

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Monday, June 22, 2020

Committee Present:

Leigh Martin, Sean Nicholson, Phil DeZutter, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Dorothy Scally

Administration Present:

Joseph Maruszczak, Superintendent of Schools
Maureen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent
Jay Byer, Business/Finance
Dennis Todd, Director of Student Support Services
Mary Anne Moran, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School
Debra Swain, Principal, Memorial Elementary School
Janice Gallagher, Principal, Clough Elementary School
Jen D'Angelo, Director of Student Support Services (new)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nicholson read the following statement: *Consistent with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law MGL Ch. 30A, S. 20 and Regulation 940 CMR 29.10, which allows for remote participation in certain circumstances under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law Regulations, the Mendon-Upton Regional School Committee will be conducting this meeting remotely. In this particular case, all six members of the Committee are participating remotely and virtually through videoconferencing. This is consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 10, 2020, which eased the requirements of having a meeting in a physical space open to the public and having a quorum of the Committee physically present. Any and all votes will be conducted by roll-call votes. Per usual, this meeting will also be livestreamed and recorded.*

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Superintendent Maruszczak.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Superintendent Maruszczak stated School Committee reorganization is governed by Policy BDA, which calls for an organizational meeting to be held at the first regular meeting following the annual town elections. Section II of the current policy indicates that the office of Chairperson will be selected by nomination and a roll call vote. Please note that the M.G.L. Ch. 71, S 16A, requires vote may not be done in secret from the School Committee membership for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Assistant Treasurer.

Superintendent Maruszczak asked for nominations for Chairperson

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Leigh Martin to nominate **Vikki Ludwigson as Chairperson.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson begins chairing the meeting and asked for nominations for Vice Chairperson

MOTION: On a motion of Leigh Martin, seconded by Sean Nicholson to nominate **Kerry Laurence as Vice Chairperson.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for secretary

MOTION: On a motion of Leigh Martin, seconded by Phil Nicholson to nominate **Sean Nicholson as secretary.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for Taft Library Trustee

MOTION: On a motion of, Sean Nicholson seconded by Kerry Laurence to nominate **Leigh Martin as Taft Library Trustee.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for Risteen Fund Representative

MOTION: On a motion of, Sean Nicholson seconded by Kerry Laurence to nominate **Phil DeZutter as Risteen Fund Representative.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for Assistant Treasurer

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Leigh Martin to nominate **Sean Nicholson as assistant treasurer.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for Treasurer

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Sean Nicholson to nominate **Joseph Leacu as Treasurer.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for Clerk to the School Committee

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to nominate **Kelly McElreath as Clerk to the School Committee.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes

Chairperson Vikki Ludwigson asked for nominations for Blackstone Valley Educational Collaborative

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded, by Leigh Martin to nominate **Superintendent Joseph Maruszczak as Blackstone Valley Educational Collaborative.**

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes; Dorothy Scally, yes

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to nominate Sean Nicholson, Vikki Ludwigson and Phil DeZutter to the Budget Subcommittee;
Leigh Martin, Vikki Ludwigson and Dorothy Scally to Policy Subcommittee;
Phil DeZutter, Kerry Laurence, and Sean Nicholson to the Negotiations Subcommittee;
Kerry Laurence, Leigh Martin and Dorothy Scally to the Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee;
Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Dorothy Scally, Sean Nicholson and Phil DeZutter to the Golden Apple Subcommittee
VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes; Dorothy Scally, yes

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Leigh Martin, seconded by Phil DeZutter to approve the agenda.

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes; Dorothy Scally, yes

Approval of Open Session Minutes of June 1, 2020

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Leigh Martin, to approve the Open Session minutes June 1, 2020

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes; Dorothy Scally, yes

Approval of Executive Session Minutes of June 1, 2020

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve the Open Session minutes June 1, 2020

VOTED: VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes; Dorothy Scally, yes

II. COMMUNITY COMMENTS - NA

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

PPE for Reentry

Dr. Maruszczak stated guidance from DESE was distributed detailing the equipment needed for safety supplies. District is still waiting for additional guidance. He believes it will be a hybrid schedule with in person and remote learning. Wearing of masks by all students and staff will be required thus a 12-week supply of disposable masks for all staff each day and one per week for each student was needed. The district ordered 10,000 masks, 8k for adults and 2k for children. It was noted all soaps dispenser will be working for hand washing. There will also be 120 gel sanitizer stations and large capacity sanitizer stations will be placed in high traffic area

Nipmuc Graduation- July 19

The ceremony will be on Sunday, July 19 at 10 am on front field and the rain date is Monday July 20. The district has worked with the Board of Health and student leadership in planning the ceremony. Planning includes where everyone will be sitting for appropriate social distancing and making it special for the students and families. Dr. Maruszczak noted the students are excited and looking forward to having it outside.

Statement on Nuestro Mundo Public Charter School

Dr. Maruszczak made a statement in regards to the news of his involvement in the Nuestro Mundo Public Charter School in the Providence area. Dr. Maruszczak was encouraged by RI Dept of Ed to explore the program in the Providence area where Providence College will be a sponsor of this K-8 school. He noted there is a high degree of uncertainty due to the budget crisis for this type of project. The process is ongoing but he stressed his priority is Mendon-Upton and the challenge the district is facing with the budget and reopening during COVID.

FY20 Budget Update

Jay Byer noted the district realized savings in transportation and district is finishing strong this year and hope to recoup some of the revenue loss anticipated for next year. School Committee discussed the charter school expenses and Medicare reimbursement.

IV. ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Formation & Work of the MURSD Cultural Proficiency Subcommittee Maureen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Cohen updated the School Committee on the work of the MURSD Cultural Proficiency subcommittee:

- Formation of this committee was based on the national conversation happening
- District is a member of the exSel network
- One of the areas recognized for growth during a district assessment is Cultural Proficiency
- There was an administrator workshop around proficiency leadership last August
- ELA curriculum review year and put on hold, part of the work was training on cultural proficiency and how to look at curriculum without bias
- It was determined the training should be done with more teachers – mini presentations were done in February at a faculty meeting.
- This is a good starting point for the district
- Jennifer Mannion had discussion in her staff meetings at Miscoe in zoom meetings
- Revamp the summer reading due to the closing and made the reading all choice readings for the students. The list has been updated to have diversified books.
- Schools have been doing work in Cultural Proficiency as well.
- With recent events, staff has been reaching out with ideas. In the fall, there will be another assessment and developing a plan for the future.
- Great conversations have been occurring in the district and books for staff to read will be introduced for staff conversations
- Question is what are we using for PD – Facing History. High School was a pilot for DESE and recognized the need to change
- Question asked where should this topic be discussed – history or social studies. Dr. Cohen stated is in our curriculum in our ELA. The new standards for social studies have readjusted to introduce this curriculum. 5th grade is where many of these topics are discussed.

V. GOLDEN APPLE AWARD SUBCOMMITTEE

Golden Apple Award Subcommittee: Awarding of the 2019-20 MURSD Golden Apple Awards

Kerry Laurence presented the recent work of the Golden Apple Award Subcommittee. There were 110 nominations which is double than last year's nominations. Also, each

School had a number of nominations. The staff is recognized for its creativity and communications. Kerry noted there are 3 awards presented this evening but all staff has done an exceptional job and the School Committee is proud of the staff.

The recipients of the Golden Apple Award are:

- Olivia Hendricks, Memorial 3rd Grade SI Teacher
- Jim Charest, Miscoe 8th Grade Social Studies Teacher
- Allison Towne, Nipmuc Guidance Counselor

Kerry noted for each recipient what was included on their nomination's forms. Each recipient was presented the award earlier in the day and videos were shown of the presentations.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Introduction of New Director of Student Support Services

Dr. Maruszczak introduced Jen D'Angelo as the Director of Student Support Services as of July 1. Jenn currently works at the Southeastern Vocational Technical High School. She started as a paraprofessional and became a special ed high school teacher. Jen has had success in her positions. Dr. Maruszczak stated there was a strong pool of applicants however Jen was outstanding candidate. Dr. Maruszczak welcomed her to the district.

Jen D'Angelo thanked for having her and excited to start. She has been overwhelmed with the sense of community of the district. Jen noted Dennis has been working with her (thankful to him) and looking forward to working in the district.

Dr. Maruszczak also thanked Maureen for heading up the Committee and bringing a diverse group of people together in the pandemic for interviews.

DESE Initial Guidance on Reentry- Fall 2020

Dr. Maruszczak noted the Commissioner will be available tomorrow to unveil the guidance and looking at a hybrid model. State is looking to get as many students back in school as soon as possible. Guidance will be distributed as soon as it is received.

MURSD Reentry Advisory Committee

Dr. Maruszczak put out an all call for a district committee for assistance in processing the guidance specific to MURSD. After 48 hours, there more than 158 people volunteered.

The Goal of the Committee will be:

- Review DESE reopening plan
- Provide input and guidance to MURSD admin in developing plan for our schools
- Assist in identifying potential issues that need to be addressed for re-opening
- Assist in development of surveys and gathering input from stakeholders.

Thus, there will be 40 stakeholders to deliberate upon policies and practices in these areas in 5 working groups:

Academic Programming: This working group will be reviewing potential models of teaching & learning, professional development, technology, needed teaching materials & supplies, etc. particularly in light of the possibility of a hybrid model.

Logistics/Scheduling: This working group will be reviewing the school day, the school year, transportation, and changes needed to instructional space to meet current requirements of social distancing.

Student Life & Extracurricular Activities: This working group will be reviewing potential changes that need to be made to school lunch, interscholastic sports, after and before school programming, and extracurricular clubs/activities.

Physical Safety & Mental Health: This working group will be reviewing SEL needs and supports for all students, physical improvements to the buildings for safety (e.g., plexiglass barriers), and PPE needs for all schools

Equity & Access: This working group will be reviewing needs related to students, families, and staff members related to safety risks, procedures and solutions to meet those needs so there is equity in educational opportunities for students as well as working conditions for staff.

The objective of the working groups is to process the information and make recommendations (June/July). The steering committee will synthesize recommendations & develop MURSD reentry plan (July/Aug 2020). Lastly, the Superintendent & Regional School Committee will finalize and approve reentry plan before August 15, 2020.

There is a lot of wisdom among the staff and district to develop the best possible plan for the district.

SC Resolution on COVID-19 Funding- Discussion & Vote

It was noted 69 communities have signed this resolution and it would be beneficial to present a unified front with other school committees and state more money is needed for COVID funding.

Leigh Martin read the following statement:

WHEREAS, if schools are to re-open this fall in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the responsibility of each school district to do so safely and responsibly; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that each school district is able to pay for the enormous additional staffing, transportation and material expenses required to do this; and

WHEREAS, the state cannot expect mandatory COVID-19 safety guidelines to be followed without also ensuring that each school district has the funds required to implement these guidelines; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED: that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates.

We must ensure a statewide school re-opening that is safe, responsible and equitable.

THERE CAN BE NO UNFUNDED MANDATES FOR COVID-19.

Respectfully,

The Mendon-Upton Regional School Committee

Vikki Ludwigson, Chair

Members: Phil DeZutter, Kerry Laurence, Leigh Martin, Sean Nicholson, Dorothy Scally

Approval of Adoption of Resolution and send to the Governor

MOTION: On a motion of Leigh Martin, seconded by Sean Nicholson to adopt the Resolution and send to the Governor.

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes; Sean Nicholson, yes; Leigh Martin, yes; Vikki Ludwigson, yes; Kerry Laurence, yes; Dorothy Scally, yes

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Shelley Cook asked about the cost for charter school – district pays \$150,000 net payment for 13 Mendon Upton students going to charter school. This is determined by formula subject to appropriation. The formula reimbursement goes down each year where the district is responsible to 100% of the funding for the student.

Leigh Martin stated the Mendon Town Meeting is Monday June 29th. For the override to be passed, it needs to be voted on Monday evening.

Phil DeZutter stated Upton Town Meeting is Tuesday, June 23 and the funding needs 2/3 majority to be passed.

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

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Reconciliation of FY21 Budget- August 10
- Recommendations for Reentry Structures/Procedures- August 10

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Leigh Martin to adjourn

VOTED:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath