

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

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Rd. Dudley, MA, at 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 was not in attendance  
Elaine M. Rabbitt  
Stephanie A. Reed  
Jack Bagan, 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, Terri A. Caffelle, Dan D’Arcangelo, Doris Dono, Jody A. O’Brien, Dean W. Packard, John D. Paire, Mary A. Pierangeli; District Staff: Kevin Foley, Diane Seibold, Brooke Beverly, David Deremian; Charlton Residents Joseph Spiewak, Karen Spiewak; Mason Road School students Olivia Kac, Brady Farmer, Ryleigh Asquith, Ava Serrano, Ariana Jurski, Victor Sobinski, Alyssa Grammer, Jack Connole, Alexis Moore, Elaina Nelson, Jeremy Cronauer, Jayden Miglionico, their parents; media representatives: Debra LaPlaca, Telegram, Rich Early, audio-visual coordinator, 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**

A. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, January 27, 2016*

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by S. Reed to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, January 27, 2016, 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:

<b>Warrant #</b>	<b>Amount</b>
37	\$680,777.74
1036D	\$441,146.23
1036P	\$1,119,389.83

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,241,313.80</b>
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**V. School Spotlight – Mason Road School**

Michelle Gray, Mason Road School Reading Specialist, introduced the 11 boys and girls who participated in the Book Club and the Literacy Lunch Bunch at Mason Road School. The students read their book reviews and recommendations.

The committee thanked the students for their presentation.

**VI. Citizens' Forum**

Joseph and Karen Spiewak of Charlton approached the board to speak about the water issue in that town.

Mr. Spiewak is a member of the Charlton Water and Sewer Commission, but said he attended the meeting in a non-official capacity seeking the committee's support as the town negotiates with Exxon Mobil. Successful negotiations would bring public water to Charlton Middle School and Heritage School, where past water testing has revealed small amounts of MBTE due to a tank rupture at the former LaMountain's Gas Station on Route 20. Mr. Spiewak said it is vitally important that the power of the pen and the public be used to keep the pressure on Exxon Mobil as the town is close to the finish line. He said any support is important. Charlton Town Administrator Robin Craver is leading the charge in negotiations.

Currently, there are several locations where gasoline has spilled into the ground, among them Route 20 and Old Worcester Road. Mr. Spiewak said Exxon Mobil has been identified as the liable party. The School Loop, which would connect Heritage School and Charlton Elementary to the town water from the center of town, involves six miles of pipe, and would also connect to Bay Path.

Mr. Spiewak said any water quality issues come under the purview of the Board of Health, and said that questions about contamination, should be directed to the Town Administrator's Office.

Mrs. Spiewak asked the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee to consider adopting a *Parents' Right to Know: Water Quality Reporting Policy*. Mrs. Aucoin agreed to put the item on the next agenda for consideration.

**VII. Communications**

1. Mr. Desto said we have received several communications in response to an article in the Telegram noting water testing that revealed MBTE in the schools' water.

MBTE is a gasoline additive used to raise the octane number.

Mr. Desto has results of water tests at Heritage School and Charlton Middle School dating back 12 years. MBTE was detected four times. There has been no detection for the last eight years at Heritage School and for five years at Charlton Middle School. Mr. Desto said each time it was detected it was below the level mandating reporting and action.

The level was between 0.5 – 1.4 in 2007, he said, noting every 1.0 is one part per billion. The standard is 70.0.

Mr. Desto said the district tests monthly for volatile organic compounds and coliform, and annually for MBTE. There was no alarm to test more frequently, he said. Mr. Desto and Mr. Mathieu have discussed making the most recent reports public by the end of this week, and to develop a process for making them public from this point forward. Also, the district will test for MBTE monthly instead of annually.

Mr. Desto read a letter from Steven Donovan, general manager of the district's water testing firm Whitewater, and a Charlton resident with children in the school. Mr. Donovan wrote that he has reviewed the data and states he is comfortable with his children drinking the water.

Mr. Desto said the district is taking steps and will keep vigilant.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk, instruct the superintendent to write a letter expressing our concerns for the negotiations with Exxon Mobil, and the steps taken by the district concerning water quality, was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Mrs. Antocci received a letter from a parent who expressed concern about the school calendar, specifically, she requested part of February vacation be used to make up for snow days taken up to that point.

3. Mrs. Antocci attended the yesterday's meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools yesterday, which focused on the governor's Chapter 70 proposal. She said there have been changes to the criteria for low income students.

4. The meeting also featured discussion about School Choice, specifically the reimbursement rate to receiving districts. Mrs. Antocci said the representative from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education thought the rate was fair as he has not heard otherwise.

5. Mrs. Antocci said it was revealed at the MARS meeting that charter schools benefit from regional transportation funds. Not only are districts not getting the monies as promised, but charters are.

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

1. Mr. Desto said the Leaders' Breakfast originally scheduled for Friday, February 12, has been rescheduled to Feb. 23 at 9 a.m. to allow Senator Anne Gobi to attend.

2. Mr. Desto commended district STEAM Director Karen Ares for developing a partnership with Country Bank for Innovative Student of the Month Award. The program recognizes students who have been particularly creative, offered an inventive solution, have been inspiring or creative in some other way, with a \$50 Visa Gift Card, certificate and a notification to the school committee. The first recipient is Caitlyn Butz, who designed the school's STEAM logo.

3. Mr. Desto shared the timeline for principal searches at Shepherd Hill and Mason Road School. He said he would like to have a school committee member on each search committee.

Mrs. Kabala volunteered to serve on the Mason Road School search committee, while Mrs. Aucoin and Mrs. Antocci will serve on the Shepherd Hill committee.

#### **IX. Student Representative Report**

Jack Bugan reported on Senior Recognition Night for members of the Girls Varsity Basketball team. Other winter sports are following suit this week.

The Shepherd Hill Winter Percussion will offer free performance on Saturday at the school.

Mrs. Rabbitt commended the district students involved with the music programs at Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School, and Shepherd Hill, for their display of encouragement and camaraderie during last weekend's Central Mass. Show Choir Festival. She said the students were very supportive of the other performers in the festival.

#### **X. New Business**

##### **A. FY 2017 Budget Presentation – Part 3 – Mr. Desto, Mr. Mathieu**

In his third budget presentation, Mr. Desto highlighted those areas that meet the district's priority of enhancing safety and security of our students, while meeting state and federal mandates as well as contractual obligations.

Mr. Desto proposed 7.5 essential positions, four of which restore those lost to budget cuts over the last several years: Grade 1 teacher at Mason Road School; grade 2 at Dudley Elementary School; a grade 3 and special education teachers at Heritage School; foreign language at Charlton Middle School; a .5 FTE foreign language teacher at Dudley Middle School, an adjustment counselor and math/computer science teacher at Shepherd Hill.

Mr. Mathieu talked about state aid numbers. The governor's numbers show an increase of just over \$36,000 in state aid. Mr. Mathieu reviewed the district's funding sources as Chapter 70, transportation aid, and school construction reimbursement. He outlined the rationale for continued limited state aid, saying the burden of school spending is shifting to the towns from the state.

Mr. Mathieu reviewed those revenue sources that reduce the true cost of education from \$54,000,000 to the proposed preliminary budget of \$49,870,076.

##### **B. District Office Administrators Budget Presentations**

###### **a. Technology – Mr. D'Arcangelo**

Mr. D'Arcangelo reviewed the inventory of current user devices and achievements and outlined the district's technology goals and objectives.

There are currently 154 wireless access points in service, providing wireless connectivity throughout six schools and parts of the high school. Another 34 access points are currently

being installed at the high school. Mr. D’Arcangelo’s \$692,600 budget requests represents over \$550,000 in fixed expenses, and \$267,955 in projects and upgrades.

b. Special Education – Mrs. O’Brien

Mrs. O’Brien said the district administration and staff are always looking for ways to strengthen and improve our programs. To that end, she has formed a Special Education Achievement Gap Task Force to analyze data and develop a strategic plan to continue to address students’ academic progress. Mrs. O’Brien’s budget request of \$2,289,852 includes contracted services, transportation, tuitions, program evaluation, professional development and projected staffing needs.

C. Finance Director Report *(Vote may be Required)*

- a. Charlton High School Alumni Funds – At the last meeting, Mrs. Mary Brown asked for the return of their scholarship funds. Mr. Mathieu contacted the district’s legal counsel, James Cosgrove and the Department of Revenue, and was advised that there is no way to return the funds without having had a clause to do so at the time the scholarship was accepted. There is no public purpose in returning the funds, therefore, Mrs. Brown has been advised to create another scholarship fund and thereby deplete this fund over the years. They are seeking to increase the scholarship to \$500.
- b. Shepherd Hill Site Study – Mr. Mathieu has sought quotes from two additional firms. Once the bids are received and analyzed, he will have a request for the committee to award the feasibility study to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.
- c. Acceptance of Donations (Vote Required) - Following the committee’s meeting of January 27, 2016, Mr. Chalk pointed out that it is unlawful for the committee to vote on an item that is not on the meeting agenda. Therefore, the vote to accept the bank’s donation of \$500 for its new Student of the Month Award program, is void, and Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to vote its acceptance. In addition, the district has received a donation of \$10,000 from Marilyn Fels and the Fels Family Foundation

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to accept the \$500 donation from Country Bank, for its Student of the Month program, was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to accept the \$10,000 donation from the Fels Family, was approved by unanimous vote.

The committee expressed its appreciation for her continued generosity.

- d. Quarterly reports – Mr. Mathieu distributed quarterly financial reports through the end of December 2015. He said he will continue the practice of

freezing the budget in the near future to better manage the return of reserves to offset the budget.

- e. Per the District Agreement, the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee must vote a preliminary budget 75 days before the first annual town meeting. The budget proposed this evening reflects the 5.19% budget increase. Mr. Mathieu said the budget will undergo numerous adjustments before the towns are asked to vote.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve a preliminary FY 2017 budget of \$49,870,076 with assessments of \$12,664,023 to Charlton and \$7,928,199 to Dudley.

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to approve a Preliminary FY 2017 Budget of \$49,870,076 with assessments of \$12,664,023 to Charlton and \$7,928,199 to Dudley, was approved by unanimous vote.

**D. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report**

Mrs. Rabbitt said the subcommittee did meet this morning and focused on the current budget and working on the presentation.

**E. Review of Draft Position Letters on Regional Transportation and the Charter School Cap**

Mrs. Rabbitt said there have been new developments concerning the proposed lifting of the Charter School Cap, and she will provide that to Mr. Desto to amend the position paper.

The committee agreed to send the transportation letter as presented.

**F. Report of the Executive Session Minutes Review Subcommittee (*Vote Required*)**

Mrs. Kabala and Mrs. Aucoin met with Mr. Desto to read through the minutes dating back to 1970.

<b>Proposed for Release</b>	<b>Retained</b>	
6/24/15	10/22/08	3/23/94
6/10/15	7/11/07	11/18/92
3/11/15	9/13/06	8/12/92
10/22/14	7/13/05	7/1/92
7/16/14	2/12/03	5/7/92
5/28/14	1/22/03	3/11/92
5/14/14	11/13/02	4/3/91
4/2/14	6/27/01	5/8/89
3/12/14	3/14/01	11/28/88
4/10/13	1/10/01	4/4/84
5/23/12	12/13/00	3/20/84
8/23/06	8/16/00	12/19/79
5/12/99	6/9/99	3/23/78
	4/28/99	7/14/77

	9/23/98	1/13/77
	9/9/98	4/24/75
	8/12/98	10/8/70
	5/13/98	

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to release the selected executive session minutes as recommended by the Review Subcommittee, was approved by unanimous vote.

#### G. 2016-2017 School Year Calendar

Mr. Desto provided a revised calendar to address the concern of some members for having Election Day, November 8 as a school day. The committee in 2013 voted this as a no-school day at the request of the town administrator and town clerk. This new proposal honors that promise.

Mrs. Antocci said the latest draft does not address the 57.6 % of the survey respondents who sought to shorten or eliminate February vacation.

Mrs. Antocci said the goal was to provide more concentrated educational time during the year to curtail the need to go deeper into June. She said the November Election Day adds another day off in the month that is already affected by Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving.

Mrs. Rabbitt said if the district can address the town's concerns for traffic and children in the building, it will also provide an excellent opportunity for students and allow the district reinvent a schedule.

Mr. Desto said he will put together a plan for November 8, 2016. He said it is his hope to adopt the calendar by the next meeting.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by R. Chalk to approve the 2016-2017 school year calendar resulted in a tie vote.

Voting in favor were Mrs. Kabala, Mr. Chalk, Mrs. Aucoin.

Opposed were Mrs. Antocci, Mrs. Rabbitt, Mrs. Reed.

Mr. Desto will provide more information at the next meeting:

- Plan for the students on Nov. 8
- Criteria for use of February Vacation and staff considerations

#### H. Consideration of Request for Non-resident Student Enrollment, Policy JF (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Desto received a request by a Charlton resident, requesting that her daughter be allowed to complete her senior year at Shepherd Hill as the family is moving out of district.

Mr. Desto recommended approval.

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

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

Mr. Desto presented the request of a Dudley parent who requested to home school her son in grade 8 for the remainder of the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the request for home schooling as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

**XI. Next Meeting Dates**

- School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 7 p.m.
- School Committee Meeting: Public Hearing at Shepherd Hill Regional High School and meeting
- Finance Sub: March 19 at 9 a.m.

**XII. Future Agenda Items – 16-17 Calendar, FY 17 Budget, Principal Search Updates, Discussion regarding policy on Water pollution; auditors at second meeting in March**

**XIII. Executive Session “...to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation.”**

Motion to enter Exec Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, and to reconvene for a vote if necessary and to adjourn, was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:45 p.m.

The committee returned to open session to 10:51 p.m.

**XIV. Adjourn**

A motion by R. Chalk, seconded by M. Antocci to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 10:52 p.m.

*Items used for this meeting include the following:*

<i>Agenda for Feb.10, 2016</i>	<i>Superintendent's Report of Friday, February 5, 2016</i>	<i>Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, January 27, 2016</i>	<i>Draft of 2016-2017 School Year Calendar</i>
<i>Executive Session Minutes proposed for release</i>	<i>Finance Director's Report Budget Memo 1 Budget Memo 2 FY 2017 Budget Proposal FY 2017 Budget Presentation</i>	<i>Technology Director's Budget Special Education Administrators' Budget</i>	<i>Position Papers: Regional School Transportation Charter School Cap</i>
<i>Principal Openings Time Line</i>	<i>Football appeal</i>		

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary