

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, Wednesday, January 27, 2016, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 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 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, Doris Dono, Jody A. O'Brien, Mary A. Pierangeli; district teachers Brooke Beverly, Nate Skermont, David Deremian, Sara Sanborn, Kevin Foley; Stefan Sage; Charlton Elementary School students Javier Jillian Clark, Evan Remillard, Okko Kleino, Colden Blackwell, Owen Kennedy, Jillien Clarke, Rangely St. John, Javier Miranda; media representatives: Deborah 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, January 13, 2016*

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by S. Reed to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, January 13, 2016, 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
33	\$524,148.18
34	\$139,119.17
35	\$625,924.49
36	\$647,016.96
1034D	\$7.52
1035D	\$442,647.46

1035P	\$1,130,090.68
Total	\$3,508,954.46

V. Citizens' Forum

1. Mary Brown, chair of the Charlton High School Alumni Scholarship Fund Committee requested that the balance of \$7,083.59 in contributions be returned as it has earned just \$2.86 in interest while held by the district. Ms. Brown said it is the scholarship committee's goal to grow the funds in perpetuity and it won't as it is presently being held. She requested the district issue a check to the Charlton High School Alumni Scholarship and that the scholarships will continue to be awarded from it.

Mrs. Aucoin informed Ms. Brown that this item is on the evening's agenda, and the committee will discuss it at that point.

VI. School Spotlight – Charlton Elementary School

Mrs. Pacheco and art/STEAM teacher Amy Paquette, who conducts a weekly STEAM lesson for kindergartners and first graders at Charlton Elementary School. After describing the four lessons, seven first graders read a brief report of the lessons, which stressed working together in teams to complete such projects as house building, paper chains, and snowflakes.

VII. Communications

Neither Mr. Desto nor committee members had items to report.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

1. Mr. Desto reported that the 2014-2015 graduation and dropout rates for Shepherd Hill were made public, and that the dropout data contained a significant error. Students who withdrew over the summer were not recorded as having enrolled in area private schools and are therefore considered drop-outs.

Mr. Desto said the annual dropout rate provides information about one particular school year and all students enrolled in the school in that year. The four-year graduation rate provides information about a particular group of students over the course of a typical four years in high school. It should be noted that some students complete graduation requirements in a fifth year or earn a GED. Thus, the four-year graduation rate is not a final indicator of the number of students who, in fact, earn a diploma. This year, 21 students from the class of 2015 are listed as non-grads. This number includes the following: three students who obtained certificates of attendance as a result of alternative portfolios for MCAS assessment, five who are still enrolled and working on obtaining the diploma in a fifth year, five who earned a GED, and eight dropouts.

Mr. Desto reported the adjusted four-year graduation rate is 94.2%. The adjusted rate includes only those students who were in the original cohort and did not leave the cohort. It does not include those students who transferred into the school or district after October 1 of ninth grade. In other words, it includes only those students who completed all four years at Shepherd Hill.

In addition, the district's five-year graduation rate is 96% and the five-year adjusted rate is 96.3%.

2. Mr. Desto invited the committee to the Addiction Crisis Meeting on Friday, February 5 at 9 a.m. There is a particularly heavy concentration of opiate-related incidents in Central Mass. Area police, fire, and EMTs will attend as well as personnel from Webster Public Schools.
3. Shepherd Hill will host the Central Mass. Show Choir Festival February 5-6. Choirs from Charlton Middle School and Dudley Middle School will share the stage with Shepherd Hill.
4. The Negotiation Subcommittee will meet with the Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association on Thursday, February 4 at 5 p.m.
5. Members are invited to the Leaders' Breakfast on Friday, February 12 in the district office at 9:30 a.m. Senator Anne M. Gobi will be in attendance.
6. Mr. Desto has received two official notification of retirements from Shepherd Hill Principal Mary A. Pierangeli and Mason Road School Principal Theodora Dono, effective at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year. He thanked both for their exceptional work on behalf of district students, saying the schools have continued to improve since their assumed their roles.

Both principals thanked the committee for the opportunity to serve the district and for their encouragement throughout the years.

The high school position has been posted, with Mason Road School slated for early February. Mr. Desto said appointments should be finalized by the end of April.

IX. Student Representative Report

This item was tabled as Jack Bugar is not in attendance.

X. New Business

A. FY 17 Initial Budget Presentation, Part 2 – Budget Priorities

Mr. Desto's second budget presentation focuses on the educational priorities we hope to accomplish. Salaries and health insurance account for 75% of the increases, combined with new ELL requirements.

Mr. Desto presented four main areas of emphasis:

1. Class sizes in grades 1-3: Mr. Desto cited overwhelming evidence that class size affects the acquisition of skills. Classes of 20 and below are optimal. To reach this goal would require hiring three additional teachers this year.
2. Social emotional / mental health support: Students today have more barriers to learning that ever, he said. To provide this support would require hiring an adjustment counselor and guidance support at the elementary school. Mr. Desto said the district is looking at internal options.

3. Moving us Forward, Global Awareness: Mr. Desto revealed the high school plan for Global Studies Pathways and a certificate program that include courses of study, field experiences, extra-curricular activities, college credit courses, foreign travel. At the middle school, foreign language would be offered to grades 7 and 8, requiring a full time teacher at Charlton Middle School, and .5 at Dudley Middle School.

4. Moving us Forward: The district is making significant progress in STEAM integration. The committee's approval of the STEAM director has paid dividends. Replacing a math position at Shepherd Hill that was cut several years ago would impact the budget.

B. Consideration of Changes to Shepherd Hill Course Catalog – Vote Required

Mrs. Pierangeli provided a memo detailing the proposed changes to the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Program of Studies for the 2016-17 school year. The proposals have been endorsed by department coordinators and the School Council.

- Math Department: deleting two MCAS Preparation courses and adding Exploring Computer Science, Introduction to programming.
- Science Department: deleting two physics courses and a lab period. Adding Project Physics, and renaming Marine Science to Marine Biology.
- Social Studies: deleting four courses which are obsolete or have not been requested by students.
- Business and Technology: consolidating three outdated electives to create Business Applications. Adding Effective Presentations, and deleting four courses, including personal keyboarding.
- Health/PE, Family and Consumer Science: deleting a number of elective courses that have not been offered for many years. The topics are covered in the department's remaining offerings, and PE staffing cannot accommodate these electives.

The computer programming course is dependent upon approval of the position proposed in the FY 17 budget.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the Shepherd Hill Regional High School 2016-17 Program of Studies as proposed this evening, was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Director of Finance and Operations Update

Health Trust Fund: Mr. Mathieu provided an update on the health insurance trust fund, reporting that it appears to be in better shape than it was last year, helped greatly by the rate increases and plan changes. Mr. Mathieu estimates the fund will be out of deficit with a small surplus by the end of the fiscal year.

Chimney repair at Shepherd Hill, (Vote Required): The boiler chimney stack has been a concern and is in danger of collapse. Mr. Mathieu opened three bids for this project two weeks ago and requests the committee's action this evening.

Boston Chimney and Tower, Peabody: \$18,747

SOM Construction Ent., Dudley: \$18,747

Royal Steam Heater Co., Gardner: \$24,800

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to award the bid to Boston Chimney and Tower at the bid of \$18,747.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to accept the bid to reconstruct the boiler chimney stack from Boston Chimney and Tower at a cost of as requested by Mr. Mathieu and recommended by Mr. Desto, was approved by unanimous vote. The work will not affect the operation of the heating and ventilation system.

Policy for architect: Mr. Mathieu said such a policy is not required of the district at this time. It would be in effect when the district has an approval to fund construction.

Request to return funds to Charlton High School Alumni Fund. As Ms. Brown explained earlier in the meeting, the group will continue to award the scholarship to Charlton seniors, but is requesting the funds be returned to them for investing. Mr. Mathieu said the request needs to be reviewed by legal counsel.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to honor the request of the Charlton High School Alumni Association to refund the alumni scholarships funds, subject to the advice of legal counsel, was approved by unanimous vote.

Notification of \$500 donation from Country Bank. The bank has donated \$500 to the district as part of its new Student of the Month award program. Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to accept the funds.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to accept the \$500 donation from Country Bank, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu said the governor's budget was released today, and provides some challenges for the district.

D. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Update

The subcommittee met on January 7 and continued discussion on capital expenses, e-rate funding, and finding creative ways to move forward with goals and priorities through alternative funding sources. The subcommittee's next meeting is Wednesday, February 10 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, at 9 a.m.

E. Charter Schools – Discussion (Vote may be required)

Mrs. Rabbitt requested this item. In light of the possible question on the November 16 statewide ballot seeking to lift the cap on Charter Schools, Mrs. Rabbitt said the committee may want to consider drafting a position statement. While charter schools maximize the choice for parents of where to send their children to school, it has a detrimental effect on the district as it loses \$9,500 per student. School Choice brings in \$5,000 per student.

Mrs. Rabbitt said there is a real legislative push to lift the cap. The governor's budget includes another \$20 million toward charter schools.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by E. Rabbitt that the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee draft a position statement in support of the state's cap on charter schools, was approved by unanimous vote.

F. Regional Transportation Reimbursement – Discussion (Vote may be required)

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has proposed to Governor Charlie Baker to insert the phrase "subject to appropriation" in the section of the statute governing regional school district transportation. The current language says the regional school district is obliged to provide transportation for all children in kindergarten through grade 12 and will be reimbursed by the state for the full amount expended for such transportation. The DESE is proposing that this reimbursement will now be subject to the governor's appropriation. The committee argued that it has never been reimbursed 100% of the costs of transportation.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by S. Reed that the school committee draft a position statement opposing the DESE's proposal to insert the language "subject to appropriation" in MGL Chapter 71, Section 16C, after the second use of the word "transportation," was approved by unanimous vote.

G. Consideration to Adopt 2016-2017 School Year Calendar – Vote Required

Mr. Desto thanked Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Antocci, Kevin Foley, David Deremian, and Mrs. Allen for the hours they devoted looking at calendars, and researching information to construct a calendar to maximize learning time.

Mr. Desto said the highlights of this calendar are two half-day professional development days in November and March. The group also proposed holding school on Election Day, November 8, 2016. The committee had voted in January 2013 to not hold school that day out of concern for student safety as Charlton voters use Heritage School as a polling site. Mr. Desto said Heritage School students will not be in the building that day, but instead moved elsewhere for educational activities or even a field trip. He asked the committee to consider rescinding its vote to not hold school on Election Day.

By scheduling two full-day professional development days in August and a third on January 2, the last day of school for students would be Monday, June 12. Snow days will likely move the last day to further in the week.

Mrs. Kabala said she will not support this calendar because of concerns for Election Day. She said the committee promised the town there would be no school that day and should not rescind its vote.

Mrs. Antocci said the calendar was designed to maximize the educational days at key times in the school year.

The committee tabled this item and asked Mr. Desto to research voting trends in Charlton and return to the committee with information to support a decision on Election Day.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings: Wednesday, February 10, 2016, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, 7 p.m. ; Wednesday, February 24, 2016, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 7 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting: Wednesday, February 10, 2016, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 9 a.m.

XII. Future Agenda Items – FY 17 Initial Budget Presentation, Part 3 ; calendar; executive session, district office administrators; budget; feasibility study update.

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 8:50 p.m.

Items used for this meeting included:

Agenda for January 27, 2016	Minutes of Wednesday, January 13, 2016	Superintendent's Report of Friday, January 22, 2016
2016-2017 School Year Calendar	Finance Director's Update – 1/22/16	Shepherd Hill Program of Studies
FY 2017 Budget Presentation Part 2		

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.