

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**FOWLER SCHOOL LIBRARY**  
**APRIL 13, 2017**

Present: Dawn Capello, Justin Hemm, Jamal De Vita, Mary Mertsch, Bethlyn Houlihan  
Administrators: Robert J. Gerardi, Jr., Superintendent; Michelle Resendes, Business Manager,  
Jennifer Gaudet, Assistant Superintendent

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman's Report

Ms. Capello recognized the Maynard High School Boys Basketball Team state champions.

Minutes

A motion was made by Dr. De Vita to accept the minutes of March 16, 2017. 2nd by Mr. Hemm.  
The motion was approved 5-0.

Student Representative Report

The High School Band and Chorus students are looking forward to the Disney trip coming up. The trip is April 20 to April 25. Students are also looking at their schedules for next year. This past week was personal awareness week. Olivia and Sophia presented on tanning booths. They brought in scanners where you look at possible skin damage you may have now from tanning booths. The students received pledges to not tan for Prom. Students went to LaSalle College last week. They were looking at dual enrollment. There are good options for students, especially for teaching.

Ms. Gaudet said that Maynard is the only High School doing this model in the State. Students enroll in college courses and receive college credit on line at LaSalle. Students receive transcripts in the hybrid model. They train professors in the on-line setting. Students can receive 4 credits in biology and 3 credits in English next fall. Also, a business course in the fall and sociology in the spring. They also visit the campus a few times. There are lots of opportunities for towns who don't have a college campus in their proximity. We are looking at the possibility to have all students the ability to get 3-15 college credits when they leave the High School.

Dr. Gerardi said Ms. Gaudet is working with LaSalle on a grant for this initiative.

Superintendent's Report

We are reviewing the challenges of the school budget tonight.

Congratulations to the Fowler Latin club for their performance at the recent state convention. They finished 6 out of 16 schools. Many students received individual awards.

Dr. Gerardi also toured the customs border patrol area at Logan Airport this week. There were thirty schools and colleges represented. Maynard was the only public school.

#### Citizen's Comments

None.

#### School Calendar 2017-2018

A motion was made to have a school day on November 10, 2017, by Mary Mertsch with the last school day of June 13, 2018. 2nd by Dr. De Vita. The motion passed 5-0.

#### FY18 Budget

Class size was looked at. We will continue to watch class size. We will have an another discussion on class size at the next meeting.

Budget sub-committee recommendations were presented.

#### Comments

Dr. Gerardi read the list of reductions. Recommendations were also made by all district unions. The list is not in priority order.

Ms. Mertsch: She has been reading the posts on social media and there is some mis-information. There is talk about Dr. Gerardi giving himself a raise. There is also concern about last year and Ms. Gaudet's position. She was curriculum director and the school committee changed it to assistant superintendent. This was not a new position. We do a lot of comparing ourselves to similar districts. We looked at the central office and are happy to take questions.

Ms. Capello: The school committee gave cost of living raises last year. 2.8% for Dr. Gerardi and Ms. Gaudet was 2.6%.

Ms. Houlihan: We have the option to not give increases to others without union contracts. We can freeze raises.

Ann: I am concerned with the contractual issues. What about union contracts?

Ms. Capello: The union contracts are not cost of living raises. The professional contracts are the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager. The leadership is at this level and the school committee decides what the increase is.

Stacy R: Does this sheet that was passed out reflect the \$651K to be cut? What does it matter what anyone says? You have already made the list.

Ms. Capello: We don't know what the state funding is. This list could change.

Ms Mertsch: The senate has proposed their budget – state money for CH 70 has a possibility of getting more money. There is a link on my facebook page to send a letter to Jamie Eldridge and Kate Hogan.

Ms. Houlihan: We are not the only town going through this. We are having collaborative conversations with the town.

Ms. Capello: Mary and I have been on the sub-committee. It was critical that employees found out before the general public. This list is not prioritized right now. We want to get everyone's input in the process as we move ahead.

Mr. Hemm: This is a new process. In the past, we would historically not have these conversations. It is important to hear everyone's suggestions. This is just the first of a few conversations we will have.

Stacy: If you took the Assistant Principal position and split it and also split between school adjustments counselors so many would be affected. You need to think about the long-term effects.

Jennifer W: We acknowledge your hard work. I am making a plea for the music cuts. Once these cuts are made, they are hard to get back. We have a wonderful program. Hate to see any permanent damage.

Kristy G: Thank you for this forum. We have a lot of concerns about cutting Vice Principals. We are bringing back the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Social-emotional goals for the district would be affected. Next year at Green Meadow, is there going to be an additional first-grade section? Think about thoughtfully considering transfers of teachers. We have a strong 4<sup>th</sup>-grade team. We have a strong transition team to Fowler.

Ms. Capello asked Ms. Gaudet to follow up on that. And let the team know.

Ken E: This is no like repairing the streets. The idea that we could balance our budget based on teachers is incorrect. We want quality schools. It's about what kind of teachers we have. We cannot have a town budget where we increase 2 1/2% a year. What kind of town do we want to have? We need to have competitive salaries. We need administrators. Someone has to do the job.

Sara D: She is interested in clarification on the immersion paraprofessional. Dr. Gerardi said the intent was to have immersion paraprofessional in each grade level. We have special education needs in these rooms also. We have to add special education paraprofessionals to the immersion rooms. Spanish immersion always has a class of 25 students. Need to maintain a paraprofessional in these classrooms.

Meg S: I recognize that this is a difficult process. It is a challenging job to do away with something. .5 AP position. Would that be also .5 at GM? Ms. Gaudet said we need to look at that model to see what would work. A .5 position doesn't mean .5 job. We have team meetings to meet with the assistant principal regularly. For the music reduction at fowler to .6, it seems to be a reduction in the band. .4 is the small group instruction and chorus. With the Fowler schedule rotation, we can meet and talk about students. Without full-time music and library, we will not have time to meet. If we are reducing, those conversations will not happen.

Dr. Gerardi: The goal would be to have the same schedule – 8<sup>th</sup> grade specialists will come back down to Fowler.

Ms. Gaudet in order to keep all schools whole, we need .4 at HS band and chorus; .8 at GM and 1.0 at Fowler which equates to a 2.4 position.

Danielle P: Here we are again. Why are we here again? How do these cuts fit into the vision of the town? This is a huge impact on the community. My concern is that people will move out of Maynard rather than coming in.

How does the town prioritize the budget when hurting our children. If you could please speak about the collaboration.

Dr. Gerardi: We are collaborative with the town officials. We have had many meetings with the town since February.

Ms. Capello: We can always do more. I have been involved on different boards for 10 years. We can get forums together more with the town. Residents want to weigh in. We have officials ready to have the conversations.

Ms. Mertsch: Town government isn't set up in a way for people to gather. We need to change that. We need more chances for informal gatherings.

Ms. Houlihan: What do we want to look at next year? We need priorities across the town. There are other constituencies. How do we move forward? The Board of Selectmen needs transparency. This is not just a problem in our community.

Danielle P: My questions was more was how does the current situation fit into the long-term vision that the Board of Selectmen has for the town?

Chris DeSilva – The budget is annual. It is a 12-month process. As much as the school has legal commitments, other departments have legal commitments also. We don't pick on the schools. This year every department in town has cuts based on the amount of money we have. We don't get some funding until after town meeting.

We committed to the school committee to get the dollars into the school's budget as soon as we can. We don't know what the dollars are going to be yet. The Board of Selectmen and School Committee are communicating more now than ever. For the future, we want to fully fund the schools. We are doing the best we can. When we set the budget it is based on the money we have. We are looking at the rest of the funds like CH70.

Ms. Gaudet: In talking about long term planning. Joint commissions working together and figuring out how we do things. It's not easy. There are state problems. The foundation budget has been underfunded. Long term plan of having sidewalks and schools is where we want to go.

Ms. Houlihan: She recently saw the capital plan and there is a lot to cover. One possibility is an override.

Mr. DiSilva: On April 25 there will be a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee at Fowler for a discussion on the school budget. Everyone is welcome. The town will benefit from tax dollars commercially with new growth in the town.

Danielle U. I wanted to speak to the importance of secretarial and custodial staffs. It is a huge mistake because they all do more than answer the phone. We are the front line of

communication. In order to maintain the level of service we provide, it's impossible with one person. We do way more than phone calls and attendance. If we don't have the custodial staff, the whole system will break down.

Denise L: Last year at Green Meadow, we had a hit on the specials. We have no team time. Now we are going to cut a custodian, a secretary, .4 music, and cut out recess and lunch aides. How is this going to work? How can we do our jobs? Never mind social emotional learning.

Kyle B: I am the Lead Custodian at MHS. I work directly with Kevin every day and see a revolving door at MHS. I am worried about the Assistant Principal cuts to .5. I see the majority of how kids act during the school day and after hours. I am worried about students not getting the help they need along the way. To be in the trenches all day long, to see the cuts fowler to .5, it will have a far-reaching effect by the time they get to MHS.

One secretary at each school will not work. They are the first line of defense at each school. Can't be good for anyone. With the custodians, the cleanliness of the building dictates the test scores, morale, absenteeism.etc. The schools will deteriorate. We rent the high school out every day. There will be so many issues taking out 1.5 out of the building. I understand cuts have to be made. There is so much at stake.

Ms. Mertsch: How many custodians? Four at each school plus 1 outside person.

Stephanie G: 4<sup>th</sup> grade has 6 classes one immersion. What's the long-term plan for immersion when does it stop?

Ms. Gaudet: We are engaged in global competency, not just immersion but also foreign languages. We are bringing in the Massachusetts bilingual education program to give us insight into what we are doing well and how do we move forward. We realized that we are grasping at different models that might not work for Maynard. This outside group will look to what will work for Maynard.

In may, there will be a teacher and parent forum and a report back in June to begin planning. There will be a Spanish Immersion class in grade 5.

Stephanie G: For the out-of-district expenses, can anyone come back into the district to save money? De. Gerardi said we have brought back some students.

I would advocate for the Fowler assistant principal to be full-time. I also wants the music program to stay strong. The rotation concerns me.

Trish F: Without custodians, our buildings will fall apart. Without our Librarians with the rotation is difficult. Please don't let our schools be ruined.

Maryellen M – had students in schools for 20 yrs. The High School bears the burden of foreign exchange but the little money goes back into the HS. The money can't be spent on positions.

Why can't we fund a position at MHS from foreign exchange funds? Also, no one wants these cuts, if we can take back any of these out what would happen? What are the alternatives?

Dawn – talked about taking one teacher from every grade a raising class size. This is rarely popular. We had all sports on the list, cutting specials.

Bob – We have looked to increase fees, bus, athletics. Always have heavy debates behind the scenes.

Mary – We weigh what other groups valued. We anticipated this in the fall. We reached at four other districts Looked at admin staffing, secretaries and custodial. Looked at coaches. They were hard conversations.

Bob – For the foreign exchange funds. Both foreign exchange and resident students benefit. We subsidized increased on-line courses with these funds.

Jennifer – We want to create programs like dual enrollment and the service learning trip to Guatemala.

Hesitant to use one-time funds for salaries or anything that is structural. There are rules for funding and what we use these funds for.

Maryellen – I know it is a really tough job. As a community, there is only one pot of money and the schools get a big share. Thank you for your hard work. Let people know about the funding. Can you publish what you use the funds for?

Nance M: I have a concern on the FTE reductions. Huge impact on people. .4 and .6 or 8 impacts retirement for teachers with reduced FTE. Our valued staff will look elsewhere. Ability to recruit staff at .4 and .6. I understand the cuts are necessary, but in the long run, when we reduce it hurts what comes into the district. Looks like we are only hiring bits and pieces.

Ann: Son in 6<sup>th</sup> grade with anxiety. It was a seamless transition in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Please don't change the team.

I heard a lot that it sounds like jobs are really not thought through the options.

Ms. Gaudet: We have thought about options but there are multiple options. We have to take it into consideration. We will talk with the people and see what will work. There are multiple options.

Jamal a lot of heart and passion into this job we have been voted to do, a lot of time and effort making these decisions. We are looking at implementation strategies in the works with multiple options. We take this extremely seriously. We work on implementation strategies. We want to Figure out what is the smallest impact.

Amy H: If you walk into any school and see the front office, they do so much. To think they can provide the same quality of support in the same amount of time, you are going to burn them out. At the High School, one of the secretaries already left and the Principal and Vice Principal are filling in. The trickle-down effect of no having an adequately staffed office is monumental.

Ms. Capello: The ultimate timeline is at town meeting. The meeting is May 15. The state number comes in on June 30. Tonight's input is critical.

Mr. Hemm – I didn't expect to leave here with a clear solution. This is the first in a series of meetings. I kept a tally sheet tonight and will use it as the process moves forward. I appreciate everyone who spoke tonight. We will work with the town.

### Executive Session

This item is tabled.

Mr. DiSilva would like invite everyone to the joint next meeting April 25 at 7:00 pm

A motion was made by Mr. Hemm to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote at 10:05 p.m. without the intent to return to open session. Second by Ms. Mertsch. The motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore  
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent