

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee's Special Meeting on the FY 20 Budget held Thursday, February 7, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Cathleen Carmignani
Catherine M. Kabala
Elaine M. Rabbitt
Stephanie A. Reed
Jamie L. Terry

Mary N. Antocci, Vice Chair, was not in attendance.

Also in attendance were Kristine E. Nash, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; Lorinda C. Allen, Karen A. Ares, William F. Chaplin, Daniel S. D'Arcangelo, Jennifer A. Desto, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Diane D. Seibold, Christopher E. Starczewski; Kevin Foley, Richard 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

III. New Business

FY 2020 Budget:

Dr. Nash introduced the second night that has been designated for budget presentations.

Middle School Principals:

Dean W. Packard, Charlton Middle School: Mr. Packard said doors opened on the 19-year-old school in August with 94 staff and a \$6 million budget. Mr. Packard thanked Dr. Nash, Mr. Mathieu, Mrs. Ares, Mrs. Marderosian, Mrs. Allen, and staff for their assistance.

Mr. Packard said class sizes stayed consistent with 681 in October, and just one additional student in February. There is an average class size of 21.2, except in foreign language which is 25.

Mr. Packard offered a projection of 663 students in 2019-2020.

Charlton Middle School and Dudley Middle School currently share a library media specialist. Mr. Packard's new staffing requests include a library instructional assistant to staff the library for five days.

Mrs. Kabala said she is concerned about the parity between the two middle schools, as the Charlton Middle School library would be staffed with a non-credentialed librarian.

Under the special education reorganization plan, each building would relinquish two general special education instructional assistants in exchange for a special education teacher. Mr. Packard proposes to place that teacher in grade 8.

Mr. Packard also proposes to relinquish the ACES teacher for a computer applications teacher. This position was not replaced following a retirement several years ago.

The ACES program serves students identified as at-risk. There are presently 62 students in this program. Mrs. Rabbitt asked if there is any impact to the guidance counselor's schedule. Mr. Packard said the guidance counselors loop and develop relationships with the students, and would therefore monitor the students.

Mr. Packard is requesting a Smartboard, and said his capital project request is the roof, the library air conditioning unit, and climate control in the 5th and 6th grade wing to protect the technology equipment.

Mr. Packard said he is trying to build a grade 5-6 computer application curriculum.

Christopher E. Starczewski, Dudley Middle School

Mr. Starczewski said the faculty and staff are the core of our work with the kids.

Dudley Middle School presently has 61.4 FTE professional staff, and a stable enrollment of 557.

Staffing requests include a foreign language teacher by which Mr. Starczewski said Dudley Middle School may be able to increase student access to those classes. He said there are presently 87 seats in Rosetta Stone, but that is because there is no alternative for language instruction. Mr. Starczewski said the middle schools would move from Rosetta Stone to Duolingo.

Dr. Nash said Rosetta Stone is not a replacement for foreign language.

In addition, Mr. Starczewski is requesting a health/physical education teacher, which would allow us an equitable schedule model, and would enable him to pull two core teachers out of teaching health.

Mr. Starczewski will place the special educator into grades 7 and 8 math and ELA.

Regarding capital projects, Mr. Starczewski noted he has \$660,000 worth of projects. Need to plan for these in the next several years: boiler sections, roof. Many of the projects have been brought on by wear and tear. Other expenditures include security cameras inside and out, at a cost of \$13,500, and an oil tank monitor.

Concerning a parity in exploratories, it was noted Charlton Middle School has fewer.

The committee expressed concern about the lack of a librarian at Charlton Middle School, noting research skills necessitate having a certified librarian.

Increases in technology include items for guidance and psychology, such as Q-global, Renaissance. The middle school has lost the grant monies that fund the iExcel program.

High School Principal:

William F. Chaplin

Mr. Chaplin said he currently has a staff of 105, and a student enrollment of 1,113. As for 2019-2020 projections, Mr. Chaplin said he usually adds five to each grade. There are presently 134 school choice students.

Mr. Chaplin said it is time to market the school choice availability.

For staffing requests, Mr. Chaplin would add his special education co-teacher to grade 9 and 10. Mr. Chaplin said an additional nurse is needed at the high school. To fund that position, Mr. Chaplin will study the possibility of eliminating the health teacher. Mr. Chaplin's staffing requests also include a full time athletic director, a guidance counselor, and a custodian. Mr. Chaplin noted the guidance director position was cut three years ago, and the custodian was cut two years ago.

Mrs. Terry disagreed with the plan to eliminate a health teacher in view of the decisions the students will make over the next several years.

Mrs. Rabbitt requested a sample flow chart to show how students move through grades 9-12 and meet the graduation requirements.

The sole technology hardware request is to replace three projectors at a cost of \$210,000, although Mr. Chaplin noted projects such as two burst pipes, a broken elevator, unplayable tennis courts, and a water shut off valve.

Mr. Chaplin noted a bump in the science supplies line item due to the third year of Project Lead the Way bio-medical interventions.

Mrs. Rabbitt requested information to determine equity of assistance for music and show choir students.

Mr. Mathieu addressed outstanding capital needs, noting a backlog of projects among the seven schools. Mr. Mathieu said two years ago the committee opted to not pursue capital in favor of the operational override. He said with the school project debt off the books, FY 20 has the possibility to be the right year to go forward with presenting our needs to the towns.

STEAM / Curriculum:

Barbara A. Marderosian –

Mrs. Marderosian presented notes relative to the curriculum and professional development budget, showing amounts for course reimbursements and conferences, as required by the collective bargaining agreement.

Mrs. Marderosian said a number of curriculum study groups continue to meet over the summer months, including social studies curriculum frameworks, and a social studies task force at the middle schools. The emphasis is on civics, and is less on geography, and more on U.S. history.

Ongoing curriculum study groups will be held to train K-8 teams for co-teaching, as well as in the high school. In-house professional development is required for recertification.

Mrs. Marderosian noted the grades 1-4 reading curriculum is now 10 years old, and will be replaced. Five teachers from each side of the district for each grade will be training in its implementation.

Mrs. Marderosian highlighted the expenditures under the district's Title II grant as Renaissance U online for STAR assessment software, district and building mentor coordinators and math and literacy facilitators, The grant also funds new teacher mentors, PLTW training and travel.

The total curriculum and professional budget is \$278,007.60, which is offset by federal entitlement grants of \$77,291.

Karen A. Ares

Mrs. Ares reported on the contracted services, including Project Learn Academy, and introduction to project based learning, for a cohort of 35 teachers,

Mrs. Ares said the district is currently in a contract for science materials for grades K-5 with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt until June 2020. It was purchased as a transition to the new 2016 STE curriculum frameworks. The next step is to purchase a curriculum to align and create units with the new reading materials and explore more science investigation kits and reader texts rather than a science workbook.

Mrs. Ares spoke about Project Lead the Way, and the \$35,000 grant awarded to implement the Gateway Curriculum. Teacher training began last summer and continues in the current school year.

Mrs. Ares said other grants pay for supplies at the middle schools, such as App Creators in grade 8. She said the PLTW engineering grant will be used to implement engineering classes.

Mrs. Rabbitt left the meeting from 9:07-9:09 p.m.

Technology:

Daniel S. D’Arcangelo

Mr. D’Arcangelo spoke about the department’s ongoing goals to maintain a hardware replacement schedule, maintain a list of district approved hardware devices to purchase, infuse new and emerging technologies like interactive whiteboards, projectors and document cameras into the classrooms, as well as to replace high school network cables, computers in labs, and roll out Windows 10 on all devices.

Mr. D’Arcangelo said the department carries fixed annual expenses of \$719,785 and includes such items as hardware replacement. Intranet connectivity between schools, internet connections, firewalls, student information systems, library catalogs and district office software and subscriptions.

Projects and upgrades proposals include the network cable project, school software licenses.

Mr. D’Arcangelo said the department needs \$400,000 to update the fleet of equipment every year.

With the presentations concluded, Dr. Nash said the committee has a lot to digest. Referring to the districtwide ranking of the personnel requests, Dr. Nash said the personnel needs are substantiated, and have been ranked by the administrators based on their impact on students.

Dr. Nash said the thoughtful budget presentations resulted in a budget that is close to being balanced. She said the committee needs to make assumptions about the funding, and to be aware that there are unknowns. Dr. Nash said the positions of district-wide ELL teacher, and the nurse at Shepherd Hill will be funded to meet compliance issues. She said there is not a position on the list that we do not see as a need.

Referring to the presentation of personnel reorganizations, and the reduction of the district’s team chairs, the substantial savings will result in funding a high school special education teacher, the job coach instructional assistant and a BCBA.

Dr. Nash said the current budget does not provide sufficient funds to allow us to put in any new positions beyond the priorities.

Dr. Nash said the committee’s Wednesday, Feb. 13 meeting will feature serious discussion, and if there is something members want to look at, or if you have any thoughts about to contact the district office.

Mrs. Kabala asked how much it would cost to fund all the positions as requested. Mr. Mathieu said \$740,000.

There are a total of 18 new positions, of which six can be covered, including the elementary library coordinators by transferring the cafeteria monitors’ salaries to the cafeteria revolving account.

Not included in the budget is the cost to replace the district’s 10-year-old reading program.

Mr. Mathieu said the district is not being funded at the level it needs to spend at.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the budget is in the early stages. Moving forward, she said we can hope that revenue increases, as well as per pupil reimbursement, Circuit Breaker funds. The priority sheet is helpful in the event additional monies are realized.

Committee member said they appreciated the way the budget was presented as it shows a clearer pathway to realizing and meeting goals.

Mrs. Kabala asked when the district would realize the \$200,000 in insurance savings. Mr. Mathieu said on July 1, 2019.

Dr. Nash said she is open to conversations regarding how the budget can fund personnel requests. Is there another place in the budget? She said the committee could make other decisions.

Mrs. Rabbitt said she considers this budget as the first pass that can be amended if principals go back and look at something, or go in another direction. She said her concern is not with rebuilding the E&D fund. She said this is where we need to fund capital items when they happen. Mrs. Rabbitt said there are extensive needs in all buildings, and all could take the E&D monies. She said the district does not have the money there to handle our capital needs, as we have been using it to fund the budget.

IV. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meetings:

- Superintendent Finalists Interviews: Monday, February 11, 2019, Superintendent Finalists Interviews, Steven Lamarche at 5-6 p.m. and Dr. Michael Whaley, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 12, 2019, Superintendent Finalists Interviews, Jennifer Haggerty, 5-6 p.m. and Dr. Julie Carlson, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 13, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 27, 2019, Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 6 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Monday, February 11, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School 8:30 a.m.

Policy Review Subcommittee: Thursday, February 28, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 9 a.m.

Negotiation Meeting, Thursday, February 28, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 4-6 p.m.

V. Adjourn

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by C. Carmignani to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 10:02 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include the Agenda, and budgets from Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School, Shepherd Hill, Technology and Curriculum.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.