

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special School Committee Meeting

Nipmuc High School, Professional Development Room

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

Committee Present:

Sean Nicholson, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Phil DeZutter, Erick Brown

Administration Present:

Joseph Maruszczak, Superintendent of Schools

Maureen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent

John Clements, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Kerry Laurence.

Pledge of Alliance was recited

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Vikki Ludwigson, to add acceptance of Dr. Maruszczak resignation to the agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Amended Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson to approve the amended agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

II. NEW BUSINESS

Acceptance of Resignation of Superintendent, Dr. Maruszczak

Chairperson Kerry Laurence stated the School Committee received a formal letter on July 6 of Dr. Maruszczak resignation to be effective August 1, 2021.

Sean Nicholson stated he appreciates Dr. Maruszczak for his hard work and thanked him for everything. Phil DeZutter stated he did a great job and navigated the district through difficult times but he is leaving district in a better place. Kerry Laurence thanked Dr. Maruszczak for his years of service and excited for him on his new opportunity. Erick Brown thanked and wished him good luck. Vikki Ludwigson appreciated your leadership especially over this past year and wished him well.

Dr. Maruszczak is leaving for the opportunity to work on project that has been his passion. He knows his life will change running this dual language school but this is a great opportunity to start this project and it is a risk he is willing to take. Dr. Maruszczak has loved the last 10 years as superintendent of MURSD and is sad to be leaving the team/community and appreciates the nice words.

Approval of the Acceptance of the Resignation of Dr. Maruszczak

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to accept of Dr. Maruszczak resignation.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

School Committee discussed the appointment of Dr. Cohen as interim superintendent and should hold an executive session in the future to handle any negotiations for an interim contract.

Approval to Appoint Dr. Maureen Cohen as Interim Superintendent

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to appoint Dr. Maureen Cohen as Interim Superintendent of MURSD.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Dr. Cohen thanked the School Committee for the opportunity and support and appreciate. She stated she is fortunate to continue the vision and work closely with Joe over the last 8 years and she is committed to advance the strategic plan. Committee will post a meeting for exec session to move forward with the contract.

MURSD Joint Town Meeting- Discussion & Finalization of Date

Phil DeZutter stated the School Committee is working through 3 paths to fund the FY22 budget simultaneous:

- Working with Mendon BOS and Finance to determine impact
- Working within the district on budget since the end of the fiscal year as brought more clarity
- Set time and move forward with District meeting

Thus, School Committee is looking to have a joint town meeting in middle of August to give time for these avenues to move forward

Sean Nicholson expressed concern from public about the teachers rehiring. Is there a consideration to be made to move it to the end of July and hopefully keeping the staff and less ambiguity?

Vikki Ludwigson stated School Committee was advised by District Counsel to target mid/late August in order to plan for this meeting.

Kerry Laurence stated Mendon is looking for conclusion in order have better clarify of town finances

Phil DeZutter stated a meeting sooner than mid-August could result in less participation due to summer vacations; believes there is an opportunity to have a collaboration with Mendon officials to see if district meeting could be avoided. Although he understands the need for urgency. Middle of August gives more flexibility

Dr. Maruszczak stated the 2 weeks can have major impact on staffing due to buyer's market. Meeting on August 15 for beginning on August 30 and there are not many highly qualified candidates. Sooner resolution is a smarter decision.

Erick Brown stated Mendon BOS will need to have a Town Meeting in order to move money; the earliest date for a Town Meeting would be July 28th.

Mendon BOS stated any date within the month is difficult. Selectboard stated the current budget model needs to change and thus begin right away on planning FY23 budget.

Approval of the Date of August 7 for Joint Town Meeting

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Vikki Ludwigson, to to set the date of August 7th for the Joint Town Meeting

VOTED: Unanimously approved

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS – NA

Former Mendon BOS Dennis Shaheen stated when District was formed and leaders felt it was a government under themselves and reluctant. School Committee stated it

would not happen. He asked why the SC is not honoring the will of the voters in Mendon after 2 override votes. As an example, he believes class size are too small and can be increased. School Committee should respect the will of Mendon. Phil DeZutter understands Mr. Shaheen point but School Committee also need to respect the will of Upton and the collective vote.

Michael Kreger, Mendon- feels vote in Mendon was close would like to see a comprise. Would like School Committee to review budget and determine a level services budget

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

V. Other Matters Not Anticipated by The Committee Within 48 Hours of The Posted Meeting

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson to adjourn

VOTED: Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes by Kelly McElreath