

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the Meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held
Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m.
and via

Live Stream - Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/dcrsd>

<https://vimeo.com/471436725> Video

Conferencing - Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/99234878141>

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Kenneth J. Laferriere, Chair

Pauline J. Aucoin, Vice Chair, attended remotely

Cathleen Carmignani at 7:35, attended remotely

Jordan W. Evans

Catherine M. Kabala, attended remotely

Stephanie A. Reed

Jamie L. Terry

Michaela Cluett, Student Representative

Also in attendance were Steven M. Lamarche, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations, Brian J. Ackerman, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; district administrators Lorinda C. Allen, William F. Chaplin Daniel D’Arcangelo, Jennifer A. Desto, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Christopher E. Starczewski, Michael Resener, Michael Tucker, Peter Olson, Kelly True, representatives, Sandra Sullivan, secretary. There were 26 attendees from Zoom and Vimeo live streaming.

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

In response to the recommendation by the Charlton Board of Health that all meetings of town employees be held remotely rather than in person, this evening’s meeting was moved to Shepherd Hill Regional High School.

The chair entertained a motion to waive policy BE to allow flexibility in scheduling school committee meetings for the remainder of calendar year 2020. This motion was made by J. Evans, second by S. Reed. The motion failed by a roll call vote of 2 in favor, 4 opposed.

C. Carmignani: absent

J. Evans: no

C. Kabalano

S. Reed: yes
J. Terry: no
P. Aucoin: no
K. Laferriere: yes

Mrs. Terry asked to hold on the vote until Mrs. Carmignani is present. Mrs. Terry was in favor of meeting remotely when the meetings are supposed to be held in Charlton per district policy BE.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by J. Terry to waive policy BE to conduct business during this evening's meeting in Dudley was approved by roll call vote:

C. Carmignani: absent
J. Evans: yes
C. Kabala: yes
S. Reed: yes
J. Terry: yes
P. Aucoin: yes
K. Laferriere: yes

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Moment of Silence

Mr. Laferriere asked that the moment of silence be a reminder about showing kindness and respect.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, October 14, 2020

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, October 14, 2020 as corrected, was approved on roll call vote:

C. Carmignani: absent
J. Evans: yes
C. Kabala: yes
S. Reed: yes
J. Terry: yes
P. Aucoin: yes
K. Laferriere: yes

Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, October 14, 2020

A motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, October 14, 2020, was approved on roll call vote:

C. Carmignani: absent
J. Evans: yes
C. Kabala: yes
S. Reed: yes
J. Terry: yes
P. Aucoin: yes

K. Laferriere: yes

V. Approval of Warrant

Accounts Payable Warrants 19, \$60,503.88, 20, \$307,609.24, and 21, \$102,496.74 were approved electronically Payroll warrants 1400 P - \$1,330,556.02 and 1400 D - \$474,642.19 were approved electronically.

Mrs. Carmignani entered meeting via zoom at 7:35 p.m.

VI. Citizens' Forum

Mr. Laferriere read policy BEDH:

Mrs. Terry read a statement prior to hearing from citizens. She said the committee welcomes constructive feedback, and asked those who speak to be kind, do their homework, and be part of the solution, not just offer negative words.

Ashley Karle, Dudley, thanked Mrs. Terry for starting off the meeting with a reminder about kindness. She urged the committee to use a data driven approach, rather than rely on personal feelings and to consider a return to full in person learning. Ms. Karle said she is extremely concerned for those in our community who do not come from a place of care or love. She said the number of children who have been left alone has doubled and they are in danger of being targets of predators.

Ms. Karle said the Corona virus has a 99% survival rate, and children are low risk, not the primary driver. She said inperson instruction is best and extended closures are harmful. She said she knows of day cares that have been open since July with no cases of Corona virus. She asked the committee to please let logic and statistics determine the outcome.

1. See the data that supports kids being kept out of school 2.
See the data to support reason for half day school
3. Facts that drive the decision for hybrid.

Caitlynn Panczyk, Dudley, addressed the petition she started a week ago and which closed last night with 570 signatures in support of more live teaching. She urged the committee to return to full time instruction without further steps. She said the petition's goal is not to make teachers' jobs more painful, as she understands the hard work teachers do. Instead, she said the petition highlights that we are missing something, and that is the lack of live instruction. Ms. Panczyk said Dudley-Charlton is the only district to have one full day of independent-remote learning. She said it is time to move forward toward our #1 goal of 100% in person learning.

VII. Communications

Mrs. Aucoin reported on the successful nomination of former school committee member Mary Antocci for the Lifetime Achievement Award given by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. The award is given annually at the Joint Conference of the MASC and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents usually held in Hyannis in November. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, that meeting will be held virtually this year. The MASC will reportedly present the award to Mrs. Antocci in person. The committee asked the Mr. Laferriere to write a letter of congratulations.

Mrs. Terry reported receiving feedback from staff and parents regarding the current learning module.

Mr. Laferriere reported he was successfully nominated by Mrs. Terry for membership on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools. Mr. Laferriere will report at future meetings regarding the meetings he will attend.

VIII. Student Representative Report – Ms. Michaela M. Cluett

Miss Cluett reported students have been working hard in their classes, and they enjoy the in-person classes.

The Shepherd Hill Show Choir and Band have begun practices and look forward to performing in whatever virtual venues are made available to them.

The Shepherd Hill Student Council is meeting virtually to prepare for the upcoming holidays, and is gearing up for class officer elections.

The fall athletic season is more than half way complete, with teams holding senior recognition nights.

The Senior Class is holding a virtual fundraiser through Boom Supply.

The Shepherd Hill National Honor Society is planning a Haunting on the Hill drive-through Halloween event. The cost is \$2 per car. The NHS is also accepting donations for its Thanksgiving Food Drive.

IX. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Lamarche reported on the positive case of Covid-19 in the district by a bus driver of a Charlton route. Mr. Lamarche reviewed the protocol that was followed for this event.

Regarding the current hybrid learning plan, Mr. Lamarche said we are in a divisive, 50-50 world, and we are not alone. We all want to be back to full-time, in-person learning, and until that time there is no perfect learning model. Every district has its detractors. Mr. Lamarche said administrators are working closely with neighboring districts to understand the practices.

Mr. Lamarche said the path to full day hybrid can only be accomplished if needs are met. He said we want to replicate a district that is doing this well, but have not found one, or one which believes they are doing it well.

The Dudley and Charlton Boards of Health are sponsoring a Flu Clinic on Saturday, November 7, 2020 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School from 9 a.m. to noon. All participants must remain in their car and wear masks. A flu vaccine is required of all children attending school in the state.

Mr. Lamarche and Mr. Mathieu have completed a preliminary screening with the Massachusetts School Building Authority in response to the district's Statement of Interest. The MSBA does not have a budget at this time, but the district's SOI is still in play.

Elementary Library Coordinator Rachel Lemansky is now serving as an online technology resource for families.

The state is allowing communities to decide the use of snow days or weather-related closures. Mr. Lamarche said the district will call for a remote learning day unless there is a state of emergency or power outage.

Life Touch – the district is not generating the recent emails that families may have received. School photos will be taken at Shepherd Hill in November, and all other schools are delayed until January.

Mr. Lamarche received word that the instructional assistants are ready to come to the bargaining table represented by the Massachusetts Teachers Association. He requested the chair appoint school committee representatives to the negotiation subcommittee. Mr. Laferriere will serve with Mrs. Aucoin and Mrs. Kabala.

As reported earlier, Mary Antocci has been selected for the Lifetime Achievement Award by the MASC. Former member Elaine Rabbitt has been nominated for Life Membership by the MASC. The voting will be held during the virtual meeting on November 7.

X. New Business

- A. Report of the Director of Finance and Operations – Richard Mathieu
 - a. Donations

Mr. Mathieu presented recent donations for the committee’s acceptance, and recommended approval:

To the District from an anonymous donor to fund additional Chromebooks	\$1,000
From the Shepherd Hill Booster Club for baseball field renovations	\$8,725

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to accept the donations as presented, was approved on roll call vote:

- C. Carmignani: absent
- J. Evans: yes
- C. Kabala: yes
- S. Reed: yes
- J. Terry: yes
- P. Aucoin: yes
- K. Laferriere: yes

b. Snow Plow Bids – Charlton

Mr. Mathieu said bids were opened in the district office earlier today. The district sought bids last year for all three schools in Charlton, but the vendor could not meet his obligations for the final two years. The district received two bids: RSI Construction, Charlton, and Steven and Gregory Realty Inc. of Oxford, which was the low bid by \$4,000 in the amount of \$142,050. Mr. Mathieu said the bids were 15-20% higher than last year’s bids.

Mr. Mathieu recommended awarding the bid to Steven and Gregory Realty. References have been checked.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by S. Reed to award the FY 21 and FY 22 Charlton Schools Snow Plow Bid to Steven and Gregory Realty of Oxford, was approved by unanimous roll call vote:

- C. Carmignani: yes
- J. Evans: yes
- C. Kabala: yes
- S. Reed: yes
- J. Terry: yes
- P. Aucoin: yes
- K. Laferriere: yes

Mr. Mathieu has filed for reimbursement through the Federal Emergency Management Association for the cost of personal protection equipment.

c. Update HVAC systems and planning

Mr. Mathieu reported that on the HVAC system is complete at Dudley Elementary School, while repairs are underway at Dudley Middle School and have begun at Charlton Middle School. The delivery of the MERV-13 filters has been delayed by a week. The schedule for testing and balancing is not affected by this delay. Aerodyne will begin its work next week at Charlton Elementary School, Mason Road School, and Dudley Elementary School.

Consulting Engineering Services retested areas such as the Shepherd Hill cafeteria, Charlton Middle School media room, and the Dudley Elementary School and Heritage School gyms.

Mrs. Terry thanked the school custodians as they work hard to get the units working, and noted the HEPA units being installed at Heritage School are noisy. Mr. Mathieu said the engineers are looking at an alternative.

Paul Pytko, Operations Manager for Stevens and Gregory Realty, thanked members for the snow plow bid award.

B. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting – 10.27.2020

FY 20 Closeout

As FY 20 is closed out, Mr. Mathieu said the goal is to return a healthy excess and deficiency amount to the budget. There is a sufficient balance in the Circuit Breaker. As we know the status of preschool attendance and tuition, that revolving fund is included to make sure we have enough. Mr. Mathieu said \$60,000 was budgeted as an offset.

FY 21 Budget Update: Mr. Mathieu provided an updated revenue budget. There is a decrease in revenue expected from the governor's budget. These state figures are needed before the committee can vote a final budget.

Capital planning: Mr. Mathieu said the district has needed a sustainable capital program for a number of years, and recommends a multi-phase program to address the needs. In this first phase, Mr. Mathieu said the suggested priorities are technology, safety, athletics, building infrastructure and equipment, maintenance of grounds and an appropriation for a MSBA-level feasibility study.

The Capital and Safety Subcommittee will prioritize first and then the Budget and Finance Subcommittee we find the funding.

Mr. Mathieu presented the Budget and Finance Subcommittee's meeting schedule.

District Agreement – The agreement, signed in 1970, has not been reviewed in many years. School Committee members are asked to review the document and offer any suggestions or concerns to Mr. Mathieu for discussion at the Budget and Finance Subcommittee's November 17 meeting.

Medicaid – Mr. Mathieu said the district is reimbursed under Medicaid for services delivered to students. The program has changed as the pool of students has expanded while monies did not increase as dramatically. The district will receive less reimbursement for services than in the past as there has no school from March to September. The district must complete a lengthy report. Training was held for those individuals responsible for this date.

The committee thanked all administrators, especially Mr. Mathieu for his work on the budget.

C. Update Opening School Year 20/21

a. Teaching and Learning – Dr. Brian Ackerman

Dr. Ackerman reported the district has been awarded a valuable Early Literacy Grant to be used for reading instruction for K-3 educators.

Staff benefited from a third webinar with Dr. Sheldon Eakins regarding creating an equity rich, bias free educational environment.

Dr Ackerman thanked every teacher in the district for their collective efforts on behalf of our students both in the classroom and online. He said teachers are providing succinct but powerful learning opportunities for students, and are thoughtful and deliberate approach to the hybrid model.

Dr. Ackerman has created a survey to compare instruction last school year and this year. He is seeking real time valuable feedback.

D. Update on District Equity Committee – Dr. Brian Ackerman

The Equity Committee is collaborating with the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee by welcoming Dr. Sheldon Eakins for a third webinar with staff. These opportunities allow staff to reflect on equity-based practices and self-monitor their progress. The next step is to add a student voice by bringing Shepherd Hill Regional High School students into the fold.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, November 18, 7 p.m. remote

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, December 9, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 4:00 p.m. remote

Policy Review Subcommittee: Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 9:00 a.m. remote

Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning: November 2020 - TBD

Capital and School Safety Subcommittee: Friday, November 13, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

A district-wide email will be sent to remind the community about the availability for lunches and pick up times and locations.

Dr. Ackerman will meet with Mrs. Karle and Mrs. Panczyk on Friday to hear their concerns.

XII. Future Agenda Items: Update HVAC, Update Fiscal Year 2021, Update Equity Committee, Update Plan Transitions, Update Student Services Department

XIII. Executive Session: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association**] if in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

The chair entertained a motion to enter exec session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association**] if in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and to reconvene in open session for a vote if necessary and to adjourn, This motion was made by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala, and approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:04 p.m. C.

Carmignani: yes

J. Evans: yes

C. Kabala: yes

S. Reed: yes

J. Terry: yes
P. Aucoin: yes
K. Laferriere: yes

The committee returned to open session at 10:48 p.m.

XIV. Adjourn

A motion by S. Reed, second by C. Kabala to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 10:48 p.m.

J. Evans: yes
C. Kabala: yes
S. Reed: yes
J. Terry: yes
P. Aucoin: yes
K. Laferriere: yes

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for Wednesday, October 28, 2020	Superintendent's Report, October 28,2020	Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Wednesday, October 28, 2020
Minutes of the Executive Session of Wednesday, October 28,2020	Report of the Director of Finance and Operations	Equity Committee Update, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Teaching and Learning Update, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning	Regional Agreement, towns of Dudley and Charlton	Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting schedule 2020-2021

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, secretary