

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
April 27, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Secretary), Ms. Donna Newcomb and Ms. Maria Santos. Mr. John Moses (Vice Chair) arrived at 6:09 p.m.

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."

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of April 13, 2021.

Ms. Newcomb motioned for the school committee to approve the minutes of the regular school committee of April 13, 2021. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Good News

"The Thursdays" made it to the nationals of the International Championship of High School Acapella! Additional good news, from Dr. Hirsch, is that the middle school students will return tomorrow for full-day in-school learning. Mr. Doherty shared that the CHIPS "Little Library" was installed during April break, thanks to the hard work of Mary Ellen Forte, her family and the CHIPS PTO. The library is found in the O'Donnell Fairy Garden. Pre-school book donations will be appreciated. Ms. Santos added that the "Grab and Go" was a huge success at CHS. *Lions Roar* is featuring pictures of this event.

Public Comments

No callers tonight.

New Business

1. Announcement of CHIPs Program Coordinator: Ms. Megan McGuirk

Amy Reese, Director of Student Support Services, joined the meeting virtually to introduce Ms. McGuirk. A two-minute recess was called due to technical audio difficulties. While the difficulties are being attended to, the meeting will resume following the parts of tonight's agenda which only need to broadcast audio from the meeting room itself. Due to recent technical issues, Dr. Lang believes it would be appropriate to have speakers attend future meetings in person. Agenda items 2 and 3 will be addressed later tonight or at the next meeting.

4. Kindergarten Entrance Age Policy Waiver

Dr. Hirsch mentioned that in February she proposed a policy waiver for children who turn six in August and had not attended kindergarten to enroll in kindergarten for the upcoming school year. Parents have reached out to see if this policy would be in place beyond this year and if the waiver might be extended to include children turning six in July. School Committee members have not received much communication on this from parents. Based on Committee input, Dr. Lang said a formal vote would be taken on this issue at the next meeting on May 4, 2021. The Committee is comfortable with extending the policy for children who turn six in August beyond the coming school year but would like time to consider moving the change to include July as well. Dr. Lang will reach out to counsel to draft the policy change.

5. MSBA Statement of Interest Submission Timeline

Due to COVID the time to submit has been moved from April this year to June. Dr. Lang would like the Committee's support to revise and submit again an application to build a new high school. This summer he would like to look again at capital projects using Dorr-Whittier or another group. After more than four years it would be helpful to hold "visioning" sessions again involving the whole community. This would be pertinent to developing the facilities portion of the strategic plan. The application is due on June 25th. The Committee supports Dr. Lang submitting to MSBA for a new high school.

6. FY2021 Budget Report: 3rd Quarter Financials

Ms. Johnson-Collins reviewed the report included in tonight's agenda packet.

7. FY2021 Recommended One-Time Expenditures

Dr. Lang discussed his memorandum contained in tonight's agenda packet concerning his recommendations for one-time expenditures. Capital projects and prepaying next school year's special education costs, he feels would be beneficial. Input has been gathered from building principals, assistant principals and department coordinators. He is making the recommendations tonight so that plans for these expenditures may be solidified this month. Projects may include renovation of the McCarthy Lecture Hall, maker spaces, as well as purchase of "back-to-school" supplies. Dr. Lang has included the suggestions in tonight's packet. The Committee discussed some of the proposals. Dr. Lang would be happy to hear additional suggestions and the list will be revisited at the next meeting and over the next few weeks.

8. FY2021 Recommended Budget Transfers

Mr. Moses motioned for the school committee to approve the FY2021 local operating budget transfers for the Chelmsford Public Schools totaling \$91,916 as presented. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

9. Return-to-School Update

Dr. Lang shared his slide show and additional comments addressing the update. His full slide show is included in tonight's agenda packet.

a. Community & Covid Data Trends

There was a community uptick in late March, but last week's data was lower. Conversations are ongoing with the town health department. There has been no spread from isolated cases reported in the schools and school numbers continue to remain low.

b. Staff & Student Covid Pool Testing

Pool testing is in week six with over 45,000 participants and only three positive cases were identified.

c. Middle School Full In-Person Return to School: Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Middle school students will return tomorrow.

d. High School Full In-Person Return to School: Monday, May 3, 2021

CHS students will return on May 3, 2021.

10. New CPS Website Launch: May 1, 2021

This will be rolled out this weekend as a multi-day process.

11. Personnel Report: March 2021

No action required.

Liaisons

The Chair shared that Center School PTO is working hard on fundraising and enrichment. They are looking forward to the updating of their playground. They sold close to 900 tickets for their calendar raffle and had a successful "recycling day".

Public Comments

Mr. Moses shared that he received a positive comment on including July birthdays for kindergarten registration.

Adjournment (8:07 p.m.)

Mr. Moses motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Newcomb seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*