

MINUTES

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: 5 West Street, School Committee Room

January 5, 2022 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Zoom

George Scobie

Dottie Kauffman

Jessie Harrington

Gail Holloway

Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield

Beth Chamberland

Karen Ballway - AEA Vice President

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Scobie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Karen Ballway, AEA Vice President, thanked everyone that helped over the weekend to supply the teachers with test kits and masks.

The committee thanked Karen for her kind words, and expressed their gratitude for all the teachers are doing everyday for the students.

Minutes: None

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS: None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT: Jasmyn Gates & Ally McGill joined via Zoom.

Jasmyn stated there was not much to report given the fact we had only been back in session for a few days after the break. The high school has changed the seating protocol for lunch to help keep everyone safe. Most students are concerned/talking about if we will need to pivot to remote learning. Overall, other than the COVID numbers, school is going smoothly. Winter break was a much needed rest for everyone.

The committee thanked Jasmyn for her report, and wanted Jasmyn to relay to the students that they appreciate their cooperation and we will continue to take it day by day.

Ally stated she is currently home dealing with COVID herself. She reiterated that winter break was a nice break for all. Ski club starts on Thursday, Jan 6, 2022. That is exciting as we were not able to have it last year. And students are looking forward to the Jay Peak Trip that is planned for March.

The committee thanked Ally for her report and wished her well and a speedy recovery from COVID.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

COVID Update

Information

Dr. Handfield provided an update on COVID cases and other pertinent details since our last meeting. Dr. Handfield stated we reported 110 COVID cases on Monday over a span of 11 days. Closed on Tuesday the 4th due to a nursing shortage as it is state law that you must have 1 nurse in each building. Dr. Handfield stated that hopefully going forward this will not happen again, but safety of the students is a priority. We reported 61 COVID cases today, Wednesday, January 5th. These numbers are common across the state at this time. Dr. Handfield shared an encouraging statistic from Dr. Chamberland. Due to test and stay we have had 4758 negative tests that have allowed students and staff to stay in school,

Part II of FY '23 Budget Kick-Off

Information

Dr. Handfield presented the second portion of the draft budget via powerpoint slides and a working draft budget for FY'23. A draft number of \$28,870,214.33 will need to be voted on to send to Town Hall. Dr. Handfield informed the committee that there is a 3.15% increase from last year's budget. He also stated this budget is preliminary as we do not have town or state fund numbers as of yet.

Jessie Harrington asked if lunch is offered at no cost to all students, how can we calculate the actual numbers and funds for free & reduced lunch. Cecilia Wirzbicki informed the committee that even though lunch is currently offered to all students at no charge, we still collect the free & reduced lunch applications from families and that information is entered into the Gateway system by food services to identify who qualifies.

Gail Hollway commented that during the budget presentation at the last school committee meeting, she noticed almost no one had increases in their building budgets. She asked if the increase in the overall budget was because of personnel.

Cecelia Wirzbicki and Dr. Handfield both confirmed that yes, the increase is due to personnel. 87% - 89% of the budget is for salary.

[Jessie Harrington](#) stated that this is a very lean budget. She thanked Dr. Handfield and administration for working hard to bring forth this budget. She also stated she was thankful that the administration was able to do so without making cuts to fine arts and sports, or adding fees as other districts have had to implement.

[Cecelia Wirzbicki](#) stated that yes, the budget is lean, and administration does their best to maintain staff levels to accommodate student needs.

Gail Holloway commented that the bus fee has not increased since it was implemented and that was worth mentioning. Gail also stated that very seldom does the Town question the school departments motives and is supportive.

Draft FY' 23 Budget Number

Dr. Handfield stated the draft number for FY'23 is \$28,870,214.33. A motion is needed to send this number to the Town Administration.

Recommended Motion.....to send the FY' 23 draft budget number of \$28,870,214.33 to the Town Administration.

George Scobie entertained a motion to send the FY'23 draft budget number of \$28,870,214.33 to the Town Administration as presented by Dr. Handfield.

Gail Holloway made a motion to send the FY'23 draft budget number of \$28,870,214.33 to the Town Administration as presented by Dr. Handfield, Jessie Harrington seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

Assabet Valley Collaborative End of Year Financial Statements

Dr. Handfield supplied the Assabet Valley Collaborative Financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2021. A motion is needed to accept the financial statements.

Recommended Motion.....to accept the Assabet Valley Collaborative Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2021.

George Scobie entertained a motion to accept the Assabet Valley Collaborative Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2021, as presented by Dr. Handfield.

Gail Holloway made a motion to accept the Assabet Valley Collaborative Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2021, as presented by Dr. Handfield, Jessie Harrington seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Hand Sanitizer Donation from Big Y Foods in Southbridge

Dr. Handfield informed the committee that Jeffrey Allain, Sales Manager with Big Y Foods in Southbridge, contacted the office to donate 80 cases of hand sanitizer to the district. Joe Fahey, our facilities director, retrieved the 2 pallets worth of hand sanitizer and will distribute throughout the buildings.

Recommended Motion.....to accept the donation of hand sanitizer from Big Y Foods in Southbridge with gratitude.

George Scobie entertained a motion to accept the donation of hand sanitizer from Big Y Foods in Southbridge with gratitude.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to accept the donation of hand sanitizer from Big Y Foods in Southbridge with gratitude, Jessie Harrington seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING REPORT:

Social Emotional Screener

Dr. Chamberland stated that this year we will pilot the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire with students ages 5-17 to more specifically determine social emotional needs in the areas of emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behavior. The questionnaire is completed by students who are over the age of 11, with the permission of the parent. Parents complete the questionnaire for younger students. This screening will take place with small groups of students to allow us to build a system of support across the district to address the needs of our students in a structured and targeted manner.

iReady

Dr. Chamberland informed the committee iReady is an online diagnostic tool that students in grades k-5 have been using for the past two years. This program is highly regarded to support student mastery of skills in both English Language Arts and Math. Principals and grade level leaders recently completed a training session to elevate their use of the program in each of our schools. The training focused on increasing student usage as our data demonstrates students have a high level of mastery when they meet the 45 minutes per week of usage. The training

also provided information on the assignment of skill specific lessons to support classroom instruction. We are excited to see the continued success of our students with the usage of this program.

Auburn High School-National Honor Society Field Trip

While field trips continue to be very limited, the members of the Auburn High School National Honor Society went to Boston to enhance their learning in a number of areas. The multiple areas students visited during the trip addressed learning in the areas outlined below:

Outdoor Aquarium Tank at New England Aquarium—Mr. Berg lesson on Seals and Biology
Moakley United States Courthouse—Mr. Kennard lesson on Government, the Court System, and Due Process, Mr. Berg, a lesson on Climate Change
Sykcrapers—Mr. Kennard Photography lesson using iPhone Panorama Features
Site of the Boston Massacre—Mrs. Heidemann lesson on the Boston Massacre and Crispus Attucks
New England Holocaust Memorial—Mrs. LaBeaume lesson on the Holocaust and structure of the memorial

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:

Acceptance of Memorial Gift

Action

Mrs. Worzbicki informed the committee that the Swanson Road Staff had collected funds in memory of one of Auburn's students Gracie Bulger, upon her passing. The funds were donated in order to purchase something to benefit the Auburn school community, in her memory. I would ask for your acceptance to establish a Gift account in memory of Gracie Bulger.

Recommended Motion.....to accept with gratitude the funds donated by Swanson Road Staff members in memory of Gracie Bulger and establish a gift account to be used to purchase something for the Auburn School Community in her memory.

George Scobie entertained a motion to accept with gratitude the funds donated by Swanson Road Staff members in memory of Gracie Bulger and establish a gift account to be used to purchase something for the Auburn School Community in her memory. as presented by the Business Manager.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to accept with gratitude the funds donated by Swanson Road Staff members in memory of Gracie Bulger and establish a gift account to be used to purchase something for the Auburn School Community in her memory. as presented by the Business Manager, Gail Holloway seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

Year to Date Budget Report

Information

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report dated December 22, 2021.

Budget Transfers - December 22, 2021

Action

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a listing of Budget Transfers between the same series, along with a listing of Transfers between different series for which she was seeking approval from the committee.

Recommended Motion.....to approve the list of Transfers dated December 22, 2021 as presented by the business manager.

George Scobie entertained a motion to accept the list of transfers as presented by the Business Manager.

Jessie Harrington made a motion to approve the list of Transfers dated December 22, 2021 , Gail Holloway seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Scobie entertained the motion to adjourn for the evening at 7:13p.m.; Jessie Harrington made a motion to adjourn, Gail Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Williams

Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

FY'23 Budget

Assabet Valley Collaborative End of Year Financial Statements