

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, at 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; district administrators: Lorinda Allen, Karen Ares, William Chaplin, Jeffrey Ferranti, Dean Packard, Robin Parmley, Kathleen E. Pastore, Diane Seibold, Christopher E. Starczewski; district teachers, Kevin Foley, Angela Muller Crone, Mary Solomita, Amy Jette, Kathleen Carlson; Dudley Elementary School parents and students Olivia Whitehurst, William Whitehurst, Berlin Krysiak; Kenny LaFerrierre, Sam Bitar; 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.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, March 28, 2018*

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, March 28, 2018, was approved by unanimous vote.

The committee said the vote to award the bid for the district school bus at the March 28 meeting contained an erroneous figure, and the committee opted to revote the award.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to award the District School Bus Bid to Anderson Motors of East Providence, R.I., at the negotiated price of \$83,777, was approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Citizens' Forum

Lisa Tinsley, and Julie Richard, parents of Charlton Middle School students, began to speak and were asked to meet with the superintendent to air their concerns, which the chair said were inappropriate for citizens' forum. Mr. Desto agreed to contact them Wednesday.

V. School Spotlight – Dudley Elementary School

Dudley Elementary School Principal, Diane D. Seibold introduced Olivia Whitehurst, William Whitehurst, and Berlin Krysiak to speak about their involvement with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Each student talked about how they enjoy meeting with their “big” once per week. Olivia Whitehurst also demonstrated her Pop Bottle Project honoring Amelia Earhart.

VI. Communications

Mrs. Rabbitt had several items:

State Auditor Suzanne Bump was recently quoted in a magazine article urging a review of the regional school district funding formula.

Mrs. Rabbitt attended the MARS Legislative Breakfast. State officials reported that state revenues are coming in, and were hopeful that these would assist the state budget.

Senator Harriette Chandler is urging citizen to pick up the advocacy to fully fund regional school district transportation because her senate bill to form a commission to study regional budgets has disappeared from consideration. There are social media sites on which citizens can air their thoughts.

VII. Superintendent’s Report

1. Mr. Desto offered a wrap up on the Dudley Town Hall meeting with state auditor’s office representative Ben Tafoya. Mr. Desto reported that regional schools contain 10% of students, but receive 1% of funding; in any regional district, where there is a slight difference in funding ability, Dudley and Charlton are closer than in any other region in the state.
2. Women in STEM Night with the Science and Engineering Fair. Mr. Desto said the event was awesome, one of the very best, featuring incredible projects, pride and passion among the students. There were robotics demonstrations, and representatives from women in STEM careers.
3. Wednesday night District Show Choir Festival at 6:30 p.m., provides a showcase of the best high school and two middle school choruses in the state.
4. Wellness Works Family Fun Fair and 5K, Saturday, April 28, 9 a.m. to noon.
5. District Art Show Friday, May 4 from 5 to 8 p.m.

VIII. Student Representative Report – Rebecca Moore

This item was tabled.

IX. New Business

A. FY 2019 Budget / Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report

Speaking on behalf of all Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee members, Mr. Desto thanked citizens for their support of the Proposition 2 ½ override during the April 3 special town election. Mr. Desto said he is grateful for the support of our town leaders as well as the school committee’s leadership. Most of all, Mr. Desto said he is happy for the students who will benefit from the opportunities the funds will provide.

Mrs. Kabala thanked Mr. Desto for his efforts to answer voters’ questions, and explain the district’s needs. Mrs. Kabala said as the face of the district, he set the tone.

Mrs. Reed reported on the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting held prior to the school committee meeting. She said discussion centered on the new positions of adjustment counselors and technology/integration specialists positions

at the four elementary schools, as well as the technology infrastructure upgrades that will result from the override. Regarding the latter, Mr. Desto said the bid for the wiring projects came in inexplicably lower than projected. Mr. Desto said the district may be able to do even more with our technology infrastructure. This will be an agenda item for the April 25 meeting.

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

Donations

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

To Charlton Middle School for STEM classrooms from the Ramsey family	\$5,000
To Charlton Elementary School through Butterbraids fundraiser	\$5,018

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

FY 19 Budget

Mr. Mathieu said based on the results of the special town election of April 3, the budget will be presented for final approval at the two town meetings in May. Mr. Mathieu said any changes to revenues will not be known until later in April and not finalized until June or July. Any expense line item changes, such as the savings in health insurance based on the Good FY 19 Budget: good news, will bring forward the infrastructure and the expected changes in the health insurance budget at April 25 meeting.

Net Metering Credit Agreement

The district has received a final proposal by Seaboard Solar to purchase net metering credits from their proposed solar project. Mr. Mathieu said the agreement is being reviewed by legal counsel. It is the same agreement as approved by other communities. Mr. Mathieu said Seaboard is under time constraints to finalize the project, and cannot hold this agreement until April 25. Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to authorize him to sign the agreement if it passes legal review.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to authorize the director of finance and operations to sign the agreement with Seaboard Solar to purchase net metering credits, was approved by unanimous vote.

FREC Bid Schedule

The district will continue with these collaborative bid opportunities through the French River Education Center purchasing cooperative.

FY 2019 Health Insurance rates

The Insurance Advisory Committee recently discussed implementing a 1% rate increase for next fiscal year. Mr. Mathieu said great improvements and savings have been realized since the move to one provider. The IAC will also work with Group Benefits Strategies to gauge interest in forming a joint purchase group.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve a 1% increase in health insurance rates for FY 19.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to approve the 1% health insurance rate increase for FY 19, was approved by unanimous vote.

Circuit Breaker

Mr. Mathieu said the state is attempting to appropriate additional monies for FY 18 Circuit Breaker to address the shortfall in funding that set the reimbursement rate at 65% rather than 75%. The state is hoping to get to 72% reimbursement.

Community Eligibility Program

Mr. Mathieu said Mason Road School is on the qualified list for free breakfast and lunch for next year. Mr. Mathieu has started the application process. It is hoped that participation in the lunch program will increase through this program.

C. Consideration to Appoint Director of Special Education (Vote Required)

Mr. Desto and the search committee have voted to recommend Lorinda Allen as the lone finalist for this position. Mr. Desto said he and the committee interviewed four very good candidates, but found Mrs. Allen to possess a rare combination of courageous leadership, and is someone for whom he has and trust and respect. He said he has no doubt that this is the right choice, as Mrs. Allen exemplifies what education should be about.

Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by C. Kabala to appoint Lorinda Allen as the Director of Special Education, effective July 1, 2018, was approved by a vote of 6-0. Mrs. Rabbitt abstained.

Mrs. Kabala thanked Mrs. Allen for her impressive 100-day entry plan.

Mrs. Antocci said her concern is with the impact to the curriculum director position as the district institutes project based learning. The curriculum director is critical to its success, and said the district needs a highly qualified candidate to take that position.

Mrs. Rabbitt referenced Mrs. Allen's entry plan, which emphasizes student achievement and how it has not been where it could be. Ms. Rabbitt said the district needs some measurable movement in that direction, as well as the establishment of a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Speaking as a special education parent, Mrs. Rabbitt said the most important achievements are outcomes, and any solutions need to be based on the belief that special education students are capable.

Mrs. Allen's salary will be negotiated in executive session after the meeting of April 25.

D. Consideration to Participate in State-sponsored School Choice Program, 2018-2019 – Discussion

Mr. Desto said the right course of action is to replace the 33 graduating school choice seniors. He said this keeps the district solid without increasing the number of students as we must offset the cost associated with students who choice out of district.

Mr. Chalk said his concern is always for the number of students going out of district on school choice.

Mrs. Antocci said we have worked very hard to keep class sizes down, and agreed that we look at school choice at the high school only.

The public hearing and vote will be set for the school committee meeting of Wednesday, April 25 at Charlton Middle School.

E. Consideration of Article XXIII, Enrollment of Employees' Children (Vote Required)

To date, Mr. Desto has received requests to enroll five non-resident employees' children, one at Grade 1 at Mason Road School, and three kindergarten and one grade 1 at Charlton Elementary School.

Mr. Desto recommended approval. The nurses' contract also has this provision, but no requests have been received from that group.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to approve the enrollment of non-resident employees' children consistent with Article XXIII of the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association, was approved by unanimous vote.

F. Consideration to Amend District Policy JQ, second reading, (Vote Required)

The policy is presented for amendment on this second voting in to the record this evening.

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by R. Chalk to waive the reading, was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the amendments to policy JQ on second reading, was approved by unanimous vote.

G. Consideration to Post Essential Positions, 2018-2019 School Year (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto has been notified of six retirements at this point. He is also seeking to post the four new positions of two adjustment counselors, and two technology/integration specialist positions created for FY 2019.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by C. Kabala to authorize the superintendent to post the positions vacant due to retirements, and the four new positions, was approved by unanimous vote.

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

The grandparents of a Mason Road School kindergarten student have recently gained custody of the child, and live in Southbridge. They are requesting the child be allowed to complete the 2017-2018 school year at Mason Road School. Their letter states they will enroll the child in Southbridge for the 2018-2019 school year.

Mr. Desto recommended approval, based on the child's best interest.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the request for temporary non-resident enrollment for the remainder of the 2017-2018 school year, contingent upon the grandparents' provision of transportation, was approved by unanimous vote.

I. Mr. Desto's Announcement

Mr. Desto announced that he is leaving the district at the end of the 2017-2018 school year to accept a position as principal of Auburn Middle school.

Mr. Desto read from a letter he had sent to the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee earlier this week: "It has become increasingly clear ... that the personal toll the job takes on my family and me is too heavy. I always encourage others to do what makes them happy, and I have come to realize that I need to take my own advice and try to get back to being a healthier person and a better father and husband." Most importantly, Mr. Desto stated, "I need to be more present for my young son, lest I miss some of the most important and formative years of his life – something for which I would never forgive myself."

Mrs. Kabala said Mr. Desto put his mark on this district. She said as a public figure, you are never free from the job. Mr. Desto has always said, "Students First," but now he is to be commended for putting his family first.

Mrs. Rabbitt thanked Mr. Desto for his courageous leadership of the district, and for this courageous step to take care of his family.

X. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings:

- Wednesday, April 25, 2018, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 9, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee:

Wednesday, May 9, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 5 p.m.

XI. Approval of Warrant

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

Subcommittee Warrants		Accounts Payable Warrants		Payroll Warrants	
Warrant #	Amount	Warrant #	Amount	Warrant #	Amount
106	\$196,835.90	108	\$75,029.57	116DV	\$-3.87
107	\$40,582.39	109	\$593,740.91	1195D	\$18.31
		110	\$49,936.81	1195P	\$121.12
Total	\$237,418.29	Total	\$718,707.29	1196D	\$12.93
				1196D Adj	\$5.16
				1196P	\$177.60
				1197D	\$430,681.06
				1197P	\$1,199,246.29
				Total	\$1,630,258.60

XII. Future Agenda Items – Budget, Strategic Planning, 2018-2019 School Choice Public Hearing, Circuit Breaker and health care figures, Posting the Superintendent’s Position, lighting at Charlton Middle School entrance.

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 8:05 p.m.

Items used for this meeting included the following:

Agenda for April 10, 2018	Superintendent’s Report Friday, April 6, 2018	Minutes of Wednesday, March 28, 2108
2018-2019 Student Enrollment	Finance Director’s Report Friday, April 6, 2018	Technology Teacher/ Integration Specialist Job Description
Wellness Works 2018	Policy JQ, Proposed for Amendment	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.