

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Wednesday, May 9, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Mary N. Antocci
Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Catherine M. Kabala
Joseph M. Pietrzak
Elaine M. Rabbitt
Stephanie A. Reed
Jamie L. Terry

Rebecca Moore, 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, Dean Packard, Robin Parmley, Diane Seibold, Christopher E. Starczewski; Kenneth LaFerriere, Charlton resident; media representatives 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

The committee welcomed Jamie L. Terry, as the new representative from Charlton.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 25, 2018*

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by S. Reed to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, April 25, 2018, was approved. Mrs. Terry abstained.

B. *Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, April 25, 2018*

This item was held for discussion during the executive session.

IV. Citizens' Forum

Kenny LaFerriere, who recently sought the one-year seat on the school committee, offered his thanks to Mrs. Terry, and wished her the very best as she begins her term. Although he was not elected, Mr. LaFerriere said he learned a lot, and will continue to support the schools.

V. School Spotlight – Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Shepherd Hill seniors Paige Vaillancourt and Kathleen Landry offered photos and commentary about the recent trip by the Global Awareness Program's trip to Dublin, Wales, London, Paris, and Normandy. Both said it provided an opportunity to experience other cultures, while learning history and current events.

VI. Communications

Mrs. Rabbitt attended the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools' annual meeting last week. Department of Elementary and Deputy Commissioner of Ed Jeff Wulfson was present for a conversation regarding legislative action to form a commission to study transportation across all domains including for homeless students, and regional schools. Mr. Wulfson expressed that he is not supportive of the 100% regional reimbursement promise, but would like to establish a percentage that is consistently delivered.

Regarding the busing piece, MARS noted a lack of competition for busing contracts, and looks to the state to offer some relief.

Mrs. Rabbitt said Senator Julian Cyr, D, Cape and Islands, has filed an amendment to the original bill seeking to form a regional school study commission. This bill failed in the House because of confusion among representatives, who thought that it was regarding regional transportation, they did not see that it looked at regional school budgets.

VII. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Desto shared good news regarding people in the district.

1. Mr. Desto congratulated district art teachers and students for the successful Art Show on Friday, May 4. Mr. Desto said an enormous amount of work went into this show.
2. Charlton Middle School Drama Club presented *The Sound of Music* May 5 and 6 to rave reviews. Mr. Desto thanked the cast and crew.
3. Middle School principals Dean Packard, and Christopher Starczewski have announced the names of the winners of the ***New England League of Middle Schools Scholar Leader Awards***. These recipients are chosen by faculty and staff, and are usually among those students who will become standouts at Shepherd Hill Regional High School and beyond.

The students will be honored at a banquet on Wednesday, May 16.

Dudley Middle School: Molly Starczewski and Alek Popovich.

Charlton Middle School: Kyle Norberg and Adeline Smith.

4. The already award winning Shepherd Hill Envirothon Team, coached by teachers Justin Sauvageau and Ray Sullivan has won the prestigious Massachusetts Secretary of the Environment's Award for Excellence in Environmental Education. They will be recognized at the State House later this month.
5. The school committee is invited to attend the Senior Banquet on Thursday, May 31 at the Hogan Center at the College of the Holy Cross at 6 p.m., and of course Graduation on Sunday, June 3 at the DCU Center, 6 p.m. Other senior dates to remember are: May 31, Senior Banquet; June 3 Graduation, 6 p.m.

VIII. Student Representative Report – Rebecca Moore

Miss Moore reported on the **Broadway Spectacular** to be held at Shepherd Hill on Friday, May 11, featuring the band and chorus. AP exams are underway; the annual Mock Car Crash event has been revamped and will be held Thursday, May 10. Each year, this event sponsored by the school's SADD raises awareness against drunken and reckless driving.

IX. New Business

A. FY 2019 Budget / Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report

The Budget and Finance Subcommittee met at 5 p.m., and discussed employee retirements and resignations, and the accompanying savings as new employees are hired. The subcommittee also conducted a preliminary review of extra-curricular stipends as outlined in the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association, with an eye toward saving money. Other topics included capital repairs, and contracting for a feasibility study of all the schools.

Mr. Desto said the subcommittee also had a brief discussion about other ways we can engage the towns in matching revenue sources with the district's long terms needs.

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

Mr. Mathieu presented the following donations for approval

To Charlton Elementary School from Dennis and Patricia Winski for technology

\$500

To Charlton Middle School from the Ramsey family for technology

\$500

To Shepherd Hill Music Department from the Janet Malser Trust for new piano \$35,000

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to approve the donations as presented above, was approved by unanimous vote.

Special Education Transportation Contract

Mr. Mathieu reported that the district began negotiations with VanPool Transportation of Wilbraham three years ago when facing increased transportation costs for special education students by the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative of Southbridge. The resulting contract with VanPool kept costs down, but that contract ends on June 30. VanPool

has proposed a new three year contract keeping the costs of half of the routes static, but increasing the other half of the routes by \$5 per day for each of the three years of the contract.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve the new three-year contract with VanPool, and this was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu reminded the committee of Mrs. Rabbitt's initial inquiry about the installation of cameras on the special education vans. Mr. Mathieu said VanPool indicated the cameras can be installed for \$5 per day per all 23 routes, for an additional \$21,000 per year.

The committee agreed that this is important to have, especially for protection of those students with limited communication ability.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by E. Rabbitt to instruct VanPool to install the cameras on the special education buses at additional cost, was withdrawn following discussion.

Mr. Mathieu said the additional expense could be taken from the contingency fund, and replenished as we go through the hiring process and realize savings.

Mr. Mathieu will reach out to Van Pool and let them know the committee is interested in the cameras and whether financial consideration could be given.

Mr. Desto said several of the vans have people serving as monitors, and asked if cameras would be needed on those vans, and the committee agreed that we should.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to instruct the finance and operations director to investigate with VanPool the district's interest in installing cameras on all buses, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu obtained pricing for the First Parent App, which provides bus location information to parents. The app is \$12,420, with \$2,000 for the required routing software, and onetime set up fee of \$15,000, for a total of \$29,420.

Mr. Mathieu said to be able to implement this from the beginning of the school year, he recommended buying the software and paying for training for the year.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by J. Pietrzak to approve the purchase of the First Parent App at a cost of \$29,420 for routing software and training, was defeated by a vote of 2-4. Voting in favor were S. Reed and J. Pietrzak. Voting No were P. Aucoin, C. Kabala, M. Antocci, and J. Terry. Mrs. Rabbitt voted present.

Mrs. Antocci said she is struggling with paying for something that only tells us where the bus is, and that she would rather spend that money on the van cameras. Mrs. Antocci said it is more important to ensure safety on vans than for parent to know minute by minute where the bus is.

Mrs. Antocci said it is more cost effective to buy the routing software to allow for analysis which could potentially save the cost of one bus on the road.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked if this could be included in the regional transportation reimbursement, and Mr. Mathieu said he did not think so.

Mr. Mathieu said without the appropriate training we won't get this project in place by September.

Mr. Desto said the app might not be worth the money, but the routing software may be.

Mrs. Terry asked if the district can opt out after the first year if there are no benefits.

Mr. Desto said the district might consider a pilot program for the location app, instead of for the whole district.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to purchase the routing software only at a cost of \$2,000, was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Consideration to Approve 2018-2021 Strategic Plan *(Vote Required)*

The process began with a two-day retreat in August 2017 during which district administrators identified strengths and weaknesses and constructed a portrait of a Dudley-Charlton Regional School District graduate. The group identified seven key areas of greatest impact: technological literacy, critical thinking and problem solving, empathy, resilience, initiative and self-direction, communications and collaboration, globally aware citizens.

The new plan is effective July 1.

Mr. Desto said he is excited about the direction this sets for our district.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Consideration to Name Shepherd Hill Auditorium *(Vote May be Required)*

Mr. Desto provided a sample draft policy for the committee to consider, saying it could guide discussion and action on future requests.

The committee agreed to establish a procedure rather than a policy, and suggested an addition to the language presented by Mr. Desto.

Once a written request has been received, the superintendent, under the direction of the school committee will research the merits of the request and make a recommendation to the school committee in a timely manner.

Mrs. Rabbitt said if anyone wants to see how we do things, they look at our policy book. She said it is important to have this guidance and criteria. We are leaving something for the people that follow us to see how things were done in the past.

It was agreed to add a procedure section to the policy book.

Mrs. Antocci said the language should include a statement about the rarity and uniqueness of the circumstances leading to the request.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the district should not limit these opportunities to winning teams and organizations.

Mr. Desto agreed to review the language, reach out to person who nominated Mrs. Galli and offer a potential update at the committee's next meeting.

E. Update on Superintendent Hiring Process – Discussion

The position has been posted on School Spring and the MASC website. The application deadline is May 14. Mr. Desto is finalizing details for first the search committee's first meeting on May 17. There are 17 applicants at this point.

F. District Office Open Positions and Structure – Discussion

Mrs. Antocci requested this item to address two current vacancies, and begin the conversation about what we want our district to look like.

Mrs. Antocci said it is time to restructure as the two top positions are nearly vacant. She said we must ask ourselves what do we really need, what works best for the district?

Mrs. Antocci proposed suspending the search for the curriculum director to allow the committee to solicit the help of Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools to compare how other districts are structured. She requested the curriculum director position be reposted as an interim position to allow us to respond to needed changes and to repost the new position during the 2018-2019 school year. Mr. Desto agreed we should look at the structure but said we need to fill the position now. The problem is that with posting this as an interim, the two top positions would be filled with interim candidates during the 2018-2019 school year, and the interim superintendent would be hiring the permanent curriculum director.

Mrs. Rabbitt agreed that a district of our size has a thin central office staff, and that this is an opportunity that does not come along all the time. Mrs. Rabbitt said it is time to evaluate the roles, and possibly identify a line of succession to the superintendency.

Mrs. Kabala said the curriculum director is needed and said we can't wait the year.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by M. Antocci to fill the curriculum director vacancy with an interim, for one year, with the potential of being extended for a second year, was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by M. Antocci to ask the superintendent to contact MARS and MASC to seek advice and suggestions on how to move forward with restructuring the central office staffing, was approved by unanimous vote.

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

Mr. Desto has received additional requests from district employees to enroll their children under the terms of the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association, 2016-2019 and the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, and the Massachusetts Nurses Association, 2017-2020. Mr. Desto recommended approval, noting there is no affect to class sizes.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by E. Rabbitt to approve the requests to enroll employees' children as outlined in their employment contracts as stated above, was approved by unanimous vote.

H. Consideration to Accept Foreign Exchange Students, Policy JF (*Vote Required*)

This item was tabled, as the student in question has backed out of the placement.

The committee agreed that the district needs to investigate opportunities with companies that pay the tuition of foreign exchange students.

I. Consideration to Set Last Day of School (*Vote Required*)

The district has used seven snow days, amending the last day of school as June 21, 2018. Mr. Desto recommended declaring the last day of school as an early release date.

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by S. Reed to declare the last day of school for the 2017-2018 school year as Thursday, June 21, and to set this day as an early release day for students, was approved by unanimous vote.

X. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings:

- Wednesday, May 23, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 13, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee:

- Wednesday, June 13, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 5 p.m.

XI. Approval of Warrants

Subcommittee Warrants		Payroll Warrants		Accounts Payable Warrants	
Warrant #	Amount	Warrant #	Amount	Warrant #	Amount

114	\$5,158.05	1202D	\$97.97	118	\$246,527.38
115	\$267,006.69	1202P	\$652.15		
116	\$44,290.73	1203D	\$428,534.62		
117	\$87,159.80	1203P	\$1,194,595.14		
Total	\$403,615.27	Total	\$1,623,879.88	Total	\$246,527.38

XII. Future Agenda Items – Budget, School Improvement Plans, Superintendent Hiring Process, Procedure for naming facilities, cameras on special education student vans, MASC MARS representatives

The chair entertained a motion to enter executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, and to reconvene in open session for a vote or votes, if necessary, and to adjourn, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:02 p.m.

XIII. Executive Session – *“To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.”*

The committee returned to open session at 10:03 p.m.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, April 25, 2018, as corrected, was approved. Mrs. Terry abstained.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by C. Kabala to offer Director of Finance and Operations Richard Mathieu a new three year contract with a one-year roll over clause, and a salary of \$120,500 for the 2018-2019 school year, was approved by unanimous vote.

XIV. Adjourn

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by S. Reed to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 10:04 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for Wednesday, May 9, 2017	Minutes of Regular meeting of Wednesday, April 25, 2018	Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, April 25, 2018	Superintendent’s Report of Friday, May 4, 2017
Report of the Director of Finance and Operations, Friday, May 4, 2018	Draft policy for naming of district facilities	Shepherd Hill Envirothon Team Congratulations	District Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary