

## DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, May 24, 2017, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, MA, 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

Jack A. Cederberg, 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 F. Chaplin, Dan D’Arcangelo, Jodi A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, John D. Paire, Kathleen E. Pastore; Charlton Elementary School Students, Teacher Amy Kirouac, Barbara Marderosian; parents, Mary Pierangeli, teachers; 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 7:02 p.m.

### **II. Pledge of Allegiance**

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

*Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, May 10, 2017*

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by R. Chalk, to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, May 10, 2017, 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:

<b>Warrant #</b>	<b>Amount</b>
73	\$213,656.06
74	81,361.18
75	\$1,595.50
76	\$2,049.00
1129D	\$436,274.85
1129P	\$1,156,885.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,891,821.99</b>

### **V. Citizens’ Forum**

Charlton resident Stefan Sage presented a number of concerns following the presentation by Charlton Elementary School students.

1. Mr. Sage commended Mr. Desto's efforts at the town meeting, where voters approved an additional \$214,000 to support the school budget. Mr. Sage said while this increase saves some proposed staff reductions, more is needed to adequately fund the delivery of services in the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. Mr. Sage said voters in Dudley and Charlton need to realize the education of their children is at a cross road. Without funding, budget cuts will include the arts and recreational aspects of education. Mr. Sage encourages town officials to being work immediately with the district to draft an override proposal for next year.
2. Mr. Sage expressed concerned about the cut of the middle school librarian (media specialist) position. This cut follows last year reduction, which resulted in one librarian to serve the middle schools. Also cut for FY 18 were the elementary library coordinators. Mr. Sage said this is not conducive to providing quality education. A librarian is an important role, and asked the committee to figure out a way to restore the position. Mr. Sage said he is considering a Go Fund Me account.
3. Mr. Sage has spoken to parents who are upset with the dress code, and that enforcement appears to be unequal between girls and boys.
4. Mr. Sage addressed a parent who attended a school committee meeting recently, who expressed fear that she would be labeled as *that woman* for doing so. Mr. Sage encouraged parents to question and raise concerns with administration, teachers and parents.

Mr. Desto said students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and take ownership of the schools.

#### **VI. School Spotlight – Charlton Elementary School**

Principal Lori Pacheco introduced five of the students from the Enrichment Program and reading specialist Amy Kirouac. The program supports 19 first graders who are reading above grade level. The students enjoy book clubs, and discussions. Kindergarten students have participated as well.

The students were Lily Faucher, Eloise Thomas, Spencer Avoglia, Brayden O'Neil, and Tatiana Smolynsky,

#### **VII. Communications**

There were no communications from Mr. Desto.

Mrs. Rabbitt will report on the Regional Committee Meeting held Tuesday evening under the Budget and Finance Subcommittee item under New Business.

#### **VIII. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Desto has invited the 2017 retirees to attend the June 14 school committee meeting. In the meantime, the individuals were asked to provide the name of their favorite book, which the district will donate to the school library of their choice.

Upcoming events include the Senior Banquet at the College of the Holy Cross, Thursday, June 1, at 6 p.m. The Class of 2017 Commencement will be held Sunday June 4 at the DCU Center at 1 p.m.

#### **IX. Student Representative Report – Jack Cederberg**

Mr. Cederberg was joined by fellow students to show photos taken during their recent trip to Italy, Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Among the highlights of the trip were the Neuschwanstein Castle, Tower of Pisa, and the Dachau internment camp. Mr. Cederberg thanked the school committee for its support of these trips, as well as Mrs. Pierangeli, who is the reason the trips run so perfectly each year.

**X. New Business**

A. Consideration to Amend Policy IJNDBA, Student Technology Acceptable Use, first reading  
(*Vote Required*)

This policy is included in the school handbooks, which are under consideration later in the meeting. The policy spells out appropriate behavior for students as they use district devices. Next year, students will be responsible for Google Accounts and G Suite.

Mrs. Ares explained that with these Google accounts, students can take their work with them wherever they go. The policy is essentially a permission slip, and is comprised of language recommended by Google.

A motion by J. Pietrowicz, seconded by R. Chalk to waive the reading of policy IJNDBA, was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to approve policy IJNDBA on first reading, was approved by unanimous vote.

B. Consideration of 2017-2018 Student Handbooks (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Packard and Mr. Paire said their school councils and faculty reviewed the handbooks, and suggested changes to make the language more fluid and current.

Discussion began concerning the proposal to remove the honor roll, or make it optional for grades 5-6 as it causes anxiety among the students.

Mrs. Kabala was concerned about removing it but said the ultimate decision should be consistent at both middle schools. She is also concerned removing the honor roll is unfair for those students who enjoy working hard to get the grades.

Mr. Desto said grade 5 is the transition year for students and is an emotional challenge. Mr. Desto suggested the middle school recognize excellence in a different way. As a compromise, the honor roll will begin at grade 6.

Presently, Dudley Middle School fifth graders are recognized for completing 100% of their homework. Charlton Middle School presents team awards.

Mrs. Rabbitt suggested a quarterly award for academic improvement.

Mr. Desto said this language does not need to be in the handbook, but there will be an agreement to recognize those students in different ways.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to accept the 2017-2018 Middle Schools Handbook as presented with the changes, was approved by unanimous vote.

Before Mr. Chaplin presented the high school handbook, Mrs. Antocci initiated discussion about the attendance guidelines that appear in both handbooks. The language addresses the importance of school attendance and discourages absences due to extended family vacations which result in the need for the student to make up missed classroom work, quizzes and tests.

Responding to the suggestion that the missed work will be made up upon the student's return to school, Mrs. Kabala said it is not right to not give the student the classwork in advance.

Mr. Desto said it is acceptable to have differences based on the age of the students and that a note in the handbook is not going to deter families from scheduling vacations during school times. The committee asked Mr. Chaplin to craft a sentence to make it clear that it is a student's responsibility to make up any work they are unable to complete during their school absence.

Mr. Chaplin noted that chronic tardiness may result in the student losing his/her parking/driving privileges.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the handbook should note that the fee structure is subject to change by the last meeting in June.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by S. Reed to approve the Shepherd Hill 2017-2018 handbook with the changes made this evening, was approved by unanimous vote.

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

Mr. Mathieu presented several donations and asked the committee for its approval:

To Dudley Elementary School Caring Continues program from Mr. and Mrs. Bromage	\$50.00
To Shepherd Hill from Abbvie Your Cause, LLC \$280.00	
To Charlton Elementary School from Planet Aid \$62.50	
For district art show from face painting	\$98.00

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to accept the donations as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu presented a memo with the rates of health insurance for the coming year, as well as the current plan designs.

Mr. Mathieu included a copy of the special education transportation contract. He asked the committee to review the copy and he will ask for their signatures at the next meeting.

D. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee (*Vote may be Required*)

1. Mr. Desto said the Senate is hard at work this week hammering out its budget. He said there are rumors indicating the district will have a small reduction in transportation.
2. District administrators have registered for the upcoming Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) end of year report conferences in June and September in Marlboro.
3. Information is available from the MARS Member Town Financial Report relative to the district's plan to seek a Prop. 2½ override.
4. Mrs. Rabbitt said the Regional School Committee met last Thursday and heard the news that state revenues are not improving. This paves the way for the governor to possibly implement 9C cuts once again.

Mrs. Rabbit said the positive news from that meeting is that Bill 217, sponsored by Sen. Harriet Chandler is moving forward. The bill calls for a commission to study regional school districts financial processes and their ability to meet the minimum local contribution, Mrs. Rabbitt noted neither Senator Anne Gobi nor Ryan Fattman signed on with this bill.

E. FY 2018 Budget (*Vote may be required*)

Mr. Desto was pleased to report that the FY 2018 budget passed successfully at both town meetings. He said the process was grueling, and he thanked administrators and staff who lent support.

Mr. Desto said although the budget passed, it did not accomplish all of its goals to fully support contractual obligations, maintain class sizes, fund STEM and Global Awareness Programs as well as those events to promote mental / emotional health. Mr. Desto said the district has hit the wall and needs to start working on an override for FY 2019.

At its last meeting, the committee authorized Mr. Desto to reduce the budget by \$52,500. Instead of cutting the Project ACES position at Charlton Middle School, Mr. Desto and Mr. Mathieu reduced the Shepherd Hill feasibility study in the amount of \$75,000. This leaves \$22,500 to reinstate elsewhere in the budget. Mr. Desto said Shepherd Hill needs improvements but that the towns cannot support an override and a new building project. He recommended capital improvement projects at Mason Road School, Heritage School, and Dudley Elementary School.

Mrs. Kabala asked if the district has responded to Senator Fattman, who had indicated the Senate is able to support capital projects. Mr. Desto said those discussions are underway.

Mr. Sage had pleaded for the librarian and the \$67,186 cut for this salary.

Mrs. Kabala asked if the committee would consider increasing the number of students accepted under the school choice program at the high school by another 10 spots. She said this \$50,000 could be combined with the \$22,500. Mr. Chaplin indicated Shepherd Hill could support more students, just not 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mrs. Antocci said it is dangerous to perpetuate funding salaries with school choice income, and that the committee should be looking at other avenues. Mrs. Antocci said she does not know why there is no concern for keeping low classes at the high school.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the district has a budget for FY 2018, although it is tenuous. She said using school choice to fund the school budget is the same as the town of Charlton's hesitancy to use its stabilization account to fund the assessment. She said the committee needs to be careful of the message we are sending to the towns.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to reopen school choice and to add 10 seats in grade 10-12 for the 2017-2018 school year, and to use the funds generated by these additional seats with the \$22,500 restores to the FY 2018 budget to fund the middle school librarian position, was approved by a vote of 4-3.

Voting in favor were Mrs. Aucoin, Mr. Chalk, Mrs. Kabala, Mr. Pietrzak.  
Opposed were Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Rabbit, and Mrs. Reed.

Mrs. Kabala said she will defend her position to anyone who asks. She said it is a shame to have these beautiful libraries but with no staff.

Mr. Chalk said each year he seeks to fill the school choice seats vacated by graduation. He said he fears if the district does not take this action to restore the librarian with school choice funds and wait until next year's budget, and if anticipated monies do not come through, the district will have lost a year that we could have had a librarian. He termed the budget shortfalls a gushing wound that we can only put a bandaid on.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked that this be a task of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee to create an avenue for funding.

Mrs. Kabala said if there was a revenue stream we would have found it, and asked to move the question.

F. Consideration of Request for Non-Resident Enrollment, 2017-2018 School Year (*Vote Required*)  
Kevin and Melissa Lemoine of Oxford, have requested their daughter be allowed to attend Charlton Middle School beginning in August 2017, while the family awaits completion of a home they are building on Jennings Road, Charlton. The anticipated occupancy date is mid-September. This request is consistent with district policy requiring residency by then end of the quarter, which, in this case, is Nov. 4. Mr. Desto recommended approval, contingent upon their provision of transportation until they are residents.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak, to approve the request of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Lemoine of Oxford, as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

G. Consideration to Establish Preschool Summer Camp (*Vote Required*)  
Charlton Elementary School Preschool Teacher Holly Provost is once again proposing a Summer Camp three mornings per week for four weeks at a cost of \$75 per week. Mr. Desto said the camp is of great value in helping kids prepare for the upcoming school year. The camp was established in 2010 by Ms. Provost. This vote recognizes the camp as an official district camp.

Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to approve the Preschool Summer Camp as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **XI. Next Meeting Dates**

- *Nurses Negotiation Subcommittee – Thursday, May 25, 3:30 p.m. District Office*
- *Regular Meetings – Wednesday, June 14, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.*  
Wednesday, June 28, 2017, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.

**XII. Future Agenda Items – FY 2018 Budget, School Improvement Plans, Evaluation of the Superintendent.** The committee asked Mr. Desto to schedule a joint meeting with town officials and state representatives to begin the conversation about an override and to study the district's ability to meet the minimum local contribution requirement.

The committee thanked Mr. Cederberg, as this is his last meeting. He will graduate in June and attend the University of Rhode Island in the fall.

**XIII. Executive Session –** “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.”

Mrs. Aucoin entertained a motion to enter executive session, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position, and to reconvene in open session for the purpose of adjournment, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:32 p.m.

#### **XIV. Adjourn**

The committee returned to open session at 10:25 p.m.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee for its advice concerning an invoice received by the district. The committee took no action.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by C. Kabala to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 10:33 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for May 24, 2017	Superintendent's Report of May 19, 2017	Minutes of May 10, 2017
FY 2018 Budget Memo #9	Middle School Handbook	High School Handbook
Dudley-Charlton Regional School District health insurance plan rates	Special Education Transportation Contract	Finance Director's Report
Policy IJNDBA	Invitation	Summer Camp Proposal

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.