

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
March 15, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Secretary), Mr. John Moses, Ms. Donna Newcomb 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. In-person public participation will be taking place tonight in accordance with social distancing and safety protocols established by the Chelmsford School Committee Public Participation Guidelines. Anyone interested in speaking during the public input portion of the meeting would have notified the superintendent’s office by yesterday afternoon and would have been provided with the guidelines and assigned a time to attend the meeting to speak. 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 their comments or questions during our second public input session at the end of the meeting.”

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of February 17, 2022
2. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of March 1, 2022

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the regular School Committee meetings of February 17, 2022, and March 1, 2022. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Student Representatives Announcements

Katrina congratulated Maddie Priestly, Olivia Hall, Amelia Kelly and Naomi DeSouza who ran in the Indoor Track Nationals in New York last weekend. House Olympics are happening this week at CHS. The staff won last night’s basketball tournament while the seniors dominated today’s hockey game. Juniors attended the Career Opportunity breakfast today. Spring sports registration has begun!

Sarah shared that term three ends in two and a half weeks. At that time seniors who are participating in the Capstone Project will have their last day in school. She congratulated the Speech and Debate Team

who competed in the Harvard National Forensics Tournament. Sophia Roy advanced to the finals in “informative speaking” and Rishi Ajmera advanced to finals in Lincoln/Douglas Debates. The Writing and Literature Club is hosting a school-wide contest where pieces submitted will address the theme “love”. The Theatre Guild will host the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival preliminary round here on March 20th.

Ms. Santos added that the Career Fair was great!

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that this Saturday the 11th annual grade four through twelve Choral Festival will take place at 1:30 at the CHS PAC.

Public Comments

None.

New Business

1. Ratification of MOA: Chelmsford School Administrators’ Association

Dr. Lang outlined the terms of this three-year agreement and language changes. Town Manager, Cohen who is part of the School Committee’s negotiation team, is also present tonight for the vote. Dr. Lang recommends full ratification.

Mr. Moses motioned to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement with the Chelmsford School Administrators Association as presented. Mr. Doherty seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 6-0 (with Town Manager Cohen included in the vote).

2. School Committee Mid-Year Goals Review

An update on the goals is included in tonight’s agenda packet. Mr. King is pleased with accomplishments so far this year. Ms. Newcomb likes the new format! She would like to see the results of the Strategic Planning Workshops included in the document going forward.

Mr. Moses motioned to accept the report as a report of progress as amended. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

3. Superintendent Mid-Year Goals Review 4. Vote on School Choice Program: 2022/23 School Year

An update on the goals is included in tonight’s agenda packet. Dr. Lang is pleased with what has been done thus far and looks forward to continuing the work on these goals for the remaining months of the school year.

Mr. Moses motioned to accept the report as a report of progress. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

4. Vote on School Choice Program: 2022/23 School Year

Dr. Lang shared that there will be room for incoming ninth grade students in the upcoming school year. Up to 16 incoming freshmen may be accepted under this program. The \$5,000 per students paid to the district from the state helps to fund the 1:1 computer initiative.

Mr. Moses motioned to accept sixteen (16) additional/new students at Chelmsford High School in Grade 9 under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts School Choice Program in the 2022/23 school year, bringing the total School Choice participation in the Chelmsford Public Schools to forty-five (45) enrolled students in the 2022/23 school year. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

5. Vote to Establish Special Education Reserve Fund - MGL Chapter 40, Section 13E

In addition to the packet in tonight's agenda about this item in "New Business", Dr. Lang provided a detailed explanation on how this reserve fund works and would be beneficial to the Chelmsford Public Schools for future or unbudgeted special education needs. For a full understanding of this reserve fund, please view tonight's School Committee meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia. Dr. Lang addressed questions from The Committee.

Mr. Moses motioned for the School Committee to vote to establish a special education reserve fund in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law chapter 40, paragraph 13E. Mr. Doherty seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

6. Vote to Approve Regular Education Student Transportation Contract

Ms. Johnson-Collins proved details to supplement the information contained in tonight's agenda packet. The only bid received was from NRT. Currently it costs the district \$400 per bus per day. In year one of the new contract it will cost \$412 per bus per day.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the regular education transportation contract for three years with two years of option. Mr. Doherty seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

7. FY2022 Budget Projection

Ms. Johnson-Collins reported on the projection included in tonight's agenda packet. At this time the budget looks favorable.

8. Recommended FY2022 One-Time Budget Expenditures

Dr. Lang presented projects for The Committee to review for funds that will be available for re-allocation. The details are included in tonight's packet. The materials for some of these projects will need to be ordered soon to allow the projects to be completed during the summer. For this reason, some of these projects will need to be approved tonight. Recommended projects include new cafeteria tables for three elementary schools and a new lighting system for the high school stadium (the lights currently there can be repurposed elsewhere in the district, for example at the tennis courts). More of these projects may be voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the listed one-time purchase recommendations. Mr. Doherty seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

9. Recommended FY2022 Budget Transfers

Ms. Johnson-Collins discussed the budget transfers proposed in tonight's agenda packet.

Mr. Moses motioned to approve these FY22 local operating budget transfers for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. Mr. Doherty seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

10. Incoming 5th Grade Students - Middle School Assignment

Dr. Lang reviewed the past practice that all students at Center and South Row attend middle school at McCarthy. The majority of students from Byam and Harrington go to Parker Middle School, but a small portion of these students are sent to McCarthy each year. Dr. Lang has reached out to the parents of that small group of students (32 students in all) letting them know that these children would be able to go to Parker in the fall instead of McCarthy if desired. This would enable these students to remain with the children with whom they attended elementary school. The response was that 16 would like their children to attend Parker, while the other 16 chose McCarthy. The choice is completely voluntary. Although policy allows Dr. Lang to make this determination without approval of The Committee, he wanted to hear members' thoughts on this. The Committee is fine with Dr. Lang's suggestion. No further action required tonight.

11. Update on COVID-19: Case Count, Pool Testing Initiative, At-Home Rapid Antigen Test Kit Program Participation, and Student Vaccination Status

Dr. Lang shared the updates in tonight's agenda packet and provided additional information. The data is looking strong for the community. The vaccination numbers keep rising which is also good. Pool testing continues to go well. Last week 99.7% of tests were negative. Positive tests are receiving support. At-home tests continue weekly. The COVID Dashboard is posted to the web site every Friday morning.

12. Personnel Report: January 2022

No action required.

13. Personnel Report: February 2022

No action required.

14. School Committee Policy Updates

MASC has removed policies that were instituted during the height of the COVID 19 outbreak and are no longer needed. The mask mandate for busses is no longer in effect because the federal government has removed the requirement. Currently masks are required in the school nurses' offices. The Chair included a document in tonight's agenda packet suggesting updates to policies EBC and BEDH discussed these proposals with The Committee at tonight's meeting. The Chair will work on the formatting for these proposals and present them for approval at the next meeting.

15. Approval of Field Trip and Travel Requests

Mr. Moses motioned to retroactively approve the field trip to Boston that went successfully. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Newcomb shared that South Row had a successful book drive. Their virtual Science Fair is available as a slide show on the South Row website. "Curious Creatures" and a therapy dog visit took place today. A visit to the second grade from "Wing Masters" will take place on the 21st of this month. Byam will host "Paint Night" with Mrs. Brown on the 16th and the 26th a hootenanny talent show will take place. On the 29th the "Artist in Residence", Rob Serrett, will begin a three-day visit. Tomorrow night The Chelmsford Council of Schools will meet. March is hosting a youth art exhibit at the Chelmsford Public Library in the McCarthy Room.

Mr. Doherty said that CHS parents, for "Pi Day", provided 220 Table Talk pies for staff to celebrate the day! The CHS PTO is still needing parents to help with the breakfast to take place after the prom. The Boosters provided financial support for the Nationals at Virginia Beach. Their big fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday at The Establishment to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Ms. Santos added that the McCarthy PTO will hold "Rock 'n' Roll" Bingo on March 25th. Student Bingo already has 75 participants lined up for this Friday afternoon. A joint breakfast was provided for the administration and staff. Over 100 7th grade students attended "The Black and Light Dance".

The Chair shared that the CHIPS PTO met and most recently offered the enrichment for dental health with all students receiving toothbrushes. A staff appreciation breakfast was appreciated by all. Spirit Week will take place the beginning of May and volunteers are needed for all activities.

Dr. Lang attended a national meeting for superintendents in Nashville in February. It provided a good opportunity to discuss lessons learned from the pandemic. It was helpful to get a national view and to meet with superintendents from many other states.

Adjournment (7:56 p.m.)

Mr. Moses motioned to adjourn. Mr. Doherty seconded it. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*