

## ***DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT***

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, March 8, 2017 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

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 Chaplin, Jody O'Brien, Lori Pacheco, Dean Packard, John Paire, Kathleen Pastore, Diane Seibold; teachers David Deremian, Kevin Foley, Charlton resident Stefan Sage; media representatives Deb LaPlaca, Telegram, Rich Earle, audio-visual coordinator, Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

**Public Hearing:** *In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 12B, the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District will hold a public hearing on the subject of the state sponsored School Choice Program on Wednesday March 8, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.*

The chair called the public hearing to order at 7 p.m.

Mr. Desto welcomes comments from the community, prior to the committee's vote on the matter under New Business.

No one from the public spoke.

The chair closed the hearing at 7:01 p.m.

### **I. Call to Order**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

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

### III. Approval of Minutes

#### *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 8, 2017*

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 8, 2017, was approved with one abstention, Mr. Pietrzak.

#### *Minutes of Budget Workshop of Wednesday, February 15, 2017*

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, February 15, 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:

| Warrant #    | Amount              |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 45           | \$118,694.09        |
| 46           | \$96,510.79         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$215,204.88</b> |

### V. Citizens' Forum

Stefan Sage, Charlton, said he was unable to attend the meeting in which the FY 2018 preliminary budget was set, but saw it on cable. He said he hopes there were numerous calls of outrage that we are spending so little on our students. Mr. Sage said the district is just above the Wachusett Regional School District's per pupil expenditures. He said the public should be outraged that we are at that level in our two communities. He said voters need to realize that the district does not have the economic support of its communities, and said he hopes people attend the Board of Selectmen meeting to express their opinions. He urged voters to attend finance committee meetings as town officials need to hear from people, and people need to let their towns know they want a change in their economic responsibilities in educating our children.

Mr. Desto thanked Mr. Sage for his ongoing support of the district and public education.

### VI. School Spotlight – Mason Road School

Principal Robin Parmley introduced the Mason Road School Kids of Character program. The students recited the Character Pledge and then recited the different character traits that the school has focused on throughout the year.

The committee thanked the children for their presentation.

### VII. Communications

1. Mr. Desto shared a letter from a parent of a Shepherd Hill student, in which she thanked the staff who has worked with him over the years, and expressed her pride in the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District.

2. Mrs. Rabbitt provided an update on the MASC Regional Meeting. She said a representative from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy provided an informative presentation which is available on the website. Representative Kimberly Ferguson (D-1<sup>st</sup> Worcester) is seeking school districts to identify two targeted areas, mandates or struggles, they want to focus in on something that has a great impact.

3. Mrs. Rabbitt spoke with a middle school parent from Spencer, who reached out to her regarding the opioid crisis. The parent would like to know how the topic is being addressed in the middle schools.

**Action Item:** Mrs. Rabbitt requested information be presented at a future meeting concerning. Mr. Desto agreed to schedule the topic at an upcoming meeting.

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

1. Mr. Desto congratulated committee member Joseph Pietrzak, who has been named Coach of the Year for the Southern Worcester County League. Mr. Pietrzak serves as the coach of the Oxford High School Girls Basketball team.

2. The Shepherd Hill Girls Varsity Basketball team is heading to the finals against Springfield Central. The game will be held at UMass Amherst Friday, March 10 at 6 p.m.

3. Last weekend was a banner weekend for Shepherd Hill sports and activities: The Show Choir dominated the competition at the Daniel Hand High School in Connecticut. Illusion was awarded a Silver Medal, Best Pit Band (unisex division) and Grand Champion (unisex division); Fantasy was awarded a Gold Medal and second. The Dudley Middle School choir took first place, and Gavin Tarnowski won Best Male Soloist; Charlton Middle School took second place, and Abby Shaw won Best Female Soloist. The Color Guard took third place, while the Winter Percussion claimed first place; in athletics, Senior Kevin Mensah will compete in the 55 meter dash in NYC this weekend.

4. Parent teacher conferences will be held March 9 for grades K-12. It is an early release day for students.

5. Mr. Desto sought the committee's feedback on his drafted letter to state legislators, which details the school committee's struggle with the FY 2018 budget and the necessary cuts. The committee agreed it was well-written and needed to be sent.

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

1. The Shepherd Hill Student Council is attending the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils Leadership Conference in Hyannis. The council is hoping to bring home the gold again this year. The council is planning its spring events, including the annual dodgeball tournament.

2. The Shepherd Hill Show choirs are planning a Classical '80s concert.
3. The Foreign Language Club is making last minute preparations for its trip to Rome, Florence, Munich and Prague.

**X. New Business**

A. FY 2018 Budget Presentations (*Vote Required*)

*Elementary Schools: R. Parmley, L. Pacheco, K. Pastore, D. Seibold*

The principals reviewed class sizes, staffing requests, large purchases and capital projects. Mr. Mathieu said all requests made by principals this evening are currently in the budget.

*Staffing requests include:*

Grade 1 teacher

Grade 4 teacher

Teacher of the Deaf

*Large purchase requests include:*

New health curriculum

iPad cart

10 doc cameras

media cart

RTI kits

In-Focus cameras

*Capital projects are identified as:*

Tank monitoring system

16 roof fans

Playground mulch.

Bathroom stall replacements panels

Cafeteria tables

*Middle Schools: J. Paire, D. Packard*

The middle schools are not requesting any additional staff

*Large purchases:*

Document cameras

Computer mice

In-Focus projectors

*Capital projects:*

Testing of smoke detectors, cafeteria amplifier

Cafeteria tables  
Roof repair

*High School:*                      *W. Chaplin*

*Staffing requests:*  
Full time adjustment counselor  
Full time athletic director

**Action Item:** Committee members requested additional information and a job description for the athletic director proposal. Mr. Desto and Mr. Chaplin will provide this information at the April 12 meeting.

*Large purchases:*  
AP stats textbooks  
music supplies  
show choir rights  
advanced robotics kits

*Capital projects:*  
10 radios and repeater package  
New chairs for the library

B. Consideration to Participate in School Choice Program, 2017-2018 (*Vote Required*)  
At the February 15 budget workshop the school committee discussed the revenue generated for the district by this program. Mr. Desto has recommended the committee participate in the program at Shepherd Hill only for the 2017-2018 school year. Mr. Desto proposed filling the 34 spots vacated by graduates, and an additional 20 spots. He and Mr. Chaplin agree the class sizes are favorable for this proposal.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by C. Kabala to participate in school choice for the 2017-2018 school year, was approved by unanimous vote.

The committee considered the number of students to accept under School Choice:

Mr. Desto said the additional 20 spots is a conservative number that will bring in additional revenue, but not overwhelm the school.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by C. Kabala to accept the superintendent's recommendation to open 54 School Choice slots at Shepherd Hill, was approved by unanimous vote.

**Action Item:** Mrs. Rabbitt requested data on class sizes based on current projections of course enrollment.

C. FY 2018 Budget (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto said while the process of crafting a fiscal year budget is the same, it is actually more difficult than usual due to the lack of revenue from the state, and the communities' difficulty meeting the demands of their respective minimum local contributions. The committee must consider reducing the budget prior to its presentation at the annual town meetings.

Mr. Desto and Mr. Mathieu presented FY 2018 Budget Memo #2, which outlines reductions totaling \$743,160 in staffing, technology and capital improvements.

The committee will consider the reductions by each category.

**Staff reductions of newly created positions: \$162,500**

- Grade 1 at Charlton Elementary School (leaves 7 grade 1 classes at 21.5 class size)
- Grade 4 at Heritage School
- Special education teacher at Shepherd Hill will retire, and the position will be absorbed by another teacher without threat to educational services.

Mrs. Rabbitt and Mrs. Antocci urged the committee to wait until additional information is provided.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the staffing reductions as proposed above, for a total of \$162,500, was approved by a vote of 4-3. Voting in favor were, R. Chalk, C. Kabala and J. Pietrzak, S. Reed. Opposed were M. Antocci, E. Rabbitt, and P. Aucoin.

**Capital Improvements: \$40,428**

Mr. Desto said the proposed reductions do not impact student health and safety.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to approve the reductions to capital improvements by \$40,427, was approved by a vote of 6-1.

Mrs. Rabbitt was opposed.

Mrs. Rabbitt said she is uncomfortable voting about money with no information about where the money is coming from. She said the committee has reached a tenuous position with the budget and it is being pushed over the cliff. Mrs. Rabbitt said budget and policy are the school committee's functions and she is uncomfortable with the process. She said there is no information which will allow her to go out to the community and educate them about the district's needs as outlined by the administrators. She said for that reason, her votes will be nos.

Mrs. Kabala said there is a revenue problem that will not be solved despite advocacy in the communities. She said the superintendent and finance director are recommending the least painful cuts.

**Custodial Substitute budgets \$34,096**

The district will continue its practice of using a district-wide floating substitute rather than budget for substitutes at each building. The reduction will not impact the classrooms.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the reduction to the custodial substitute budgets in the amount of \$34,096, was approved by unanimous vote.

**Technology \$145,860**

Mr. Desto said the district is considering alternative financing for this line item. This reduction reduces the number of requested Chromebook car

**Action Item:** Mr. Mathieu said he has spoken to representatives of UniBank concerning a debt exclusion and leasing to fulfill the technology needs. He will present this information at the March 22 meeting.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the reduction to the technology budget failed by a vote of 1-6. C. Kabala was in favor. Voting no were M. Antocci, P. Aucoin, R. Chalk, J. Pietrzak, E. Rabbitt, S. Reed.

**Health Insurance Expenses: \$246,056**

Health insurance costs for Title I and cafeteria staff will be funded by federal funds. Mr. Mathieu said this is a one-year solution. This expense will return in the FY 19 budget.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak, to approve the transfer from the federal programs grants totaling \$246,056, for FY 2018, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu said the cafeteria funds would ordinarily be used to replace aged cafeteria equipment.

**School Expense Line Items \$35,000**

Each principal was asked to reduce the school line items by a percentage. Similar reductions were enacted last year.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the reduction to the school expenses line item by \$35,000, was approved by unanimous vote.

**Additional School Choice: \$100,000**

This was effected by the committee's vote earlier this evening. No further action is needed.

**ELL Teacher – Increase of \$20,780**

The district has hired the ELL teacher for Dudley Elementary School and Dudley Middle School. This increases the budget by \$20,780 to match the actual salary.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the increase to the budget by \$20,780, was approved by unanimous vote.

With its votes, the school committee has approved \$597,480 in reductions this evening, creating a proposed operating budget to \$47,274,870. The capital budget remains at \$3,706,688 for a total proposed budget of \$50,981,558.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve the budget as proposed.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to approve a capital budget of \$50,981,558, with assessments as follows:

Charlton: operating budget, \$12,505,119, capital assessment, \$546,147 for an assessment of \$13,051,266.

Dudley: operating budget, \$7,833,097, capital assessment, \$652,411, for an assessment of \$8,485,508

Total assessment: \$21,536,774.

This was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report *(Vote May be Required)*

There was no meeting.

Mrs. Rabbitt reported there has been discussion at the state house concerning mandating full time preschool.

E. Director of Finance and Operations Report *(Vote Required)*

Mr. Mathieu asked the school committee to approve the following donations:

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| To Charlton Elementary School from Planet Aid Inc.,  | \$42.15           |
| To Heritage School from Masonic Angel Foundation to sponsor students in their after-school enrichment programs | \$500.00          |
| To Heritage School from Fresh Kix Dance  | \$100.00          |
| To Heritage School from Country Bank, Staples Gift Card  | \$250.00          |
| To Charlton Middle School from May Jane Pevay, for defibrillators and maintenance                              | \$200.00          |
| To Dudley Elementary School from Wilson Language Training Corp. for its Caring Continues program               | \$250.00          |
| To Dudley Elementary School from the Dudley Women's Club for its Caring Continues program                      | \$200.00          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$1,542.15</b> |

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



Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to declare 76 televisions as surplus, and to authorize him to dispose of them.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci, to declare 76 televisions as surplus, and to authorize the finance director to dispose of them, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu said he has completed an analysis of transportation reimbursement data for FY 18, and as a result has increased the transportation revenue budget to match what is on the cherry sheets.

F. Consideration to Amend 2017-2018 School Year Calendar (*Vote Required*)

Since the calendar was approved at the February 8 meeting, the district has learned that Veterans' Day should be moved to Friday, November 10. It was originally approved as November 13

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the revisions to the 2017-2018 school year calendar as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

G. Consideration of Request for Leave of Absence (*Vote Required*)

A Shepherd Hill Teacher has requested a leave of absence through the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year to care for a relative who is ill.

Mr. Desto recommended approval of this request consistent with Article XV, Item D of the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association.

Mrs. Rabbitt left the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to accept the request by a Shepherd Hill teacher for a leave of absence through the end of the 2016-2017 school year, was approved by 6-0.

H. Consideration of Request for Home Instruction, Policy IHBG (*Vote Required*)

Charlton Parents have requested to home school their son in grade 3 for the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year. Mr. Desto recommended approval based on the student's best educational interest.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the request by the Charlton residents, was approved by a vote of 6-0.

I. Consideration of Request for Non-Resident Student Enrollment, Policy JF (*Vote Required*)

A district family has requested that her children in kindergarten and grade 3 be allowed to finish the school year in their respective schools despite their move out of the district, which

was necessitated by factors beyond their control. Mr. Desto recommended approval based on the children’s best educational interest.

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the request for non-resident enrollment, consistent with policy JF, was approved by a vote of 6-0.

**XI. Next Meeting Dates**

School Committee Meetings:

- *Budget and Finance Subcommittee* - Wednesday, March 15, 2017, District Office, 5 p.m.
- Dudley Elementary School Principal Sub committee
- *Regular meeting* – Wednesday, March 22, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.
- *Joint Financial Planning Meeting* – Wednesday, March 29, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 6:30 p.m.
- Meeting with District Nurses – Thursday, April 6, Shepherd Hill, 3:30 p.m.

Mrs. Rabbitt returned to the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

**XII. Future Agenda Items – FY 2018 Budget, alternative funding for technology, Coordinated Program Review Audit**

*Executive Session:*

“...to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.”

**XIII. Adjourn**

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 9:27 p.m.

Items used for this meeting were:

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Agenda for March 8, 2017  | Superintendent’s Report of March 3, 2017 | Minutes of Meeting of February 8, 2017 | Minutes of Budget Workshop of February 15, 2017 |
| 2017-2018 Draft Calendar  | Assessments                              | School Choice Recommendations memo     | Budget Summary                                  |
| Dudley Elementary School Principal Timeline   | Finance Director’s Report                | FY 18 Budget Memo #2                   | Letter to Legislators                           |
| Budget Presentation Packets:<br>Charlton Elementary School, Mason Road School, Heritage School, Dudley Elementary School, Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School, Shepherd Hill |  |  |   |

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.