

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
April 12, 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 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."

The Chair congratulated Mr. Moses and Ms. Santos on being re-elected to serve on The Chelmsford School Committee!

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of March 15, 2022

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes from March 15, 2022. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Student Representatives Announcements

Sarah shared that CHS is entering the fourth quarter and preparing to wrap up the year. Some seniors have left to pursue their internships. The seniors remaining in school have 22 more days! CHS accreditation is beginning and visitors from NEASC have already visited the school and conducted interviews. Their findings will be reported within 45 days. The Melting Pot will provide their annual "International Lunch" for teachers this Thursday. The last two years were missed due to COVID concerns. The class officers for the Class of 2023 are: Marty Coleman for president; Jonah Abraham for vice president; Julia Williams for secretary and the treasurer will be Josh Boot. The Theatre Guild won regionals for their play *Faith and Despondency*. The Guild received many other awards. Students are looking forward to April break next week!

Good News

Mr. Moses shared excellent news. He thanked Lori Trahan's office staff and Bill Silver for the receipt of ARPA funds in the amount of \$820,000. This will be used to provide 2,200 new laptops and 70 additional access points. This will help provide equity to all students.

Ms. Santos thanked the CHS students who ran the recent Student Leadership Conference with over 150 participants. Dr. Lang was pleased to moderate one of the panels for the conference and was impressed with the engagement of the students and The Town participants.

Mr. Doherty shared that he and Ms. Newcomb attended South Row's international events last weekend. A huge crowd enjoyed the event. Ms. Newcomb was pleased with how this event highlighted the diversity in our community and the countries of origin of many of our families.

Public Comments

Melissa McDonald of six Colonial Terrace in Chelmsford shared her concerns about iReady. She is not pleased that her children need to spend 45 to 60 minutes a week on their computers for this enrichment program. She would like to see The District poll parents, teachers and students to determine the future of this program.

New Business

1. Reorganization of School Committee

- a. Election of School Committee Chair**
- b. Election of School Committee Vice Chair**
- c. Election of School Committee Secretary**

Dr. Lang opened the meeting to nominations. Ms. Newcomb was nominated by Mr. Moses for Chair. A voice vote showed all five members in favor. Ms. Newcomb, the newly elected Chair, opened nominations for Vice Chair. Jeff Doherty was nominated by Mr. King. A voice vote showed all five members in favor. Mr. Moses nominated Mr. King for secretary. A voice vote showed all five members in favor.

2. Spotlight on the Schools: Center Elementary School

Dr. Lang welcomed Center Principal, Diana Fulreader, and Assistant Principal, Donna Omobono. They were accompanied by Chris McGillicuddy, Center's music teacher and several students and parents. The school's focus is to provide "equity, inclusivity and a culturally responsive education". Their School Council recently sent a survey for parents which was translated into 30 languages. The results will be discussed at a school forum to influence steps taken for the next school year. Text sets for each grade level this year focused on DEI. The presentation tonight is augmented by a slide show which features students demonstrating the wonderful ways in which the school is providing equity, inclusivity and culture for all. To fully appreciate tonight's presentation, please view it on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube. Ongoing Professional Development of DEI has supported the teachers in discussions and activities on similarities and differences. Grade level meetings and bulletin boards promoting diversity have flourished this school year. All classes are doing multicultural projects in art and music. May 10th there will be a family sing along night. This June, Center will host a "Culture and Arts Night" which will feature students performing music, shared student artwork and a book fair! Last year, Mr. McGillicuddy proposed adding music keyboarding to the curriculum. He was able to write a grant for this and get complete funding within three months' time! The School Committee was treated to three impressive keyboard presentations this evening! Thanks to Aria (1st grade), Jemma (2nd grade) and Emma (4th grade) for sharing their keyboard talent tonight!

3. Care Solace Referral Resource – Verbal Update

Dr. Lang welcomed Shannon Bischoff, Coordinator for Social Emotional Learning and Counseling Services, to the meeting to provide an update on Care Solace Referral Resource. This resource is being piloted from March through July 1st for the district. It provides access to mental health and substance abuse treatment for the community. Project Interface (William James College) had to stop providing referrals for a brief time due to the high volume of requests but are now again a resource for Chelmsford.

Care Solace is available 24/7 each day of the year and offers 200 different languages. Staff members may make the referral if the family would like. In only the past two weeks, Care Solace, has matched five families with clinicians! When the trial period ends the district will decide on continuation of this resource. If a decision is made to continue the \$16,000 per year fee may be covered by Esser Funds over the next two years.

4. Academic Assessment Calendar Update

Dr. Hirsch included a memorandum in tonight's agenda packet updating the academic assessments to take place for the remainder of this school year. She elaborated on this for The Committee tonight. Analysis of the assessments will take place over the summer to determine best practices for teaching staff for the next school year. A pilot program for iReady (ELA and math) at CHS took place this year and will be evaluated over the summer.

5. Potential Middle School Merger/Realignment Working Group – Verbal Update

Dr. Lang shared that he will soon be sending messages to families about a group that is working on equity issues between the two middle schools and inefficiencies regarding the operation of running two schools in each middle school (elementary schedule for grades 5 and 6 and a middle school model for grades 7 and 8). Dore & Whittier proposed a new middle school project which might result in a new school being built in six or so years. Meanwhile, the “working group” will work on proposals for more equity and better alignment for the current middle schools. One idea is to have one middle school building for grades 5 and 6 and the other the school for 7 and 8. Soon after April vacation meetings will be held with nearby districts who do have separate building for grades 5 and 6, and another for 7 and 8. Forums will be held before the end of the school year to get public feedback on the findings. Any changes would not take place before the 2023/24 school year. Transition planning would take place during the 2022/23 school year.

6. Anticipated Last Day of School: Students & Staff

Dr. Hirsch has included a memorandum in tonight's agenda packet providing information on the last day of school for students and staff. Tentatively the last day of school for students (except at Byam Elementary) would be Thursday, June 16th and that would be a half day for students, but a full day for staff. Staff would attend for a half the day on June 17th. Since Byam lost one additional day this school year their last day of school would be June 17th and that would be a half day for students with a full day for staff. Tuesday, June 21st would be a half day for staff. Monday, June 20th is a federal holiday to celebrate Juneteenth.

7. School Committee Policy Updates

Mr. King spoke of the proposed updates. Clarification was discussed to replace “citizens” with “residents of the district”.

a. BEDH – Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

b. BEDH-E – Guidelines for Public Comment

Mr. Doherty motioned to accept the revised and updated policy BEDH Public Comment at School Committee Meetings and policy BEDH-E Guidelines for Public Comments with the correction to the term “citizen” and the rest as presented. Mr. King seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

8. Approval of Field Trip and Travel Requests

Mr. Doherty motioned for The Committee approve the three presented out-of-state field trips. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared that McCarthy's recycle day or "junk" day will be May 14th. McCarthy Idol will return on May 14th! Harrington will hold a "send-off" for the fourth graders on June 10, 2022. There will be a yearbook signing, a DJ and an ice cream truck. Also, Harrington's calendar fund raiser brought in over \$13,000! They are currently hosting a "Read-a-Thon" to raise money to place a book vending machine in the school!

Mr. Doherty said that the CHS PTO's "Prom Committee" will host the after-prom breakfast. Volunteers are needed. This year The Alumni Association will send letters to students receiving scholarships and a week later the check will be mailed. The Booster Club has fifteen \$1,000 scholarships. The deadline to apply is May 20, 2022.

Mr. King spoke of how lifting COVID restrictions at Center School created improved functioning in the school. Children are being respectful of those who choose to wear masks. Their playground equipment has been ordered, with the ground breaking to take place in May. The PTO raised \$50,000 to help fund this and are thankful to the district for additional support. They also raised \$20,000 on their calendar raffle. CHIPs PTO continues to offer enrichment for all their kids and have frequent staff appreciation events!

Ms. Newcomb encourages families to volunteer for the school PTOs.

Action/New Items

Mr. Moses wants to place The Chelmsford Land Acknowledgement Proclamation passed by The Town on the agenda for an upcoming meeting.

Sarah shared that the CHS Civic Action Club sponsored a survey for all the voters in Chelmsford. Ms. Santos thanked Sarah for working on this with her club members.

Mr. King stated that Town Meeting will be held on April 25th, the next night will be the regular meeting of The School Committee.

Mr. Moses will attend the upcoming virtual "Day on the Hill".

Ms. Newcomb would like to see the MASC legislative priorities discussed at a future Committee meeting.

Ms. Santos would like to see work take place on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (7:37 p.m.)

Mr. Doherty motioned to adjourn. Ms. Santos seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*