

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
February 7, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Vice Chair), Mr. Dennis King (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 & Finance)

Call to Order

6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Opening Statement

“This 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 the Chelmsford School Committee Public Participation Guidelines. Anyone speaking tonight during the public input portion of the meeting has notified the superintendent’s office of their desire to speak and has been provided with these guidelines. Upon request written comments received no later than 12:00 p.m. on the day of this meeting will also be read and made part of the record of the meeting during the second public comment session.”

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of January 17, 2023

Mr. Doherty moved that The Committee approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of January 17, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Students Representative Announcements

Lana shared that the McCarthy Middle School presented the play *Matilda* which was a “huge success”! Tomorrow will be a half-day for students. She congratulated The CHS Swim and Dive Team for winning their tournament.

Keya added that Choral Fest 2023 will be held on Saturday, February 11th at the CHS PAC. The Crescendos acapella group gave a “stellar performance” at the New England Voices Fest and will be heading the regional quarterfinals on February 12th where The Thursdays will also compete. A live webinar will take place on February 15, 2023, on ways to reduce the cost of college for all those who are wishing to attend.

Dr. Hirsch shared that The Office of Language Acquisition from DESE has invited the CPS ELL Team to present at the Leadership Network Conference as a “model district”. Additionally, they asked Ms. Victoria Carnavale, an ELL teacher at Parker Middle School, to write an article for their newsletter *Nuestro Puente* which will highlight the district’s ELL programming support. The Fulbright TEA Scholars have arrived at UMass and two of them are at CHS. They are excited to be here to learn and share information with our teaching staff and provide an experience for the students with whom they interact. All 21 of them will be present at the next School Committee meeting on February 28, 2023.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Spotlight on the Schools: McCarthy Middle School

McCarthy Principal Kurt McPhee along with Kerry Calobrisi, Assistant Principal, and Moya Charig, School Counselor, joined the meeting to share highlights from the current school year. McCarthy strives for each student to have a sense of belonging in the school and in the Chelmsford community. Participation in after school clubs and activities makes this possible for many students. Additionally, The PBIS Committee offers fun events monthly and has helped with students feeling connected. Ms. Calobrisi spoke of a rewards system for students who meet and exceed expectations daily through the course of their schedule and these students are able to participate in a variety of monthly events. The events include: a game show; volleyball (staff versus students); classroom door decorating; BINGO; with an upcoming visit from a member of The Harlem Globetrotters; McCarthy Floor Hockey Cup Tournament; a walk-a-thon and end of year celebration. Principal McPhee also shared DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) monthly events throughout the school year including; Heart Health; Black History Month; Women’s History Month and celebrations of diverse ethnicities. Ms. Charig has also begun to take actionable steps to address comments and language that can be exclusive rather than inclusive. Ms. Charig has been addressing racism, microaggressions, and anti-LGBTQIA statements. She has offered weekly meetings allowing conversations open to all eighth-grade students around these concerns to help create a “safer” McCarthy. After vacation week this opportunity will be open to students at other grades with the help of the other counselors on staff. McCarthy has an after-school club called “Stand Up McCarthy” providing a safe space for gay students. The presentation was warmly received by The Committee. The accompanying slide show is quite informative.

2. Vote: Approval of Contract for Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Moses spoke of the six-year contract negotiated with Superintendent Lang based on the important work he has done in his eight years in Chelmsford and the importance of continuity moving forward. Ms. Santos added that Dr. Lang’s abilities and talent have brought the district to fiscal order at a time when other school districts are struggling. She thanked Dr. Lang for his continuous good working relationship with the Committee. The Chair thanked Mr. Moses and Ms. Santos for their work on this contract.

Mr. Doherty moved that the School Committee approve a new contract of employment for Dr. Lang based on the specific terms previously discussed by the Committee in Executive Session on or about January 9, 2023 and presented and reviewed in Executive Session on February 7, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Dr. Lang expressed thanks to Mr. Moses and Ms. Santos for their work on the negotiations and to the entire Committee for their support. He thanked his central office staff for their support as well. He looks forward to the work of the upcoming years.

3. Superintendent's Recommended FY2024 Budget

The binders containing the FY2024 budget were distributed. The budget proposal will be posted on the district's web site tomorrow. Dr. Lang presented highlights of the budget including the summary on page 10. At the next meeting on February 28th the budget will be reviewed page by page and there will be opportunity for discussion. His slide show included in tonight's agenda packet supported the budget presentation. Dr. Lang is pleased that the district has been in good financial shape for a number of years. FY 2023 is in great shape! To fully appreciate the presentation, one should view this segment of tonight's meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube. The Town of Chelmsford continues to support the public schools with a \$3.2 million dollar increase for FY2024 compared to the FY2023 budget of \$67.5 million. The increase provides for level service funding with the proposed amount of \$70.7 million for FY2024. 2024 will bring a 14% increase in out-of-district special education costs, which is much higher than the usual 2 to 3% increase of past years. The district continues to add programs to provide for some of these special education needs in a way that keeps the students within the district which is better for the students and the community. The proposed budget includes increasing the LPNs at schools to full time status from 0.7 currently. Additional ASD (serving students on the autism spectrum) classrooms will need to be added and will be housed at Harrington for the 2023/24 school year (currently there are three ASD classrooms at Byam). The 1:1 initiative will be supported by School Choice Funds. The School Committee meeting on February 28th will be a page by page look at the total budget with opportunities for questions. The public is welcome to attend. Dr. Lang thanks Ms. Johnson-Collins and her business staff for their diligent work on the FY2024 budget.

4. Synthetic Turf Fields – Revolving Fund Debt Service Schedule

Dr. Lang shared a report from Ms. Johnson-Collins providing an update on the turf fields at CHS and McCarthy. There are two years of payments remaining on both. The fields are in good shape and are well maintained annually.

5. Recommended FY2023 Budget Transfers

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum in tonight's packet recommending two budget transfers.

Mr. Doherty moved that the School Committee approve the FY2023 local operating budget transfers for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

6. CPS Internal Control Manual for Federal Grants: Update January 2023

Ms. Johnson-Collins shared a memorandum and spoke to the requirement for this manual. This is an update from the manual of 2017. The updated manual is shared in tonight's agenda packet with the updated portions in red print. The Committee expressed thanks to Ms. Johnson-Collins and her department for the hard work this document entailed.

Mr. Doherty moved that The Committee vote to acknowledge the receipt of this updated report in progress the CPS Internal Control Manual for Federal Grants. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

7. Tiered Focus Monitoring Report: English Language Learners

Dr. Hirsch provided an update on the site visit completed last month as well as the self-assessment completed by the district. The good news is that the district is in complete compliance and no corrective actions are needed and DESE is featuring Chelmsford as a “model district”.

8. School Committee Workshop Discussion: Legislative Agenda

The Chair would like to schedule a Committee workshop for March to discuss legislative agenda for the upcoming meeting with the state representatives. March 14th at 6:00 was agreed upon for this meeting.

9. McCarthy Middle School Tennis Court Area Redesign/Refurbishment

Dr. Lang included documentation pertinent to this project in tonight’s agenda packet. This will be a capital project for FY2025. He will share the report with the Select Board. Planning will begin in the spring for a multi-use recreational space for the public for hours when school is not in session.

10. Valley Collaborative 2021-2022 Annual Report

This annual report of progress is included in tonight’s agenda packet. Dr. Lang is the Chelmsford Public Schools representative to the Valley Collaborative Board.

11. Valley Collaborative Winter 2023 Newsletter

Included in tonight’s packet.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared that The Wellness Committee met. One goal for this year is to address wellness education at the elementary level. At South Row they have used all school assemblies to do programs as a model for the other schools under the leadership of Ms. Simes. Stephanie Quinn is working on the second goal which is staff wellness. This will include a staff survey to ascertain ideas. The McCarthy PTO will hold “Rock and Roll Bingo” on March 24th. They also held a successful book fair. A Roller Kingdom night for the whole school is in the works. Their PTO will meet with Parker’s PTO to discuss the realignment plans for next year. ELLPAC will be offering a workshop for their leaders in Spanish.

Mr. Moses stated that both Byam and Parker will hold PTO meetings tomorrow night.

According to Mr. Doherty to CHS PTO met last night and were happy with the success of their recent “Grab and Go” for staff with another planned for March. Planning for the “After Prom Breakfast” continues. The Boosters Club will host a St. Patrick’s Day party on March 11th and will be selling Easter tulips. Scholarship applications will be available on March 1st on the website for ten of \$1,000 each.

Mr. King added that Center’s PTO is selling raffle tickets for “The Taste of Chelmsford”. Their Science Fair will be on March 16th and the Chelmsford “Read In” will return this year. On May 13th they will hold a recycling day with McCarthy.

Ms. Newcomb shared that the South Row PTO will host the community “Read In” from March 13th through the 17th and a school wide book fair will be held that same week. They are starting a recycling program for broken crayons and used markers. Their Science Fair will take place on February 28th.

Action/New Items

None

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (7:33 p.m.)

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

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*