

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
February 6, 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 January 16, 2024

**Mr. King motioned to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2024. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

**CHS Student Representative Announcements**

Lana shared that last Friday The Lions Club and the CHS Leadership and Community Service Club hosted a musical showcase at the PAC. The event’s proceeds went to The Home for Little Wanderers which helps to build stable lives and futures for disadvantaged children. This past Sunday the junior class held a craft fair with over 120 local crafters selling various items. This successful event raised money for the Class of 2025. On this upcoming Saturday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the CHS Cafeteria the Chelmsford High School’s Asian Student Organization will host a Lunar New Year celebration for The Year of the Dragon. There will be entertainment and cultural foods offered.

Keya added that scholarship information for seniors is now available on the CHS homepage and will be updated on a continuous basis. Choral Fest, the annual singing tradition for grades 4 through 12 will be held on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the PAC. The public is invited to this free event! Course placement has begun for CHS students for planning their schedules for the next school year. Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, is a half day for all students.

## Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that the International Teachers arrived last week. This partnership with UMASS Lowell included 22 teachers, three of whom are placed at CHS. Today, at UMASS, all 22 shared posters about their home country and shared the preferred clothing and foods of that country. They will be visiting until the end of February and will attend the next School Committee meeting.

## Public Comments

None

## New Business

### 1. Spotlight on the Schools: South Row Elementary School

Dr. Lang welcomed South Row Principal, Ms. Terri Gilbert, and Assistant Principal, Mr. Jayson Ramalho, to the table to update on the happenings at South Row. Their presentation included a slide show as well as several student videos! Ms. Gilbert spoke proudly of the robust Student Council which includes approximately 50 fourth grade students. Mr. Ramalho shared that the backbone of the Student Council is developing young leaders. The students are learning what leadership entails and the challenges involved. They are encouraged to share ways they can contribute to the betterment of their school and to the Chelmsford community. Principal Gilbert shared "stats" and "meeting format" information. There are three teachers who volunteer for the Student Council along with the administrators. Highlights include: six school "jobs" (which are rotated monthly); themed "spirit days"; a new school newspaper; guest readers throughout the school; and school bus mentors. Student Council members also host grade level meetings monthly for the younger grades. Additionally, there are four sub-groups for monthly meetings: Kindness Group; Passport Group; Student Council Information Group and Welcome to South Row Group. This presentation may be best enjoyed by watching it on Chelmsford Telemedia!

### 2. MSBA Vote: Vote to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority a Statement of Interest (SOI) for South Row Elementary School

Dr. Lang included a memorandum in tonight's agenda packet regarding the district's application to the MSBA's Accelerated Repair Program for repair to a section of the roof of South Row School. The application must be submitted by March 1, 2024, and must be approved by both The School Committee and the Chelmsford Select Board. Approval, if granted, will be determined by the fall for work to be done in the summer of 2025 or 2026. Dr. Lang recommends a vote of approval tonight.

**Mr. King motioned that be it resolved Having convened in an open meeting on February 6, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of the Town of Chelmsford, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated February 5, 2024 for the South Row Elementary School located at 250 Boston Road which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future for the replacement of school facility systems, such as roofs, as certain sections of the roof at South Row Elementary School have exceeded their useful life and require replacement at this time; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Chelmsford to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.**

### **3. MSBA Eligibility & Feasibility Period Presentation: Parker Middle School**

Dr. Lang shared a slide show presentation tonight for the MSBA eligibility and feasibility for the Parker Middle School project. As he shares the slides with The Committee tonight, he is looking for feedback and questions that may occur when the finalized presentation is shared with focus groups and stakeholders and others to whom the presentation will be given. Information includes the age of the facilities (modular classrooms are not considered permanent and do not count when looking at facilities sizes). In the last 50 years only, Center Elementary School has been fully renovated. Looking ahead to the next ten years needs to factor in the age of the buildings and the current and projected enrollment increases. Currently all four elementary schools and Parker are over enrolled when looking at recommended capacities according to gross square footage. Many of Dr. Lang's slides depict deficiencies in Parker Middle School to address 21<sup>st</sup> century education needs. There is truly a compelling argument for replacing the Parker Middle School. The eligibility period for the Parker project will begin April 1<sup>st</sup>, but work has already begun in the district. The vote for Town funding for the feasibility study would take place at Town Meeting. Dr. Lang shared three current options for consideration for the new Parker building and the existing elementary and the McCarthy buildings. The location of the new school will be part of the feasibility study. If the project is approved by the MSBA and The Town, planning the work and meeting benchmarks would begin in late summer or early fall of 2026, with the new school opening in the 2030/31 school year. Details on the timelines are articulated in Dr. Lang's slide show. Dr. Lang would like feedback from The Committee on this presentation, including the slides by February 16<sup>th</sup>. He would like the finished presentation available to be shared with PTOs and other community groups by March at which time a community forum might be held or scheduled for April.

(A brief recess was held at this point in the meeting at 7:39 p.m.)

### **4. Superintendent's Recommended FY2025 Budget**

Copies of the Chelmsford Public Schools' FY2025 Superintendent's Recommended Budget were distributed and will be uploaded to the district website tomorrow. The format is the same as previous budgets. Dr. Lang is presenting a general overview tonight. At the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting he will go page by page looking for recommendations or questions. Recommendations for next year are found on page 7. The summary level budget totals are found on page 11. Dr. Lang's presentation tonight is accompanied by slides. The local operating budget for the current year is in solid shape and grants and revolving funds are solid as well. Information from DESE comparable school districts is included. Town Manager Cohen has included a \$3.18 million increase from the previous budget to bring the FY 2025 general operating budget up to \$73.88 million. Chapter 70 funding came in lower than Dr. Lang expected. Dr. Lang is thankful to The Town of Chelmsford for being such a "good partner in education" during his years as superintendent. Increases in the FY2025 budget include: the middle school language-based program (allowing the program to include 7<sup>th</sup> graders and adding an additional language-based teacher at McCarthy); an ASD program needs to be instituted at Parker to provide for fifth and sixth graders who are coming from the elementary schools (an additional SPED teacher, as well as a BCBA and several paras will be added); a third ASD program will be added to Harrington for students who are arriving from CHIPS which will require hiring an additional SPED teacher; three additional SPED teachers will be added to schools to meet IEP demands; and an additional ELL teacher will be added to the elementary level. McCarthy will be adding a STEP program classroom for students who re-enter school after lengthy hospitalizations. This will require the hiring of an additional guidance counselor. Finally, two full-time mathematics teachers will be added at the elementary level as coaches to support the Strategic Plan's growth in mathematics. All these increases are "compliance and need-driven" and are "necessities".

## 5. Synthetic Turf Fields – Revolving Fund Debt Service Schedule

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum tonight about the turf fields. Dr. Lang said that this is the last year for paying down the principal interest on the fields. In years to come planning will need to take place to replace them. They are being well maintained.

## 6. Approval of Field Trip Requests

**Mr. King motioned to approve the CHS Wrestling Team trip to Providence, Rhode Island from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 2, 2024. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

**Mr. King motioned to approve the CHS DECA Club field trip to Boston from March 7<sup>th</sup> to March 9, 2024. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

## Reports

### 1. Liaison Reports

Mr. Moses will attend the meeting at Byam tomorrow.

Mr. King shared that SEPAC had their yearly "Parents' Rights" workshop last week, which was well-attended. Another workshop will take place in the spring on the changes to IEPs prior to implementation. Tomorrow night the Alumni Association will meet.

## Action/New Items

The Chair stated that a meeting with the Select Board regarding Nashoba Technical High School and appointing a committee member to their School Committee needs to take place. March 25<sup>th</sup> is the suggested date.

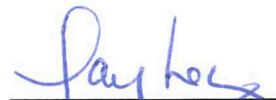
## Public Comments

None

## Adjournment (8:32 p.m.)

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

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Giglio,  
Recording Secretary*

  
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Jay Lang, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

  
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Donna M. Newcomb  
Chair, Chelmsford School Committee