

Meeting Notice

Board/Committee Name: Orange Elementary School Committee
Day/Date: Monday, March 9, 2020
Time of Meeting: 6:00 PM
Location: Fisher Hill School Library



Minutes

1. Call to Order - Stephanie Conrod called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.
Other members present were: Karon Parker, Alexandre Schwanz and Dianne Salcedo.
Others present were: Superintendent Tari Thomas/Clerk
Michele Tontodonato, Director of Finance and Operations
Christine Rodriguez, Assistant Clerk
Kate Lambert, Fisher Hill Dean
Principal Christopher Dodge
Carla Chilton
Kelly Therrien
Bruce Scherer
Denise Andrews
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Public Comment - Denise Andrews stated that she thought there was a great interview process for the superintendent search. She also spoke about the budget situation, specifically how special education is underfunded and needs a much stronger lobbying effort to the State. She suggested asking people to sign petitions and write letters.
Stephanie announced that town elections are on March 30th and Alex Schwanz and Denise Andrews are up for election. An Orange Elementary school committee member resigned but it is too late to put that on the ballot.
Dianne Salcedo announced that March 10th is candidate night for orange town offices. The event will be held at the Orange Armory at 7:00pm.
4. Report of the OETA - Carla Chilton stated she was very grateful for Tari's letter to the Governor and feeling a little stifled from how the student opportunity act went. Negotiations are going well and should be finished up shortly. MCAS is starting at Dexter Park. Grade 6 started a fundraising campaign for their field trip with a spring jamboree which is both Fisher Hill and Dexter Park friendly. Kelly Therrien reported Fisher Hill has filled the token jar again so they are having a rainbow day tomorrow. They are looking for a new reading and math curriculum (the TILT committee is researching this).
5. Approval of the Minutes of January 13, 2020, February, 25, 2020 and February, 27, 2020
On a motion made by Alexandre Schwanz and seconded by Karon Parker, the committee voted unanimously to approve the three sets of school committee minutes listed above.

6. Public Hearing on the FY21 OES School Budget (on file) - Tari presented the FY21 budget and explained how the budget affects ongoing improvements and key metrics. Our enrollment is 534 and our high needs population is now determined by DESE to be 66.4%. Special education has also increased. Tari reviewed choice in and out numbers, outplacement numbers and charter school tuition. She explained our internal and external budget drivers, enrollment history and projection (which included Warwick Community school projection and a big departing sixth grade). There is a 19.8% budget increase which is a \$7,936,752 total increase. Tari also reviewed revenue sources, functional categories, history of financial sources and percentage increases. Tari and Michele are looking for input from stakeholders. There is an unknown house and senate budget and the current budget is beyond the reach of our community.

Michele said she is finalizing transportation contracts and educators contracts. There was a short discussion on the new principal model. Michele stated she has a meeting with the town Administrator on Thursday to go over budgets and Tari went before the Finance Committee with version I of the budget a few weeks ago. Tari stated that everything we can do to get the budget down, we have to do. Michele noted that 70% of the increase is payroll.

Stephanie talked about advocacy and how she believes the Student Opportunity Act failed Orange Elementary. She is seeing the need for social workers and suggested the possibility of cost-sharing certain positions and also possibly reaching out to Bill Diehl. Stephanie also suggested looking at repurposing paras. Dianne stated that CAPS has a number of professionals that are willing to provide services to the district and would like to look into using their services more. Alex said he wouldn't want to see a budget number this high go to the town. There was a short discussion on grants and how those come into play with the budget.

7. Public Hearing on School Choice and Vote - Tari presented historical data on school choice (on file). Her recommendation is to vote to continue to be a school of choice but with no seats available. Budget numbers are up in the air and Warwick Community School is a wild card. Tari explained if all the Orange students attending Warwick return, the district will need to add a fourth section of fourth grade and the only place where a slot or two could open would be grade 6.

On a motion made by Dianne Salcedo and seconded by Alexandre Schwanz, the committee voted unanimously to table the school choice vote until the next meeting.

8. Matters for Action/Vote

a. Endorsement of School Building Project - Bruce Scherer reviewed numerous issues at Dexter Park and explained why that school would not work for an expansion. He presented the layout and traffic plans for the Fisher Hill expansion. He said the total budget started at 66 million and is now down to 54 million. He also said the design team was phenomenal; they understood what was really needed in the building. Bruce also reviewed the inside space. He explained that taxes will go up whether we fix Dexter Park or get the Fisher Hill expansion. Next Monday we will find out from the MSBA what our reimbursement rate will be.

On a motion made by Dianne Salcedo and seconded by Alexandre Schwanz, the committee voted unanimously to endorse the school building committee moving ahead with the schematics presented by Chair Shearer and the town vote for a building renovation/addition project.

b. 2020-2021 District Calendar - Tari reported that she has not received any feedback on the proposed calendar from any of the three districts. The committee discussed the need for winter and spring breaks. Mr. Dodge reported that when the group met to create the calendar, it was complicated

working with the middle and high school schedules so they just met in the middle. It was also noted that there will be no blizzard bags next year.

On a motion made by Alexandre Schwanz and seconded by Dianne Salcedo, the committee voted unanimously to approve the 2020-2021 district calendar for Union #73 and Ralph C. Mahar Regional.

c. OES FY20 Transfer Requests (on file) Michele explained that this is usually voted by the Resources and Capacity subcommittee but we did not have a quorum at the last meeting.

On a motion made by Dianne Salcedo and seconded by Alexandre Schwanz, the committee voted unanimously to move \$72.50 from Travel-SpEd to Union #73 Travel SpEd and to move \$551.95 from Supplies to Supplies-SpEd DP.

d. OES FY20 Rural Aid - Michele explained we will receive \$20,490 in additional rural aid funds for FY20.

e. FY19 unpaid bill - Michele explained there is an unpaid bill from FY19 bill that will need to be paid out of FY20 professional development.

On a motion made by Dianne Salcedo and seconded by Alexandre Schwanz, the committee voted unanimously to pay the FY19 bill from CES out of FY20 Professional Development.

9. March Items

a. Superintendent Search - Stephanie reported that pending negotiations, we have hired Dr. Zielinski as superintendent and the three district school committee meeting went well. The three chairs along with Michele have been discussing the superintendent's contract and will present it to Dr. Liz this Thursday. The completed contract will be presented to the school committees in April for a vote.

b. Kathy Reinig's letter (on file) - The committee briefly reviewed Kathy Reinig's letter to Senator Comerford regarding the financial struggles of the town and expressed their appreciation.

c. Building Challenges & Needs - Tari updated the committee on Dexter Park building struggles. She reported that they have located piping that was letting off steam and have been cleaning and painting the affected areas. Slight erosion of the concrete joist was a cause of concern and they have engaged a commercial engineer to give recommendation for next steps. A picture from 2005 looked similar to what it looks like now showing there was no new erosion. Tari will keep the committee updated.

d. Technology Update (on file) - The Overarching technology goals are to move to touchscreen Chromebooks, a reduction of paper use and speed in solving day to day needs.

e. Mid-Year Accomplishments (on file) - This is done annually to look back at what has been accomplished.

10. Sub Committee / Liaison Updates

a. Report of Union #73 Committee - no meeting

b. Report of the R.C. Mahar Representative - Stephanie stated that Dama Utley has resigned and a new member will need to be appointed.

- i. appoint a new member - ***Dianne Salcedo nominated Karon Parker as the new RC Mahar representative. Alexandre Schwanz seconded the motion. Karon Parker accepted the nomination.***
- c. Report of the Leadership, Accountability & Measurement Subcommittee - Stephanie reported there has been no meeting. There is a meeting coming up and that will include a transition plan. She mentioned the possibility of restructuring this committee.
- d. Report of the Resources & Capacity Subcommittee (minutes on file) - Dianne reported that at the last meeting Matt Heins provided an update on the buildings and the suggestion was made to keep track of how much money is being spent on Dexter Park repairs. The special education budget has only 2.3% remaining. The next meeting is March 23, 2020.
- e. Report of the Communications & Policy Subcommittee - no meeting
- f. Report of the CES Representative - Stephanie reported they had a presentation on vaping and other substance abuse at the January meeting. They also talked about challenges, professional development offerings and the student opportunity act.
- g. Report of the CAPS Representative - Dianne reported at the last meeting they talked about the CAPS programs increasing and adding classrooms as well as next year's budget. They may need to have a small tuition increase next year. The annual audit report approved by the state and the next meeting is two days from now.
- h. Report of the School Building Committee - Chair Scherer reported on the school building committee earlier in the meeting. Stephanie stated that the MSBA will cost-share the family resource center.
- i. Report of the Regional Planning Committee - Tari stated that regionalization was formally placed on hold at the last meeting.

11. Superintendent's Report (on file) - Tari's report highlighted the telemedicine program at Mahar, an update on the Coronavirus, information on the wellness policy, press release for the new superintendent, Makerspace at Mahar, budget news and update, enrollment, the excellence in teaching award winner (Angela Cote) and new policies that have been shared with families. Tari stressed the importance of participating in the census.

12. Executive Session - The Committee unanimously roll called into executive session at 8:04pm, not to return to open session, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, April 13, 2020.

Approved 4/13/20

DATE: _____

Chairperson

Secretary

The agenda reflects topics that the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed.

Public Comment Protocols

The School Committee welcomes public comment on items that are within the scope of the School Committee's responsibilities. The Public Comment agenda item is reserved for this purpose. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should be aware of the following guidelines:

- ❑ The Chair will recognize those wishing to speak and give them the floor. Only persons recognized by the Chair may speak. For purposes of the minutes, speakers should identify themselves at the beginning of their remarks.
- ❑ The purpose of Public Comment is to receive input from the community, not to engage in prolonged conversation with the Committee. The Chair will ensure that any comment or question that requires a response from the committee or the School Department will be addressed in a timely manner.
- ❑ All comments should be addressed through the Chair, not any individual committee member or to others in attendance.
- ❑ Speakers are expected to respect confidentiality. This includes the confidentiality of the speaker's own child/ren as well as that of school staff and personnel.