

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at Charlton Middle School, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Rd. Charlton, 6:30 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 6:34 p.m.

Jack Bugar, Student Representative, was not in attendance

Also in attendance were Gregg J. Desto, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; district administrators: Lorinda Allen, Karen Ares, Terri A. Caffelle, Dean W. Packard, John D. Paire, Kathleen E. Pastore, Mary A. Pierangeli; district teachers David Deremian, Kevin Foley, Diane Seibold; Charlton resident Stefan Sage; media representatives Debra LaPlaca, Telegram, Rich Earle, audio-visual coordinator, Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 12B, the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District will hold a public hearing on the subject of the state sponsored School Choice Program this evening at 6:30 p.m.

I. Public Hearing on School Choice, MGL Ch. 76, Sec. 12B

Mrs. Aucoin called the public hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Desto said after consulting with building administrators, he is recommending opening 41 spots for the 2016-2017 school year. He proposed 30 spots at Shepherd Hill, 20 of which are to replace the graduating seniors.

Mrs. Antocci said she has concerns about School Choice in general, which she will share under the agenda item later in the meeting.

There were no comments.

Mrs. Aucoin closed the hearing at 6:34 p.m.

II. Call to Order

Mrs. Aucoin called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Meeting with District's Independent Auditors, Powers and Sullivan

Richard Sullivan, of the district’s independent auditing firm, Powers & Sullivan of Wakefield, Mass., reported on the completed audit of FY 2015 operations. He offered a financial statement, a report on federal award programs, and a management letter.

Mr. Sullivan said his firm experienced a seamless transition after assuming the duties from the previous firm of Polumbo and Kulas. Their work began in December, and was completed in February. The audit of FY 16 will begin in July with some preliminary work and again in October.

Mr. Sullivan praised the business office employees, saying they were audit ready as the accountants reviewed capital assets, cash and receivables. He said auditors found the proper documentation, with no audit issues concerning internal control.

The general fund shows excess revenue of \$262,833, and expenditures of \$784,905. Mr. Sullivan said this indicates the district spent 98.3% of its budget.

A significant item under liabilities, is the new regulation requiring the district to pay its share of the Worcester County Retirement System’s unfunded pension liability, in the amount of \$9.6 million.

In its reports on Federal Awards Programs, the firm noted that those employed under federal programs must sign an acknowledgement form periodically.

The Management Letter contains the firm’s observations. Of note is the health insurance fund, which dwindled to a deficit in 2015.

Mrs. Rabbitt proposed the committee take action to correct the lack of a financial policy and procedure manual.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to instruct the superintendent of finance director to send a letter to the business office staff commending them for the job they do, and to use the auditor’s words of “timely, accurate and focused.”

V. Approval of Minutes

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday March 9, 2016*

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by S. Reed to approve the minutes as corrected, was approved. Mr. Chalk abstained.

VI. Approval of Warrant

The following warrants were distributed and signed by a majority of members without further comment or questions.

Warrant	Amount
42	\$-1,998.06
43	\$1,395,075.67
44	\$463,907.22
1051D	\$28.61
1052D	\$443,536.74
1052P	\$1,125,842.09
Total	\$3,426,392.27

VII. Citizens' Forum

No one spoke at this time.

VIII. Communications

1. Mrs. Aucoin read a letter from the Dudley Board of Selectmen requesting the committee hold its FY 17 budget to an increase of 2.5% or less. Chairperson Steven Sullivan said the board looks forward to further discussion. The committee asked Mr. Desto to respond and that this will be the topic of the Joint Financial Planning meeting on Thursday, March 31 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School.

2. Mrs. Rabbitt reported she received an inquiry from parents of a Shepherd Hill sophomore concerning remediation efforts for those students who do not pass MCAS. She asked whether such parents have a full understanding of the impact of MCAS on their child's education.

3. Mrs. Reed reported on comments from Shepherd Hill parents who attended the eighth grade open house at Shepherd Hill. Some said the event should be scheduled at the same time as Bay Path.

IX. Superintendent's Report

1. Mr. Desto offered an update on the principal searches. The Mason Road School Search Committee began interviews on Tuesday, with another round scheduled for next Wednesday.

The Shepherd Hill committee has narrowed the field to two finalists who will be visiting Shepherd Hill next Tuesday, March 29.

Mr. Desto thanked the members of the search committees.

2. Congratulations are also extended to the Shepherd Hill Student Council for earning the Gold Council of Excellence by the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils.

3. The recent Charlton Elementary School STEAM Night was a success. Dudley Elementary School will hold similar nights beginning this evening and culminating April 27 for grade 3.

4. Show choirs from Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School and Shepherd Hill continue to shine, winning the New England Show Choir Showdown last weekend in Andover.

Mrs. Rabbitt requested the middle school choirs perform at an upcoming meeting.

X. Student Representative Report

This item was tabled.

XI. New Business

A. Consideration of School Choice Participation (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto recommended setting limits on the district's School Choice participation. Mr. Desto said there are presently 158 school choice students district wide, with 20 seniors at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. After consulting with building administrators, he recommends the following slots be opened for the 2016-2017 school year:

Shepherd Hill – 30 (20 to replace graduates)
Dudley Middle School - Zero
Charlton Middle School – 11 (7 in grade 5, 2 in grade 6 and 2 in grade 7)
Grades K-4 – Zero

Mrs. Antocci requested a report on the number of school choice students in each class as she said she is concerned with class sizes. She said while it may look good on paper, overall school choice is not a good thing for the district. She is concerned for students in crowded classrooms who may not receive the full value of education in the district. She said the additional students can be more easily absorbed at the high school.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the district has become dependent on this school choice funds.

She asked that this item be tabled pending more information concerning the effect on ELL and special education students, particularly in grade 5.

B. Finance Director Update (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Mathieu presented two donations to Dudley Elementary School for the committee's approval.

Target Take Charge of Education program	\$59.52
Stochaj Insurance Agency Caring Continues program	<u>\$250.00</u>
	\$309.52

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by E. Rabbitt, to accept the donations as presented above was approved by unanimous vote.

For informational purposes, Mr. Mathieu informed the committee of the \$2,000 grant awarded to Dudley Elementary School by the Whole Kids Foundation for a school garden. The committee's vote is not required.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to declare as surplus three Ricoh copiers, and to authorize him to dispose of them using good business practices. Mr. Mathieu said the items are off warranty.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to declare the three Ricoh copiers as surplus, and allow Mr. Mathieu to sell them using good business practices, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu said he anticipates the facilities assessment of Shepherd Hill Regional High School will be ready by mid-April.

C. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Update

Mrs. Rabbitt reported on the subcommittee meeting of Friday, March 18. The budget process was discussed, and Mr. Mathieu presented various scenarios for future planning, and the possibility of a debt exclusion.

D. MASC Regional Schools Committee Meeting Report

Mrs. Rabbitt reported on the meeting of Thursday, March 17. The regional committee advised school committees to monitor Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester's ruling on MCAS 2.0, as well as providing guidance for Day on the Hill participation.

The regional committee also discussed the financial impact of reporting economically disadvantaged students, as well as sponsorship of continuing education for school committee members.

E. FY 2017 Budget (*Vote Required*)

With the tabling of the school choice consideration, Mr. Desto said there are no changes to the budget. Mr. Mathieu said there have been no reductions as yet as we are waiting for additional information from the state. He provided a memo outlining some of the paths to a modified budget. Mr. Mathieu said some level of action will be taken at the April meetings.

Mrs. Kabala said she is concerned that the committee has not made any cuts and requested Mr. Desto respond to the Dudley Selectmen's request that the budget increase be below 2.5 percent.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to instruct Mr. Desto to respond to the Dudley Board of Selectmen, and to write to the Charlton board as well to explain the budgetary and that this will be looked at in depth and the Joint Financial Planning Meeting of March 31, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu said the district has suffered a loss of revenue in the forms of circuit breaker, and school choice, and these need to be factored into the budget.

F. Consideration to Begin Negotiations with Support Personnel

Mrs. Aucoin and Mrs. Kabala agreed to serve on the subcommittee and asked that communication be sent to the employee classifications seeking their concerns and requests. A meeting will be set by the second meeting in April.

G. Request for Overnight Travel, Policy IHBG (*Vote Required*)

Mrs. Pierangeli has submitted a request on behalf of the Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School, and Shepherd Hill Show Choirs for overnight travel to Heidelberg University in Ohio to attend the Show Choir Camps of America Summer Camp. The committee has approved this trip since 2012. Show Choir Director Connie Galli anticipates fifty students will participate in the camps, and will be accompanied by seven chaperones. The group will depart Shepherd Hill on Saturday, July 9, and will return on Sunday, July 17. As usual, costs will be kept to a minimum through ride sharing with another local group.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the overnight travel request as presented above, was approved by unanimous vote.

In addition, as required by State Ethics Regulation 930, CMR 5.05, with the committee's vote to approve the travel request, Mrs. Pierangeli submitted a request to authorize the chaperones to

receive discounted travel, including transportation, lodging and select meals. Mr. Desto agree with her recommendation to approve as the educational benefit far outweighs the financial assistance.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by S. Reed to approve the discounted travel consistent with SER 930, CMR 5.05, was approved by unanimous vote.

H. Consideration of Request for Non Resident Student Enrollment, Policy JF (Vote Required)

Mr. Desto presented three requests for enrollment of non-resident students for the remainder of the 2015-2016 school years follows:

In the best interest of all of these students, Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by S. Reed to approve the non-resident requests as submitted, was approved by unanimous vote.

In addition, Mr. Desto received a late request for home instruction by Charlton residents for their daughter, in grade 8. Based on review of plan and circumstances, Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the request for home instruction as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

I. Consideration for Authorization to Submit Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (*Vote Required*)

Mrs. Aucoin read a specific motion into the record:

Resolved: *Having convened in an open meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2016, prior to the closing date, the Regional School Committee of Dudley and Charlton, 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 April 2016 for the Shepherd Hill Regional High School located at 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, 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:*

- *Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.*
- *Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems such as roofs, windows, boilers, and heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility;*

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 Dudley-Charlton Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

This motion was made by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk, and approved by unanimous vote.

XII. Next Meeting Dates

- Thursday, March 31, 2016 – Joint Financial Meeting, Charlton Middle School, 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, April 11, 2016 – Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting, 12:30 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School.
- School Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 13, 2016 - Shepherd Hill Regional High School, Dudley, 7 p.m.
- School Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 27, 2016 - Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 7 p.m.

XIII. Future Agenda Items – FY 2017 Budget, Principal Search Update, School Choice, protocol and procedures for notifying the school committee when significant issues arise in the schools, MARS meeting April 12.

XIV. Executive Session – “...to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation.” Mrs. Aucoin entertained a motion to enter executive session, and to reconvene for votes if necessary, and this was approved on a unanimous roll call vote at 8:18 p.m.

The committee returned to regular session at 9:53 p.m.

XV. Adjourn

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 9:53 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

<i>Agenda of March 23, 2016</i>	<i>Minutes of School Committee meeting of March 9, 2016</i>	<i>Superintendent's Report of Friday, March 18, 2016</i>	<i>Charlton Elementary School STEAM invitation</i>
<i>Finance Director's Update</i>	<i>School Choice Recommendations memo</i>	<i>Show Choir Summer Camp request</i>	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary