

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at 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
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: Chris Starczewski, Lorinda Allen, Lori Pacheco, Kathleen Pastore, Robin Parmley, Diane Seibold, Jeffrey Ferranti, William Chaplin; Kevin Foley, President, Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association; Robin Craver, Charlton Town Administrator; Stefan Sage; Media Representatives Rich Earle, audio-visual coordinator, Deb LaPlaca, Telegram, 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

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, November 8, 2017

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by C. Kabala, to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, November 8, 2017, as amended, was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, November 8, 2017

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci, to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, November 8, 2017, was approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of Warrant

The following warrants were signed by a majority of members without further questions or comments.

Warrant #	Amount
59	\$349,109.07

60	\$635,999.13
61	\$55,000.49
62	\$1,081.74
63	\$5,162.78
1176D	\$463,827.77
1176P	\$1,174,923.11
Total	\$2,685,104.09

V. Student Spotlight – Shepherd Hill Chorus

The chorus performed two selections from its recent Holiday Spectacular. Director Becky Bussiere noted the chorus will perform at Mechanics Hall, Worcester this weekend. Mr. Desto thanked the members for their excellent representation of the district wherever they go.

VI. Citizens’ Forum

Charlton resident Sam Bitar introduced himself as recently having moved to Charlton from Oxford where he served a three-year term on the Oxford School Committee. He said he is interested in spearheading an effort to get the Special Education Parents’ Advisory Committee (SEPAC) up and running.

The committee recessed for photographs at 7:12 p.m.

The committee returned to session at 7:15 p.m.

VII. Student Representative Report – Rebecca Moore

Ms. Moore reported on the following:

- Shepherd Hill Senior Eryk Pecyna has been accepted to Harvard’s class of 2022. Ms. Moore said this shows how Shepherd Hill prepares its students.
- Ramsquad has concluded its football season support and is getting ready for the basketball season.
- The Shepherd Hill Drama Club will present “Things I Want to Say But Never Will” Friday and Saturday night.
- Shepherd Hill chorales will perform at Mechanics Hall Saturday. The Show Choir’s Annual Holiday Spectacular was a success.

VIII. Communications

Mr. Desto had no communications.

1. Mrs. Kabala shared the results of recent Telegram *Best of Central Mass.* voting. Dudley Elementary was ranked #2 among elementary schools in Central Mass., as was Shepherd Hill among high schools.
2. Mr. Pietrzak thanked Mr. Packard and Mrs. Dragon from Charlton Middle School for the grade 5 and 6 social to support the Adam Dowell Scholarship fund. Mr. Dowell graduated from Shepherd Hill in 2006. Funds earned in his memory have resulted in over \$22,000 in scholarships over the years.
3. Mrs. Aucoin received a communication from Mrs. Jennifer Cederberg complimenting Mr. Desto.
4. Mrs. Rabbitt agreed with Mrs. Cederberg complimented Mr. Desto's leadership during several crises over the last several months.

IX. Superintendent's Report

1. Massachusetts School Building Association has notified the district that its Statement of Interest for Shepherd Hill has not been accepted for further consideration for funding. Shepherd Hill was rated a 2 of 4 in the MSBA survey in terms of need. Only schools rated as 4s were accepted for further consideration. The MSBA is plagued by increasing demand but decreasing funds.

Mr. Desto said the district will regroup and submit for consideration of other MSBA programs, such as the CORE program, which carries a February deadline.

2. Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association has elected Dudley Police Chief Steven Wojnar as its president. Chief Wojnar will be sworn in during a ceremony tomorrow in Southbridge. Mr. Desto is the keynote speaker.

Mr. Desto said Chief Wojnar has made generations of students comfortable around the police.

3. Mr. Desto reported on the Worcester Telegram's Best of Central Massachusetts poll ranking Shepherd Hill and Dudley Elementary School as #2 among area schools.

4. The 2018-2019 School Calendar Study Group will meet Wednesday, December 20, 2017 at Charlton Middle School, at 10 a.m. at Charlton Middle School.

5. Of Eryk Pecyna's acceptance to Harvard, Mr. Desto noted he is also awaiting word from MIT, but believes Eryk will be attending Harvard as a computer science major. Mr. Desto noted Harvard received applications from around 35,000 of the most successful and talented students across the globe and they accept 2,000.

6. Shepherd Hill Senior Greg Gunsalus is in the Netherlands as a member of the U.S. Cyclocross Team. The sport is a form of bicycle racing that includes varying terrain and obstacles. Greg is one of the best in the world in this sport and one of the youngest on the U.S. team, which will compete over the

next three weeks. Greg's younger sister Lizzie, a ninth grader at Shepherd Hill, is one of the most promising women's cyclocross racers in the country as well and is expected to make the national team very soon.

7. Friday, December 15 is the School Committee holiday gathering, as well as the Girls Basketball game against Holy Name. Proceeds from t-shirts and donations will benefit the John Paire Student Support Fund. The Shepherd Hill Drama Club's presentation of "What I Want to Say, but Never Will" will be preceded by a pasta dinner on Saturday, with a raffle proceeds benefitting the Drama Club and the GST Alliance.

X. New Business

A. MASC/MASS Joint Conference Presentation/Strategic Planning Update – Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Rabbitt, Mr. Desto

Mrs. Antocci, Mr. Desto and Mrs. Rabbitt attended the Joint Conference in November. Mr. Desto said this is the first year that the theme of the conference lined up with the direction of the district's Strategic Plan: Mapping the Path for Student Success: College, Career, Life.

Mr. Desto said our society is in the fourth industrial revolution but education remains in the second. Schools must better prepare students for this new order in which the ability to locate and effectively use resources, as well as to work well with others.

Mr. Desto said aligning the district with this shift in focus will not happen quickly, but we need to find a middle ground.

Mrs. Antocci presented on Project Based Learning, which is a shift from the traditional instruction. She attended many sessions on this topic as it focused on reaching all students. Mrs. Antocci cited a school in Wakefield that is partnered with a school in Russia to work on a common project. She described the process of moving toward the new as "like building the plane while flying it." Mrs. Antocci said supports need to be in place for students and teachers, as well as measures of success.

Mrs. Rabbitt spoke on social-emotional learning as a core component of effective education. The concept of self-care is encouraged for staff and students, as is creativity and experimentation. Mrs. Rabbitt said we are not changing the fact that we have to study English, math and social studies, just how we have been delivering instruction. Using these new teaching methods can instill confidence as it fosters collaboration vs competition. Mrs. Rabbitt said anxiety is #1 mental health issue and presents a question for educators on how to have high expectations while reducing stress.

Mr. Desto said the Strategic Plan guides the district's action; it is crucial that the planning committee provide wide ranging voices, not just those of the school committee and teachers, but from members of the community.

B. Consideration to Hire Academic Intervention Specialist (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto requested the committee's approval to add the position of Academic Intervention Specialist at Dudley Elementary School on a temporary basis for the remainder of the 2017-2018

school year, but the teacher can be assigned to other elementary schools on an as needed basis. The specialist will fill in and support classrooms teachers as needs arise. With the committee's approval, Mr. Desto would reassign a grade 2 teacher to this position while reassigning another district teacher to that grade 2 classroom. This has become necessary due to the current grade 2 teacher's on-going health problems and the need to have a consistent teacher in the regular classroom. All other options have been explored, and Mr. Desto said this is in the best interest of the students. Mr. Desto included a job description to show the specialist position will add significant support to the children at DES.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to hire an Academic Intervention Specialist at Dudley Elementary School until the end of the 2017-2018 school year, was approved by a vote of 6-0, with Mrs. Rabbitt voting present.

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

1. Mr. Mathieu requested the committee approve the following donations:

- \$2,820 in donations to the John Paire Student Support Fund, bringing the total to \$21,909.89.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to accept the donations to the John Paire Student Support Fund, was approved by unanimous vote.

- Adam Camosse has donated \$500 to Charlton Middle School for basketball warm-up shirts.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to accept the \$500 donation to Charlton Middle School for basketball warm-up shirts, was approved by unanimous vote

2. Shepherd Hill generator replacement

Mr. Mathieu has received a quote of \$40,000 to repair the current generator and asked the committee's thoughts on spending this amount on a 45-year-old piece of equipment. The lowest bid for a new generator was \$160,000. He said in view of the level of expense for a new one and the uncertainty with plans for renovation to Shepherd Hill we may need to focus on repairs as a bridge.

The generator can be repaired in seven days.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to authorize the finance director to repair the Shepherd Hill generator at a cost of \$40,000, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to reject the bids for a new Shepherd Hill generator.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to reject the bids received to replace the Shepherd Hill generator, was approved by unanimous vote.

3. FY 19 Fuel Oil Bid

The French River Education Center has completed the bid process for oil for FY 19. The low bid was from the Santa Energy Corporation at \$2.0611 per gallon, which is an increase from the current \$1.839. The FY 19 budget will reflect this increase.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to award the bid for the FY 19 fuel oil to Santa Energy Corp., at \$2.0611 per gallon, was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report (*Vote may be required*)

Mrs. Reed reported on the meeting of December 5, during which members discussed the options for the Shepherd Hill generator and forming a warrant subcommittee to sign warrants in the district office during the weeks in between meetings.

The chair appointed a subcommittee of members who go to the district office to sign warrants during weeks between meetings. Mrs. Kabala, Mrs. Aucoin, and Mrs. Reed serve on that subcommittee.

Mrs. Rabbitt said she learned at a recent training session that the warrants must be signed at an open meeting.

Mr. Mathieu agreed to research this further.

Mrs. Reed reported the subcommittee also discussed the proposed override and a possible dollar figure to bring forth to the towns.

The subcommittee also agreed that a portion of the district's E and D funds could be used to buy a new district school bus once the monies are certified by the state by the end of January.

Mr. Desto said the biggest meeting topic was the override. He and Mr. Mathieu produced a document entitled, Operations Override Overview.

The committee must answer several questions to structure the override:

How many years do we want to sustain the funding?

What do we want to include?

How do we structure the actual question?

- a. Look at all three years in one question?
- b. Present a smaller number?

What is the timeline? Mr. Desto would like to focus on this question.

After looking at the requirements and deadlines for a March special election, the committee agreed to push the special election to April. This will allow the district to wait for the governor's budget and any aid coming to the district.

The ballot question must be submitted to the selectmen in each town 35 days before the election.

The committee reviewed the FY 19 budget figures as provided in the overview memo.

Mrs. Rabbitt the number we need is huge, and while it is not palatable for the towns, it is what we need in order to prevent the district from going back to the towns year after year.

Mrs. Kabala said the figure as discussed with town officials in October was almost \$5 million. Mrs. Kabala said she cannot justify the resulting 25% increase in the Dudley tax rate.

Mrs. Reed said \$2.8 million is as low as we can go, but the district will be back for a second and third year request.

Mrs. Rabbit said the district has gone without for so long. The need is great, and while she respects those for whom a tax increase would be a challenge, we need to let people know what the need is and let them let us know how to proceed.

Mr. Desto asked Mrs. Craver if she has a sense of what the Charlton Selectmen would support. Mrs. Craver said she recalled that the conversation seemed favorable (by finance committee) for a one-time multi override, based over three years to the district where it wants to be.

Mr. Pietrzak said there is a benefit in coming back again in smaller increments as it gives us time to further educate why we are coming back for more money the next year. Mr. Pietrzak said we have to make the ballot question palatable for the hesitant voter who wants to help.

The committee agreed to review draft ballot language. Mrs. Kabala said it needs to be simple.

Charlton resident Stefan Sage said the multi-year approach gives a dishonest picture of the district's real need and asked that the ballot question be upfront about what is needed for the three years.

Mrs. Kabala took exception to his remark as she did not want voters to suffer the financial impact.

E. Consideration to Adopt District Policy GDBD, second reading (*Vote Required*)

With the committee's second reading this evening, this policy governing health insurance benefits for the families of deceased employees will be added to the district's website.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to waive the reading of the policy aloud, was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to adopt the policy on this second reading into the record, was approved by unanimous vote.

The policy will be uploaded to the district website.

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

Mr. Desto presented two requests by district families for home instruction, and recommended the committee's approval.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the home school requests of the two families as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

G. Consideration of Request for Non-resident Enrollment, *(Vote Required)*

Mr. Desto presented the request of the Grigware family of Webster, currently building a home on Noble Street, Dudley with an anticipated move in date of December 10, 2017. The family requests their children in grades 6 and 4 be allowed to enroll prior to that date. In the best interest of the students, Mr. Desto did grant preliminary approval contingent upon the committee's vote.

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the request by the Grigware family for temporary non-resident enrollment, contingent upon the family's provision of transportation to and from school, was approved by unanimous vote.

H. Consideration of Request for Overnight Travel, Policy IJOA *(Vote Required)*

The Shepherd Hill Student Council requested the committee's approval of its annual trip to the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils in Hyannis. This is always a valuable trip that many students count as one of the highlights of their time at Shepherd Hill. The interaction with other student council members from schools across the state has proven to be a tremendous motivator for our students, and Mr. Desto recommended approval.

- *Date of Trip:* March 7-9, 2018
- *Number of students:* 16
- *Number of school days missed:* 2 ½
- *Cost to students:* \$150.00 (estimated) Costs defrayed through student council funds and sharing a bus with two other schools
- *Chaperones:* 2 – Student Council Advisors Cyndi Piehl and Daniel Duffy

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by S. Reed to approve the trip by the Shepherd Hill Student Council to Hyannis March 7-9, 2018, as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

A. School Committee

Wednesday, January 10, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, January 24, 2018, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.

B. Budget and Finance Subcommittee

TBA – Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 9 a.m.

C. Wage and Benefits Subcommittee – Nurse Negotiations – TBA

XII. Future Agenda Items – FY 2019 Budget, Strategic Plan, 2018-2019 School Calendar

XIII. Executive Session – “to discuss strategy with respect to litigation or collective bargaining if an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.”

The chair entertained a motion to enter executive session to discuss litigation or collective bargaining as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:28 p.m.

- M. Antocci – Yes
- P. Aucoin – Yes
- R. Chalk – Yes
- C. Kabala – Yes
- J. Pietrzak – Yes
- E. Rabbitt – Yes
- S. Reed – Yes

The committee returned to open session at 9:56 p.m.

XIV. Adjourn

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 9:56 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for Dec. 13, 2017	Superintendent’s Report of Dec. 8, 2017	Minutes of Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2017
Finance Director’s Report of Friday, Dec. 8, 2017	Proposed Policy GDBD	Operational Override Overview
Letters to Senators		

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary