will be sponsoring a drive-in theater event with only 100 tickets being available for cars. Several large apartment building developments will be presented for approval in the very near future. At 58 Hunt Road three phases of buildings are taking place. The first one with 24 units will be completed by late 2020 or early 2021. The second with 36 units should be completed by February. The final building with 24 units will be completed by late March or early April. Thermal-Fisher will also be expanding to three times its current size.

The Chair shared that The Booster's Club is sponsoring a blood drive on July 15th and 16th in the CHS parking lot. Appointments must be scheduled, and social distancing will be maintained.

Action/New Items

The question was raised whether CHS student representatives were elected for the next school year.

Mr. Moses asked that a discussion or a debate might be held by The Committee to address recent accusations nationally that our public-school systems are involved in teaching students to "hate America". He would like for The Committee to release a statement stating the commitment to civic education for our students and rejecting the negative narrative. In addition, he would like to ask the MASC to release a statement rejecting that narrative.

Public Comments

The Chair shared that a comment was made that The Committee, while meeting in person, were not wearing masks. The Committee made it clear at the last virtual meeting, that anyone not comfortable meeting in person would be able to attend the meeting remotely. Social distancing is maintained, the room was sanitized prior to the meeting and the windows are open. Ms. Santos reassured that guidelines are being followed and will continue to be going forward.

- 11. Executive Session: M.G.L. Ch. 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) – The Chelmsford School Committee provides public notice of its intent to convene in executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body or the chair so declares.**

Adjournment (8:34 p.m.)

- 1. Ms. Newcomb motioned to adjourn to executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body or the chair so declares and further not return to open session. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.**

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio*