

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
November 14, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Dennis King (Vice Chair). Ms. Susan Mackinnon (Secretary), Mr. John Moses and Ms. Maria Santos. Ms. Susan Mackinnon is not present this evening.

Also present: Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent), Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent), and Ms. Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business & Finance)

Call to Order

Ms. Newcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00

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 this 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 school committee working session meeting of October 17, 2023

Mr. King motioned to accept the minutes from our working session on October 17, 2023. Ms. Santos seconded. Motion carries 3-0 with Mr. Moses abstaining.

2. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of October 17, 2023

Mr. King motioned to accept the minutes from our meeting of October 17, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

3. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of October 24, 2023

Mr. King motioned to accept the minutes for our meeting on October 24, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Lana shared that a drive through Trick or Treat was held on October 28th, with donations given to The Paul Center and The Chelmsford Food Pantry. The CHS Theatre Guild’s presentation of *Mamma Mia* opens this Thursday night with additional performances on Friday and Saturday. On Tuesday November 21st, CHS will hold a Pep Rally to prepare for the Chelmsford/Billerica Thanksgiving football game. Spirit Week will start tomorrow!

Keya added that The Interacts Club is sponsoring a winter wear drive to coincide with Spirit Week. Collection boxes will be in the CHS main lobby from November 13th through the 21st. Items will be donated to the Lowell Transitional Living Center. All athletes who want to play a winter sport must attend a meeting on Wednesday, November 15th, at 2:00 p.m. in the CHS Gym. The coaches will meet with all registered athletes after the meeting to give specific information. Project 300 returns to CHS with donations being accepted until the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. During Plus Block a cart will come to classrooms to also receive donations.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that a full professional development day took place last week. Michael Bonner was the guest speaker who spoke about creating “genuine relationships with your students and with each other” to make learning meaningful. Last week’s newsletter contains additional information about the follow-up sessions on that day for teachers. Tomorrow is a half day for middle and elementary school students during which family conferences will be held.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Spotlight on the Schools: McCarthy & Parker Middle Schools

Dr. Lang welcomed middle school principals Jeff Parks and Josh Blagg to the meeting to present some of the work that took place and how the opening to the school year has been going. With the middle school re-alignment, a lot of staff were moved and there was shifting for the students. Mr. Parks began by stating that he and Mr. Blagg have been friends for a long time, and they are happy to work together on this “good collaboration”. Mr. Blagg shared that there are common threads in opening two “new” schools including: service-learning opportunities; team building; SEL Second Step; a combined PTO; as well as year two of parent/teacher conferences. School wide SEL takes place one day per week. Maintaining one PTO for all four grades over four years is a bonus.

Mr. Blagg shared the motto for Parker of “Dream Big, Work Hard, Make it Happen!”. Parker has one school-wide service project each month. They raised over \$3,000 by collecting change for The Jimmy Fund! The PBIS program continues at Parker. Students are rewarded for doing the right thing. Over 300 students participate in after school clubs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The “Day of Awesomeness” sponsored by the PTO was enjoyed by the whole school. Additionally, there are grade level social events planned. The Bionic Project was kicked off by a professional soccer player and encourages diversity, equity and inclusion and cultivating cultural awareness. Academically, the grade level teachers now have common planning time and are able to focus on “common language and approaches”. He concluded by sharing photos of events at Parker.

Mr. Parks started by highlighting building updates to McCarthy including revitalizing “four corners” into a satellite office in the middle of the school; the new science labs; and the new fitness facility which is used for curriculum as well as after school. Starting at the beginning of the school year the mantra has been “we are one school!”. Each team has a unique schedule, and the students cycle through five classes. Care was taken to set up the staff and students for each new team as a mix of those who were at Parker or McCarthy last year. The schedule also includes a possibility of Spanish, Literacy Support or Special Education services. This allows for smaller class sizes and offers students an elective block (chorus, band, orchestra, computer, reading, health, PE, art or Project Lead the Way) for half of the year. Mondays is SEL/Second Step day. He shared a photo of the Student Leaders who, just today, moved thousands of cans of food for Project 300!

2. FY2025 Capital Planning & Prioritization

Dr. Lang included two memoranda and supporting documents in tonight's agenda packet addressing his initial prioritization of the capital requests for FY2025. Mr. King will be the School Committee representative who will attend The Capital Committee meetings. This Committee will be looking at capital requests from all departments in Chelmsford. They recommend projects for funding at April Town meeting. If the projects are approved by The Town, the school district moves forward to conduct the projects. The last four pages in the packet detail the district's capital plan for FY2025 through FY2028. Three of the listed capital projects have already been deferred for several years. Three others have already been completed so they no longer will need funding. In the memo to John Souza dated November 1, 2023, Dr. Lang listed projects totaling \$3,364,028 for consideration. The school district will have the opportunity to present to the Capital Committee on November 30th. The task before our School Committee is to approve a list of the capital projects in priority order. Dr. Lang presented his priority rationale to the Committee so that discussion and a final vote can take place tonight or at the next meeting on November 21st.

Mr. King motioned to approve the new reprioritized list as presented tonight. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Dr. Lang will send the revised list to John Souza tomorrow.

3. Personnel Report: October 2023

No action required.

4. Valley Collaborative Fall 2023 Newsletter

This newsletter is shared in tonight's agenda packet.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos attended the combined Parker and McCarthy PTO meeting last night. They had a successful recycling day. The budget looks good, so planning is in the works for enrichment programs. The Book Fair at Parker went extremely well. The Wellness Committee met today and are planning for a Wellness Fair Day in March at CHS with vendors and community organizations.

Mr. King shared that the Alumni Association had a successful Hall of Fame event. Their scholarship applications will be available in December. They are optimistic about being able to present the scholarships in person this year. SEPAC announced that Governor Healey proclaimed November 2023 to be SEPAC Awareness Month in Massachusetts for the fifth consecutive year.

Ms. Newcomb thought the presentation to the state reps went well. Dr. Lang forwarded them talking points for the proposal for a new middle school. Dr. Lang felt it was important for them to be aware of growing enrollment which is predicted for the next five to ten years and how this ties into our need for a new building.

Ms. Newcomb also shared that The Committee attended the MASC/MASS joint conference last week and on Wednesday our School Committee presented a workshop featuring Chelmsford's experiences with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training. The attendance was good and thoughtful questions were asked. Ms. Newcomb sat on a panel on day two of the conference.

Action/ New Items

Mr. Moses shared that there will be a Veteran's event at the Career Center at CHS on November 16th with vets who are CHS graduates and Dr. Parks, Becky Tyros and himself who will be speaking to students who are planning to join the service.

Public Comments

none

Adjournment (7:35 p.m.)

Mr. King motioned to adjourn. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio,
Recording Secretary*