

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, 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

Also in attendance were Gregg J. Desto, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; Mary A. Pierangeli, Principal, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, Matthew Morway, Shepherd Hill history teacher; 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

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, June 24, 2015*

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, June 24, 2015 as corrected, was unanimously approved.

B. *Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, June 24, 2015*

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by J. Pietrzak was withdrawn and this item was tabled.

IV. Approval of Warrant

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

Warrant #	Amount
3	\$488,842.55
75	\$261,616.79
77	\$199,640.48
78	\$133,170.66
79	\$47,529.65
1002D	\$319,512.83
1002P	\$871,496.45
Total	\$2,321,809.41

V. Citizens' Forum

No one spoke at this time.

VI. Communications

1. Mr. Desto received two responses to the committee's letter in opposition to PARCC testing. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester thanked the committee for its message, saying the DESE is currently evaluating whether PARCC is the right fit for the state.

Governor Baker's office responded that they understand the committee's concerns, and is grateful for the voice.

Mr. Desto has received word from Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association President Kevin Foley that the letter accurately reflects the union's opinion.

Mrs. Antocci reported on recent newspaper articles regarding Common Core and Congress' rewrite of the No Child Left Behind Law, which passed recently by a narrow margin. The new guidelines dramatically reduce the federal role and give more authority to the states.

Mrs. Antocci said there is a campaign by those opposed to the Common Core seeking to bring the issue to a ballot.

Mrs. Rabbitt attended the July 7 forum by the state Board of Education regarding PARCC. She said many teachers spoke and none were in favor of PARCC. She further stated the opposition can stop PARCC but our standards are still aligned to Common Core. Massachusetts lead the way in establishing the curriculum and we are losing that.

VII. Superintendent's Report

1. Mr. Desto introduced Shepherd Hill psychology and history teacher Matt Morway who is being inducted into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame at a major ceremony at the DCU Center in Worcester on Saturday, August 8, 2015. Mr. Morway will join other honorees representing a variety of categories, ranging from high school players to senior adults who still play the game at age 65 and older. Mr. Morway is being honored for his decades of successful service as a broadcaster of local high school basketball. Approximately 1,900 people, including Mr. Desto, will attend the Hall of Fame dinner, which has become one of, if not the, largest sports dinners in America.

The August 8 festivities will include a series of panel discussions featuring NBA greats and Hall of Famers Dave Cowens and David Thompson.

Mr. Morway said he is a school teacher first, and considers his broadcasting as an extension of the classroom. He treats all athletes with respect on the air and off.

2. Mr. Desto reported on Curriculum Director Lorinda Allen's efforts to create a cohesive writing program across the district. This week, 11 volunteer teachers of grades K-8 have gathered in the Shepherd Hill library to review programs and theories and compile best practices. Mr. Desto said it is very exciting to see what they are doing.

VIII. New Business

A. FY 2016 Budget / Finance Director Update (Vote Required)

Mr. Mathieu presented a quarterly financial update for FY 15. He said the school lunch program is in the black.

- Public use of the Athletic Field – Discussion

Mr. Mathieu presented a draft of an amended rental agreement which spells out prohibited items for those using the field. For example, Gatorade is prohibited on the turf area.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to accept the new rental policy as amended was unanimous.

Regarding use of the field by the community, Mrs. Kabala questioned the need to keep the lights on until 10 p.m.

The committee decided the hours will be posted as 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the summer, and 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the school year.

Mr. Mathieu said the district is waiting for price quotes for security cameras.

- Policy for School Lunch Charges – Discussion

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to consider creating a policy for students with a negative balance in their school lunch account. Under the law, any deficit must be covered by the general fund. Mr. Mathieu said there was \$6,600 in uncollected lunch fees at the end of this school year. The original amount was \$12,000, and was cut in half by administrators.

Mrs. Aucoin said no student should go without lunch, and requested the district explore the universal free lunch program as offered by the federal government. Mr. Mathieu will present information in August on this program and the eligibility issues.

He asked the committee to allow him to bring forward a draft policy that outlines the next steps of this debt collection.

Mrs. Rabbitt suggested the language be included in the handbooks as well.

- Process for Hiring District's Independent Auditors

As the committee is aware, the district independent auditors will not renew their contract. Mr. Mathieu recommended a selection committee be formed to conduct interviews.

Mr. Desto recommended the budget subcommittee conduct the interviews and narrow the field to 2-3 candidates to bring forward to the full committee.

The committee agreed, and Mr. Mathieu will reach out to area auditing firms.

Update on field project: There has been much discussion over the last year regarding seating at the renovated field. A portable unit would cost from \$80,000-\$90,000 and there is little use for it elsewhere in the district. Mr. Mathieu has investigated the possibility renting bleachers. Of four bids received, the lowest cost for a unit seating 600 is \$61,000 for two years.

The district has learned that because the field and school are within 300 feet, portable restrooms can be utilized and there is no need to build restrooms as had previously been mentioned.

Mr. Mathieu said the athletic revolving account had been built up for this purpose and there is \$90,000 available.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to authorize the finance director to accept to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder for bleacher rental, was unanimously approved.

Mr. Pietrzak asked about continued fundraising efforts and if there is a plan to inaugurate the field. Mr. Desto said there is a meeting scheduled at Shepherd Hill to discuss officially opening the field.

Mr. Mathieu said as of late today, the paver pathway was completed and the bubbler fixed. He said the project is wrapping up and within budget.

B. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Update

Mrs. Rabbitt reported on the subcommittee held earlier today. The main agenda item was setting a meeting schedule and agenda items. The subcommittee's goals are to maintain a focus on the budget throughout the year and to target communication with the community to help everyone understand the budget process and financial needs. The subcommittee will collaborate with the towns and explore alternate funding sources to effect change.

The subcommittee will begin its review of fees in August.

C. Consideration of Requests for Home Instruction, Policy IHBG

Mr. Desto presented the seven requests from parents seeking to continue homeschooling their children for the 2015-2016 school year.

- Michael and Kristine Correia, Charlton. Aaron, grade 7, Zachary, grade 9.
- Sean and Katherine L. Naef, Charlton. Anna, grade 7, Elizabeth, grade 5, Jane, grade 1.
- Robert and Kerryann Durward, Dudley. Bridget, grade 11.
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Miller, Dudley. Zachary, grade 1, Bradley, kindergarten.
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Prouty, Dudley. Cheyenne, grade 7.
- Ms. Judith Bohanan, Dudley. Mia, grade 8.
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael Werbecki, Dudley. Hailey, Michael, grade 4.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve these requests as submitted, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Reed requested to survey home school families to determine the reasons for their decision.

D. Consideration to Approve Enrollment of Non-Resident Student, Policy JF

Esdras Oliveras of Uxbridge, has requested that his son, Jake, be allowed to complete his education at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. Jake, a member of the class of 2016, has spent his academic career in the district and now has moved to Uxbridge with his father. Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to approve the request, contingent on the parent's provision of transportation to and from school, was approved by unanimous vote.

E. 2016-2017 School Year Calendar Study – Discussion

Mrs. Reed requested discussion on constructing the calendar to optimize effective learning time. Mr. Desto recommended establishing a study group that would determine a course for:

- Establishing operating priorities (e.g. what's best for student learning, family time, staff motivation, etc.)
- Establishing a plan of action with timelines
- Surveying the opinions of the communities and the district staff
- Gathering information from other successful districts
- Presenting findings to the School Committee

Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Antocci will serve.

The committee has previously approved scheduling Tuesday, November 8, 2016, as a no-school day to accommodate the presidential election, and to ensure there are no children in the building during polling hours. Mrs. Kabala suggested making that day a professional development day.

Mr. Desto will ask Mr. Foley to recommend teachers to serve on this task force.

F. Civility Policy – Discussion

A goal of the Strategic Plan is to create a civility policy by the opening of the 2015-2016 school year. Mr. Desto presented the committee with a draft. The purpose of a civility policy is to establish parameters for communication between parents and school staff. Mr. Desto said these provisions may become an addition to the district's current communication policy, or it can be established as a procedure. Mr. Desto said it is about what we are teaching our students in those situations.

Mrs. Rabbitt suggested the message of civil communication can be included under the parent tab of the district website, and in the student handbook.

X. Next Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, August 12, 2015 – Charlton Middle School, Charlton, 7 p.m.

XI. Future Agenda Items –

Executive session minutes

Review of Fees

Student lunch policy

September: opening of renovated athletic field

XII. Adjourn

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 8:35 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include: Agenda for July 15, 2015; Superintendent's Report of Friday, July 10, Minutes of Wednesday, June 24, 2015; Finance Director's Report; 15-16 Staffing Changes, Benefits Coordinator job description; civility policy draft; PARCC responses.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.