

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
February 27, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Dennis King (Vice Chair), Ms. Susan Mackinnon (Secretary), Mr. John Moses and Ms. Maria Santos.

Also present: Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent) and 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 regular school committee meeting of February 6, 2024

Mr. King motioned to approve the minutes of the meeting on February 6th. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Keya shared that the scheduling process for the 2024/25 school year has begun for students. Many CHS students participated in “The Memory Project”, a youth arts organization for intercultural learning and kindness amongst children of the world. CHS students created portraits for children from Syria which were then delivered to the children! The Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild will hold their preliminary round on March 2nd. Tuesday, March 5th is an early release day. On March 6th the CHS “Wellness Fair” will take place. A junior “Career Exploration” breakfast will also take place on March 6, 2024.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that her “good news” is sitting in the audience tonight!

Mr. King added that the CHS wrestler, Thomas Brown, won his third All-state Title this weekend! Also, he and Jose Bethel will be competing in the New England Wrestling Tournament this weekend in Providence.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Recognition: UMASS Lowell Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Fulbright Scholars

Dr. Hirsch stated that the TEA Fulbright Scholars visiting are the “best and brightest teachers” from around countries of the world. Of the twenty visiting tonight three are working with teachers at CHS. All of them attend seminars; learn about the American education system and work closely with our teachers to the benefit of the teachers involved and the students.

Madame Gadbois of CHS shared how wonderful working with these scholars has been each of the six years she has participated in the program. She introduced Moussa Tangara from Mali who has been co-teaching with her. He shared that he had a dream of coming to the USA to study and believes he came to the best place! He enjoys sharing and learning with Madame Gadbois and appreciates other classes he has been able to observe while here. He looks forward to sharing all he has learned with his colleagues when he returns to Mali to promote positive change.

Next, we heard from Thomas Kientega from Burkino Faso who has been pleased to be partnered with the nice people from CHS who share their time and resources so willingly. His experiences here will be helpful also to his colleagues and his students when he returns to Burkino Faso. He was happy to be able to share with CHS students information about his country and games from there. He enjoyed his time in Lowell and appreciated the various excursions. He also thanked the administration for his time at CHS.

Lastly, Uugantsetseg Gantumur from Mongolia spoke of how much she has enjoyed her stay and she echoes what her colleagues shared about their experiences at CHS. She is especially impressed with “project-based learning and social emotional support” for students. She appreciated all the after-school activities offered and the “child-friendly environment”. She looks forward to implementing after-school projects when she returns to Mongolia. She shared that she learned English from Americans who volunteered with The Peace Corps and has shared with CHS students the impact just one person can make and hopes that some of them will be “good volunteers around the world”!

The Committee expressed appreciation for all the TEA Scholars. A photo was taken of all to commemorate their experiences here.

2. Presentation: Strategic Plan Steering Committee – Human Capital

Tonight, members of the fifth group of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Human Capital and Staffing are presenting. Diane Carey, Director of Human Resources, and Jon Morris, Department Coordinator of K-12 Science joined the meeting. Ms. Carey mentioned the other members of the Human Capital and Staff Group. The theory of action and initiatives are the same as the other four groups of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which have been presented at previous meetings and are also included in tonight's slide show. This group's priorities are increase collaboration with outside teacher prep programs with the focus on diversifying Chelmsford staff; see what percent of instructional staff who indicate that they feel adequately prepared to differentiate for diverse student populations and the percent of staff who report feeling equipped to provide culturally responsive instruction.

Mr. Morris added the two initiatives were to "conduct newly developed staff survey and analyze results" and "identify teacher collaboration programs that will diversify staff applicant pool". Results were shared through Panorama and included in tonight's slides. The surveys involved 30 questions for teachers and 16 for support staff. The data was shared in a small group this past summer to ascertain where opportunities for growth exist. Professional development this year was driven by this data. The same survey will be conducted again this spring to determine growth from the PD this year and to inform building leaders and coordinators what needs to be targeted for next year's plan.

Ms. Carey spoke of the initiative to diversify staff and the applicant pool. This has involved outreach to UMASS Lowell and Merrimack Community College "to formalize teacher prep programs". This year six from the two colleges are involved in the Chelmsford Public Schools. Ms. Carey reached out to other areas colleges and hopes to expand this program to include more student/teacher interns. Additionally, the district has partnered with MERC (Massachusetts Educational Recruiting Consortium) which will help locate candidates of color for hiring in the participating school districts. On March 16th they will hold a job fair where Chelmsford will be present. Regional job fairs will also be held and attended by Ms. Carey. Many CHS students have expressed an interest in careers in education and the local programs offered. Dr. Lang shared the district and Merrimack College for four years have offered a Master's in Education program to benefit our teachers with a Bachelors' Degree in Education which results in educators who may be licensed in dual areas.

3. Personnel Report – January 2024

No action required.

4. FY2025 Budget Hearing

Dr. Lang guided The Committee through the FY2025 Superintendent's Recommended Budget page by page to approve the budget item for each page and move on until the entire budget has been approved.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1110 School Committee in the amount of \$43,310 as presented on page 12 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1210 Superintendent in the amount of \$498,441 as presented on page 13 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1220 Assistant Superintendent in the amount of \$277,806 as presented on page 14 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1230 District Wide in the amount of \$500,700 as presented on page 15 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1410 Business and Finance in the amount of \$493,157 as presented on page 16 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1420 Human Resources in the amount of \$356,507 as presented on page 17 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1430-1435 in the amount of \$123,000 as presented on page 18 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 1450 Districtwide MIS in the amount of \$1,591,197 as presented on page 19 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2110 Curriculum Directors in the amount of \$1,421,383 as presented on page 20 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2110 Curriculum Directors – Special Education in the amount of \$1,035,207 as presented on page 21 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2210 School Leadership in the amount of \$3,209,298 as presented on page 22 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2300 – 2305 in the amount of \$26,116,526 as presented on page 23 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2310 Teacher Specialists – Regular Education in the amount of \$2,317,006 as presented on page 24 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2310 Teacher Specialists – Special Education in the amount of \$8,419,421 as presented on page 25 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2320 Medical/Therapeutic Services in the amount of \$540,626 as presented on page 26 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2325 Substitutes in the amount of \$811,000 as presented on page 27 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2330 Paraprofessionals in the amount of \$4,815,040 as presented on page 28 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2340 Librarians/Media Center in the amount of \$838,241 as presented on page 29 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2357 Professional Development in the amount of \$218,775 as presented on page 30 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2410 – 2415 Textbooks & Instructional Materials in the amount of \$470,324 as presented on page 31 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2420 Instructional Equipment in the amount of \$183,600 as presented on page 32 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2430 General Supplies in the amount of \$613,258 as presented on page 33 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2440 Other Instructional Services – Special ED in the amount of \$215,000 as presented on page 34 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2451 – 2455 Classroom Instructional Technology & Software in the amount of \$785,000 as presented on page 35 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 2710 – 2800 Guidance & Psychological Services in the amount of \$3,084,284 as presented on page 36 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 3200 Medical & Health Services in the amount of \$994,870 as presented on page 37 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken, Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 3300 Transportation in the amount of \$4,647,758 as presented on page 38 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 3400 Food Services in the amount of \$129,691 as presented on page 39 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 3510 Athletic Department in the amount of \$876,489 as presented on page 40 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 3520 Other Student Activities in the amount of \$204,440 as presented on page 41 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 3600 School Security in the amount of \$218,737 as presented on page 42 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 4110 – 4210 – 4230 Custodial Services in the amount of \$2,093,814 as presented on page 43 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 4120 – 4130 Heating of Buildings & Utility Services in the amount of \$1,351,200 as presented on page 44 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 5150 Employees Separation Costs in the amount of \$242,777 as presented on page 45 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve DESE Code 9300 Tuitions in the amount of \$4,151,116 as presented on page 47 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve the total budget amount for fiscal year 2025 at \$73,880,000 as shown on page 48 of the budget book. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Dr. Lang will post the budget to the website and will send it to all the Town Meeting Reps. There will be a meeting with The Town Finance Committee with a presentation to them. The budget will go before Town Meeting at the end of April.

Reports

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared that the CHS PTO met and has begun to plan for the After-Prom event. The CHS PTO with the help of administration held a Valentine's event which was "a big hit"! The middle school PTO met. Parker's Drama Club will present *Any Kids* on March 8th and 9th. They have acquired a new "book vending machine". Parker's Pride Run will be on May 19th. McCarthy will hold a "black light dance for 7th grade on March 1st with staff chaperones. On March 22nd McCarthy will hold its annual "Rock 'n' Roll Bingo". 7th grade enrichment will feature Marian Blumenthal who will share her experiences as a Holocaust survivor. The two middle schools will host a combined talent show on May 18th at the PAC. Ms. Santos gave a "shout out" to McCarthy teacher, Jen Dussault, is offering math tutoring for parents! Center PTO will meet in March.

Mr. King shared that the Alumni Association met and have a new digital application process for scholarships which has been very popular! This year they will present the scholarships in person in May!

The Chair added that South Row is hosting their Science Fair tomorrow night.

Mr. Moses shared that Emily Dilworth, a Byam teacher and president of The Chelmsford Council of Schools and president of the McCarthy PTO, is very sick. There will be a vigil for her tomorrow evening at The First Baptist Church. There has been an outpouring of support from the Byam community.

Action/New Items

Ms. Santos would like an update on Fountas and Pinnell curriculum.

The Chair would like to learn about post-COVID attendance issues.

On March 25th, The Committee will be attending the Select Board meeting to vote on a member for The Nashoba Valley School Committee.

Mr. King would like to know when the public forums will begin for the new school building project. Dr. Lang will update his slide show for this and hopes to schedule an event after the April election and before Town Meeting. Per Committee request he will look for dates in March as well.

Dr. Lang and Dr. Hirsch are holding coffee hour meetings monthly at local establishments for the public to attend! The dates and places will be posted.

Ms. Mackinnon would like an update on redefining the roles of paraprofessionals. Dr. Lang stated that this committee has met several times and is working hard. He will be happy to provide an update by the end of this school year.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (8:13 p.m.)

Mr. King motioned to adjourn. Ms. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

***Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio,
Recording Secretary***