

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special School Committee Meeting

Virtual

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Committee Present:

Sean Nicholson, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Phil DeZutter

Administration Present:

Joseph Maruszczak, Superintendent of Schools

Maureen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent

Jay Byer, Business Finance

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Kerry Laurence.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to amend the agenda to include rebalancing the staff at the 2 Elementary Schools

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes

Vikki Ludwigson, yes

Kerry Laurence, yes

Phil DeZutter, yes

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

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes

Vikki Ludwigson, yes

Kerry Laurence, yes

Phil DeZutter, yes

II. NEW BUSINESS

Rescheduling of Joint Town Meeting

Dr. Maruszczak shared a copy of the proposed warrant with School Committee. He noted the original date of August 7 is no longer a good time to have the meeting since STM for Mendon is August 9. Thus, Dr. Maruszczak is recommending to reschedule the meeting of the district for Thursday, August 12. By approving the warrant this evening, it will allow the 14 days required to post on websites and other locations in the 2 Towns. The warrant will also be sent to the Milford Daily News.

Dr. Maruszczak also noted there will be a need for another meeting next week. This is for a joint meeting with Selectmen in both Towns to discuss and appoint a moderator for this meeting. Thus, there is a need for SC to vote to change date and approve warrant.

Approval To Change the Date of the District Meeting from August 7 to August 12

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Vikki Ludwigson, to change the date of the District Meeting from August 7 to August 12.

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes
Vikki Ludwigson, yes
Kerry Laurence, yes
Phil DeZutter, yes

Jay Byer clarified the warrant states a 6 pm start time. It was also noted the only article is the school budget amount certified at the last School Committee meeting. This vote will be a yes or no and there can be no amendments during the meeting.

Approval of the Warrant

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve the Warrant as presented.

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes
Vikki Ludwigson, yes
Kerry Laurence, yes
Phil DeZutter, yes

Next Steps

Dr. Maruszczak reminded the School Committee members there is a school committee meeting on scheduled on Monday, August 9 and this is the same date as the Mendon STM, thus the need to reschedule.

Dr. Maruszczak informed the School Committee he is waiting to get legal counsel advice. It was noted once a warrant is posted, it cannot be 'canceled' and would need to occur. If this was to occur, a meeting would be held to open the District Meeting, pass over Article one and adjourn the meeting.

It is hopeful the meeting on August 12 is a moot point however could have implications with if the meeting should go forward.

Approval to change the date School Committee Meeting from August 9 to August 16

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to change the date of the School Committee meeting from August 9 to August 16

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes
Vikki Ludwigson, yes
Kerry Laurence, yes
Phil DeZutter, yes

In reference to the District Meeting, it was determined logistics of where and how the meeting will need to occur. Phil DeZutter mentioned to reach out to Upton Officials to engage the same company used for the Annual Town Meeting. It was noted the meeting could also occur in the Nipmuc gym with capacity of 1200. A sound system would be needed. Dr. Cohen stated she would work with Jay Byer on logistics and information needed. Phil DeZutter will be the School Committee liaison between Jay Byer.

Kerry Laurence spoke with Steve Dodge as President of the Moderator Association. Now the date is set, she would reach out to association as to who is available. Steve also mentioned he is available and has experience. Kerry Laurence will follow up and reach out to the BOS of each Town. Once she receives the list of available moderators, she will coordinate a meeting with the Selectmen.

Rebalancing of Staff between the 2 Elementary Schools

Dr. Maruszczak shared the enrollment of both schools. It is lower in Clough than Memorial. There was concern about not increasing 4th grade position at Memorial. Based on current info, it results in class sizes of 27, 26, 26. There is a staff member from Clough out on layoff, if successful outcome of the budget, this individual could be hired by the Memorial and bring the class size down to more manageable number of 20. It is difficult to balance class size at each grade level between the 2 schools. To going to 2 classes of 24 and 25 at Clough, Jan Gallagher stated there are up to 9 students who are may determine to come back vs home school and it could be the reverse position. Noted every single year, enrollment is subject to change with last minute enrollments.

Phil DeZutter believes this should be looked at closely to not have larger class size. Making this change, with current information, makes sense.

Class size for 3rd grade? At Memorial School size will be around 20 with SI at 16. In regards with social distancing, CDC recommending masking for students and staff for the school year as of today. District is still waiting for guidance from State Officials. These class sizes are not higher than national average.

III. Other matters not anticipated by the Committee within 48 hours of the posted meeting

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Kerry Laurence, seconded by Sean Nicholson to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a), exemption #3 to conduct negotiations with non-union personnel, the Interim Superintendent of Schools. (The Committee will not return to open session.)

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes
Vikki Ludwigson, yes
Kerry Laurence, yes
Phil DeZutter, yes
Dorothy Scally, yes

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath