

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 6:30 p.m., Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, MA 01507

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Mary N. Antocci
Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Raymond J. Chalk, Vice Chair, arrived at 6:58 p.m.
Catherine M. Kabala
Joseph M. Pietrzak
Elaine M. Rabbitt was not in attendance
Stephanie A. Reed arrived at 6:58 p.m.

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, Jeffrey L. Ferranti, Lori A. Pacheco, Robin L. Parmley, Kathleen E. Pastore, Diane D. Seibold, Chris Starczewski; district staff: David Deremian; Charlton residents Stefan Sage, Kenneth Laferriere; Charlton Elementary School parents and students ; media representatives Rich Earl, audio-visual coordinator, Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting began at 6:30 with a report of the district's FY 2017 audit results from Richard Sullivan of *Powers and Sullivan*.

Mr. Sullivan offered an overview of the audit process and shared some results of the financial audit. Mr. Sullivan thanked Mr. Mathieu and the staff for their cooperation and preparedness throughout the auditing process. He said the fact that the staff responded to requests with a sense of urgency, answered questions in a timely manner and accurately, shows there is a system in place.

Mr. Sullivan said there was \$9.9 million remaining in the budget at the end of June. The district devoted a responsible amount to Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) and pension liability.

The general fund fared slightly better with \$200,000 in additional revenue, \$1.3 in excess and deficiency, which did not have to be used.

Mr. Sullivan said a new standard has been issued relative to accounting and reporting requirements for OPEB. This new standard will phase in during fiscal year 2018, and will substantially impact the district's financial statements and affect the requirements for accumulating the necessary data for the reporting requirements.

The District spent \$1.8 million In grants in 2017. There were no findings in this area, with three clean opinions.

In its Management Letter, the firm of Powers and Sullivan found no internal control issues. One comment regarding the health trust fund has been resolved, and the accounting policies and procedures manual has been drafted.

Mr. Sullivan recommended the district perform a fraud risk assessment to identify, analyze and manage risk of asset misappropriation.

Mr. Desto thanked Mr. Sullivan’s staff for the professionalism shown as they worked in the district office for several weeks.

Mr. Sullivan left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, January 10, 2018*

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by C. Kabala, to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, January 10, 2018, as corrected, was approved. Mr. Pietrzak abstained.

IV. Approval of Warrant

The following warrants were signed by the Warrant Subcommittee, and brought to the meeting for further review and signatures. There were no comments or questions.

Warrant #	Amount
74	\$30,541.46
75	\$38,282.59
76	\$363,588.98
77	\$129.90
78	0.00
79	\$257,724.28
80	\$627,423.27
1186D	\$459,568.24
1186P	\$1,145,378.69
Total	\$2,922,637.41

V. Citizens’ Forum

VI. School Spotlight – Charlton Elementary School

Mrs. Pacheco introduced several students who offered their insight regarding School Spirit Days, and made suggestions for future themes. The children invited the committee to join them on Friday, January 26 for PJ and Teddy Bear Day.

VII. Communications

Mr. Pietrzak commended Charlton Middle School and Dudley Middle School for livestreaming their basketball games on Twitter.

Mrs. Antocci commended the district's Show Choirs who not only performed well enough to medal in the recent competition in Lowell, but also represented the district with outstanding conduct.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

1. Mr. Desto reported on the memo from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding its upcoming Targeted Review of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. While participation is mandated by law, implementation of any resulting DESE feedback is not. DESE has chosen to evaluate the district in three areas: leadership and governance, human resources and professional development, financial and asset management. Representatives will be in the district Feb. 12-14 for interviews with administrators and principals. School Committee members are invited to meet with the team at three different times.
2. Mr. Desto has been nominated for a seat on the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) Board of Directors. The commitment is two hours per month for meetings.
3. Mr. Desto will meet with Senator Ryan Fattman on Tuesday, February 6. Among other topics, Mr. Desto will discuss the senator's offer to assist with capital projects.
4. Mr. Desto commended the students who were recently named Country Bank Students of the Month:
 - Jordan Russell, grade 4, Heritage School, completed independent research on what turkeys eat. She also built a robot from recycled material.
 - Trevor Wallace, grade 5, Charlton Middle School, strives to do his best. He recently completed items via 3D printing. He strives to complete projects that rise above the rest.
5. Mr. Desto congratulated Mrs. Pastore as she is nominated for the Thomas C. Passios Elementary Principal of the Year award. The selection will be made in May, and, the winner will represent Massachusetts at the national convention in Washington, D.C.

IX. Student Representative Report – Rebecca Moore

This item was tabled.

X. New Business

A. FY 2019 Budget Presentation, Part 1 – Mr. Desto (*Vote May be Required*)

Mr. Desto presented the first look at the FY 2019 budget, laying out the priorities over the next three fiscal years that will directly affect our students.

Mr. Desto reviewed the last three years to show that the priorities have been consistent: reduce class sizes in grades 1-3, and expand to include K and 4; improve social-emotional support.

Regarding class sizes, data shows respectable numbers, but there is still work to do. Social Emotional Support has been increased with the hiring of two adjustment counselors at Shepherd Hill. This was not new staff, but reallocated.

Other areas of focus include mental health first aid, and signs of suicide training.

Mr. Desto said the district continues to make strides in the areas of STEAM.

The Global Awareness Program continues to offer foreign travel opportunities, and the district hopes to increase the number of students who can experience foreign language.

The 2019-20 school year will see shifts in educational priorities through STEAM activities and project based learning, engagement and preparation for college and careers.

The district has been successful in obtaining Project Lead the Way Grants at the high school, resulting in two classes of bio-medical science. Biological systems will be added.

Middle school students will be able to take design and modeling, auto and robotics, app makers, computer science for innovators and makers.

To comply with the Massachusetts Digital frameworks, the district will add technology integration specialists for teachers and students.

The 2020-21 school year will see upgrades to the STEAM infrastructure. Mr. Desto and Mr. Chaplin are working on a statement of interest to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for consideration of Accelerated Repair funds to fix the Shepherd Hill roof. Technology wiring throughout the district is a much needed project that is eligible for E-rate reimbursement of from \$300,000 to \$400,000.

The district also hopes to add two foreign language teachers at the middle schools, and find an international partner in our schools.

Mr. Desto said the district will need a director of college and careers.

The elephants in the room include;

Funding

Mindset shift

Unity. This is so important, to do something so different we have to be together publicly.

The school committee's budget dates:

Feb. 7 special budget meeting

Feb. 14 initial budget presentation

Feb. 27 deadline for selectmen to approve an override election

March 14 public hearing on final budget

April 3 tentative date for the special election

May 21 Annual Town Meetings.

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

1. Mr. Mathieu presented the donation to Shepherd Hill in the amount of \$750 from the Auburn/Webster Lodge of Elks for the Global Studies trip to Dudley, London, Paris and the D-Day beaches in Normandy. This will pay for an additional excursion.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by S. Reed to accept the donation from the Auburn/Webster Elks, was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Mr. Mathieu presented a list from the IT Department of items, asking the school committee to declare them as obsolete and non-working equipment. The items include desktop computers, printers, laptops, monitors, projectors, Chromebooks and battery backups. Mr. Mathieu said workable items are used and donated where applicable.

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by R. Chalk to declare the technology equipment as listed as obsolete and non-working, was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Mr. Mathieu presented the Quarterly Report of the General Fund. He said there has been a change in the regulations to allow for foster students to be transported back to his/her district of origin. With that, the district's expenses have increased dramatically, creating a deficit. Additionally, special education transportation expenses have increased due to out of district students, and the need for monitors on vehicles. There is no such fixed reimbursement for foster students yet as there is for homeless students.

Mr. Mathieu said these overages are worrisome, but not problematic in view of pending building system expenses and the ability to return funds to the general ledger at the end of the year.

Mr. Mathieu said he will keep the committee updated on these areas of concern.

4. Excess and Deficiency has been certified by the Department of Revenue at \$1.8 million. As reported at the last meeting, the increase is primarily due to the elimination of the health insurance trust fund deficit.

At the first meeting in February, Mr. Mathieu will recommend the school committee appropriate funds to buy a new school bus for the district.

5. At the last meeting, the committee discussed the possibility of a joint bid for transportation services. The next day one town dropped out and by the weekend, another town did as well. At that point, Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Desto agreed it is best that district prepare its own bid. This has been published and will be opened February 7.

6. Mr. Mathieu reported some numbers from the governor's budget have been released, and show a \$20 per student increase to Ch. 70 funding. In addition, the transportation cherry sheets have increased by \$20,000 for the district.

In other news, the estimated charges for sending school choice and charter school students out of the district increased by \$150,000.

As suggested in Mark Abrahms' financial report last spring, the minimum local contribution for Charlton has increased by \$182,000, and Dudley's by \$387,000.

C. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee (Vote May be Required)

Mrs. Reed said Mr. Desto covered much of the meeting's topics under the budget presentation.

The subcommittee decided to recommend the full committee seek a one-question override, rather than a menu option.

Mrs. Reed said the subcommittee agreed the district would need to seek an override of \$5 million to accomplish all of its goals, but knows the towns cannot support that. Mrs. Reed said the subcommittee recommends waiting until the governor's budget has been released before discussing an override figure. The subcommittee agrees that focusing on technology is the way to accomplish a big portion of the committee's goals.

The subcommittee discussed whether to adopt a policy or procedure to govern warrant signings, as well as to schedule a training with the district treasurer. This was put before the full board for discussion.

The committee agreed to establish a procedure rather than a policy, and agreed to hold a warrant training session with District Treasurer Melinda Ernst Fournier on a Friday when she works in the district.

Mr. Desto will obtain samples by the next full committee meeting on February 7.

D. Consideration to Authorize Superintendent to Submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Desto will write update the statement of interest for submission to the MSBA for consideration of its Accelerated Repair Program. The proposed project is to repair the Shepherd Hill roof.

Mrs. Aucoin read the motion into the record, and this was so moved by R. Chalk, seconded by S. Reed and approved by unanimous vote:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on Wednesday, January 24, 2018, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee of Dudley and Charlton, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated February 14, 2018 for Shepherd Hill Regional High School, located at 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: **“Priority 5. Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility.”** The Shepherd Hill Regional High School roof is 25 years old and leaks are becoming more common. Additionally, it is not optimum for alternate energy sources such as solar panels. Available renewable energy grants require roofs to be less than 10 years old; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the

Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

E. Consideration to Approve *Agreement Between Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and Massachusetts Nurses Association (Vote Required)*

At the last executive session, the committee came to an agreement, which has been ratified by the district nurses. The Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee can approve it at this point.

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the Agreement between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Massachusetts Nurses Association as presented this evening, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Kabala said the subcommittee, Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Desto spent a considerable amount of time on this negotiation. She thanked the nurses for their time.

Mr. Desto thanked the committee members for the time spent in executive sessions, and recognized that this represented much time away from home and family.

Mr. Desto said Mrs. Aucoin and Mrs. Kabala spent at least 50 hours as a service to the community in negotiating this contract. He said this is a good product.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings:

- Wednesday, February 7, 2018 (Special Meeting on Budget), Shepherd Hill, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 14, 2018, Shepherd Hill, 7 p.m. Initial budget
- Wednesday, February 28, 2018, Charlton Middle School, 7 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee:

- Tuesday, January 30, 2018, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 9 a.m.

XII. Future Agenda Items – FY 2019 Budget Presentations, warrant procedure

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by R. Chalk to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 7:54 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for January 25,4, 2018	Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, January 22, 2018	Superintendent's Report of Friday, January 19,2018
Finance Director's Report of January 24, 2018	Quarterly Report, General Fund, FY 2018	Targeted Review

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary