



Cohasset School Committee Meeting

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Cohasset Middle-High School

Community Use Room

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA

In Attendance: Jeanne Astino, Chairman
Ellen Maher
Barbara Stefan
Jennifer Madden
Paul Kearney

Also in Attendance: Louise Demas, Superintendent
Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent
Michael MacMillan, Director of Finance & Operations

Chairman Astino called the meeting back to order at 7:20 p.m.

Pledge- Recited

Public Comments-Maggie Moy-33 Ledgewood Drive stated she received a letter from principal Carolyn Connolly in June regarding changes to the Science curricula. They never received follow up information explaining the changes. They are not sure how this will affect students' GPAs. Chairman Astino responded that Superintendent Demas and Dr. Sullivan will investigate and get some answers. Dr. Sullivan agreed and stated it was a fair question and he will address it. Mrs. Moy also added that the program of studies on the website is not up to date. Superintendent Demas will look into.

Jeff Moy-33 Ledgewood Drive stated they met with the Superintendent over a month ago and were promised an update on the private investigation. He asked when that update will be available. Chairman Astino stated the Title Nine investigation is still not finished. The private investigation is on hold until the Title Nine investigation is completed. Mr. Moy asked about the SC Attorney that was at that meeting and where that money for legal expenses comes from. Chairman Astino responded that the SC has a line item for legal expenses in the yearly budget.

Marc Perrone-124 Pleasant Street asked how long the Title Nine investigation will take to complete. Chairman Astino responded that they do not know. Mr. Perrone asked if legal fees are enhanced due to this situation and if there are any other fees. Chairman Astino responded that there are extra costs for substitute teachers and staff.

Jeanine Perrone-124 Pleasant Street asked what the district is doing to support the victim and their family and if the district is paying for alternate tuition at another school. Chairman Astino responded they cannot comment at this time.

Jessica Duncanson-132 Chief Justice Cushing Highway asked if they will have additional fees for settlements. Chairman Astino responded they cannot discuss at this time. Ms. Duncanson asked where the PR firm expenses were taken from the budget. Mr. McMillan stated they are from the SC budget.

Approval of Warrant-Motion by Mrs. Maher to approve Warrant 19-06S, seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote; Paul Kearney-Aye, Barbara Stefan-Aye, Jeanne Astino-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye.

Superintendent's Report-High School Model UN Trip-Mike Welch reviewed the proposed trips. One trip is to Boston-January 24-27th with an estimated cost of \$500 and the other is to New York-March 1-4th with an estimated cost of \$850. Mr. Welch reviewed the itinerary for the trips. **Motion by Mrs. Maher to approve the Model UN trip to Boston on January 24th-27th and to New York on March 1st-4th, seconded by Mrs. Stefan and the vote was unanimous (5-0).**

Text2Tell Initiative-School Resource Officer Gregory Taylor explained the new anonymous reporting system the Police and Schools have implemented. It allows students and parents to make anonymous reports about concerns of safety or student wellness. This is part of the continuous effort to increase campus and student safety and provide students with a safe, completely anonymous outlet to share concerns. They will have an assembly tomorrow to introduce it to students and posters will be hung around the buildings. The SC had a brief discussion and agreed the posters should be displayed at the library, teen center and Recreation Center as well.

Dima Omran-19 LedgeWood Farm Drive asked if the students will be told to use the app wisely and not for pranks. Officer Taylor responded that they will make that clear to students.

Jessica Duncanson-132 CJC Highway stated it is a great step for the district. She asked what happens when there is a serious complaint. Officer Taylor explained the process and standard procedures.

MHS Traffic Pattern-Superintendent Demas stated she has met with administrators, Police, Fire and Director of Public Works, Brian Joyce, and they have looked at the traffic flow at the CMHS. They are trying to make it safer but there are still issues with it. Also, they will be opening the doors of the school at 7 a.m. instead of 7:10 a.m. to help with conflicting train schedules. There will be another lane created when coming into the school to help with drop off and pickup. There will be right turn only coming out to Pond Street. They will also move the bike rack closer to the school and away from the buses. They will be looking into traffic flow patterns at all the school buildings.

Maggie Moy-33 LedgeWood Drive asked if they could tell parents to stay out of the student parking lot. She also expressed her concerns that traffic would get backed up if there is a right turn only on Pond Street because of the traffic light at the corner of 3A and Pond Street.

Start School Later Initiative-Superintendent Demas reviewed the last study they did on the Start School Later initiative. She thought there was an outside group working on this initiative and apologized to proponent Maura Sharry. She spoke with the District Digital Learning Coordinator, Susan Skeiber, as she has experience from her former district which shifted to a later start time for their high school. Ms. Skeiber stated she was the Superintendent in Duxbury when they adopted the Start School Later

initiative. She said there must be a lot of educating and it is not something that will likely be ready by this September. She recommended they form a committee and start working on it. Mr. Kearney stated this concept has been out there and has been discussed by the Start School Later group for a couple of years. People should be educated by now.

Maura Sharry-15 Virginia Lane stated she met with Susan Skeiber three years ago, so this is not something new to the district. The Mariner has done a great job with articles of information on this initiative. The longer the district waits the worse it will be.

Superintendent Demas will put together a committee.

Enrollment Update-Superintendent Demas reviewed the current enrollment numbers for the district.

Middle School NELMS Study Update-Dr. Sullivan reviewed the goals of the study. He discussed the sixth-grade team they created which meets once a week. They are working on developing structures including: norms for collaborating, establishing roles and responsibilities, teaming and what they want from common planning, collaborating regarding expectations and creating a monthly newsletter that will be sent home to parents. The sixth-grade team and representatives from the middle school leadership will attend a professional development day on November 30th. Dr. Sullivan stated the middle high school team attended the Mass IDEAS School Design Institute on October 13th and 14th. They focused on PBL at the middle school. He reviewed the goals for the Middle School Action Planning Team as follows: to develop an effective sixth grade teaching team, increase community involvement, develop a unique middle school culture, improve transitions from grade to grade and restructure utility periods for learning and advisory. Dima Omran-19 Ledgewood Farm Road asked if the students are educated on mid-term elections that are currently discussed daily in the news. She also asked if they had plans to expand lessons in diversity in the schools. Superintendent Demas responded that the Diversity Committee has been growing and it is something that is on the forefront. She invited Ms. Omran to join the committee.

Superintendent Demas said that, in collaboration with the Safe Harbor Coalition, there was a Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age presentation on October 12th which was well attended. Students have been coming in 10 minutes early for Mindful Breathing for stress management. She has met with Safe Harbor Coalition and discussed having both a risky behavior prevention and a life skills program.

Guidance Counselors met with ninth graders and made stress balls. The crisis team continues to meet with the Middle High School. They had safety training on September 21st and will have it again on October 12th. They have met with the DCF and Assistant District Attorney's office and the goal is to meet every 6 weeks to keep dialogue going. This is something they have decided to do proactively and is not required of the school.

Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito was in town last week to present Cohasset with a \$50,000 grant for a Student Information System. Superintendent Demas has met with Ron Menard and they plan to start implementing in February.

Playground Updates-Superintendent Demas stated the Deer Hill Playground is completed and looks great. She also asked that more wood chips be ordered for Deer Hill and for more to get added to the Osgood School Playground to help make it safer until that playground is renovated.

School Safety Committee-Dr. Sullivan stated they sent out information to parents looking for volunteers for the School Safety Committee and got a great response. The mission is that the best practices are being implemented and communication structures are improved. They are working on putting together a team. SRO Greg Taylor will be on it along with SC representatives, parents from each grade, a SEPAC member, school nurse, counselor and two students. They will create goals and benchmarks. They will ensure transparency. The first meeting is Thursday, November 8th at 6 p.m. in the Learning Commons.

Blizzard Bag Discussion-Superintendent Demas explained this is a potential way for the virtual make up of snow days. It is just a discussion in the beginning stages that was discussed at a recent Superintendent's meeting. The Board had a brief discussion. Superintendent Demas will keep the SC informed.

Finance-Monthly Update-Mr. MacMillan reviewed the budget summary. He reported overall personnel costs are up due to last year's step increases, which they expected. He is watching expenditures closely. The Grants and Revolving Accounts have a few negative numbers in the report. This is just a lag and will be fine once grants are received and recorded.

Transportation Update-Mr. MacMillan stated there is an increase in bus maintenance due to the buses being kept longer. They are currently in negotiations for the new leases. He met with the transportation coordinator and they will have information on seat belts for the next meeting.

School Committee Comments and Communications-Chairman Astino attended the AEC meeting. They had a great presenter on the cost savings of street lights. It is on the warrant for Special Town Meeting. Mrs. Maher asked if Superintendent Demas could invite the school nurse to an upcoming Educator Spotlight since it is a new position. Mrs. Maher stated the Budget & Finance sub-committee met with Mr. MacMillan and he has a comprehensive spreadsheet for Capital & Facilities. It keeps track of everything that must be done. Mrs. Madden attend the CEF meeting and reminded everyone to register for the upcoming Spelling Bee on November 4th. The CEF is also sending out their annual appeal letter.

Minutes-Motion by Mrs. Stefan to approve the minutes of 9/5/18, seconded by Mr. Kearney and the vote was unanimous (5-0). Motion by Mrs. Stefan to approve the minutes of 9/19/18 as amended, seconded by Mr. Kearney and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Motion by Mrs. Maher to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Stefan and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

The meeting adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

Documents used at the Meeting

Model UN Trip

Start Late Initiative

Enrollment

NELMS Study-Update

Monthly Update-Finance

Transportation Update

Minutes

Follow Ups