

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Mary N. Antocci
Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Raymond J. Chalk, Vice Chair
Catherine M. Kabala
Joseph M. Pietrzak
Elaine M. Rabbitt
Stephanie A. Reed arrived at 7:02 p.m.
Rebecca Moore, Student Representative

Also in attendance were Gregg J. Desto, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; district administrators: Lorinda Allen, Karen Ares, William Chaplin, Dan D’Arcangelo, Jeffrey Ferranti, Lori Pacheco, Dean Packard, Robin Parmley, Kathleen Pastore, Christopher Starczewski; Mason Road School parents and students Timothy Booth, Amelia, Olivia, Braden, Emerson; media representatives Debra LaPlaca, Telegram, Rich Earle, audio visual coordinator; Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

The chair called for a moment of silence for Patricia Bair, who died recently. Mrs. Bair served on the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee for 13 years.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, January 24, 2018*

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, January 24, 2018, was approved. Mrs. Rabbitt abstained.

B. *Minutes of the Special Budget Meeting of Thursday, February 8, 2018*

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the meeting of Thursday, February 8, 2018, as amended, was approved. Mrs. Reed and Mr. Pietrzak abstained.

IV. Approval of Warrant

The following warrants were signed by the warrant subcommittee and distributed to the committee this evening for review and signatures.

Warrant #	Amount
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81	\$337,738.80
82	\$6,429.55
83	\$44.96
84	\$194,021.15
85	\$58,359.64
86	\$128,803.40
87	\$157.69
88	\$22,886.37
89	\$503,852.40
1187D	\$444,640.35
1187P	\$1,172,605.84
1189D	\$456,653.91
1189P	\$1,236,537.15
Total	\$4,224,992.41

V. Citizens' Forum

Susan Smolsky, a Charlton resident with children in the 4th and 6th grades, inquired about the 4 library coordinator positions that were cut from the FY 2018 budget. Mrs. Smolsky asked if the FY 2019 budget restored those positions. Mrs. Smolsky said she was formerly employed as the library coordinator at Mason Road School, said she asks not as a former employee but as a parent who believes library services are vital to students.

Mr. Desto said the positions are not included in the FY 2019 budget at this time.

VI. School Spotlight – Mason Road School

Katrina Schmitt, the technology teacher at Mason Road School and Dudley Elementary School, and first graders Timmy Booth, Emerson Fedish, Amelia Piarulli, Brayden Trybulski, Olivia Vivenzio, assisted school committee members in a computer programming game. In this manner, these young students can learn about algorithms and coding.

VII. Communications

Mrs. Antocci offered an update on former foreign exchange student Matilde Martini. Because of her participation on the Shepherd Hill Wrestling while she was a student here, Matilde is now involved with mixed martial arts in her native Italy.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

1. Mr. Desto Update on DESE targeted district review, which concluded today. For the past three days, auditors from DESE have been visiting classrooms, interviewing parents, school committee members, teachers and staff. During the debriefing session with Mr. Desto and Mrs. Allen, the auditors commented on the positive culture of the schools, and the excellent behavior of the students.

Mr. Desto said the district should receive a report in about 10-12 weeks. There will be a rebuttal period and then the results will be posted on the DESE Website. Mr. Desto thanked everyone for their cooperation, and especially Mrs. Allen for coordinating the process.

2. STEAM Director Karen Ares reported the good news about the district's success with the second round of Project Lead the Way grants. The district was recently awarded a two-year grant of \$30,000 per middle school. (\$18,000 in the first year, and \$12,000 in the second year, per school). The monies will be used to create a biomedical science course for Shepherd Hill.

Mr. Desto thanked Mrs. Ares, Mr. Packard and Mr. Starczewski for their hard work.

Mrs. Ares also reported on a grant from the Dudley Women's Club to support the Women in STEM night on March 13 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. The evening will feature representatives from area companies, a career expo and STEM activities, as well as a keynote speaker panel.

3. Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Desto have completed the Statement of Interest for the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair Program. Friday, February 16 is the deadline for submissions. The district is hopeful for consideration to repair the Shepherd Hill Roof.

IX. Student Representative Report – Rebecca Moore

1. Miss Moore reported that Shepherd Hill Varsity Basketball team member Jason O'Regan scored his 1,000th point this week against Leominster.
2. The Shepherd Hill Girls Track Team has qualified for an international meet in New York,
3. Dudley Middle School's Prestige Show Choir remains undefeated during competitions this year.

Mr. Desto said the middle school show choir benefits from the mentorship of the Shepherd Hill choirs. Mr. Desto commended senior Jason O'Regan who, he said, is as good a person as he is at basketball.

X. New Business

A. FY 2019 Budget:

i. Presentation, Part 2 – Mr. Desto (*Vote Required*)

During his first presentation, Mr. Desto provided educational priorities. Tonight, Mr. Desto said it is largely about the numbers.

FY 19 budget goals are very similar to the last two years:

- Safety and security of students
- Recurring operational funding concerns
- Social emotional/ mental health support
- Progress toward Strategic Plan
- STEAM, project based learning
- Integrity of technology

- Reduce class sizes, grades 1-4
- Maintain extra-curricular opportunities

This year, the following positions are being requested:

2 adjustment counselors

2 technology integration specialists

Mr. Mathieu reported that the total state aid will increase by \$95,160, which is a good start. Increases include to Chapter 70 by \$74,980, and in transportation revenue of \$20,181. FY 19 is also the final year of school construction debt.

Mr. Desto said the proposed town assessments total \$3,087,988, which exceed the minimum amounts required by law by a total of \$2,079,512. Charlton's proposed increase is \$1.543 million, while Dudley's is \$1.544 million.

Charlton is above target share by \$20,470, while Dudley is below target by \$1,054,827.

FY 19 revenues are based on 2016 property values. In addition, the district is committing an additional \$142,784 from reserves to cover unexpected increase in state assessments for school choice and charter schools

Additional revenues of Circuit breaker, school choice, athletics, cafeteria revolving, e rate reimbursement, preschool tuition, parking fees equals \$4,576,697

Mr. Desto said for the past 12 years the burden of funding has shifted from the state to the taxpayers by 10%. He said 10% of the district's budget is \$5 million,

The next steps will be determined by the Legislative budget schedule:

House of Representatives – by end of April

Senate Ways and Means – mid-May

Senate – beginning of June

Vote on Conference Budget – June

Governor's action – June

Mr. Desto said the district's tradition of success is due to students, families, administrators, faculty, staff, the committee and communities. He said we don't outspend many, but we have extraordinarily professional and caring people.

The most recent Per Pupil Expenditures show the district spends \$11,750 compared to the state level of \$15,511. We are at the bottom.

Mr. Desto said the Charlton selectmen have approved the request for an override election. Dudley acts next week. Mr. Desto said calculations show that the override will add \$700 per pupil, which keeps us below Leicester, but raises us to third from the bottom instead of the bottom.

Looking to the future, the district faces a variety of challenges, with possible solutions found in an override, increased revenue, staffing/programing deductions, and increased school choice.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve an initial FY 2019 budget of \$53,155,649, with assessments to Charlton of \$13,902,746, and to Dudley of \$9,309,316, for a total of \$23,296,062, was approved by unanimous vote.

ii. Proposition 2 ½ Override – *Update / Discussion*

Mr. Desto thanked the Charlton Selectmen for approving the school committee’s request for an override election to be held on Tuesday, April 3, 2018. Mr. Desto reported the selectmen’s kind words for the school committee and the work it is doing to make the district great on a shoestring budget.

Mr. Desto said the following items will help:

1. Attendance at meetings: Mr. Desto will try to attend every Charlton board of selectmen meeting in the run up to April 3. Mr. Mathieu will attend in Dudley.
2. A document that answers all frequently asked questions. He asked committee members to let him know of the questions that they receive.
3. A list of talking points to provide when approached by the community. Again, Mr. Desto asked committee members to let him know of particular items that they feel are important.

Next steps:

Mr. Desto asked the committee for input, specifically, whether he needs to reconvene the budget group that met in the fall. Mrs. Kabala said this is a school project now, and the group is not necessary.

Mrs. Rabbitt suggested attending finance committee meetings as well.

Mr. Desto asked if he should schedule a public budget forum. Mrs. Kabala was not in favor of a meeting, but suggested a video be made to answer budget questions. Mrs. Kabala said people don’t come to meetings.

Mrs. Rabbitt suggested providing a forum on the district website where people can submit questions, and have them answered at meetings.

Mrs. Kabala complimented Debra LaPlaca on the articles in the Telegram that brought attention to the override. Mrs. Kabala said the articles were right on target.

B. Director of Finance and Operations Report (*Vote Required*)

1. Mr. Mathieu presented donations for the committee’s acceptance:

Dudley Women’s Club to the district for Women in STEM Night

\$200.00

Mary Jane Pevay to Charlton Middle School for defibrillator upkeep	\$200.00
Fresh Kix Dance Studio to Heritage School	\$100.00
Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation to district for 2018 Art Show	\$500.00
Annette Mitchell to Charlton Elementary School to replace restroom partitions	\$1,500
Box Tops for Education to Dudley Elementary School	\$969.90
Anonymous donation to Dudley Middle School to support meal account deficits	\$75.00
Anonymous donation to Dudley Middle School for Ski Club	\$1,000.00
Anonymous donation to Dudley Middle School for student meal account deficits for breakfast	\$300.00
Anonymous donation to Dudley Middle School to support meal account deficits	\$700.00
Total	\$5,544.90

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to accept the donations as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Mr. Mathieu said District Transportation bids were opened on February 7. The current contract expires in June. Mr. Mathieu said the pricing did come in at only a 5% increase, which is lower than anticipated. First Student is the only bidder, and presented an increase of \$173,000, pending final price negotiations. Mr. Mathieu said he is unable to secure the First Parent app within that fixed price, only a reduction of the \$5,000 in set up costs.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve the bid as is, without the app and the additional \$17,020 for the first year, and \$12,420 for subsequent years.

Mr. Mathieu said the app is an optional package, and recommended this be discussed separately.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to award the three-year district transportation bid to First Student at the price of \$3,090,673.90, without the First Parent app, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked that the First Parent app be discussed at the upcoming Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting.

With this app, parents can track the bus along its pickup and delivery. The committee agreed this will be valuable in times of inclement weather.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to instruct the finance director to negotiate with First Student to add the yearly cost of the bus app into the contract per year, was approved by unanimous vote.

The app will be free to parents.

3. Mr. Mathieu said the district needs to replace its own bus, which is a 2007 model with 184,000 miles. This bus has served the district well, but it needs to be replaced. Mr. Mathieu said the committee needs to approve a budget amendment of \$115,000.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve a budget amendment of \$115,000, to be funded by the excess and deficiency monies, for the purchase of a new district bus, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Desto has pursued this funding from Senator Ryan Fattman's capital expenses funds to no avail.

Mrs. Rabbitt has advocated for smaller van to be used to transport students to life skills activities, and for small sports teams and other needs. Mrs. Rabbitt said perhaps this purchase can be included at this time.

C. Warrant Signing Procedures – Discussion

Mr. Mathieu presented a draft of a procedure, which, he said, codifies the current process, and is based on that which is used by another regional school district. The procedure is clear about the need to bring every warrant to the committee.

Mary Antocci agreed to be the alternate member of the subcommittee. A training session has been scheduled for Friday, March 2 at 3 p.m. with District Treasurer Melinda Ernst Fournier.

The warrant signing process will be scheduled after New Business items on the school committee agenda to allow for review and questions.

All new school committee members will be trained within 30 days before signing the warrant.

D. Cybersecurity Information – Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Rabbitt

Mrs. Rabbitt and Mrs. Antocci attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's Division IV presentation on cyber security as it pertains to the school environment. There have been two recent local cyber-attacks, but this happens every day.

Blue Hills Regional Vocational Technical High School suffered a distributed denial of services attack. Over a five-week period, systems were rendered inaccessible at the hands of a disgruntled parent. This served the school as a valuable demonstration of their preparedness.

Bay Path Regional Vocational High School was also hit by Ransomware in July. Although there were no students in the school, three months of data was lost.

Mrs. Rabbitt and Mrs. Antocci said the biggest threat is through e-mails, flash drives, and guest networks. Vulnerabilities include daily operations, financial systems, payroll, warrants, student and employee information, teacher lesson plans and MCAS 2.0 testing.

Mrs. Rabbitt and Mrs. Antocci brought this to the committee's attention during budget season to discuss costs of security systems.

Technology Director Dan D'Arcangelo joined the discussion, and agreed that while there are many ways to be attacked, the district's guest networks are isolated, and are not part of production. The

district's Ransomware combatant is daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly backups. In fact, Mr. D'Arcangelo said the district was hit a year and a half ago by ransomware.

Mr. Pietrzak asked Mr. D'Arcangelo if the district is adequately protected, to which Mr. D'Arcangelo replied we are protected well for a school district which is dead last in per pupil funding.

The committee thanked Mr. D'Arcangelo for his presentation, saying it is information that deserves a fresh look.

E. Consideration of Request for Non-Resident Enrollment, Policy JF (*Vote Required*)

A former district resident has requested that her daughter be allowed to complete the eighth grade in the district. The parent moved out of district citing safety reasons. It is in the best interest of the student that Mr. Desto recommends approval.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci, to approve the request for non-resident enrollment, was approved by unanimous vote.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings:

- Wednesday, February 28, 2018, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 14, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m. – Public Hearing, FY 2019 Final Budget

Budget and Finance Subcommittee:

- Tuesday, March 6, 9 a.m.

XII. Future Agenda Items – Budget, Administrators' Budget Presentations, MSBA Update, Strategic Planning Update

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by S. Reed to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 8:51 p.m.