

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – OCTOBER 18, 2021

A regular School Committee meeting was held at the Administration Building on Monday, October 18, 2021.

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

Asst. Superintendent Elizabeth White and Student Representative Emma Villarubia were in attendance. Supt. John J. Robidoux was absent due to a death in his family.

Debbie Kelley taped the meeting.

Chairman Rowland opened the meeting at 6 pm.

He announced that, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person in attendance who wanted to record any portion of the meeting must notify the Chairman. School Committee meetings are broadcast live and 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.

Mr. Rodrigues led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Barbosa offered a moment of silence for everyone still struggling with the pandemic

There was no executive session.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Rowland established a Consent Agenda consisting of #4 Personnel, #5 Correspondence, #6 Informational Items, #9 Approval of Bills. Action will be taken later in the meeting on #8 Approval of Minutes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Completion of 2020-2021 Superintendent Evaluations Goals Proposed Superintendent Evaluation Goals 2020-2021

To be tabled under Action Items.

Recommendation for School Committee Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) - November 2021 Conference

Members recommended Mrs. Barbosa and Mr. Graham. Mrs. Barbosa said she is excited.

Consideration of Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) Resolutions to be Addressed by Swansea School Committee Delegate to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) Conference – November 2021

Mr. Graham explained each resolution.

Dedicated Funding for School-Based Clinics and Services

MASC looking to support funding for school-based physical health and mental health clinics and services.

School Committee members agreed it is a good idea but can't see how it could be done.

Asst. Supt. White said she can't see that being implemented anywhere.

Homework GAP and WIFI/Internet Access

MASC looking for legislation to provide free broadband internet to all K-12 students in the State.

Mrs. Barbosa, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Rodrigues could support it. Chairman Rowland would be in favor as long as there is reassurance that the School Department would not be responsible for "policing" the internet.

Mr. Carvalho concerned about funding.

Asst. Supt. White said majority of students have internet access.

Mr. Graham said we could offer amendments.

Mrs. Barbosa asked if she could vote contrary to the School Committee decision if additional information is provided at the conference.

Chairman Rowland said it would be up to her to vote for it. He suggested she prepare a report for the School Committee.

IDEA Full Funding Act

MASC calls for the Massachusetts Congressional delegation to reintroduce and promote the passage of the IDEA Full Funding Act.

Mr. Carvalho noted years ago there was Chapter 766 funding. He supports it.

Chairman Rowland said it is well deserved.

Mr. Rodrigues and Mr. Graham support it.

Mrs. Barbosa is 110% in support of this.

Mr. Carvalho assured they are not against special education. Regular education money has been used to fund special education.

Mrs. Barbosa said special education needs more funding.

Recess

To support legislation calling for at least 20 minutes of uninterrupted supervised, safe and unstructured free-play recess per day.

Asst. Supt White stated all elementary schools have recess. They do exercise after lunch.

All in favor.

Zero Tolerance Policies

MASC calls for the Legislature to enact or amend legislation to encourage the use of restorative, therapeutic and educational approaches to incidents whenever possible over the use of “zero tolerance” policies in order to provide students the best chance to remain in the public school systems of the Commonwealth.

Asst. Supt. White said we do not have a zero tolerance policy.

Chairman Rowland felt there has to be some rule violations that cannot be tolerated. He is talking about “bad stuff.”

Mr. Carvalho said it has to be up to the principal. Parents have to be involved and read the handbook. Kids have got to start following rules.

Mr. Rodrigues said there has to be offenses that can’t happen twice. He would probably not support this.

Mr. Graham not comfortable supporting this without knowing the details.

Mrs. Barbosa agreed.

Chairman Rowland felt this cannot be done through legislation.

Asst. Supt. White said zero tolerance would exclude criminal, drug related, violent incidents. She gave example of zero tolerance.

Alternate to MASC

MASC calls upon the Legislature to establish a commission to research and analyze alternate means for students to demonstrate academic achievement to be used to satisfy graduation requirements.

Chairman Rowland supports this although he doesn't know if it can be done. He noted the School Department has made progress with MCAS over the years. There should be alternative methods.

Chairman Rowland said it is about time standards are revised.

Mrs. Barbosa felt it is a long time coming. She supports it.

Mr. Graham supports it.

Mr. Rodrigues is in support of alternative methods.

Emma asked if students would have a choice to take MCAS or alternative.

Chairman Rowland suggested Mrs. Barbosa could bring that up at the conference.

School Committees and Receivership

MASC seeks support of local initiatives and legislation to restore school committee oversight of the superintendent and/or receiver, including but not limited to goal setting, performance review, and the evaluation process.

Asst. Supt. White said it would be nice to have guidelines in place.

Chairman Rowland said it is a good idea on the surface but control of the School Department remains with the elected board. At one time, the Town was very dangerously close to receivership. There is not enough detail.

. Members felt they need more details.

Electric School Buses

MASC to petition Congress to appropriate \$30 billion dollars for improving the electrical supply infrastructure and providing electric buses and charging stations.

Asst. Supt. White said it would be wonderful. We are not there yet.

School Committee members can't support it at this time.

Chairman Rowland said he spent 30 years in automotive industry. The application for electric vehicles is positive. It is perfect for electric school buses. The problem is technology. It is also scary that they are asking for \$30 billion dollars for infrastructure.

Prohibiting Use of Native American Mascots

Support of legislation calling for regulations prohibiting public schools from using an athletic team name, logo, or mascot which names, refers to, represents or is associated with Native Americans.

Asst. Supt. White explained that all letterhead has a statement at the bottom that mentions diversity, etc.

Members agreed. Chairman Rowland had no comment either way.

Close Contact and "Test and Stay" Data Comparison 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Years

Asst. Supt. White did not have year to year comparison. She had update on "Test and Stay." 646 days that allowed students to remain in school. 151 students were tested. She commended the nurses who have a huge burden. As of last week, there is a little more help.

Mr. Graham asked about testing vaccinated students.

Asst. Supt. White said the majority of students that received the vaccination have stronger immunity than most adults because student shots are more current. There was one vaccinated young adult that came in close contract. She said new guidelines have been released but not user friendly.

Mr. Rodrigues pleased that this has reduced school absences.

Asst. Supt. White said she had talked to Leslie Stolts.

School Committee members commended all nurses.

Statement of Interest for New Junior High School and Discussion Regarding Possible Subsequent Usage

Asst. Supt. White explained it is a long process. The application was submitted in June to be accepted into the program. In a normal process. The state is backed up. Hopefully, there will be a positive update by December or January.

Mr. Carvalho noted it takes 3 to 5 years to build a school. The current junior high school is not available until a new school is built. It is not an easy process.

Mr. Graham said “good point.” His thoughts about putting two elementary schools into the junior high and using one for Town Hall is mute right now.

Fall River Public Schools is Seeking to Join the South Coast Educational Collaborative

Asst. Supt. White said it makes sense at this time. Fall River has been seeking membership for a while. The Superintendent is supporting this.

ACTION ITEMS

Vote to Approve Superintendent Evaluation Goals 2021-2022

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

VOTED: To table 2A Completion of 2020-2021 Superintendent Evaluation Goals and 2B Proposed Superintendent Evaluation Goals 2021-2022.

Vote to Approve Delegate to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) November 2021 Conference

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

VOTED: To appoint Sonya Barbosa as Delegate to the MASC November 2021 Conference.

Vote to Approve Alternate to the Massachusetts Associations of School Committees (MASC) November 2021 Conference

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

VOTED: To appoint Eric Graham as Alternate to the MASC November 2021 Conference.

Vote to Respond to MASC Proposed Resolutions

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

VOTED: 3 Ayes; 1 Nay; 2 Abstention; To support Resolution #1: Dedicated Funding for School-Based Clinics and Services.

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

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

VOTED: 3 Ayes; 2 Abstentions; To support Resolution #2: Homework Gap and WIFI/Internet Access.

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

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

VOTED: To support Resolution #3: IDEA Full Funding Act.

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

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

VOTED: To support Resolution #4: Recess.

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

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

VOTED: To support Resolution #5: Zero Tolerance Policies.

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

Alternative to MCAS

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

VOTED: To support Resolution #6: Alternative to MCAS.

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

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

VOTED: To abstain on Resolution #7: School Committees and Receivership.

The vote: Mr. Graham – Abstained; Mr. Carvalho – Abstained; Mrs. Barbosa – Abstained; Mr. Rodrigues – Abstained; Chairman Rowland - Abstained.

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

VOTED: To disapprove Resolution #8: Electric School Buses.

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

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

VOTED: 4 Ayes; 1 Abstention; To support Resolution #9: Prohibiting the use of Native American mascots.

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

Vote to Approve Fall River Public Schools Becoming a Member of South Coast Educational Collaborative

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

VOTED: To approve that the Fall River Public Schools join the South Coast Educational Collaborative as member with full benefits, privileges and responsibilities and subject to the terms and conditions of the Collaborative Agreement, approval by the Department of Education and subject to applicable Commonwealth rules and regulations.

Further, that the Chairman of this School Committee is authorized, on behalf of the Committee, to execute all appropriate documents to consummate the Committee decision.

Further, acknowledge that the Superintendent of Schools will serve as the District's representative of the Collaborative's Board of Directors.

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

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

Mr. Graham mentioned the November 1 meeting at high school should begin earlier than 6 p.m. The Town Meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Chairman Rowland will discuss with Supt. Robidoux.

Mr. Rodrigues talked about the amount of community support for students in various activities. He mentioned the volleyball game and the theater company's production of Beauty and the Beast.

Mr. Carvalho said he heard many positive comments about the play. He commended Mr. Jeronimo and students.

He felt the School Committee should have been recognized with the opening of the new playground at Hoyle School.

Asst. Supt. White said it was not intentional.

Mr. Carvalho had copies of messages from Facebook regarding vaccines for volunteers. He contacted the Mass. Association of School Committees and found out the Superintendent has the right to require vaccinations.

Mrs. Barbosa also contacted MASC. She felt it is a gray area. If a teacher works in the district and children attend Swansea schools that teacher does not have to be vaccinated to volunteer after school. But, a parent who wants to volunteer has to be vaccinated. She does respect the Superintendent's intentions.

Asst. Supt. White assured that Supt. Robidoux responded to every e-mail. He met with parents. Every decision he makes is based on the best interest of our students. She noted younger kids are not vaccinated right now.

Chairman Rowland said it could be one unvaccinated person who comes into the school and infects one child who then brings it home to possibly an elderly family member.

He said decision is coming down from the state and local levels.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

VOTED: To table the Negotiations Sub-Committee meeting minutes of September 23, 2021.

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

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

VOTED: To accept the minutes of September 27, 2021.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular School Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, November 1, 2021 at the high school at a time to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: To adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Gamer
Secretary

Items Distributed at the October 18, 2021 School Committee Meeting

Superintendent Goal Completion 2021

Superintendent Goals 2021-2022

Report of Resolutions Committee

Vote for Member School Committee

Josephine Lapre – Retirement at the end of the 2021-2022 school year

Brown School News 9/24/21 and Parent Calendar

Notice on Drive Through Flu Clinic on Saturday, October 16, 2021 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Case High School

Mark G. Hoyle Elementary School - October 21, 2021 Calendar

Joseph Case Junior High School Update 9/24/21 and copy of letter to families dated October 7, 2021

Luther Pride Newsletter – Volume 8, Issue 2 – October 5, 2021

Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official Program – Certificate of Completion for Supt. John J. Robidoux