

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee
Wednesday, April 26, 2017, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, MA 01507, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

- Mary N. Antocci
- Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
- Raymond J. Chalk, Vice Chair, arrived at 7:31 p.m.
- Catherine M. Kabala
- Joseph M. Pietrzak
- Elaine M. Rabbitt arrived at 7:31 p.m.
- Stephanie A. Reed

Jack A. Cederberg, 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, William Chaplin, Jody O'Brien, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, John D. Paire, Robin L. Parmley, Kathleen E. Pastore; district art teacher Cindy Rawson, parents and 3rd and 4th grade students from Heritage School; Stefan Sage, Charlton resident; media representatives Deb 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.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 12, 2017

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, April 12, 2017, as corrected, was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of the Executive Session of Wednesday, April 12, 2017

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by J. Pietrzak, to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, April 12, 2017, as corrected, was approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of Warrant

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

Warrant #	Amount
61	\$987,509.22
62	\$47,832.00
1126D	\$435,168.10
1126P	\$1,147,024.31
Total	\$2,617,533.63

V. Citizens' Forum

Lisa Tinsley, mother of two district students, asked the committee if they will follow up on its letter supporting a moratorium on high stakes testing, specifically, the MCAS 2.0. She asked what actions have been taken to educate parents about their ability to speak out about the test. Mrs. Tinsley requested to distribute flyers about a rally for education being held Saturday, May 20 in Boston.

Mr. Desto confirmed that the committee's 2015 letter supported a bill that would place a moratorium on high stakes testing and to remove the emphasis of high stakes testing. As superintendent, Mr. Desto said he is not opposed to student assessment, but the high stakes aspect of it.

The committee thanked Mrs. Tinsley for her comments.

VI. School Spotlight – Heritage School

As staff and students prepare for the 5th Annual District-Wide Art Show, Heritage School Art Teacher Cindy Rawson introduced 3rd and 4th graders who showcased their art and shared their inspiration. The students were Maeve Costa, Lucien Garry, Adriel Okuma, Luke Smolski, Max Waron, Bella DiGregorio, Jillian Terlizzi, Isabel McLam, Sadie Wilber, Ethan McDermott, and Anthony Desto.

VII. Communications

Mr. Desto was informed that Heritage School has won recognition by the Department of Environmental Protection. Heritage School has achieved one of the top scores in the Non-Transient Non-Community System Category of the 2017 Water System Awards Program. The school was not only in compliance with all drinking water regulations, but also took the initiative to go above and beyond basic compliance. The district is invited to the Public Water System Awards in Devens, on Tuesday May 9.

The award program encourages efforts to protect water supplies.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Desto shared five items:

1. Mr. Desto reported staff and students returned from the foreign language trip to Italy, Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic Monday. Global Awareness Program Director Mary Pierangeli reported all 155 students were responsible and well behaved throughout the trip.
2. The Coordinated Program Review is in its second week in the district, and Mr. Desto reported it is progressing well.
3. The MCAS administration at Charlton Middle School was audited Wednesday morning by representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Charlton Middle School earned an A+++ rating. Mr. Desto congratulated Mr. Packard, staff and students.
4. The Shepherd Hill Drama Club will present Twelfth Night, Friday and Saturday, April 28 and 29 at 7 p.m.
5. The 5th Annual District Wide Art Show will be held Friday, May 5, at Shepherd Hill, featuring art from students K-12. There will be opportunities to buy art and otherwise support the event.

IX. Student Representative Report – Jack Cederberg

This item was tabled in Mr. Cederberg's absence.

X. New Business

A. Finance Director's Update (*Vote may be Required*)

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

To Dudley Elementary School for its Caring Continues program:	
Mr. and Mrs. Bromage	\$50
E.J. Stochaj Insurance Agency	\$250
Dudley Women's Club	\$150
To Charlton Elementary School from Reach Out for Schools	
For music therapy program	\$4,950

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by M. Antocci to accept the donations, was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Mr. Mathieu presented a proposal that may reduce the number of buses. At present, students with parking passes still get a seat reserved on an appropriate bus. Mr. Mathieu suggested it is more efficient to notify these students that we will not reserve this spot until further notice. Although routes will not be known until July, the committee agreed Mr. Mathieu could investigate and request to reduce a bus if necessary.

Mrs. Rabbitt said this is worth pursuing and may provide cost saving measures.

Mrs. Kabala said it appears as if most Dudley Middle School students are driven to and from school by parents. She said she sees many empty seats on buses, and asked if ridership in the middle schools can be studied.

Mr. Mathieu said he can review parent ridership with the possibility offering an opt-out program at the younger grades. Mr. Mathieu and Principal Dean Packard have discussed piloting an effort at Charlton Middle School.

Mrs. Antocci agreed these are great ideas. She said we need to uncover anything that can save us money that presents no risk to the children. Mrs. Antocci said there is potential to uncover some significant savings.

Mr. Mathieu noted one bus costs \$50,000 per year.

In an effort to avoid a \$70,000 increase for special education transportation by the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative, Mr. Mathieu requests the committee's approval to change providers. Last year, the district contracted with Van Pool, a private company to provide transportation for out of district special education students. Mr. Mathieu said a recent proposal from Van Pool matches the current SWCEC rates. This will allow the district to keep the budget consistent with last year.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to employ Van Pool Transportation company for in-district special education students, beginning July 1, 2017, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu provided the quarterly financial update, saying there are no concerns at this point in the school year. He noted that special education costs will be offset by Circuit Breaker.

B. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee (*Vote may be required*)

Mr. Pietrzak said the subcommittee met this evening, but there may be more discussion regarding the meeting with the Charlton Finance Committee earlier this evening. Mr. Desto attended with Mr. Chalk and Mrs. Rabbitt.

Mr. Desto said he spoke to the finance committee about further reductions, possibly only by \$400,000 if tonight's recommendations are approved. This would also require the town to contribute significantly more above the minimum local contribution. Mr. Desto said the proposed cuts will not impact the classroom, and allows the district to maintain critical positions as proposed.

Mr. Desto said the district recognizes the revenues our towns have, and that additional contributions represent a significant sacrifice. Mr. Desto pointed out our situation and what it would look like if our district got the same overage amount it got last year.

Mrs. Rabbitt said it was fruitful to be able to explain the funding situation to the finance committee. She said the finance committee recognizes the budget cannot be fixed this year, and that the district has no flexibility with this MLC number.

The two committees discussed the override with the knowledge that it is not a permanent fix.

Mrs. Rabbitt said Sen. Harriett Chandler has filed legislation in the Senate. Bill 217 would establish a commission to study regional foundation budgets. Mrs. Rabbitt said the finance committee voted this evening to support this legislation. Mrs. Rabbitt said the bill addresses the minimum local contribution formula that creates the budget problems.

Mr. Desto proposed holding a budget-only meeting Wednesday May 3 at Charlton Middle School, at 4:45 p.m. in advance of the meeting with Sen. Fattman at 6 p.m. The meeting will be devoted to discussing the path to reductions, which will be proposed at the committee's regular meeting of May 10.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to send a letter to the Massachusetts Senate Letter of support for Senate Bill 217, was approved by unanimous vote.

C. FY 2018 Budget (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto and Mr. Mathieu presented proposed \$282,093 in reductions to the FY 2018 budget:

ELA Curriculum creation	\$50,000
Use of Circuit Breaker Funds to offset Special Education costs	\$50,000
Small salary changes, recognizing resignation at Charlton Elementary School, and a leave of absence and rescinded	\$14,387
Increase of use Excess and Deficiency	\$100,000
House Budget provides \$10 more per student allocation for Chapter 70	\$38,020
Additional Regional Transportation	\$29,686
Total Reductions	\$282,093

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by J. Pietrzak to accept the reduction to the FY 2018 budget as proposed, was approved by unanimous vote.

With the approved reductions, the FY 2018 budget is proposed as \$50,418,253, with an assessment to Charlton of \$12,663,026, and to Dudley of \$8,142,737.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to approve the FY 2018 budget as \$50,418,253, with an assessment to Charlton of \$12,663,026, and to Dudley of \$8,142,737, was approved by unanimous vote.

The difference between the assessment and the town of Dudley's submitted budget is \$436,224. Charlton voted \$271.865 over and above last year's increase, leaving a gap of \$502,298.

Mrs. Kabala said the May 3 budget meeting needs to be devoted to how the district can meet these numbers, saying we have to face reality.

Mrs. Kabala noted the budget cuts made this evening do not affect staff or programs.

D. Consideration to Post Essential Positions, 2017-2018 School Year (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto requested to post these positions for the 2017-2018 school year to allow the district to attract the best candidates.

Shepherd Hill

Special Education
Instrumental Music

Dudley Middle School

Grade 8 Math
Grade 6 Math/Science

Charlton Middle School

Team Chairperson
Grade 7 Math, one-year extended employment substitute
Grade 7 Social Studies
Grade 7 ELA

Dudley Elementary School / Mason Road School

Instructional Technology

Charlton Elementary School

Kindergarten Teacher

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the posting of 2017-2018 essential positions as presented this evening, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Chalk noted these positions are vacant due to retirements or resignations. They are not new positions.

E. Consideration of Request for Overnight Travel, Policy IJOA (*Vote Required*)

The Shepherd Hill Environmental Science classes have requested approval of an overnight experience at the Heifer Project Overlook Farm in Rutland, Saturday and Sunday, May 13 and 14. Environmental Science Teacher Judy Nawrocki and Principal William Chaplin submitted the request for 30 students to travel to Rutland to spend the night at the farm immersed in the experiences of poverty. Ms. Nawrocki and one other adult will chaperone the group. The cost per student is \$75. The committee's approval will also authorize Ms. Nawrocki and another staff member to receive free or discounted lodging/meals in the course of their responsibilities. Mr. Desto recommended approval of this request based upon the educational value it holds for our students.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the student overnight travel on May 13 and 14, 2017 to Rutland, and to authorize the chaperones, Ms. Nawrocki and one other staff member to receive free and/or reduced travel, meals in the course of their responsibilities, was approved by unanimous vote.

The students may be driving themselves to the event.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

- *School Committee Budget Meeting*
 - Wednesday, May 3, Charlton Middle School, 4:45 p.m.
- *Joint Financial Meeting* – Wednesday, May 3, Charlton Middle School, 6 p.m.
- *Regular School Committee Meeting* – Wednesday, May 10, Shepherd Hill, 7 p.m.
 - *Town Meetings:*
 - a. *Charlton* – Monday, May 15, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.
 - b. *Dudley* – Monday, May 22, Shepherd Hill, 7 p.m.
- *Negotiation meeting* with Massachusetts Nurses' Association and the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, Thursday, May 25 at Shepherd Hill, 3:30 p.m.
- *Regular School Committee Meeting* – Wednesday, May 24, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.

Future Agenda Items – FY 2018 Budget, School Improvement Plans, Handbooks, executive session for negotiations with non-union personnel and administrators' contracts.

XII. Adjourn

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 8:25 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for Wednesday, April 26, 2017	Superintendent's Report of Friday, April 21, 2017	Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 12, 2017
Minutes of the Executive Session of Wednesday, April 12, 2017	FY 18 Budget Memo #5	Finance Director's Report of Friday, April 21, 2017
Overnight Travel Request, Heifer Project	Art Show Program	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary