

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

A regular School Committee meeting was held at the Administration Building on Monday, September 13, 2021.

Members Present: Sonya Barbosa, James Carvalho, Thomas Rodrigues, Scott Rowland. Eric Graham was absent.

Superintendent of Schools John J. Robidoux and Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth White were in attendance.

Chairman Rowland opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

He announced that, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person in attendance who wanted to record the meeting must notify the Chairman. School Committee meetings are broadcast live and also recorded for broadcast on Sunday at 12:30 p.m., Monday at 6 p.m., Tuesday at 2 p.m., Wednesday at 10 a.m., Thursday at 10 P.M., Friday at 10 a.m., and Saturday at 2 p.m. on Swansea Cable Access Channel 15. Meetings can also be accessed over the internet at swanseacabletv.com.

There was no executive session.

Mr. Rodrigues led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Barbosa offered a moment of silence for all families who have had to deal with COVID.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Rowland established a Consent Agenda consisting of #4 Personnel Items, #5 Correspondence, #6 Informational Items, #9 Approval of Bills. Mr. Carvalho requested that #8 Approval of Minutes be removed from the consent agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Joseph Case High School “Cardinals” Marching Band Trip, November 2021

Supt. Robidoux advised this is an annual trip. It is planned for November 5-7, 2021 to participate in the National Marching Band Competition at the Met Life Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The cost is approximately \$395 per person. The booster organization, CHAMPS, will do necessary fundraising. All adults will pay their own way. Twenty-five students are members of the band.

Mrs. Barbosa said she is glad they are able to go. She is all for it.

Supt. Robidoux said state mandates have to be followed in the case of an overnight trip.

Mr. Carvalho asked about the mask mandate.

Supt. Robidoux explained that masks must be worn on the bus and then New Jersey mandates followed.

Mr. Carvalho asked about sign off sheets.

Supt. Robidoux said that documentation is part of the travel package.

Mr. Rodrigues said his questions were answered with regard to COVID.

Chairman Rowland thanked Mr. Cordeiro for submitting this request to the School Committee early. He would like to have Mr. Cordeiro attend a meeting to talk about a plan should somebody on the bus have COVID symptoms.

Chairman Rowland noted that this proposal has evolved. Mr. Cordeiro has done a fantastic job summarizing the information into one document. He will commend Mr. Cordeiro in person.

Opening of School Report

Supt. Robidoux said there are newsletters from the schools. Overall, school opening went as smoothly as it could. There were no issues with regard to mask wearing. Students know what they have to do.

A meeting has been scheduled with Amaral Bus to discuss a few issues and address parent frustrations.

Sports have started. Students are excited to be back in school with their friends.

Asst. Supt. White said everyone is glad to be back. New staff doing OK.

Supt. Robidoux noted he has had conversations with the union. He e-mailed new hires to check in with them. They all felt welcomed. Responses were positive.

Mr. Rodrigues glad to hear positive comments. He mentioned the Amaral Bus issues.

Mrs. Barbosa said there wasn't any news from Luther School and the junior high school.

Supt. Robidoux said that will be in the next packet.

Mrs. Barbosa asked if there is a reading specialist in every school.

Supt. Robidoux said there is a special ed reading specialist district-wide and a school adjustment counselor at every school. The junior high school has a reading teacher.

Mrs. Barbosa asked about quarantined kids. A parent was told they had to pick up a packet. She wondered why not electronically.

Supt. Robidoux said there is a Google classroom. It is not live streaming. Resources are available to all students who are out.

Mr. Carvalho talked about a student who crossed the road behind the bus.

Supt. Robidoux said that should have never happened. The transportation director is responsible for contacting Amaral with any issues. If there is no response, the principal or Superintendent follow up.

Chairman Rowland talked about the resilience of children. They will always remember this time. It is difficult right now but, hopefully, will not last much longer. He liked the Superintendent balancing the good with the bad.

Supt. Robidoux said, when students step up and do the right thing, they are following the model of the teachers in addition to their parents.

Capital Improvement Plan – FY'21

Supt. Robidoux reviewed the projects completed during the summer. He commended Randi Arruda and Gil Ferreira who worked hard to get these items completed.

Mr. Carvalho noted that these maintenance projects keep the schools in good condition. He inquired about additional cameras at the high school.

Supt. Robidoux said there are enough cameras district-wide.

Mrs. Barbosa liked the update.

Mr. Rodrigues said the amount of items completed is remarkable.

Supt. Robidoux said they do what they can with whatever money is available. There were savings last year because students were not in school and also it was a mild winter.

Chairman Rowland echoed Mr. Rodrigues' comments. He, too, is amazed at how much work gets done every year. A visitor from a nearby town could not believe the age of one of the schools by its appearance. As a School Committee member, he is most proud of their ability to maintain these buildings. He commended Mrs. Arruda. Her motto should be, "We do what we can with what we have."

Mr. Carvalho said the upgrading of the roofs added years to the buildings.

Supt. Robidoux noted the conditions of the schools is detrimental when asking the state to build a new school.

Health and Safety Discussion

Supt. Robidoux outlined plans in place since school started. Masks, distancing, UV system, windows open on buses. Talked about a drive-thru flu clinic at the high school. All town departments are working together. Mrs. Stolts is coordinating with the State to get a mobile unit to Swansea for vaccines

Principals have talked about virtual open house and possibly parent/teacher conferences.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Survey

Supt. Robidoux said the survey was sent to School Committee members, principals, school staff, parents and guardians, town administrator, chief of police, fire chief, and Board of Health. It has to be completed in order to apply for grant funding. There were 531 responses. Eighty percent were parents/families. The top three priority areas of interest were (1) Implementation of evidence-based interventions that respond to student's social, emotional and academic needs - 57.6%, (2) School facility repairs and improvements - 29.9% and (3) Purchasing educational technology - 24.5% . They will meet to review results and start crafting the grant application due on October 1.

Mrs. Barbosa felt there would have been more responses if there was a presentation to explain it.

ACTION ITEMS

Vote to Approve Joseph Case High School Marching Band Trip, November 2021

A motion was made by Mr. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To table the Joseph Case High School Marching Band Trip.

NEW BUSINESS: FUTURE DISCUSSIONS BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mrs. Barbosa asked about sharing emergency broadband benefit with families.

Supt. Robidoux said he will send it out.

Mrs. Barbosa asked about putting observation request forms on line.

Mrs. Barbosa felt that parental consent is needed to receive IEPs digitally. Last May, Dr. Garell had indicated IEPs would be e-mailed and mailed. They are just e-mailed. There are people who do not have e-mail. Parents should be able to indicate their preference. She questioned the survey sent out in June.

She asked if ABA is offered in our district. She didn't think there is a trained ABA therapist.

Mr. Carvalho noted that several years ago some IEPs were sent to the wrong address. He felt parents should sign a waiver if IEPs are sent out by e-mail.

Supt. Robidoux said there were concerns that IEPs were not sent out in a timely manner. Therefore e-mail is the best option.

Chairman Rowland thanked Mrs. Arruda and the team for completing all those projects during the summer.

Supt. Robidoux repeated the information about the upcoming COVID and flu clinics and also the booster shot.

He said the field hockey team defeated Somerset/Berkeley, ending a 55-game winning streak.

Asst. Supt. White read a letter from Pat Chapman on behalf of the Case High School Scholarship Committee. Eighty four scholarships in the amount of \$61,125 were awarded this year.

Chairman Rowland inquired about the student representative.

Supt. Robidoux advised that Mr. McCann will introduce the student reps at the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Carvalho, seconded by Mr. Rodrigues, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the minutes of August 25, 2021.

The August 18, 2021 subcommittee minutes were tabled.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular School Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, September 27, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Rodrigues, seconded by Mr. Carvalho, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn at 7:18 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Rodrigues – Aye; Mr. Carvalho – Aye; Mrs. Barbosa – Aye; Chairman Rowland – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Gamer
Secretary

Items Distributed at the September 13, 2021 School Committee Meeting

Director of Music Richard T. Cordeiro – Request to bring the Joseph Case High School Marching Band to East Rutherford, NJ to compete in the National Marching Band competition

E. S. Brown School Principal Wendy Williams – Activities scheduled for September and Parent Calendar

Gardner School – Report on first week of school

Mark G. Hoyle School – September 2021 Calendar and safety information

Joseph Case High School – Remote Open House 2021 and list of staff e-mails
Information on moment of silence on the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

Laurie Anderson – Resignation as ELL teacher

Kristen Ferreira – Resignation as Integrated Preschool teacher at Hoyle School

Meghan Raffa – Resignation as Paraprofessional at Brown School

Phil Reis – Resignation as Health and Physical Education teacher

American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III)
Public Input Survey (Fall 2021)

List of Capital Improvements for FY 2021