

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**FOWLER SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HALL**  
**APRIL 27, 2017**

Present: Dawn Capello (Absent), Justin Hemm, Jamal De Vita, Mary Mertsch, Bethlyn Houlihan (Absent)

Administrators: Robert J. Gerardi, Jr., Superintendent; Michelle Resendes, Business Manager, Jennifer Gaudet, Assistant Superintendent

Public Hearing on the proposed FY18 School Budget Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Hemm opened the meeting and outlined the budget process in the district. The final budget can change depending on the results of the Annual Town Meeting and the final State Budget Chapter 70 Funds. He then opened the floor for questions.

Discussion

Meg S: She was part of one of the sub-committees that worked on the budget. A lot of things were looked at in extracurricular. Middle school sports were discussed during the sub-committee discussion. I wonder what the reason is for those being kept vs. cutting our assistant principal and other staff members. It is a lot easier to fund the sports program than to fill the vice principal.

Ms. Mertsch: We looked at small items. When looking at the vice-principal position, this was part of looking at other schools administration numbers.

Dr. Gerardi: Usually those programs are small numbers. These programs are sometimes enrichment and we look at them as part of our day. It was a hard discussion.

Ms. D: Last year you had the dollar amounts on the sheet, this year they are not there.

Dr. Gerardi: Before 2013, we were funded above the state average. Since then, we have not had level funding. These are all difficult budget decisions. We are a \$16M business. Our foundation is being hit hard this year.

Meg S: Last year, we did not receive cuts to the high school. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade is coming back. Our guidance staff next year has huge numbers of students. You still have students in crisis. With no vice principal, there is no one to go to. How are we helping them? Students go to guidance for help. Thinking of the mental well-being of the Fowler students. Please reconsider some of the extra pieces that were talked about.

We have a building based support system that is fractured because of the guidance counselor cut. It is hard to say if it will be fixed or more broken. I couldn't make that determination. Our Vice-Principal leads the culture of the school. Guidance counselors knew all kids from 4-8 until they left the Fowler School.

Mr. Hemm: We are doing all we can to hear the thoughts and emotions of the community. Last year, we heard about class sizes and we did a good job of not touching some items. This is the process we need to hear. Every cut is deep and hurtful. We need to have a conversation on how to get revenue in our town.

Ms. S: Town Departments need to be more collaborative. These departments should know about the safety of our students with these cuts.

Mr. Hemm: Ms Capello has asked to be put on the Board of Selectmen agenda next week. We will be asking for more funding.

Ms. StJ: We are here to support the music program. The theater program has only been there one year. Could it be shifted?

Mr. Hemm is keeping tallies. He then will look at the decision-making process in the end of what people are saying.

Ms. P: I have no children in the system, but I have a family law firm in town. The number one person children go to is the guidance counselors at school. Especially when they can't talk to anyone. In these cases, we have had guidance counselors that make all the difference.

Dr. De Vita: We talked about some of the possibilities of GM and Fowler sharing positions. Any update on how this would that look? Concern about their schedules?

Ms. Gaudet: Schedules are dependent on where we land with all our staffing. We will try for the most efficient and effective services.

Ms. B: I have shared that my son has hearing loss. Green Meadow is very accommodating. In addition, the physical space needs to be accommodating also. I recognize the custodians who made my son be able to be in the classroom. They have made it a safe walking place for the kids and a clean school that the kids can feel pride in. I understand every cut. Our custodians are important.

Mary said the sky is not falling yet. The skies are falling. These cuts have been happening since 2012. If you don't have the students that are high achievers, you will lose the student base. Why haven't you been screaming to support the schools? What is the school going to look like in 5 years? Green Meadow students need to be safe in their environment. You can't put them in the middle school without any help.

Dr. Gerardi: I appreciate your comments. I am providing data to the town. We have a lot to be proud of. We have very successful students and programs.

Dr. De Vita: It is good for the Board of Selectmen to hear other voices in town. What are the town priorities? What does the majority want? I applaud your efforts. Whatever they give us, we have to make it fit. We need to get the message out to the town side.

Parent: Why are we asking for level funding?

Mr. Hemm: One request was for level service; one was more and one was gold plated. This year we just gave them the request we could not live without. Their results were the same.

Mr. Hemm made a motion to close the Budget Hearing in accordance with MGL:CH71;S38(N) at 7:43 p.m. Second by Dr. De Vita. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Hemm opened the regular School Committee Meeting at 7:44 p.m.

#### Chairman's Report

Mr. Hemm acknowledged the musicians and chorus returning from the Disney trip this evening. The committee recognizes and supports their accomplishments in representing the town. Congratulations and best wishes.

#### Minutes

A motion was made by Dr. De Vita to accept the minutes of May 13, 2017. 2nd by Ms. Mertsch. The motion was approved 3-0.

### Superintendent's Report

This has been a challenging week passing out layoff letters to staff members. I sincerely hope that this turns around. It was also nice of the police and fire departments to escort the band and chorus back into town.

Tomorrow, the police and fire will be at Green Meadow School for High Five Friday. Thank you for all you do for our community.

### Student Representative Report

Olivia: This week the student representatives worked with Mr. Caragianes around their report. We wanted to talk about the high school custodians. Last year we started to have janitors appreciation week, where we learned and understood how much they do. The whole student body works with them. It is concerning that we wonder how can their services be maintained and upheld without the current staff.

The guidance office and fowler guidance: The fowler aged students meeting with guidance is critical for social and emotional development. When we were at Fowler, they had three counselors. We always knew someone was available for us all the time. If things change in fowler the high school will be affected. The high school relationship with guidance is emotional. There are lines out the door for scheduling. Theatre was cut last year, and it was devastating for students. The secretaries work so hard. How is one person able to do the front office job?

Ms. Carr: As class president, I see the secretary does all the graduation requirements. There needs to be a plan. All of these small cuts are adding up. What is the hole going to be next year? Also talking about how special Maynard is. Students are feeling they can't get what they want and are thinking about Assabet Vocational as an alternative. They also worry about the younger students that they have formed bonds with.

Ms. Mertsch: I appreciate the three of you speaking so passionately. I appreciate what you are saying.

Ms. Gaudet: On Monday, there is a finance committee open hearing at Town Hall that the community should attend. This is an open hearing where they go through the warrant articles. They review the summaries from the town departments and each department submits a synopsis of their budget summary.

### Citizen's Comments

Ms. M: Just a clarification that the chorus was on the Disney trip with the band.

### School Choice Vote

After discussions with the school principals, it was determined that the openings for the 2017/2018 school year would be: No seats at the Green Meadow School and Maynard High School, and Fowler has 2 seats at grade 6 and 5 seats in grade 7.

A motion was made by Dr. De Vita to accept the school choice openings as stated. 2nd by Mr. Hemm. Motion passed 3-0.

### FY18 Budget

Question: At what point do we stop asking the town for money?

Mr. Hemm: The warrant articles are printed. Anyone can make a motion to amend the current warrant on the floor. Overall budget, school budget. All very specific. The percentage of votes has to be 2/3. We still do not have the government numbers state and federal. Any changes go to the town side first. We need people to continue to advocate for our schools. You have heard the depths of the cuts. There is only so much money, but that money can be shifted. We need serious conversations about how our town is run. We need commercial and sales tax revenues and maybe an override.

Have there been any discussions about not moving forward with the GM playground? \$250K.

Ms. Gaudet: There have been discussions. If we did not do the project, the funds would go back into the capital stabilization fund. This would need to go to town meeting for vote. It would have to be used on another capital project.

### Member's Comments

Dr. De Vita: We have had some luck in the past before the Town Meeting by going before the Board of Selectmen. They have been generous and given us more money. We always emphasize the value of the schools.

Mr. Hemm: The Town Meeting is the May 15<sup>th</sup>. We need 75 for a quorum.

### Executive Session

This session was tabled.

A motion was made by De. De Vita to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote at 8:50 p.m. without the intent to return to open session. Second by Mr. Hemm. The motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent